Political empowerment of black women in the rural south: a case study of three black women mayor in rural Georgia

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ABSTRACT

POLITICAL SCIENCE

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THE POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT OF BLACK WOMEN IN THE RURAL SOUTH:
A CASE STUDY OF THREE BLACK WOMEN MAYORS IN RURAL GEORGIA

Advisor: Dr. William H. Boone

Dissertation dated December, 1997

The three mayors and the respective cities studied in this paper were Mayor Emma Gresham Keysville, GA; Mayor Justine Brown Oliver, GA and Mayor Carrie Kent Walthourville, GA. The intent of this paper was to show that the three black women mayors chose to run for mayor because they felt that through their political position they could improve the lives of the citizens of their respective cities, especially the socioeconomic status of blacks in their cities and improve the cities in the important areas of: education, employment, housing and health care. The further intent of this paper was to address the apparent neglect of scholarship regarding black female mayors in rural Southern cities by performing a case study of the black women mayors in rural Georgia. None of the black women mayors studied in this paper were successful in improving the education or housing in their cities nor the socioeconomic status of blacks and somewhat successful in improving health care. This study addresses the neglect by scholars regarding black female rural Southern municipal politics. Further study is warranted to understand the impact of black women mayors in the rural South.
THE POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT OF BLACK WOMEN IN THE RURAL SOUTH:
A CASE STUDY OF THREE BLACK WOMEN MAYORS IN RURAL GEORGIA

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY
CHEQUITA Y. WEBB

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

ATLANTA, GEORGIA
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Prior to passage of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution few women in the United States had the ability to vote or to hold political office. Since the 1920s, women have held many positions (elected and appointed) at the local, state and federal levels of government. In 1993, there were more women in the 103rd U.S. Congress than ever before; there were more women governors, women state legislators and women mayors of large U.S. cities. Even though we have experienced an increase in the number of female politicians in the United States, the majority of these females have been elected to positions at the local level. This phenomenon holds true particularly for black women who have been elected to local level positions such as mayor.

In 1990, the majority of the black female mayors were located in the southern portion of the United States. As maintained by the National Conference of Black Mayors, in 1993 the state of Georgia had 23 black mayors, 4 (four) of whom were black women.

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females. One woman is the mayor of East Point, a city which is considered a suburb of Atlanta, Georgia and is therefore not considered a rural city.\(^3\) The other three women are mayors of towns in rural Georgia. This paper will concentrate on the three black women mayors of the rural cities of Oliver, Keysville and Walthourville, Georgia. During the 1970s, many rural cities in America experienced an increase in population. The population of these three cities has increased since 1930. Between 1930-1988, Keysville had a 27.2 percent increase in population; Oliver had a 7.3 percent increase in population and Walthourville had a 64.3 percent increase in population (between 1980-1988, no record prior to 1980).\(^4\) On the authority of the 1990 U. S. Census:

1) These cities are rural per the U.S. Census Bureau definition of rural;

2) The majority population of Keysville is black (76.6%), the majority of these individuals are under age 65, the total population is 312;

3) The population of Oliver is of relatively equal distribution between black (49.8%) and white (47.41%), the majority of these individuals are under age 65, the total population is 251;

4) The majority population of Walthourville is of relatively equal distribution between black (48.98%) and white (46.33%), the majority of these individuals are under age 65 and the total population is 2,001.\(^5\)


\(^5\) 1990 U. S. Census Bureau of Population and Housing Summary Tape File 3A.
These three cities are located in the eastern section of the state of Georgia. This area of Georgia is also known as the coastal plains region. The cities of Keysville and Oliver are located near the city of Augusta which is the sixth most populated city in Georgia. Considering the close proximity of Keysville and Oliver to Augusta, neither is included in the Augusta Metropolitan Statistical Area. Walthourville is located near the city of Savannah, the third most populated city in the state of Georgia. The Savannah Metropolitan Statistical Area does not include the city of Walthourville. The southern most city of the three subject cities in this paper, Walthourville, is located in Liberty County which borders the coast of Georgia on the Atlantic Ocean. Keysville is located on the boundary of two counties, Burke and Jefferson. The majority of Keysville’s population is located in Burke County; the Jefferson County population is negligible (12 people). Burke County abuts the Georgia-South Carolina border and the Savannah River. Oliver is located in the county of Screven which also borders South Carolina and the Savannah River. (See the Appendix for exact location of each city.)

The intent of this paper is to show that these black women chose to run for the elective office of mayor because they felt that through their political position they could improve the lives of the townspeople, black and white. The paper further intends to show that because these women have occupied the office of mayor, they have been able to

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7 Ibid.
improve the cities in the important areas of: education, employment, housing, and health care. This paper will analyze these three black women mayors' attempts to improve the socioeconomic status of blacks in their respective communities.
Frame of Reference

Blacks, like other groups in the United States were denied rights (by law and by custom). The negative position of blacks in American politics can be traced to the drafting of the United States Constitution. Many scholars have studied blacks and black politics not as a separate and unique group but as a group which could be compared to any other in American society. This frame of reference would appear to be woefully inadequate because the history of blacks in America is unlike that of other Americans. The frame of references that have been used to analyze black politics in the past were the melting pot theory, traditional-systems model, and ethnic model. These models ignore the "crucial variables in the black political experience." Mack Jones’s framework would contain "those factors which are unique to the black political experience."

The author of this paper will borrow from Mack Jones’ framework of Southern black politics with the understanding that a major drawback for the author is the fact that Jones does not appear to recognize a difference between black female politicians and black male politicians. Jones has made reference to the race issue in Southern politics by

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8 The term politics as used in this paper means not only "the exercise of power in the public realm" but also participation "in such less traditional activities as involvement in social movements, local development projects, networking and informal coalition building, protesting and demonstrating, as well as the use of conventionally 'female' activities (e.g., cooking, sewing, and taking care of others) for the attainment of empowerment." Jill M. Bystydzienski, ed. Women Transforming Politics: Worldwide Strategies for Empowerment, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), pp. 1 and 203.


10 Ibid.
referencing the “power struggle between whites motivated by the canons of white supremacy seeking to maintain superordinancy at the expense of their black compatriots and the latter trying to throw off white domination. Electoral politics as it relates to black officeholders involves these formal political structures in which this conflict is played out.”

In this paper the author asserts that racism remains a factor in politics in Georgia and that the three women in this study must also face the additional struggle of sexism.

As expressed by Jill Bystydzienski, “women’s roles, in most societies, have been defined by and largely limited to the private sphere and women’s activities deemed essentially apolitical.” Therefore most scholars did not view women as political beings to be studied and certainly not to be studied as extensively or intensely as males.

Marianne Githens also said that sex was ignored as a variable in political research prior to the 1960s and afterwards.

The scholars who have studied women and politics, have differed regarding the framework that should be utilized. In agreement with Susan Carroll, researchers of the pluralist or democratic elitist framework when studying women’s political behavior did

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12 Bystydzienski, Women Transforming Politics, p. 2.

not see any differences in the voting patterns or interests of women when comparing them to men.\(^\text{14}\)

Women were not viewed as having separate interests or concerns from men and no recognition that women’s interests should be addressed differently. Carroll further articulated:

Since women were not viewed as having distinct interests, the fact that they were represented in governing bodies by men never became an issue of concern. The equation of the interests of men and women led to the implicit assumption that male representatives would represent women in their constituencies equally as well (or as poorly) as they represented men.

Moreover, the equation of the interests of men and women meant that possible attitudinal and behavioral differences between male policy-making elite’s and those few females who attained positions as elite’s were not investigated. Susan Bourque and Jen Grossholtz have observed, ‘those who study elites assume that those elites will be men and seem little concerned to investigate the few women who do appear.’ However, what has been assumed is not simply that all elites will be men but that all elites, regardless of sex, will behave similarly. Given the lack of evidence to indicate that women citizens had interests distinct from those of men, there was little reason for political scientists working within the dominant pluralist/democratic elitist framework to expect the policy-relevant attitudes and behavior of women in office to differ from those of male representatives.\(^\text{15}\)

Many women scholars have found that women do have interests that are different from the interests of men. The Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP) at


\(^\text{15}\) Carroll, *Women as Candidates*, pp. 3-4.
the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, found that there is a gender gap among public leaders which they documented in 1977. The CAWP conclusions were that male and female officeholders differed most significantly in their attitudes about issues and their perceptions about women in politics. More specifically "...women elected officials had a distinctly different orientation from their male counterparts on a number of issues, particularly on those commonly labeled 'women's issues.'" The CAWP conducted another study in 1981 where they discovered three major patterns in which women and men elected officials differed. Those patterns were:

First, across all levels of office, women have different attitudes from men on current issues.

Second, differences between women's and men's positions on issues are greater among those elected to higher levels of office.

Third, black women holding elective office at all levels are the most liberal when compared with the majority of women or men serving at the same levels.

Since scholars recognize there are differences between women and men elected officials, then the two groups should not be studied in the same manner, using the same

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16 Women's issues are domestic issues concerning women, children and families, such as health, child care, elder care, education, etc. Kathy A. Stanwick and Katherine E. Kleeman, Women Make A Difference, Report to the Center for the American Woman and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 1983, p. 10.

17 Ibid., pp. 11-12.
framework. Catherine M. Havens and Lynne M. Healy have reviewed two models used in studying women and politics. The models are defined as follows:

The equity model assumes that given access, women will perform in ways similar to existing male norms. The complementary contributions model assumes gender differences and emphasizes recognition of different styles and contributions. Thus, from the equity perspective, no shifts in policy or program, or changes in policy processes would be expected from the infusion of women into leadership ranks. In contrast, the complementary perspective assumes that women will bring unique perspectives, resulting in better, more complete organizational outcomes.  

In this paper, the author will document the political empowerment of the black women mayors of rural Georgia borrowing from the framework of the complementary contribution model. The author understands empowerment to mean:

...a process by which oppressed persons gain some control over their lives by taking part with others in development of activities and structures that allow people increased involvement in matters which affect them directly. In its course, people become enabled to govern themselves effectively. This process involves the use of power, but not 'power over' others or power as dominance as is traditionally the case; rather, power is seen as 'power to' or power as competence which is generated and shared by the disenfranchised as they begin to shape the content and structure of their daily existence and to participate in a movement for social change.  

The author believes that these three black women mayors have been instrumentally involved in community development in their respective cities. The

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19 Bystydzienki, Women Transforming Politics, p. 3.
framework for community development that the author will follow “describes what people do to improve the overall quality of life in the community” which “often involves economic development” and “the concept of collective agency.” Within this framework are three models of community development—the self-help model, the technical-assistance model and the conflict model. These three models contain two important factors: “linkages to outside sources of information and capital and planning.”

The author will borrow Otis Dudley Duncan and Albert J. Reiss, Jr.’s definition of rural which does not differ greatly from the Census Bureau’s definition of rural. Duncan and Reiss define rural as:

...persons living in places of 1,000 to 2,500 (both incorporated and unincorporated), those in places of under 1,000 (incorporated places only), and those in ‘other rural’ areas.

In 1993, the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990 was amended to reflect a new definition for rural community as “any town, township,

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20 Collective agency is a group of people solving common problems together. The most common economic development approaches are the firm-recruitment model (private firms move to areas where the resources are most attractive) and the self-development model (public and private sector groups establish locally owned enterprises). Cornelia Butler Flora, Jan L. Flora, Jacqueline D. Spears, Louis E. Swanson, Mark B. Lapping and Mark L. Weinberg, Rural Communities: Legacy and Change, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), p. 319.

21 The self-help model focuses on the process by which people work together to arrive at group decisions and take action. The technical-assistance model focuses on the task to be accomplished and uses outside expertise to help community leaders accomplish that task. The conflict model focuses on the redistribution of power among community members. Ibid., p. 320.

22 Ibid.

municipality...that has a population of not more than 10,000 individuals...” within a “county that is not contained within a Metropolitan Statistical Area.”

As defined by the US Census Bureau no residents of the three cities lives in a rural farm area. All residents of the three municipalities of this paper live in a rural non-farm area. The author of this paper will utilize this designation for residents in each city in this paper.

The three communities in this study will be called a city or municipality because each complies with the Georgia General Assembly incorporation of municipal corporations requirements and has been duly granted a municipal charter. The Georgia General Assembly minimum certification standards for municipal incorporation are: a total population of at least 200 people, minimum distance between existing municipal corporation boundaries, and use and subdivision of areas for incorporation. The author of this paper will therefore refer to the three communities of this paper as cities.

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25 Rural nonfarm and rural farm areas were US Census Bureau designations. Rural farm comprises all rural households and housing units on farms (places from which $1,000 or more of agricultural products were sold in 1989), rural nonfarm comprises the remaining rural. US Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population General Population Characteristics: Louisiana, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1992), p. A-11. A rural area does not apply only to farm residences or to sparsely settled areas, since a small town is rural as long as it is an area that has a population of fewer than 2,500 inhabitants and is outside an urban area. US Department of Agriculture, Agriculture Fact Book 1996, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1996), p. 230.

Scholars and data collectors have generally determined the definition of the South as a region which includes the original eleven states which were a part of the Confederacy plus Oklahoma and Kentucky. The author of this paper will also utilize this definition for the South.
**Electoral Politics of Blacks and Women in the South: An Historical Overview**

As previously stated, blacks' political position in the United States may be traced to the framing of the United States Constitution which assisted in the institutionalization of slavery through the slavery compromises contained in the document. Slavery in the United States was a legal system of black enslavement until the Civil War Amendments (13th, 14th, and 15th) legally ended the system. These amendments also were designed to protect freedmen’s rights, including the right to participate in electoral politics in the South (even though black males were not given their full suffrage rights in the South).

Unfortunately, the Fifteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution did not permit black females the right to vote. White females also were denied the right to vote although in Georgia white women were included in the politics of Reconstruction Georgia, on a limited basis. For example, the Georgia Constitution of 1868 stipulated that “...all married women were guaranteed control of their own property.” Women did not obtain their full suffrage rights in every state until ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution in 1920.

During Reconstruction, black males did indeed participate in politics in the South, although this participation was limited. An example of black male participation in southern politics during Reconstruction was the election of Jefferson Franklin Long, who

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was Georgia's first black United States congressperson from the fourth district in 1871 during the 41st Congress. Long's election to the United States Congress, was the first time Georgia blacks had voted. Georgia blacks also voted "in the 1867 election for constitutional convention delegates and in the 1868 election for state and federal offices. Of 169 convention delegates elected, 37 were black." Due to the small number of blacks elected to office in Georgia during Reconstruction, black effectiveness in electoral politics was minimal contrary to popular belief. There were forces inside and outside the political arena which prevented the black vote from becoming strong, such as the small number of black elected officials, the Ku Klux Klan, the conservative government elected officials and residency requirements. But all the male citizens of the South were not political participants for long.

Black male political activity was effectively halted by the Compromise of 1877, in which the national government agreed to end the military occupation of the South, thereby allowing and approving of white supremacy in the South. This also ended the Reconstruction Period.

29 Lawrence R. Hepburn, The Georgia History Book, p. 120.
The southern states further continued to deny blacks their voting rights, through Jim Crow laws. “In 1891, the Georgia General Assembly passed the state’s first ‘Jim Crow’ laws.”32 Whites in the South subordinated blacks through de jure segregation and de facto segregation. “In 1908, Georgia adopted a grandfather clause, a literacy test, and property ownership (40 acres or property valued at $500) as qualifications for voting. For the following 30 years, practically no blacks would vote in Georgia.”33 But in some ways Georgia was progressive compared to other southern states in some political areas. Prior to passage of the 24th Amendment to the United States Constitution (abolishing the poll tax), the State of Georgia, “in April 1946, became the first state in the Deep South to have neither a poll tax nor a white primary[sic]. Some 100,000 Negroes voted in 1946. By 1952, 23.3 percent of Georgia blacks were registered to vote; by 1960, 29.3 percent were registered; by 1966, 44.4 percent were registered; by 1970, 64.4 percent were registered.”34 This trend was not common for most southern states. Even though Georgia blacks in some areas were voting there were U.S. Supreme Court cases which were initiated by blacks to erase the remaining barriers to voting. One such Georgia case was Gray v. Sanders, which declared that the Georgia county unit system violated the 14th Amendment equal protection clause.35 Even though this Court decision and

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32 Lawrence R. Hepburn, *Georgia History Book*, p. 120.
33 Ibid.
34 Mills Lane, *People of Georgia*, p. 283. The white primary was struck down on April 1, 1946 by the US Supreme Court. The first state primary election in which all blacks in Georgia voted was held on July 17, 1946.
federal legislation was mandated to ensure blacks the ability to exercise their right to vote, much of the South continued to disfranchise blacks. The national government was forced to become involved in the political and social activities in the South.

The number of black elected officials increased greatly, especially in the South, after the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Prior to passage of the VRA of 1965, blacks had appealed through the courts for the right to vote. One of the landmark decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court was the Smith v. Allright case of 1944, (eliminated the white primary) and aided in permitting blacks the ability to participate in the electoral process.

Other important U.S. Supreme Court voting rights cases were Baker v. Carr, Wesberry v. Sanders, and Reynolds v. Simms. These decisions were declared during the period prior to passage of the Voting Rights Act.

In addition to the U.S. Supreme Court cases already mentioned, there were also Congressional Acts such as the Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1960, and 1964 which addressed the inequities suffered by blacks in the United States, especially in the South. But even after passage and enforcement of these laws, the southern way of life refused to die. Many black leaders, especially in the South, viewed the vote as the answer to racism in the South. But Mack Jones has noted that “voting in itself is not power; having a black majority in itself is not power; nor is having black elected and appointed officials power.
These sources become power only when appropriate means are available for harnessing and bringing them to bear upon the behavior of other actors—principally white individuals and groups."36

Examples of individuals who obtained the position but not necessarily the power are as follows. In 1965, an important event occurred in southern politics, the United States had its first black woman mayor. "Mrs. Louis Reynold, an alderman and real-estate dealer, ...served as acting mayor of Louisville, Kentucky, in January ..., while the mayor and aldermanic president were briefly out of town."37 Also in the Twentieth Century the first woman to serve in the United States Senate was a Georgian. One of Georgia’s most ardent suffragists, Mrs. Rebecca Latimer Felton, served for one day as a U.S. Senator in September 1922.38

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38 Lawrence R. Hepburn, Georgia History Book, p. 120.
Rural Politics in the United States: An Historical Overview

This section of the paper will focus on the history of farm and rural politics in the United States and the changing demographics of rural areas in the United States with special emphasis on the South.

During the 1700s and 1800s, the major industry in the United States was agriculture and most of the inhabitants of the country lived in rural areas. Men and women worked together, usually on small farms, tilling the soil. During this period, Americans followed the English Protestant culture which as believed by June Sochen:

...took on a different texture in the South—the South became a regional deviation from the colonial norm. Slavery, with its continued increase throughout the eighteenth century, influenced man-woman and black-white relations in such a way as to make the southern culture quite different from that of the North. Individual effort and achievement, for example, could never be a motivating doctrine for slaves or for most small white farmers in the South. Group effort was needed to produce and harvest the tobacco, rice, cotton, and indigo that became the major exports of the area. These products came mainly from large plantations. Small white farmers managed to grow enough food for themselves, with little left over to sell. But even they, the poor white farmers, gained comfort and pride from the fact they were not at the bottom of the socioeconomic scale; beneath them was another group of Southerners—the slaves.

Most white Southerners did not own slaves, but their conspicuous existence provided a constant reference point by which whites could measure their own meager accomplishments. No matter how poverty-stricken a man was, he could never be as low as a slave.39

The South was definitely an agriculture driven economy and became even more so after the invention and implementation of the cotton gin. Cotton was king in the South until the Civil War which changed the complexion of the South’s economy by changing the labor force and the land. The Civil War marked the end of slavery in the form it had manifested since the 1600s but the condition of slavery took on new forms and new names, share cropping and tenant farming. Nevertheless “many blacks successfully purchased their own lands after the Civil War...and by 1910 blacks owned some 15 million acres of land in the southern states, representing 218,000 farms. Blacks made up 16.5 percent of all southern landowners. Black tenant farmers operated an additional 670,000 farms.”40 But several catastrophes beset the farmers of the 1900s. The most vicious for the southern farmer was the boll weevil which crossed “the Rio Grande from Mexico in 1892, thereafter progressed at about fifty miles a year until it had infested the whole cotton kingdom.”41 The boll weevil was later controlled by pesticides (particularly DDT) but not until it had decimated the cotton crop. The South was forced to diversify agriculturally. The following are the major agricultural crops of the United States and its regions as of 1989:

United States—cattle, dairy products;
South—broilers, soybeans, dairy products, tobacco, cattle, cotton, peanuts, oranges, greenhouse, horses, wheat;

Northeast—dairy products, potatoes, greenhouse, cattle, cranberries, eggs;
Midwest—corn, soybeans, hogs, dairy products, cattle, wheat;
West—cattle, wheat, dairy products, sheep, cotton, hay, greenhouse, sugar, and pineapples.  

The major manufacturing industries for the United States and its regions as of 1987 are listed below:

United States—industrial machinery and equipment;
South—food and kindred products, instruments and related products, printing and publishing, transportation equipment, primary metal industries, textile mill products, electronic and other electric equipment, industrial machinery and equipment, chemicals and allied products, apparel and other textile products;
Northeast—paper and allied products, industrial machinery and equipment, electronic and other electric equipment, miscellaneous manufacturing, transportation equipment, printing and publishing, chemicals and allied products, fabricated metal products;
Midwest—transportation equipment, industrial machinery and equipment, food and kindred products, industrial machinery and equipment;
West—lumber and wood products, food and kindred products, printing and publishing, instruments and related products, electronic and other electric equipment, transportation equipment, food and kindred products.  

The United States is no longer tied to one industry. Most significantly, the South is no longer controlled by one industry. But the prevalent industries of the rural areas in

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43 Ibid.
the South are not the industries that require a highly educated labor force, nor are these
the highly competitive careers of the urban areas. State and federal governments have
encouraged rural development verbally but the appropriations for rural development
programs have been sporadic.

The federal government has however, assisted in the diversification of United
States agriculture through legislation. At times in United States history, the federal
government appeared to have more concern regarding rural areas than during other times.
Examples of this concern are the important laws that were enacted during this country’s
history. It is evident that the federal government was extremely concerned about
agriculture prior to the Depression and immediately afterwards because most of the
population lived on farms and derived their livelihood from farming. The 1980s showed
a definite turnaround in the stance of the federal government. The Reagan and Bush
administrations were determined to get government off the backs of the American people
and return many programs (that were funded and/or controlled by the federal
government) to the States or to private industry. There appears to be a renewed interest
regarding rural development within the Clinton administration. Examples of historically
important federal laws regarding agriculture, especially rural development, are as follows:

Homestead Acts of 1862—anyone might have 160 acres of public land by
agreeing to cultivate it for five years.\textsuperscript{44}

Morrill Land Grant College Act of 1862--granted several million acres of the public domain for endowment and maintenance of agricultural and industrial colleges.45

United States Department of Agriculture was created by Act of May 15, 1862 (7 U.S.C. 2201).46

Hatch Act (Agricultural Experiment Stations) of 1887--created agricultural experiment stations across the United States.47

Agricultural Extension Work Act of 1914 or Smith-Lever Act—created cooperative extension services between State colleges and the Department of Agriculture.48

Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933--introduced production restrictions to bring supply and demand into balance, together with price supports, to raise farm income.49

Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938--anchored the price support program into permanent law, establishing the basicsystem of acreage allotments.50

Rural Electrification Act of 1936--authorized Rural Electrification Administration (REA) as a lending agency within Department of Agriculture with responsibility for developing a program for rural electrification.51

50 Ibid.
Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act and Title V of the Housing Act of 1949--created Farmers Home Administration (FmHA), an agency within United States Department of Agriculture, which guarantees loans made by commercial lenders for farm operating needs, farm ownership, modest rural housing and makes direct loans to low-income rural residents and eligible farmers.\(^5^2\)

Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965--established programs of rural and regional assistance aimed to encourage economic planning and growth in depressed areas.\(^5^3\)

Rural Development Act of 1972--authorized appropriation of funds to carry out Title V of this act. The objective is to provide research, extension and training to ensure successful programs of rural development.\(^5^4\)

Agricultural, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Acts of 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1986, and 1987--The United States Department of Agriculture experienced severe budget cuts during these years and limited funding for rural programs such as water and sewer.\(^5^5\)

Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990, Title XXVIII—authorized the Rural Development Administration (RDA) within the United States Department of Agriculture. RDA provides financial assistance through loans and grants.\(^5^6\)

Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 1994--funds were allocated for rural housing insurance, rural water and waste disposal grants, rural community fire protection grants and rural electrification.\(^5^7\)

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\(^5^2\) *U.S. Government Manual*, p. 113. This act was amended in 1990 by the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990.


\(^5^7\) *U.S. Code Congressional & Administrative News, 103rd Congress, 1st Session*, (Washington, DC: West Publishing Company, 1993), No. 10, pp. 1046-1081. This is PL 103-111 which was signed into law on October 21, 1993.
The Homestead Acts enabled individuals who previously could not afford land the ability to own land. The Morrill Act made it possible for poor, war ravaged, southern states to educate their students in agricultural and industrial studies. Through the creation of the United States Department of Agriculture, the federal government reinforced the importance of agriculture to the national economy by creating an agency devoted solely to agriculture. The separate agriculture acts of the later years also indicated the government’s resolve to not abandon the farm economy. The agriculture acts of the 1990s are indications that the federal government realized that rural areas are not solely farm communities but have become nonmetropolitan communities which have different concerns and needs from the urban areas. Many of these federal programs have encouraged economic growth in rural areas by making the infrastructure stronger and allowing small farmers and rural businesses the ability to borrow at low rates. Farmers and individuals in nonmetropolitan areas are now able to receive grants or low interest loans to assist them in business. But even with the current interest of the federal government in maintaining the agricultural and nonmetropolitan sector of the United States’ economy, the Clinton administration advocated change within the Department of Agriculture. President Clinton in February 1994, authorized the creation of nine empowerment zones (six urban and three rural) to “encourage both imaginative thinking and private-public partnerships.”

program be evaluated over a ten year period. The program is expected to create jobs in the respective zones. Even with this positive news for rural area development, President Clinton and then Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Mike Espy, also advocated cuts within the Department of Agriculture which would include the reduction of "Rural Electrification Administration 5-percent loan subsidies." The Department of Agriculture and individuals living in rural areas should experience certain change in their economic status due to these economic plans.

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There have been scant studies performed in the years after the 1960s in the area of rural politics. Very little research has been performed regarding black women mayors or black women mayors in the rural South.

One study of black southern politics was completed by Lawrence J. Hanks who said that black elected officials do make a difference by “...providing black constituents with a more equitable share of benefits distributed by the public sector” additionally “...providing blacks in office have not brought about a socioeconomic revolution, but neither have they been completely ineffective in serving the needs of the black community.”60 Hanks made no distinction between black female elected officials or black male elected officials. This neglect is prevalent in the majority of the research that has been performed, especially research by males.

Mack H. Jones remarks that:

Black officeholders in local governments in the rural South have not had significant success in reordering the priorities of the bodies on which they serve and they have enjoyed only limited success in increasing the black community’s share of benefits and services within the constraints of present priorities. Given their acute minority status this may be understandable.

However, there is no evidence that black incumbents have been particularly aggressive in offering radical policy initiatives designed to reorder governmental priorities on issues especially salient in black communities; issues such as housing, fair employment practices, consumer protection, police-community relations, public education, etc. Many officeholders argue that it is politically naive to sponsor radical measures which are foredoomed to failure. Such strategy, they reason, only serves to brand the sponsor as controversial measures which might otherwise be adopted. The net result of such a strategy, the argument concludes, is a diminution in the effectiveness of BEOs [black elected officials].

Mack Jones also made no distinction between black female elected officials and black male elected officials. Women scholars have presented research that women politicians make a difference in politics because of their presence. Yet many of these scholars do not present significant data regarding black women elected officials, especially at the local level, because of the relatively low number of black women elected officials at the local level.

One scholar who has presented extensive research on black women in politics is Jewel Prestage. According to Prestage, since arriving on the shores of the United States of America in 1619, black women have been a part of the legacy of feminine leadership.

"Black women have been the victims of dual oppression; black women have been centrally involved in the major political struggles confronted by both black people and

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women; "black women’s political activity “has varied in accordance with the historical conditions under which that activity has taken place;” black women’s political involvement has escalated since 1965, “especially in voting and officeholding;” and "political advancements for black women have paralleled more closely the advancements of black men than they have the advancements of white women."63

Prestage noted instances of involvement by black women through nonelectoral means prior to women gaining full suffrage. Examples of nonelectoral political participation that black women conducted were involvement in the antilynching movement, litigation and lobbying. Prestage revealed that, “once legal and cultural barriers to black voting were removed, black women registered and began to vote in a rather energetic manner with black women trailing black men to a lesser degree than is the case for white women.”64 In regards to black women’s success in becoming elected to political office, Prestage indicated that “black women have been more successful within their racial subgroup than have white women in their subgroup.”65 Other scholars have also noted that black women as a group hold more political offices than white women as a group even though black women face the dual oppression of racism and

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64 Ibid., p. 242.
65 Ibid., p. 243.
sexism and in some cases classism. Of the oppressions faced by black women in politics,
Prestage registered that:

The political experiences of black women in America have been reflective of their status of dual oppression. Responses of black women to this double burden have varied between violence and nonviolence, traditional and nontraditional political activity, apathy and activism. While both racism and sexism have conditioned black women’s political experiences, racism seems to have been the prime determiner of their political status in the American system.66

Mainly black female scholars address the multiple oppression faced by black political women and acknowledge that black women are unable to separate their oppressions just as Prestage has determined that racism is more important than sexism. Black female scholars such as Kimberle Crenshaw, see the black women’s oppressions as unique because no other group must face all these oppressions at the same time. With further study, mainstream scholars will also see the black women’s standpoint as unique. The majority of women scholars do acknowledge that women in politics have a different standpoint from men and because of this difference, the women politicians make a difference in the political arena. Scholars, especially women, have documented that women’s presence in the political arena means that different issues are addressed which had not been addressed previously, such as rape, child abuse, spousal abuse, child support and others.

66 Ibid., p. 245.
Correspondingly R. Darcy, Susan Welch and Janet Clark, stated women do make a difference in politics even though they are underrepresented and that “minority women are elected at a lower ratio in comparison to minority men than white women are to white men.” Consistent with Janet Clark, the paucity of women elected officials fosters future underrepresentation. Janet Clark also credits the women’s movement of the 1970s with encouraging greater political involvement by women. R. Darcy and C. Hadley were quoted in a 1989 Psychology Today article as acknowledging that a greater proportion of black elected officials than white have been women and that ambition and opportunity were the main driving forces for these women to enter politics.

R. Darcy, Susan Welch and Janet Clark posit several theories why women are underrepresented in politics, they are:

1) Using Daniel J. Elazar’s classification of the states into 3 cultural types—moralistic, individualistic and traditionalistic—researchers have found that women’s representation is higher in moralistic states and lower in individualistic state cultures (greater competition) and lowest in traditionalistic cultures (emphasizes continuity of elite controls);

2) Party dominance. Women have fared better in Republican as opposed to Democratic states;

3) Sex role socialization was the cause of women’s low representation in public office;

4) The extent to which women’s family responsibility limits their political participation;

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5) Per Carol Nechemias women’s ability to hold office may depend on convenience;  
6) Discrimination against women and  
7) Voter discrimination.  

Darcy, Welch and Clark also commented that women did not become involved in political elective offices after passage of the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1920 because the goal was the vote not political office. They do reveal that a greater number of the public and male politicians have become more accepting of women in political positions on the local and national levels.

Karen Beckwith has made another observation concerning women’s participation in politics which could explain also why so few women are in politics:

...women are strongly, consistently present among those who report agreement with the statement that ‘politics and government are too complicated for a person like me to understand’—a presence which does not vary by subgroup. It is for feelings of political efficacy that gender related differences appear to be greatest; regardless of a variety of controls, as a group, women report lower levels of efficacy than do men.

Women’s electoral activism, especially in contrast to women’s turnout, is low, again especially among black and blue-collar working women.

The biggest differences in political participation among groups of women occur according to differences in social class background, race, and occupational status, where white-collar and blue-collar occupations are closely related to social class and race.

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68 Ibid.  
Rita Mae Kelly specified that women have a significantly different voice than men; women consider all, whereas men are more individualistic in their decisionmaking. But she also brings out that women are also different from each other. Commensurate with Sue Tolleson Rinehart, women leaders do make a difference in politics in terms of substance, style and perceptions.

Diane Fowlkes’ study of white political women revealed that sexism and racial privilege affected the lives of white political women. Ruth Frankenberg in her study of race, revealed that white women’s lives are shaped by race “in the same way that both men’s and women’s lives are shaped by their gender, and that both heterosexual and lesbian women’s experiences in the world are marked by their sexuality, white people and people of color live racially structured lives.”

Jewel Prestage and Marianne Githens pointed out that there is an additional major obstacle black women face that white women do not, race. Prestage and Githens both

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agreed that women (black or white) share one obstacle, their marginality in U.S. society. But the black woman’s marginality is distinctly different “because she is a woman wishing to achieve in a male sphere, and...she is a black entering a traditionally all-white preserve. The special setting in which the black woman in politics finds herself necessitates specific research on her as a minority within a minority.”74

Githens and Prestage’s theory of marginality coincides with Clark’s theories regarding women’s underrepresentation in political positions. Githens and Prestage observed that “the most common elective offices held by black females are those related to education, primarily on local school boards. The second most common offices held by black women are those on the municipal level. ...while black women are concentrated in offices related to education, black men are concentrated in offices on the municipal level.”75

An opposing view is that of Matthews and Prothro, regarding black female political participation in the 1960s wherein they reported that “63 percent of the Negro males and 47 percent of the Negro females are active in the politics of the South” but “there is great disparity between Negro males and females in political participation due to the failure of Negro women to engage in higher forms of participation.”76 These findings

75 Githens and Prestage, Portrait of Marginality, pp. 396-97.
are opposite those presented by Prestage and others regarding the involvement of black women in politics from the 17th century through the 20th century. There also does not appear to be a recognition of the racism and sexism faced by black women during the 1960s. Also there is not a common definition of political activity among these scholars. Matthews and Prothro define political involvement in electoral terms and the women scholars define political involvement in nonelectoral terms. Matthews and Prothro were in accord with the female scholars in reporting that “Negro women tend to be frozen out of southern politics. With the tradition of politics as the white people’s business added to the broader tradition of politics as the man’s domain, Negro women have a double barrier to overcome.” This appears to be an acknowledgment by male scholars of the dual oppression faced by black females.

Correspondingly Herbert Blumer, maintained that black females and males were not active participants in Southern politics because of the adherence to the color line. Blumer reported that:

77 Matthews and Prothro, p. 68.
The color line is a line which separates whites and Negroes, assigning to each a different position in the social order and attaching to each position a differential set of rights, privileges, and arenas of action. It defines the approach of each racial group to the other, it limits degree of access to each other, and it outlines respective modes of conduct toward each other. The color line stems from a collective sense held by whites that Negroes as a racial group do not qualify for equal status, and that because of their racial difference Negroes have no claim to being accepted socially. Thus, the color line expresses and sustains the social positions of the two groups along two fundamental dimensions—an axis of dominance and subordination, and an axis of inclusion and exclusion.78

With the passage of laws on the federal level which encouraged black civil rights, the color line adherence appears to have lessened, even in rural areas of the South. In addition to the color line, there were social dictates concerning how Southern women were to conduct themselves, in public and private. In this area also, the rules were not the same for black southern women and white southern women.

With reference to Guion Griffis Johnson, the ideal southern female of the 1800s was "described as soft, gentle, self-effacing, with enough education to enable her to carry on a polite conversation of small talk and enough wisdom to know her place and keep it."79 It is obvious from this description that the black southern female of the 1800s was not the ideal southern female described above and it was probably difficult for the white female of the time period to also live up to this ideal. Johnson acknowledges the chattel

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status of the black female during slavery and the influence that slavery and social custom placed on the past and future of black southern females through subordination.\textsuperscript{80}

Kimberle Crenshaw, Elizabeth F. Hood, Phyllis Palmer, Elizabeth Spelman, Angela Davis, Deborah King, Jewel Prestage and others agree that black females in America face not only racism but sexism and often classism. These authors also agree that because black females face these multiple oppressions, they cannot separate the oppressions from each other; each oppression has validity, no one is more oppressive than the other. The feminist movement in the United States has not addressed the oppressions of the woman of color and therefore is not seen as a means of liberation by black females. Per Darlene Clark Hine and others there is early evidence to show that during the fight for passage of the Nineteenth Amendment of the Constitution prior to 1920, white females of the time disassociated themselves from the black females who were also fighting for women’s full suffrage. Jewel Prestage documented the political behavior of black women in America prior to passage of the Nineteenth Amendment and afterwards, which consisted of nonelectoral and electoral actions.

Throughout the history of this country, the majority of blacks have lived in the South, mainly in rural areas. In the 1930s, most of the South was rural with few large urban areas. Now in the 1990s, there are more urban areas in the South but there is still a substantial rural population which is not located near an urban area or center. Since the

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., p. 424.
1950s, scholars' attention has been more on urban conditions and problems and less on rural development politically or socially. Yet the rural America of today has changed dramatically since the 1950s. Vine Deloria, Jr., has documented the change in rural America and its effects on racial minorities specifically. Deloria, Jr., declares:

Rural America is in the final days of a profound transformation. The people who formerly owned and worked the land are rapidly being displaced as large corporations purchase their lands. They are taking up jobs where they can find them in adjacent towns and large metropolitan areas. Many of these former landowners lack the social skills needed for life in the cities, are generally able to secure only jobs that require little training and experience, and frequently become welfare clients of the national government. Among those dispossessed, racial minorities and Appalachian whites bulk very large.\(^{81}\)

The displaced rural poor have now become the new urban poor. Many of those who remained in the rural areas are poor with few skills for a service economy such as those in urban areas. Most rural areas do not have industries that require a highly educated labor force nor careers that are competitive in salary with careers in the urban areas. The industries in the rural areas remain those which use the natural resources or abuse the land (for example landfills).

There are also institutional barriers to the progress of racial minorities in rural areas of America, such as “the clientele eligibility requirements for federal and state

government agencies aid, tax laws, credit rules, inheritance laws, social welfare programs, and the Protestant mythology undergirding capitalism.  

Brian Rungeling, et al found in their research that:

...the foundation for many of the problems faced by the people of the rural South is an inability to obtain an adequate level of income through work. A major reason for the difficulty is a deficiency in both the quantity and quality of job opportunities provided by the rural economies of the South. The findings of this work indicate that areas of the rural South remain economically depressed. There is little likelihood of their being able independently to provide the volume of employment needed to provide "adequate" incomes. In general, from the findings of this work the economy of the rural South can be characterized as one with an excess of labor, deficient in human-resource development, hindered in its operation by institutional constraints, and encompassing a relatively narrow variety of job opportunities. Although not all local labor markets are the same or have identical problems, in general the differences between labor markets in the rural South are more of degree than of structure of operation.

Ray Marshall reported that there are significant differences between the rural labor market and nonrural labor market. Those differences are:

1) Sociopolitical characteristics: rural people depend more on informal family and friendship relationships than on formal social organizations; they have governments which generally are responsive to economic elites and are not concerned with promoting human resource development, particularly for the disadvantaged. The disadvantaged and low-income groups lack effective organization and therefore have very little influence on public policy.

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82 Ibid., pp. 168-171.
2) Economic characteristics: persistent labor surpluses in many markets exist, fewer employment alternatives for workers exist in rural areas, and labor market information is very poor, making it difficult to match labor demand and supply.

3) Labor force characteristics: rural work forces tend to have fewer people in prime work-age categories, and rural workers tend to have less and inferior education; larger families; higher birthrates; less skills training; higher incidences of poverty; and heavy outmigration through time.

4) Rural economic activity: rural employment is very closely tied to agriculture.84

Some significant changes have occurred since Marshall’s findings. The poor and disadvantaged individuals in rural towns and cities have become more involved in local politics by demanding that the politicians be more responsive to their concerns. The rural employment is no longer closely tied to agriculture. Most rural communities are attempting to improve education, health and poverty through state and federal programs, such as community development block grants.

Larry Waterfield noted that the rural economy is no longer tied almost exclusively to farming which has changed rural politics significantly. As to Waterfield, “rural political power declined not only due to the decline in the number of farms; it was eroded due to the inception of one-person-one-vote policies and legislation. There were fewer

rural votes because there were fewer rural voters."\(^{85}\) Another distinguishing feature noted by Waterfield regarding rural America, particularly the South is that rural America is underdeveloped. Waterfield sets forth the criteria of underdevelopment which includes “a high degree of poverty and unemployment; outmigration of people and talent; lack of and declining infrastructure; old and declining industries; heavy outside control of banking, business, industry; outflow of funds and resources; declining or stagnating agriculture; lack of natural resources; inadequate basic services; isolation and poverty of spirit.”\(^{86}\) According to Waterfield, “the more criteria that apply, the poorer the area is likely to be.”\(^{87}\) Research has also been conducted regarding the rural Black Belt areas of the South.

One rural Southern Black Belt study was that conducted by Bruce H. Rankin and William W. Falk who examined “the effect of region on black and white earnings within the Black Belt and the rest of the South” to determine whether “there would be greater penalty to being black in the Black Belt, compared to being black in the non-Black Belt South.”\(^{88}\) Their research did not find this to be true. Rankin and Falk did however, find that “Black Belt recidenc[y] depresses earnings for both blacks and whites, more or less


\(^{86}\) Ibid., p. 104

\(^{87}\) Ibid.

equally and the additive effects of race and region lead to lower earnings for Black Belt blacks.89 The scholars already mentioned and others agree that the rural economy is experiencing problems. As maintained by Ronald S. Cooper, the problems continue:

The United States does not have an explicit national rural policy. The many federal and state programs that in some way influence rural development tend to be unrelated elements of industry-specific programs, such as farm programs; general local development funds that are not targeted for rural development, such as block grant programs; or land-use programs and regulations that do not have development as their primary objective, such as those of the Interior Department and the Environmental Protection Agency. In other words, while a complex array of programs and policies affect rural area development, they have developed without the guidance of an explicit rural policy. Furthermore, the most proactive of these programs, the industry programs, are structured on an economy of the past.90

Many of the federal rural development programs are farm related. Most rural individuals do not live on nor work on farms in the 1990s. The rural development programs are based on the economy of the 1950s when rural meant farm. Today rural and nonmetropolitan are used interchangeably.

"Historically, federal involvement in rural areas focused on settling the land, developing human resources, constructing the roads and buildings needed by communities, supporting farmers, and alleviating poverty."91 The 1960s and 1970s

89 Ibid.


91 Flora, et al, Rural Communities, p. 201.
targeted federal categorical and block grant funds to specific programs but this was 
discontinued during the Reagan administration which resulted in states supporting local 
development efforts.92 Because Reagan’s new federalism made states mainly responsible 
for rural area development, the needs of the citizens in the rural areas were not being 
adequately met.

Federal programs of the 1990s address rural development directly, such as United 
States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA’s) Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) 
which makes farm operating loans and also has loan programs for small towns and rural 
communities; loans for water and waste water, rural housing and rural community facility 
loans. The Department of Education has programs offering vocational and adult 
education for rural residents. The Department of Health and Human Services has 
programs for the rural elderly, community health care, migrant workers and programs “to 
enhance the health and living conditions of rural Americans.”93 If this trend continues 
and if USDA appropriations increase, then a federal rural commitment may be seen but 
only if the federal government addresses the concerns of the modern rural areas not the 
concerns of pre-1950 rural America.

92 Ibid.

Development for the 90’s: A Presidential Initiative,” (Washington, DC: Secretary of 
The scholars who have written about the future of rural society, such as Everett M. Rogers, and Harold F. Kaufman, agree that the rural cultures must discard those values that are outdated and incorporate those values that will allow adaptation to scientific and technological changes.

Scholars and others have not always used the same definition of rural. There appears to be no uniformity. Some individuals have defined rural and nonmetropolitan (which may include urban populations) as synonymous but as believed by Otis Duncan, Albert Reiss, Jr., Glenn Fuguitt and others they are not. Most scholars have defined rural areas as those incorporated and/or unincorporated places containing 2,500 persons or less. The Economic Research Service (ERS) of the USDA uses rural and nonmetropolitan interchangeably. The ERS defines nonmetropolitan areas as “counties outside metropolitan area boundaries and rural nonmetropolitan refers to people and places outside of metropolitan statistical areas.”

Another misconception many people have regarding rural areas is that rural areas are farm oriented areas only but Ken Deavers points out that most rural areas are not economically dependent on farming and that “rural is a description of settlement patterns, economic linkages and the use of territory.”

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Scholars have also noted a significant aspect of rural government. According to Carl C. Taylor, Arthur F. Raper, Douglas Ensminger and others, "the only unit of local government found universally in rural America is the county" because many rural communities are not located within town or city limits. 96

From the information above it is evident that the literature the author reviewed does address rural political development but that the emphasis was not great with each administration at the federal or state levels. Most rural scholarship is performed in the area of rural sociology not rural politics. There is very little literature regarding black mayors in rural America or black women mayors in urban or rural American cities. Although literature concerning the efficacy of black (male) mayors does exist.

When attempting to determine whether a city is politically and economically better under the leadership of a black mayor, there are opposing views. Edward Greenberg, Phil Perie and Herrington Bryce agree that a city is better if it has a black mayor. Herrington Bryce states that a black mayor represents a positive indicator of progress. But William Nelson and Mack Jones contend that a city is not better off with a black mayor. William Nelson asserts that a black mayor signals a black takeover of a bankrupt city. Mack Jones asserts that a city with a black mayor is worse off because black officeholders do not have a comprehensive agenda to address the fundamental

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problems of black people. Sharon Watson presents another even more different view. She pronounces that it makes no difference whether a mayor is black or white; what matters are the style, policies and resources available to the mayor. Ms. Watson does confirm that black mayors do have a firmer commitment to minority employment than their predecessors according to her research. The scholars in this section were reviewing black male urban mayors, not black females nor rural areas.
Methodology

The intent of this paper is to address the apparent neglect of scholarship regarding black female mayors in rural Southern towns by performing a case study of three black female rural mayors in Georgia. Each city conforms to the general definition of a rural city and each woman is a black elected official of her respective city. The author will be using the case study methodology because it allows the author to perform an intensive investigation of this group of women on an individual basis. The author understands that there are limitations regarding any research method but believes that the case study method will prove most useful in terms of gaining more information on a group of women politicians who have not been studied as extensively as their male counterparts. The author believes that the case study method is the most appropriate research method for this research because it “is an empirical inquiry that: investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.”

Examples of other types of social science research methods that the author believes are inappropriate for this study are expert opinion which would not be useful in this instance because there is very little information regarding black women mayors of rural southern towns; an experiment because it “deliberately divorces a phenomenon from its context, so that attention can be focused on a few variables (typically, the context is ‘controlled’ by

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the laboratory environment);” a history because it deals “with the entangled situation between phenomenon and context, but usually with noncontemporary events; and surveys” because they “can try to deal with phenomenon and context, but their ability to investigate the context is extremely limited.”

In this paper, the author intends to explore the impact that these three black women mayors have had on improving the socioeconomic status of residents in their respective communities. A comparison will be made of the socioeconomic status of the townspeople which existed during the administration prior to the election of the black women mayors in these towns with the conditions after these women had become mayors. To achieve this comparison, the author will review Census Data information on education, employment, housing and health care for the time periods to be reviewed. The intent of this paper is to show that these black women chose to run for the elective office of mayor because they felt that through their political position they could improve the lives of the townspeople, black and white. The paper further intends to show that because these women have occupied the office of mayor, they have been able to improve the cities in the important areas of: education, employment, housing, and health care. This paper will analyze these three black women mayors' attempts to improve the socioeconomic status of blacks in their respective communities. This research paper will be more

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98 Ibid.
qualitative than quantitative although the author intends to use quantitative data whenever possible.

This case study will use statistical data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the National Archives and Records Administration, State Data Center for Georgia, the Joint Center for Political Studies, the International City Management Association, the Statistical Record of Black America and the National Conference of Black Mayors and other federal and state agencies. Information contained in this paper will also be obtained from the Liberty County Herald, the Coastal Courier, the Atlanta Journal, the Atlanta Constitution, the Augusta Chronicle, the Augusta Herald, the Statesboro Herald, the Savannah Morning News, the Savannah Evening Press, the Sylvania Telephone, the True Citizen, political science and social science journal/magazine articles, The Georgia Archives, the Library of Congress, the National Agricultural Library, Burke County Museum, East Central Georgia Regional Augusta-Richmond County Public Library, Jefferson County Library, Georgia Southern University Henderson Library, Liberty County Historical Society, Chatham-Effingham-Liberty Regional Library, Midway Museum, Screven-Jenkins Regional Library, Tubman African American Museum, Museum and Archives of Georgia Education, Association for the Study of Afro American Life and History of Savannah-Yamacraw Branch, Beach Institute/African American Cultural Center, Georgia Historical Society, University of Georgia Main Library, University of Georgia Hargrett Library, Atlanta University Center Division of Special Collections and Archives, Auburn Avenue
Research Library, Atlanta-Fulton County Main Library, Screven County Tax Commissioner’s Office, Screven County Voting Registrar’s Office, Burke County Tax Commissioner’s Office, Burke County Voting Registrar’s Office, Liberty County Tax Commissioner’s Office, Liberty County Voting Registrar’s Office, Liberty County Planning Commissioner’s Office, State of Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Southern Regional Commission and other federal and state agencies. Survey data will also be used. There will be structured individual interviews with the three black women mayors, black elected officials in the respective cities and other elected officials in the respective cities to compare and contrast the impact the women believe they have had on improving the socio-economic status of the respective cities and the impact the other elected officials believe the mayors have had on their respective cities.

Based on preliminary research, the author believes that the research will reflect that these black women mayors have made a difference in the lives of the citizens of their respective cities and that because they are black female mayors of rural Southern cities they also face racism and sexism. The author believes that this research will add to the existing knowledge because there is so little data available on black women mayors especially black women mayors of the rural South.
CHAPTER 2

GEORGIA: AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF ITS PEOPLE AND POLITICS

As a state, Georgia is distinctive in many respects. These and other distinctions led to Georgia becoming known as the empire state of the South, although not everyone shares this view. W. E. B. Du Bois called Georgia the “Invisible Empire State” because of the racial inequities that persisted within this progressive state. Georgia is named in honor of King George II of England and is the largest state (in size) east of the Mississippi River. There are mountains in the northern part of Georgia (Blue Ridge Mountains, Piedmont Plateau and Cumberland Plateau); a river (Savannah River) and an ocean coast (The Atlantic Ocean) on the eastern side; a swamp on the southern end (The Coastal Plain) and a river (Chattahoochee River) on the western edge (Ridge and Valley Region). Georgia was the youngest of the original thirteen colonies of the United States. Georgia as an early participant in the United States Civil War was among the first southern states to secede from the union in 1861. The Vice President of the Confederacy and other important individuals of the Civil War effort were from Georgia. Also, several of the most bitter Civil War battles occurred in Georgia in addition to numerous important victories of the Union army. At the end of the Civil War, Georgia experienced

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1 See Table 2-1 for a list of distinctions for the state of Georgia.

### TABLE 2-1

**GEORGIA DISTINCTIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distinction</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The only colony aided financially by the English Parliament</td>
<td>First colony to rule against slavery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First state to legislate against the slave trade</td>
<td>First southern colony to sign the U.S. Constitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First State to defy a President of the United States for states' rights interference</td>
<td>First state to legislate President Davis' birthday a legal holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta, GA is the only city known as the black Mecca and the City too busy to Hate</td>
<td>Election of first black mayor in a major southern city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home of first woman to sit in the US senate</td>
<td>Only state named for King George II of England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last original colony of the thirteen</td>
<td>Site of creation of the cotton gin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origination of Trail of Tears</td>
<td>Home of Vice President of Confederate States of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home of Secretary of State of Confederate States of America</td>
<td>Occurrence of Sherman’s March to the Sea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First state to reject ratification of the 19th Amendment</td>
<td>Location of first federal public housing project for blacks and whites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location of first black school built by Works Progress Administration</td>
<td>Birthplace of the 39th President of the US</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
racial turmoil, economic upheaval and a complete change in the way of life of all Georgians. The Reconstruction period which followed the end of the Civil War was brief but enabled blacks in Georgia to gain access to the political arena and prepared the state for the changes to come during the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s. A part of Georgia’s negative past is the fact that the second largest number of recorded lynchings in the US during the 19th and 20th centuries were committed in Georgia.\(^3\) Even with this dark past, unlike other southern states, some portions of Georgia, apparently, dealt with racial problems in an egalitarian manner. Blacks in some areas of the state were able to exercise their right to vote with little or no interference from racist forces, especially those blacks who lived on the coast. This appears to have been due to the abandonment of these areas by whites during and after the Civil War thus allowing blacks to govern themselves.

Blacks from across the nation were attracted to Atlanta, especially during the 1970s, when Atlanta was renowned as “the black Mecca” and the “City too busy to hate.” Atlanta’s blacks prospered politically, socially and economically due in part to their education and affluence. A major racial milestone in southern history occurred in Atlanta with the election of Maynard Jackson, who in 1973 became the first black elected mayor in a major southern city. Another first for women, the South and Georgia was the seating in 1922 of Rebecca Latimer Felton who became the first woman to sit in

\(^3\) Daniel T. Williams, *Eight Negro Bibliographies*, (New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1970), Number 7, p. 6. Between 1882 and 1969, the largest total number of documented lynchings occurred in Mississippi with 1162 and Georgia was second with 1062.
the United States Senate; this was a reward for her work in Georgia politics. But even with these accomplishments, the state of Georgia’s past has not been totally unblemished nor sparkling, there have been serious racial and economic hardships. The difficulties encountered by the black citizens of the city of Keysville while empowering themselves politically in the 1980s reveal that modern Georgia has racial and class strife similar to the struggles of the past. The history of the state of Georgia begins long before the arrival of the Europeans.

Prior to the European settlements in Georgia, the inhabitants of the area were the Mound People, the Creek and the Cherokee Indian Nations. The Mound People lived in the northern part of Georgia, the Piedmont and Cumberland Region. The Creeks occupied the coastal plain regions and the Cherokee Indians resided in the plateau areas. The first Europeans to arrive in Georgia, were the Spaniards. Possibly one of the first blacks to have set foot on Georgia soil in the 1500s was a Spanish scout named Esteban de Dorantes.

Georgia was founded in 1733 by James Oglethorpe in the name of King George II of England as a new home for England’s poor and as an outpost against a Spanish invasion of the British territory. King George II granted to the "Trustees for

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6 Donald L. Grant, The Way It Was In the South: The Black Experience in Georgia, (New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1993), p. 3.
Establishing the Colony of Georgia in America’s corporation a charter to the territory extending from the “land between the Savannah and Altamaha rivers,” inland then westward to the Pacific Ocean.\(^7\) Oglethorpe, a trustee of the corporation, organized the first settlement in Savannah (the oldest city in Georgia) and arrived not with poor settlers but with soldiers to ward off the Spanish threat in Florida prior to the settlers’ arrival. Oglethorpe’s plan to settle the region entirely with England’s poor did not fully materialize because the terrain was inhospitable for the exotic crops (such as silk) that England desired. However, Europeans did settle in Georgia and flourished economically after realizing the products that would prosper in the area were the native crops of the region such as, rice, lumber, indigo and naval stores.\(^8\) In 1742, the Spanish threat in this region ended when Oglethorpe, in the Battle of Bloody Marsh, defeated the Spanish.\(^9\) In 1752, the trustees relinquished control of the colony to the royal government.\(^10\) However, prior to relinquishing power to the royal government, the trustees had passed laws which forbade slavery in Georgia. Unlike the other southern colonies at the time, “there were no slaves” in Georgia prior to 1747.\(^11\) Oglethorpe firmly believed that slavery in Georgia would lead to problems in the future, such as the slave riots experienced in South Carolina and that slaves in Georgia would make whites lazy. But the settlers who had

\(^7\) Coleman, History of Georgia, pp. 16-17.


\(^10\) Coleman, History of Georgia, pp. 43-44.
come to Georgia from Virginia and the Carolinas were accustomed to slavery and requested that the trustees repeal the law; the trustees complied in 1750 after which time the black population increased dramatically.\textsuperscript{12} The Georgia black population by 1776 had grown to a point where there were more blacks than Native Americans, and the blacks almost equaled the whites in number.\textsuperscript{13} By 1758, Georgia consisted of eight parishes, they were Christ Church parish which included Savannah; St. Matthew parish; St. George parish (Burke county); St. Paul parish, which included Augusta; St. Philip; St. John (Liberty county); St. Andrew (Liberty county); and St. James (Liberty county).\textsuperscript{14}

Even though Georgia was the youngest colony in 1775 and had strong ties to England, the revolutionary spirit did take root in Georgia because the colonists here as in the other colonies, desired more control of taxation and representation. The citizens of the youngest American colony participated in the Revolutionary War, including blacks, who at the time were not treated as citizens legally or socially.

Blacks fought for the British and the Patriots during the American Revolutionary War seeking freedom from which ever side would set them free. In Georgia most blacks fought for the British because the British freed many “Rebel-owned slaves who defected

\begin{itemize}
\item[12] Ibid., p. 22.
\item[13] Ibid.
\item[14] Kenneth K. Krakow, \textit{Georgia Place Names}, (Macon: Winship Press, 1975), pp. 29, 132. In the 1700s, Liberty County was much larger than in present day this is why portions of three parishes were originally contained in Liberty County. See map in Appendix for original parishes of Georgia.
\end{itemize}
to their ranks and were willing to fight" but some were also sold back into slavery, conceivably in the West Indies. A notable exception was Austin Dabney, a black slave in Georgia who was “freed by the General Assembly of Georgia in 1786 for service he had rendered [to the Patriots] during the Revolution in the Battle of Kettle Creek in 1779 at which time he was wounded.” Dabney was one of the many blacks who was sent to the war as a substitute for his master in exchange for freedom “when the conflict was over or when their terms of service expired.” While the war for independence was progressing, delegates from the colonies were writing the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia in 1776.

Delegates from the colonies in attendance at the Continental Congress in 1776 designed and approved the Declaration of Independence which gave the justifications for their actions which would otherwise have been construed as treasonous if the Patriots had not won the Revolutionary War. In April 1776, Georgia instructed its delegates to the Continental Congress, to vote for national independence; which they did. The first Georgia state constitution, adopted in 1777, created a legislature, an executive, a judiciary, “established schools in each county at state expense,” a state seal, citizens’ rights, abolished the eight parishes and created eight counties with new boundaries and

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16 Saye, Georgia History and Government, p. 57.
17 Grant, Black Experience in Georgia, p. 16.
names.\textsuperscript{18} Two of those new counties were Burke (the county where Keysville is located) and Liberty (the county where Walthourville is located). Even though the Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776, the Revolutionary War did not end with the signing of that document. The Revolutionary War officially ended in Georgia when the British officers surrendered to Major James Jackson on July 11, 1782.\textsuperscript{19} In support of the newly formed government of the United States of America, "on January 2, 1788, Georgia became the fourth state [the first Southern state] to ratify the Constitution [unanimously]."\textsuperscript{20} Soon after the ratification of the national Constitution, Georgia thereby further demonstrated its commitment to the new national government by revising its state constitution (using the federal constitution as a model). The changes included reduction of the terms in office of judges and election of the governor by a college of electors with the counties having equal votes.\textsuperscript{21}

The Revolutionary War ended with the new country and the state of Georgia recovering. The Revolutionary War had changed the economy of the state by destroying one of the major cash crops, indigo.\textsuperscript{22} A new crop had to be found to renew the economy.

\textsuperscript{18} Lawton B. Evans, \textit{The Student's History of Georgia: From the Earliest Discoveries and Settlements to the End of the Year 1883}, (Macon, GA: John W. Burke & Co., 1889), p. 73.

\textsuperscript{19} Evans, \textit{Student's History of Georgia}, p. 97.

\textsuperscript{20} Evans, \textit{Student's History of Georgia}, p. 103. Ware, \textit{Constitutional History of Georgia}, p. 60.

\textsuperscript{21} Ware, \textit{Constitutional History of Georgia}, pp. 63-65.

The new crop was cotton but cultivation proved difficult until a new invention dramatically changed the South's economy. Cultivation of cotton was greatly enhanced after the development and demonstration by Eli Whitney, in 1793, near Savannah, of his new invention, the cotton gin, a device which mechanically separated cottonseed from fiber. This device was a key component in the prosperity of the cotton-planting economy that dominated Georgia and other Southern states in the 19th century, thus making cotton king in the South. Land was extremely important for agriculture and for the ever expanding cotton market.

An important land agreement between the State of Georgia and the federal government resulted in the removal of the Native Americans from the state by the United States government for resettlement in the West. The Creek Indians were moved to Arkansas by 1826 and by 1838 all the Cherokees were withdrawn. The removal of the Cherokee from Georgia to present day Oklahoma is known as “The Trail of Tears” which resulted in the death of thousands of Native Americans. This trail is now an historical landmark in American history. After the removal of the Native Americans, the settlers quickly moved in, cleared the land and planted cotton. The South became a one crop region and economy. The cotton gin increased cotton production, accompanying an

23 Evans, History of Georgia, p. 141.
26 This area was the westward expansion that included the area that is present day Alabama and Mississippi.
increased demand for slave labor, prompting the growth of the southern economy. By the 1800s, most white Georgians considered slavery a positive good.  

In colonial Georgia, one of the main cash crops was rice but after 1812 the main cash crop was cotton. Prior to the Civil War, Georgia was opening its economy to industrialization to accompany the agricultural economy which was in existence at the time.

"Between 1830 and 1860, a rudimentary textile industry started in central Georgia, and the railroads began to spread through the state. Atlanta was founded in 1845 as a railroad terminus. This was a prosperous period which has been called Georgia’s ‘Golden Age’." The slaves of Georgia worked mainly in agriculture but were also "artisans, skilled workers in the urban areas, unskilled laborers, railroad construction workers, railroad engineers, railroad firemen, boat workers, millworkers, lumber workers...and were also able to hire themselves out to earn money." From the census records of this period, the majority of the slaves in Burke, Liberty and Screven counties were farm laborers. Even though slavery was entrenched in Georgia there were also free blacks living in the state. By 1810, there were no free blacks in Screven and fewer than eighty in either Burke or Liberty Counties. From 1820 through 1860, each county had an increase in the free black population, but not an increase which would translate into a

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28 Grant, Black Experience in Georgia, pp. 33-34.

29 Mary Savage Anderson, Elfrida de Renne Barrow, Elizabeth Mackay Screven and Martha Gallaudet Waring, Georgia: A Pageant of Years, (Spartanburg, SC: The Reprint Company, 1974).

30 Grant, Black Experience in Georgia, p. 36.
majority of the population nor a potentially significant political power. In 1860 more than half of Georgia’s thirty-five hundred free blacks lived in ten of the then 132 counties, one of which was Burke County with 100 free blacks.\textsuperscript{31} Liberty County and sixteen other counties throughout the state, had no free blacks in 1860 but a large slave population.\textsuperscript{32}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 2-2</th>
<th>FREE BLACK POPULATION IN GEORGIA FROM 1790 TO 1860</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POPULATION</td>
<td>1790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STATE</td>
<td>398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BURKE COUNTY</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIBERTY COUNTY</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCREVEN COUNTY</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 2-3</th>
<th>SLAVE POPULATION FROM 1790 TO 1860</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YEARS</td>
<td>1790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STATE</td>
<td>29,264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BURKE COUNTY</td>
<td>2,392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIBERTY COUNTY</td>
<td>4,025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCREVEN COUNTY</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The free blacks lived mainly in cities wherein "a large portion of the town population was composed of Negroes, which stimulated an interest in the morality and

\textsuperscript{31} King, \textit{Georgia Voices}, p. 201. The author was unable to discern from historical records available why Burke County had a large free black population in 1860.

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.
behavior of that race [sic]; rumors of slave conspiracies caused as great anxiety in villages and towns as in rural districts” which resulted in restrictive laws on free blacks within Georgia. In view of the racial attitudes in existence at the time, there were also citizenship rights which the free blacks did not possess. Freeperson status did not entitle the free black to citizenship rights because legally they were not citizens. “In 1761, free blacks were specifically barred from voting. Georgia’s first Constitution, adopted in 1777, continued the ban against voting by free blacks...In 1789, the Georgia Assembly confirmed the ban when it declared free blacks could not vote or serve on juries.” The state nor the three counties reviewed in this paper had large populations of free blacks during slavery because free blacks were viewed as a threat to the existent economy and social structure and therefore its numbers and potential power had to be controlled and minimized. Free blacks could potentially incite slaves to revolt; if such occurrences had developed and spread then not only the economy of Georgia would have changed permanently but also the society. An example of an opportunity for free blacks and slaves to meet, mingle and converse was during church services at which time slaves could be encouraged by free blacks to revolt. There was a strong opposition to the free black as witnessed by the many Georgia laws which governed her/his conduct. Free blacks and slaves lived in Georgia during slavery but because slavery was the backbone of Georgia’s economic system there was great fear of slave revolts. To prevent or lessen

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34 Grant, *Black Experience in Georgia*, p. 66.
the impact of slave revolts, “an elaborate legal and extralegal control system” was in place which had “three categories of mutually reinforcing methods:...legal controls...the masters’ discipline...and the mob.” In addition to utilization of these measures, the small number and percentage of the population of free blacks throughout the state (prior to emancipation of slaves) also hampered the influence a free black would have possessed over a slave, especially in Burke, Liberty or Screven counties. Based on the percentage of free blacks in these three counties, the free whites and slaveowners had little to fear from the influence the free blacks would have been able to exert over the slaves. But based on the percentage of slaves in the population in each of these three counties, an uprising or revolt by the slaves was a discernible possibility.

The Georgia Constitution of 1798, officially recognized slaves by name for the first time in the Constitution by stating “there was to be no future importation of slaves from Africa or any foreign place after October 1, 1798[. T]he legislature was to have no power to prevent emigrants [sic] from any other states from bringing their slaves with them” and slaves were to be protected from excessive or unnecessary injury or abuse by the owner, overseer, or a free white person. The aims of this measure were twofold, first, as a control mechanism of the slave population from within while also discouraging total lawlessness by masters, overseers and free white persons. The second protection aim was an economic measure to ensure that the value of slaves in Georgia would not

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35 Ibid., p. 52.
36 Ware, Constitutional History of Georgia, pp. 88-89.
63
decrease due to overabundance. "In 1798, Georgia passed a law forbidding importation of slaves for sale. After 1808, federal law forbade the importing of any more slaves. Many were smuggled in after that. One record in 1817 says that 20,000 a year were still coming in, some into Georgia."37 Prior to the state constitution of 1798, Georgia had enacted "the Slave Code of 1755" which set forth what was to be the conduct of slaves, masters and others in Georgia society. These slave codes (in its modifications and renewals in 1759, 1764, 1765 and 1770) proscribed the carrying or use of firearms by blacks without the permission of their master; travel by blacks in groups larger than seven was forbidden unless accompanied by a white person, and teaching slaves to read and write was forbidden.38

To protect the institution of slavery, the state of Georgia had slave codes in 1755 "which were harsh," in 1770 "which were less severe" and in the Constitution of 1798 which provided protection for the master and the slave (though not as comprehensive for the slave when compared to the protection provided for the free white or master).39 "Security for old and infirm slaves was written into the Code in 1815." 40 The severity or security of the slave codes obviously depends on whether your viewpoint is that of the slave or the master. Slavery was important to Georgia's economy and society although

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38 Flanders, Plantation Slavery in Georgia, pp. 23-25.
39 King, Georgia Voices, pp. 180-181.
40 Ibid.
"some seventy percent of Georgia's families owned no slaves at all."

The following is a clearer depiction of slavery's influence to pre-Civil War Georgia:

Approximately thirty-five hundred Georgians held thirty or more slaves, and approximately thirty-five hundred farms contained five hundred or more improved acres. These thirty-five hundred or so families, comprising just over 3 percent of the free families in the state, set much of the social and political tone in antebellum Georgia. About half of them owned fifty or more slaves and qualified for the top rank of the planter aristocracy. Typically they possessed eighty slaves and more than a thousand acres of improved land, with another 1,650 acres for livestock and future cultivation.

Prior to the Civil War in 1860, only one slaveholder in Liberty County had 300-500 slaves and, Burke County and Screven County each had one slaveholder who had 200-300 slaves; these were the largest plantations in these counties. Slavery could not continue unabated; the dilemma of slavery would have to be settled because during the 1800s the United States was changing, growing and becoming more progressive economically, politically and socially. In 1820 there were 1,763 free blacks in Georgia. By 1860 of the 465,698 blacks in Georgia, 3,500 were free blacks.

During the early 1800s, new states were joining the Union as non-slave states; most northern states had abolished slavery; and the formation of abolitionist groups had created a new movement called the Abolitionist Movement which was determined to end

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43 King, Georgia Voices, p. 176.
slavery in the United States. The dogma of states’ rights throughout the South convinced the southern states that the federal government should not have the authority to dictate policies and programs to the states. Dissension among the southern states was growing. Secession was discussed more and more as a solution for the South. The idea of the southern states seceding from the union began in 1850 but not many people believed that the South was strong enough politically or economically to secede, by 1860 the climate was more favorable to the idea of secession. There was discontent in the South regarding several issues: state’s rights, economics (taxes and tariffs), nullification (the rights of states to nullify federal laws), slavery and territorial expansion (the Missouri Compromise, the Dred Scott decision, the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854), the antislavery movement (Nat Turner, John Brown, Uncle Tom’s Cabin) and the 1860 presidential election of Abraham Lincoln. A prominent figure in secessionist Georgia was Governor Joseph E. Brown, who called for a secession convention of the Georgia Legislature because the North failed to enforce the Fugitive Slave Law and to protest “the election of Lincoln. Many who voted for secession did not foresee a war; Brown had said that secession before Lincoln’s inauguration would reduce the chance of war.” The southerners who did not desire secession were outnumbered by those who did; consequently secession became a reality. Those individuals who wanted secession believed that the Southern economy was strong enough to survive without the North.

45 Grant, Black Experience in Georgia, p. 81.
Many Southerners hoped that the threat of secession would force acceptance of Southern
demands.\textsuperscript{46} The southern states seceded from the union in the following order:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>December 20, 1860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>January 9, 1861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>January 10, 1861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>January 11, 1861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>January 19, 1861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>January 26, 1861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>February 1, 1861\textsuperscript{47}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The states listed above sent delegates to Montgomery, Alabama, on February 4, 1861, to draft a constitution for the Confederate States of America (CSA).\textsuperscript{48} On February 18, 1861, Jefferson Davis was selected and inaugurated president of the CSA.\textsuperscript{49} Alexander H. Stephens, a Georgian who had campaigned against secession was elected Vice President of the Confederacy.\textsuperscript{50} The Secretary of State appointment for the CSA was Georgian Robert Toombs.\textsuperscript{51} The war between the states or the Civil War had begun.

\textsuperscript{46} Evans, \textit{History of Georgia}, p. 267-268.
\textsuperscript{48} Evans, \textit{History of Georgia}, p. 273.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., p. 275.
\textsuperscript{50} King, \textit{Georgia Voices}, p. 280.
\textsuperscript{51} Chandler, et al, eds., \textit{The South in the Building of the Nation, Volume II}, p. 177.
There has always been a black presence in the wars of this country; the Civil War was no exception but was distinctive because black participation occurred on both sides, for the Confederacy and the Union. "The participation of blacks in the Civil War...changed the war from one aiming merely to preserve the Union and prevent the extension of slavery into one to abolish slavery." But not everyone who participated in the Civil War against the Confederacy wanted to abolish slavery. Many whites wanted the federal government to regain control and to assert the supremacy of the federal government over the states. Those who fought for both sides had various reasons for their involvement. There were blacks who fought for the Confederacy not because they believed in the Southern cause or to save the Southern way of life but often they were forced into service and used "as the main labor force in agriculture, in industry as impressed labor on military projects and as soldiers for the Confederacy." During the early stages of the Civil War, Georgia's black slaves began escaping to the freedom of the Georgia sea isles, which included Liberty County. Georgia blacks escaped and fought in large numbers for the Union army to gain freedom for themselves and their loved ones.

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52 Grant, *Black Experience in Georgia*, p. 82.
53 Ibid., p. 83.
55 Ibid.
There were no major battles in Burke, Liberty nor Screven counties notwithstanding the extensive property damage each county suffered.\textsuperscript{56} The Civil War's turning point in 1864 was the Union army's major victory when General William Tecumseh Sherman led over 50,000 soldiers on his Georgia campaign or "March to the Sea." Sherman burned Atlanta and lay siege to Savannah, destroying property and industry along the way including the rail lines in Burke, Liberty and Screven counties. Some of the land and possessions that Sherman's army destroyed were not the sole personal effects or property of Confederates or whites but also belonged to blacks.\textsuperscript{57} Sherman burned Atlanta on September 2, 1864 and reached Savannah on December 21, 1864.\textsuperscript{58} The goal of this campaign was to demonstrate to the Confederates that there was no hope for their cause and to show the might of the federal forces. The Civil War ended a few months after Sherman's march. A plus for the slaves occurred because of Sherman when "in January 1865," Sherman issued "Field Order Number Fifteen, which set aside the Sea Islands from Charleston to the St. Johns River and an area thirty miles inland for distribution in forty-acre plots to black families. Any three Negro families could get a license for a settlement. White ownership was to be excluded from the area."\textsuperscript{59} This order should not be viewed as Sherman's acceptance of blacks as equals or the vagaries

\textsuperscript{56} See Appendix for map of Civil War battlefields in Georgia; 28 principal battles occurred in Georgia; one of which was in Burke County, one in Liberty County and none in Screven County.


\textsuperscript{58} Grant, \textit{Black Experience in Georgia}, pp. 88-89.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., pp. 93-94.
of slavery because there are numerous accounts regarding Sherman’s disdain for slaves and his exploitation of their labor.\textsuperscript{60} The newly freed slaves followed Sherman’s troops, who were instructed to refuse assistance to the former slaves in the manner of food, shelter or clothing. Sherman should not be viewed as the savior of the Georgia freed persons because his order was not carried out by the federal government at the end of the Civil War. Congress did, however, pass laws and create agencies which were designed to help the newly freed slaves. One such bill “established the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands in March 1865 to confiscate abandoned lands and distribute them to freed people” and was more commonly known as the Freedmen’s Bureau.\textsuperscript{61} In 1867, a bill was introduced “to grant forty acres and fifty dollars to every former slave who was head of a household, but the bill did not pass.”\textsuperscript{62} These actions are the origin of the idea of forty acres and a mule reparations for blacks in the United States. Even though General Sherman had issued the order giving land to the blacks in Georgia, President Andrew Johnson returned the land to the former white owners by granting the Confederate leaders amnesty, reversing Sherman’s order, demanding that the blacks leave by the end of 1865 and relinquish the land to the former white owners.\textsuperscript{63} President Johnson used the power of his office to compel the U.S. Army and the Freedmen’s Bureau to enforce his policy.\textsuperscript{64}

\textsuperscript{60} Mohr, \textit{Threshold of Freedom}, pp. 90-96.
\textsuperscript{61} Grant, \textit{Black Experience in Georgia}, pp. 93-94.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., pp. 93-94.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., p. 94.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid.
enjoyed but this would take much longer to achieve; blacks continued to suffer under the yoke of racial prejudice even in programs designed to assist the newly freed persons. The Freedmen’s Bureau was created to give blacks access to land but hampered the economic and social development of blacks because it “strengthened patriarchy within the black family and institutionalized the notion that men and women should inhabit separate spheres...” (public for men and private for women) by designating “...the husband as the head of the black household, insisting that men sign contracts for the labor of their entire families and establishing wage scales that paid women less than men for identical plantation labor.”65 This represents a significant change from the slave family structure which was “unusually egalitarian” and “founded on complementary roles, roles that were different yet so critical to slave survival that they were of equal necessity.”66 There were further legal gender differences within the black community, such as the access of women to land was restricted under the Freedmen’s Bureau Act of 1865 by “assigning land to every male freedmen and refugees [sic].”67 “The Southern Homestead Act of 1866” restricted black women’s access to public land by allowing “women to claim a portion of the public domain only if unmarried.”68 “After 1867, black men could serve on juries, vote, hold office, and rise to leadership in the Republican party, while women, like their

67 Foner, Reconstruction, p. 87.
68 Ibid.
white counterparts, could not.\textsuperscript{69} The gender roles for black women were as clearly defined as the roles for white women. All women were expected to be controlled by men and dictated to by men. Black women were expected to be controlled by males of any race and by whites (regardless of gender). Even though the gender roles had been clearly delineated within both races “not all black women placidly accepted the increasingly patriarchal quality of black family life.”\textsuperscript{70} Black women brought “family disputes before public authorities; ... objected to their husbands’ signing labor contracts for them, demanded separate payment of their wages, refused to be liable for their husbands’ debts,” and “...some opened individual accounts at the Freedmen’s Savings Bank” regardless of their marital status.\textsuperscript{71} Along with the black women redefining their roles in society and within the family, another positive accomplishment of the end of the Civil War and the resultant Reconstruction period was the “birth of the modern black community.”\textsuperscript{72} As a result of the coming together and the “explosion of institution building (such as, the creation of fraternal, benevolent, and mutual-aid societies); the political and cultural fusion of former free blacks and former slaves” along with “the severing of ties that had bound black and white families and churches to one another under slavery” changed dramatically.\textsuperscript{73} Reconstruction was a time of great change in the cities and rural areas of Georgia because the skilled former slave “was not allowed to

\textsuperscript{69} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., p. 88.
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., pp. 95 and 102.
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid.
compete with white workers” and the “rural areas were faced with the problem of a labor force decreased and decreasing as a result of migration to the towns... to other states, and the large-scale withdrawal of female labor from work in the fields.” The newly freed persons of Burke, Liberty and Screven counties did not leave in large numbers but remained in the same area. The newly freed black population in these areas grew immediately after slavery with the newly freed blacks maintaining their majority population status as they had during slavery. The newly freed black women of these counties were working women, mainly farm laborers, some were cooks and domestics, very few stayed at home. The newly freed black men were mainly farm laborers. The economy of this area of Georgia was agricultural and the end of the war signaled the return to the former Southern way of life which included blacks as farm workers and whites in control politically and economically. Between 1860 and 1870, the South’s economy suffered deep declines in farm output and the value of farm land. The South experienced large population losses in both races. Georgia’s white population losses were “forty thousand...during the war.”

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75 Foner, Reconstruction, p. 125.
TABLE 2-4
POPULATION BY RACE IN GEORGIA FROM 1860 TO 1870

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>POPULATION</th>
<th>1860</th>
<th>1870</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FREE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLACKS</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>545,142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLAVES</td>
<td></td>
<td>462,198</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHITES</td>
<td></td>
<td>591,550</td>
<td>638,926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,057,286</td>
<td>1,184,109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


TABLE 2-5
POPULATION BY RACE BY COUNTY FROM 1860 TO 1870

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>POPULATION</th>
<th>FREE</th>
<th>WHITE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BURKE</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>5,013</td>
<td>17,165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIBERTY</td>
<td></td>
<td>13,436</td>
<td>4,243</td>
<td>17,679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCREVEN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,284</td>
<td>2,428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8,367</td>
<td>7,688</td>
<td>18,055</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In 1860, there were 462,198 slaves in Georgia. In 1870 there were 545,142 free blacks in Georgia which represented the newly freed Georgia blacks and freedmen from neighboring southern states. A large number of former slaves remained in Georgia at the end of slavery but did not necessarily remain in the same area of the state where they had been enslaved. For Burke, Liberty and Screven counties the 1870 Census indicated there were more free blacks in those counties than whites as a result of the losses incurred by
those counties white citizens who were casualties of the Civil War. The white population losses and the end of slavery were contributing factors to the depressed economy in Georgia and other southern states. Laws had been passed by Congress to assure that blacks had the same rights of citizenship as others but there were individuals who did not want change to occur. In Georgia and the South, there were ex-confederates who terrorized blacks to keep them in their place, to prevent blacks from progressing and obtaining equality. These persons later developed into the Ku Klux Klan, an organization which promoted and maintained white supremacy. This group was very strong in Georgia, especially rural Georgia because “many people in the rural areas had had their plantations and farms physically devastated by the armies...but emancipation had destroyed much more...and replaced benevolent paternalism...with race hatred.” In addition to the ravages of the war and the newly freed slaves, “recovery in the rural areas of Georgia was hampered by the drought which set in within a month or two of the end of the war.” The entire state of Georgia was in turmoil, especially the leadership in Georgia which had changed “from the old landed aristocracy to the new commercial class.” Southern whites, fearful of Reconstruction and the potential control of the government by Republicans and newly freed blacks attempted to prevent a black controlled government through the creation of the “county-based system of legislative apportionment” which “restricted the influence of the geographically concentrated black

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77 Conway, Reconstruction of Georgia, p. 31.
78 Ibid.
79 Du Bois, Black Reconstruction, p. 495.
population;” made “...provisions for legislative appointment of all state officials except the governor, and gubernatorial selection of judges above the level of justice of the peace” thereby insuring “that blacks would occupy few of those positions.” In addition, “...the constitution omitted...blacks’ right to hold office and required that jurors be ‘worthy and intelligent citizens...giving local officials...authority to exclude freedmen.’” Blacks continued to organize, and educate themselves about politics and their rights as citizens. An organization that was created to accomplish the above stated goals was the Equal Rights Association of Georgia which held meetings in Savannah, Macon and Augusta in 1866 to “inculcate principles of honesty, industry and sobriety among Negroes, and a kindly feeling toward former masters.” The Equal Rights Association of Georgia also passed two resolutions, one requesting that “coast lands held by Negroes were not to be regarded as territories,...land was not to be confiscated from its owners and the Georgia legislature should give equal rights to Negroes before the Courts.” Neither resolution was adopted by the legislature. The South, including the state of Georgia, steadfastly clung to the old customs regarding race and was reluctant to accept the new status of the newly freed black. An example of the reluctance was the Georgia Constitution after the Civil War which barred “blacks from voting or testifying in court except against each other.” Further it “accorded blacks the right to own property,

80 Foner, Reconstruction, p. 323.
81 Ibid.
82 Du Bois, Black Reconstruction, p. 497.
83 Ibid.
84 Grant, Black Experience in Georgia, p. 95.
marry and legitimize their children; contained an antimiscegenation law and defined black as anyone who was one-eighth or more African.”85 The Georgia legislature of 1865 also ratified Black Codes to “regulate black labor.”86 Black Code “provisions required blacks to sign contracts to work for a year for a particular employer.”87 The Black Codes were used to reenslave and oppress blacks in addition to other means of oppression of blacks such as, convict labor leasing, lynching, whitecapping (forcing undesirables off their land), and peonage. There were restoration requirements at the end of 1865 for all southern states to be readmitted into the union. Those requirements included: ratify the 13th Amendment abolishing slavery, renounce or repeal the ordinance of secession and repudiate the Confederate debts.88 Although Georgia had created a new constitution and ratified the 13th Amendment in 1865, the state was placed under federal military control under terms of the Reconstruction Acts of 1867 for failure and refusal to ratify the 14th Amendment.89 Georgia’s legislature had further antagonized the federal government and its directive regarding ex-Confederates’ exclusion from political office by sending CSA Vice President Alexander H. Stephens to the United States Senate in 1865.90 The Georgia legislature did actually ratify the 14th Amendment which prompted the removal of the federal troops from the state. Soon after the troops left, the legislature expelled all

85 Ibid.
86 Ibid.
87 Ibid., p. 148.
88 King, Georgia Voices, p. 307.
Georgia General Assembly black legislators. With this action, Georgia became the only southern state to experience a second Reconstruction, once again under military rule whereupon the African-American state legislators were returned to office. Georgia was readmitted to the Union in 1870, after its legislature had approved the 15th Amendment. The governor of Georgia Rufus B. Bullock (1868-1871) was outspoken about blacks attaining their rights and was instrumental in black enfranchisement. After the federal troops were removed from Georgia and the Democrats had total control of the state, the gains of blacks during Reconstruction ended. In spite of or because of these hardships, Reconstruction was an important time period for blacks politically in Georgia because for the first time blacks were elected to the Georgia legislature in record numbers with the assistance of the newly freed blacks exercising their right to vote. This was certainly true in Burke, and Liberty counties as indicated by the election of two blacks, Malcolm Claiborn and John Warren, from Burke County and one black, W. A. Golden, from Liberty County to the State House of Representatives. During Reconstruction there were a total of thirty black members in the Georgia General Assembly House of Representatives and two members of the Senate. The number of black registered voters increased in the State enabling the blacks legislators to obtain their respective seats. In

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91 King, *Georgia Voices*, p. 329.
92 Inscoe, *Georgia in Black and White*, pp. 38-59. In the court case *Georgia v. Stanton 6 Wallace 50* the state attempted to enjoin the Secretary of War from enforcing Reconstruction legislation. The US Supreme Court declined to hear the case “on the ground the issue was a political one.” Loren Miller, *The Petitioners*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965), p. 90.
93 Ibid., pp. 38-59.
the counties of Burke, Liberty and Screven the average increase of black registered voters was appreciably greater than that for whites in those respective counties.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 2-6</th>
<th>Average Increase of Registered Voters by County 1867-1868</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burke County</td>
<td>1249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberty County</td>
<td>403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screven County</td>
<td>443</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Georgia Registration Record, 297/10 Negative GRG 4-349; State of Georgia Superior Court Voters Book 1896-1897; Office of Secretary of State, Georgia Department of Archives and History.

Despite the black participation in politics in Georgia and increased black membership in the state legislature, blacks were not in control politically since "they never came close to forming a majority in the state legislature... no black[s] held major offices in Georgia, nor did they hold many local offices."94 In Georgia, blacks were not the majority of the population, but in Burke, Liberty and Screven counties they were a majority of the population with no political power because of race prejudice. Neither of the three counties had local black elected officials during Reconstruction. Also during Reconstruction, blacks were not more than 20% of the members of the state legislature. Politics in Reconstruction Georgia consisted of only one black in the US Congress, and few local black elected officials who were not powerful in either party; resulting in minimal substantial federal help.95 "Even during the height of Reconstruction...no black

94 Grant, Black Experience in Georgia, p. 107.
95 Drago, Black Politicians and Reconstruction in Georgia, pp. 160-163.
was elected governor or mayor of a major city, and only in South Carolina did blacks constitute a majority in a state constitutional convention or legislative chamber.96 “Over half of the entire Afro-American delegate strength was concentrated in “South Carolina, Louisiana and Florida.”97 The black legislators in the Southern states during Reconstruction were literate, farmers, ministers, skilled laborers and professional or business men but they were not numerically strong in their respective legislatures except where already discussed.98

One of the major accomplishments of the black Georgia legislators during Reconstruction was their instrumental help in the creation of a “general system of education free to all children of the state.”99 Representatives Malcolm Claiborn and John Warren of Burke County introduced bills regarding the chain gang.100 Black legislators Senator Tunis Campbell, Sr. (of McIntosh County, City of Darien) and Representative Tunis Campbell, Jr. (McIntosh County) introduced bills in the Georgia legislature on the “jury system, ...churches,...the city government of Savannah and ...Reidsville, on pleading and practice in the courts, and on better government of cities and towns.”101

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97 Ibid., p. 134.
98 Ibid., p. 138-140.
99 Du Bois, Black Reconstruction, p. 500.
Henry M. Turner, another black Georgia legislator during Reconstruction, introduced a bill “to amend the Constitution of Georgia...to enable females to vote...”102 Campbell’s bills received committee recommendations to pass but Turner’s recommendation to enable females to vote was not adopted. In addition to the proposals already mentioned, the black legislators were also interested in penitentiary reform in Georgia, especially convict leasing.103 Despite the best efforts of the black legislators, convict leasing continued to grow because it was a means of controlling blacks and was “a lucrative moneymaking venture.”104 The influence the black legislators “might have had in Georgia was nullified by their expulsion from the legislature. By the time they returned, Radical Reconstruction had been so effectively undermined that there was little chance for Negroes to exert any considerable influence.”105 John Hope Franklin and other scholars have stated that Reconstruction was overthrown by intimidation of the Negroes through violence on them personally or their property, disclosures of corruption in Republican governments, Northerners were no longer interested in crusading for the Negro, little support for Negro rights by the US Supreme Court and the election of

President Rutherford B. Hayes.\textsuperscript{106} The presidential election in 1876 was important for black power during Reconstruction because the Republican presidential candidate, Rutherford B. Hayes, offered a compromise to southern states to withdraw federal troops from the region and to not interfere with politics in the region in exchange for electoral votes which Hayes received.\textsuperscript{107} Upon his successful election, Hayes removed the troops, allowed the region to govern itself and officially ended Reconstruction in 1877 at which time Georgia, continued to rebuild. For the reasons previously stated, the belief that blacks had political control in Georgia during Reconstruction is a myth not supported by the facts.

An example of the nullification of the efforts of the black legislators was the annual message of Governor James M. Smith (1872-1877) in 1877 at which time Smith made clear that funding the educational needs of blacks was not in the best interest of the state. Smith requested “that the donation annually made to Atlanta University be withdrawn from that object, and be devoted to the establishment of Normal Schools for the education of colored teachers...by this change, useful learning would be more widely diffused among the colored people, and, consequently, a greater amount of good accomplished [sic].”\textsuperscript{108} The funds were later diverted in 1890, and were used to establish

\textsuperscript{108} James M. Smith, \textit{Annual Message of Governor James M. Smith}, (Atlanta, GA: H.S. Wright, Public Printer, 1877), p. 7. A US Supreme Court case of a Georgia county’s racially separate schools was \textit{Cummings v. Board of Education 175 U.S. 528} in which the Court did not rule on the validity of separate but equal but its non-ruling was viewed as approval of the
the Georgia State Industrial College for Colored Youth (present day Savannah State University). Governor Smith’s self acknowledged accomplishments included the establishment of greater state government financial stability, creation of a school of higher learning in Athens and creation of the Department of Agriculture. These accomplishments were significant to the state as a whole but do not reflect the changes of the blacks’ status within the state. If anything these self proclaimed accomplishments and the Georgia State Constitutions of this period further exhibit the importance of agriculture to the economy (i.e., the importance of black labor) and the exclusion of blacks in higher education. An example is the 1877 Georgia Constitution which “included a poll tax and a residency requirement to make it more difficult for blacks to vote. Power was vested in the rural counties by weakening the executive and judicial branches while strengthening the legislature and adopting the county unit system.”

Reconstruction also signaled changes in the education received by blacks and whites in Georgia.

Prior to Reconstruction, the children of Georgia were educated in one-room rural schools and church-supported academies. Public financed elementary schools were separate but equal practice. Loren Miller, *The Petitioners*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1966), pp. 213-214.


organized in 1872, and state supported high schools began in 1912. The legislature passed a bill to establish ‘a general system of Georgia schools’ which became law when the governor signed it on December 12th. It provided free instruction to ‘any free white’ person in Georgia between the ages of six and 21 years and provided for a state superintendent plus a commissioner for each county. But it had been amended so as not to be effective until January 1, 1868, because the state was simply too poor to raise the necessary revenue through taxation." Notably missing in this excerpt is any mention of free blacks, only free whites were specifically cited. Again this was an indication that blacks were not viewed as equal to whites and that blacks would only be given what whites felt would be right and proper. After the Civil War and during Reconstruction, blacks were needed in the fields to rebuild the economy. Education for blacks was not a necessity for a state rebuilding from the ravages of war that Georgia had suffered. The state made an even clearer racial distinction in the state Constitution of 1877 which specified that education of the races would be separate. Even though the political forces were hostile to assisting blacks achieve an education, black enrollment in schools increased each year between 1871 and 1876. The increase in enrollment

112 Evans, History of Georgia, p. 316-317. Evans made no racial distinction regarding the children and schools.
113 King, Georgia Voices, p. 322.
115 Smith, Annual Message of Governor James M. Smith, p. 6.
demonstrates the commitment and perseverance of blacks during this time period to improving and empowering themselves.

The State provided very little assistance to blacks in the area of higher education, so churches, Northerners, and the Freedmen's Bureau assisted blacks with their educational needs. In Georgia, during the 1880s several black colleges opened, Spelman, Morris Brown, Clark University and Gammon Theological Seminary in Atlanta and Paine College in Augusta. Atlanta University had been chartered earlier, in 1867, under the sponsorship of the American Missionary Association. The first state-sponsored school of higher education for blacks was the aforementioned Georgia State Industrial College for Colored Youths. This college for black youth was made possible by the Morrill Acts, especially the second Morrill Act of 1890 which "made available to all the states additional funds from the sale of public lands...only if the state provided for agricultural and mechanical education for all its citizens." During the gubernatorial term of William J. Northen (1890-1894) the "school term was lengthened from three to five months; the State Normal School was established and an agricultural and mechanical college for blacks was established." Other Georgia governors who were important to education reform in Georgia prior to World War I were William Yates Atkinson (1894-1898) who was "the founder of the Georgia Normal and Industrial College;" Joseph M.

117 Ibid.
118 Ibid., p. 243.
Terrell (1902-1907) who “established the College of Agriculture, and authorized an agricultural and mechanical school for each Congressional district.”\(^{120}\) There were also women’s colleges that originated during the 1800s, e.g., La Grange Female College, Wesleyan and Tift College.\(^{121}\) In 1907, a black secondary boarding school, Boggs Academy in Keysville was founded. By 1880, Reconstruction and the lifting of educational restrictions had not significantly changed the lives of most blacks in Georgia.

The 1880 Census was extremely informative regarding the lives of blacks after Reconstruction and “revealed that in 33 counties of Georgia where Negro population was thick, not more than one in 100 Negro farmers owned land.”\(^{122}\) By “1900 black Georgians had taxable titles to only one twenty-fifth of the land; only 14 percent of the Negro farmers owned farms and, in 1910 only 13 per cent.”\(^{123}\)

\(^{120}\) Ibid., pp. 308-309.
\(^{121}\) King, Georgia Voices, p. 225.
\(^{123}\) Ibid., p. 242.
### TABLE 2-7
NUMBER OF FARMERS BY RACE BY TENURE BY COUNTY FOR 1900

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>FARMERS</th>
<th>WHITE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BLACK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STATE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>owners</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>141,865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tenants</td>
<td>82,826</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BURKE COUNTY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>owners</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tenants</td>
<td>3,223</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIBERTY COUNTY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>owners</td>
<td>1,138</td>
<td>572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tenants</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCREVEN COUNTY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>owners</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tenants</td>
<td>1,039</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau

### TABLE 2-8
NUMBER OF FARMERS BY RACE BY TENURE AND BY COUNTY FOR 1910

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTY TOTAL</th>
<th>RACE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NUMBER FARMS</td>
<td>BLACK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STATE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>owners</td>
<td>98,628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tenants</td>
<td>190,980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BURKE COUNTY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>owners</td>
<td>561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tenants</td>
<td>3,338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIBERTY COUNTY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>owners</td>
<td>1,582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tenants</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCREVEN COUNTY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>owners</td>
<td>1,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tenants</td>
<td>1,893</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau

The inability of blacks to secure land ownership was due in part to the Black Codes, Jim Crow laws, and similar legislation plus social mores which were designed to
prevent blacks from owning land. Liberty County was one of the coastal counties where
the land of the Confederates had been sold to freedmen, therefore, more blacks owned
land in Liberty County compared to the other counties. Also some blacks in Liberty
County were land owners prior to Reconstruction. The post Reconstruction legislature of
Georgia in 1891 “passed legislation permitting Georgia cities to separate the races on
streetcars.”

In the beginning, the companies did not enforce the law because of black boycotts but by 1900, there was local legislation which was enforced and led to boycotts by blacks, especially in the large cities in Georgia. The rebuilding effort included the
creation of new cities and towns, one of which was Keysville which by an act of the state legislature was originally incorporated on December 29, 1890. The Reconstruction changes improved the lives of many of its citizens positively but other changes continued the status quo. One of those changes was called the “New South” movement which
advocated industrial development and urbanization but excluded blacks (the large
potential workforce) and poor whites as significant beneficiaries of the prosperity. Those who championed the New South slogan believed the place of the black in the new society should not change from the position the black held while legally enslaved in the pre-
Civil War South. New South prosperity required animosity between blacks and poor

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whites who would not fight the system based on race prejudice superiority.\textsuperscript{126} Even with the solace of race prejudice, a new device, tenancy, was created to keep the blacks and the poor whites in their places, pitted against each other and dependent upon those in power economically. The new economic system continued well into the twentieth century in addition to other instruments that were also used to keep the races separated. As a tenant farmer, the individual who had the power was the one who owned the land which often was not the poor black or white who was the tenant and was working the land. Before the end of the 19th century, the politicians passed Jim Crow laws to keep blacks and whites separated.\textsuperscript{127} Furthermore the people in power used more mechanisms such as, lynchings and chain gangs to keep the poor and blacks submissive. “Between 1889 and 1918, Georgia had more lynchings than any other state, and 94 percent of the victims were black.”\textsuperscript{128} The peak year of lynching in Georgia was 1899 with 27 persons lynched all of whom were black.\textsuperscript{129} “Though only 14 percent of the nation’s blacks lived in the state then, 31 percent of the blacks lynched that year died in Georgia.”\textsuperscript{130} These and other actions Georgia carried into the twentieth century.

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{128} Grant, \textit{Black Experience in Georgia}, p. 159.
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., p. 161.
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid.
\end{footnotesize}
During the early twentieth century there were three catastrophes in Georgia. First, the boll weevil destroyed the cotton crop. Second, blacks migrated to the North and to the cities in the South. Third, the depression of 1929 occurred and negatively affected the price one could receive for the agriculture produced and the money one could make in farming. The focus of the economy on agriculture lessened in Georgia because of these changes. The migration of blacks outside Georgia was extremely significant. Even though large numbers of blacks migrated to the cities or from the state, the effect was not felt over the entire state. "Migration was light in North Georgia, where black population was sparse. Few blacks left the Black Belt, partly because whites had them bound by contract indebtedness; those in peonage were even more tied to the soil. Migration...benefited blacks remaining in Georgia, for labor scarcity in a time of war prosperity drove up wages in practically all occupations." The author doubts that the blacks who remained in Georgia were benefiting because the Georgia Assembly passed a "work or fight" law "to force blacks into the army or into the field" that "applied to men through age fifty five" while at the same time smaller Georgia towns passed similar legislation that also applied to women; this law was designed to "keep black men working for low wages" and "drive black women into domestic service" to "stem the Great Migration." Blacks who remained were often competing with whites, especially

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131 Dittmer, *Black Georgia in the Progressive Era*, pp. 188, 191. Black Belt is an area of central Georgia which extends westward through middle Alabama and Mississippi then northward into Tennessee; is so named for its fertile black soil and the fact that blacks have been the majority population in this area since the 1790s. Richard N. Current, et al., eds., *Encyclopedia of the Confederacy, Volume I*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), p. 172.

132 Grant, *Black Experience in Georgia*, p. 306.
for the skilled jobs. There was still a shortage of blacks in agriculture and agriculture related positions due to the migration. By 1916 the Commissioner of Commerce and Labor in Georgia commented that the migration of blacks out of the state was of great concern because manufacturing plants would have difficulty operating at full capacity and there would be a crisis in farming operations.133

Although, Georgia’s black population was leaving, the agricultural base remained strong. By 1900 an industrial base existed consisting mainly of textiles and wood products. Agriculture had diversified whereby farmers were growing crops other than cotton such as corn, Idaho and sweet potatoes and raising livestock.

<p>| TABLE 2-9 | AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS IN 1900 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA</th>
<th>NUMBER OF CHICKENS</th>
<th>BUSHELS OF CORN</th>
<th>BALES OF COTTON</th>
<th>DOZENS OF EGGS</th>
<th>GALLONS OF MILK PRODUCED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STATE</td>
<td>4,549,144</td>
<td>34,032,230</td>
<td>2,420,059</td>
<td>15,505,330</td>
<td>82,438,532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BURKE COUNTY</td>
<td>91,529</td>
<td>667,980</td>
<td>89,646</td>
<td>278,330</td>
<td>504,431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIBERTY COUNTY</td>
<td>33,227</td>
<td>166,550</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>93,350</td>
<td>320,569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCREVEN COUNTY</td>
<td>63,800</td>
<td>429,540</td>
<td>36,398</td>
<td>139,100</td>
<td>589,362</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau

Although the economy of Georgia had diversified the majority of blacks remained in farming and other unskilled labor. The state’s population growth in the

Black Belt (an area which included Burke, Liberty and Screven counties) was accomplished by farm communities amending their charters from towns to incorporating as cities as was consummated by the city of Oliver on August 19, 1912.  

"Between 1890 and 1920 the majority of black workers were farmers, while the second largest group--chiefly women--were domestic servants. Most of the black farmers served as tenants and agricultural laborers. In the Black Belt, which at that time had the largest number of Negro laborers, nearly 90 percent of the blacks were tenants." An example of a device that decreased the number of black farmers was the offer Asa Candler made in 1914 of “low-interest loans to white planters and storage of 250,000 bales of their cotton in his warehouses” but no such offer was made to black farmers who were forced to “sell their land at a fraction of its value.” Georgia draft boards in 1917 used another tactic which was to take black landowners into military service and exempt black sharecroppers from service.

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136 Grant, *Black Experience in Georgia*, p. 306.

137 Ibid., p. 303.
## TABLE 2-10
**NUMBER OF FARMERS BY RACE BY TENURE BY COUNTY FOR 1920**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA</th>
<th>TOTAL FARMS</th>
<th>BLACK</th>
<th>WHITE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STATE</td>
<td>310,732</td>
<td>130,187</td>
<td>180,545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>owners</td>
<td>102,123</td>
<td>16,942</td>
<td>86,081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tenants</td>
<td>206,994</td>
<td>113,938</td>
<td>93,016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BURKE COUNTY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>owners</td>
<td>763</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tenants</td>
<td>3,878</td>
<td>3,548</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIBERTY COUNTY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>owners</td>
<td>1,543</td>
<td>961</td>
<td>582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tenants</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCREVEN COUNTY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>owners</td>
<td>1,083</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tenants</td>
<td>2,534</td>
<td>1,934</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau

During the progressive era (1900-1920) there was a new form of involuntary servitude in Georgia, peonage, which has also been referred to as “...the new slavery based upon the need for a large supply of cheap labor and governed by racist assumptions. Poor whites were among the system’s victims, but the black masses were hardest hit.”

Despite the hardships, some blacks during this period in Georgia did prosper. “Georgia led the South in the number of blacks holding federal jobs, thanks to the patronage policies of President William McKinley” but these same blacks were later removed by Presidents William Howard Taft and Woodrow Wilson.

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138 Dittmer, Black Georgia in the Progressive Era, p. 89. Peonage was the practice of arresting and convicting a jobless black on vagrancy charges, forcing the black to accept a job from a planter who paid the fine, binding the black to work until the debt was full paid, which did not occur because of overcharges for food, shelter, high interest rates and fraudulent bookkeeping. Grant, Black Experience in Georgia, p. 96. An important peonage case was Taylor v. Georgia 315 U.S. 25 (1942). Loren Miller, The Petitioners (New York: Pantheon Books, 1966), p. 335.

139 Dittmer, Black Georgia in the Progressive Era, p. 91. An example was the appointment of Henry A. Rucker by McKinley in 1897 as collector of revenue for Georgia and
were disfranchised by the poll tax which had been passed by the Georgia legislature in 1887 and the white primary system which had been in place since 1898. One city which had a black majority but was controlled by the governor was Darien, in McIntosh County. For years in Darien, "...the governor had appointed the mayor, and aldermen...to prevent a black takeover," but by "1906 blacks could boast of three elected justices of the peace, all the county's deputy sheriffs, and the entire Darien police force." The ability of blacks to control their city themselves was not the norm in Georgia. But Darien was an example of one instance where blacks were in control politically. The success of blacks in Darien was in stark contrast to one of the worst race riots in America which occurred in Atlanta in 1906 where it was "estimated that 25 blacks were killed...several hundred were injured;" the riot lasted several days and also "claimed at least one white life." The violence and harsh treatment blacks in Georgia endured led to state reforms in areas such as the penal system. Governor Hoke Smith (1907-1909, 1911) was a New South advocate who believed that "the Negro was a burden to Georgia," and ran for governor on a platform of "black disfranchisement and economic reform" and was also considered an advocate of Progressive reforms due to the abolishment of the convict lease system.

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the appointment in 1906 of Thomas Monroe Campbell, Sr. of Elbert County as the first Negro County Agricultural Agent in the United States. Grant, Black Experience in Georgia, p. 282. Cornelius V. Troup, Distinguished Negro Georgians, (Dallas, TX: Royal Publishing Co., 1962), 181.

141 Grant, Black Experience in Georgia, p. 204.
during his term in office.\textsuperscript{142} This was a cause of the earlier black Reconstruction legislators who were not able to obtain passage of a bill on the convict lease system.

In addition to the laws which disfranchised blacks, the Georgia General Assembly was the first state to reject ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1919.\textsuperscript{143} Georgia not only disfranchised blacks but also disfranchised women. After the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified, Governor Thomas W. Hardwick (1921-1923), who prior to becoming governor was known while state senator as "the father of disfranchisement in Georgia," also "promised...enforcement [of the 19th Amendment] by encouraging enfranchisement of all white women in accordance with the amendment and disfranchisement of all black women on the same plan that the Negro men [were] disfranchised in Georgia."\textsuperscript{144} This was another instance where federal law should have benefited black people but local law and custom prevented enfranchisement from occurring. One of the champions for women's rights in Georgia was Rebecca Felton who also used race baiting as a method to get the 19th Amendment passed. Felton said, "I do not want to see a Negro man walk to the polls and vote on who shall handle my tax money while I myself can not vote at all...Why this choice of Negro men over your own wives and mothers?"\textsuperscript{145} Felton's stance on black voting rights was not unusual on the

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\textsuperscript{142} Sobel and Raimo, Biographical Directory, p. 310. Grant, Black Experience in Georgia, p. 195. But this penal reform did not lead to the end of the Georgia chain gang that occurred in the US Supreme Court decision of 1937 in the Angelo Herndon case. Grant, Black Experience in Georgia, pp. 342-344.

\textsuperscript{143} Dittmer, Black Georgia in the Progressive Era, p. 121.

\textsuperscript{144} Ibid. Grant, Black Experience in Georgia, p. 201.

\textsuperscript{145} Dittmer, Black Georgia in the Progressive Era, p. 121.
part of a white suffragist, the leaders of the women’s suffrage movement also used race to secure the votes of Southern legislators for passage of the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution. Blacks had fought for women’s rights alongside white females and white males, but were cast aside when it became expedient.\textsuperscript{146}

At the beginning of the Great Depression, Governor Richard B. Russell through the Reconstruction Act of 1931, reorganized and streamlined the state government; additionally utilizing the New Deal program of the federal government to stem erosion and soil starvation in rural Georgia.\textsuperscript{147} The over cultivation of cotton in Georgia had depleted the soil of nutrients and made the ground unfit for growing other crops. The New Deal programs were good for Georgia and Georgia blacks. One significant benefit from the New Deal programs of the Depression was the building of the “Atlanta University Homes in 1933” which were “the first federal public housing project for blacks [sic] in the nation.”\textsuperscript{148} The first black school the Works Progress Administration (WPA) ever built was in Georgia.\textsuperscript{149} Notable Georgians who worked in President Franklin Roosevelt’s administration, were Clark Foreman “as special assistant on the economic status of blacks,” along with Robert C. Weaver, “who later became the first


\textsuperscript{148} Grant, \textit{Black Experience in Georgia}, p. 346.

\textsuperscript{149} Ibid.
black presidential cabinet member as the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development under [President] Lyndon Johnson,” Frank S. Horne, assistant to Mary McLeod Bethune in the National Youth Administration (NYA) and Henry A. Hunt who “became an adviser in the Department of Agriculture;” all of the above named individuals were known as members of the “black cabinet.”

Although some New Deal programs assisted blacks during the Depression, others did not. The National Recovery Administration was designed to fix minimum wages, prices and regulate work hours in covered industries but few jobs in which blacks were employed were covered and in those instances, blacks “lost their jobs to whites.” Governor Eurith D. Rivers (1937-1941) was a supporter of New Deal programs and under his administration “the state for the first time began to provide free textbooks in public schools and guaranteed...a minimum term of seven months.” After the Depression, Georgia continued to grow and gain recognition throughout the nation as the center of economic growth in the Southeast. Atlanta was strong economically in the region and was the transportation hub of the Southeast. Georgia had become a leader in the South and because of this many individuals desired the mantle of governor of Georgia.

Southern states have their colorful characters and politicians; Georgia was no exception. A famous or infamous (depending on your perception) governor of Georgia

150 Ibid., pp. 344-345.
151 Ibid., p. 345.
152 Ibid., p. 353.
was Eugene Talmadge (1933-37 and 1941-43). As governor, Talmadge opposed the New Deal and derived his power from his popularity among poor farmers and workers.\footnote{James F. Cook, \textit{Governors of Georgia}, (Huntsville, AL: The Strode Publishers, Inc., 1980), p. 247.}

Eugene Talmadge was a staunch segregationist who as governor reduced taxes and state expenditures. During this time period, there was a system in place in Georgia which favored the rural communities over the urban cities. This system was the county unit system which allocated legislative seats based on the population of the county, thereby giving the least populous counties one legislative representative each, while the eight most urban counties were allotted three representatives total.\footnote{Bartley, \textit{Creation of Modern Georgia}, p. 161.} The county unit system gave the whites in rural areas of the state control of legislation over the urban areas and blacks, via the following methods of “challenge-purge, registration discrimination, intimidation, violence, economic pressures and ballot manipulation.”\footnote{Joseph L. Bernd, “Recent Restrictions Upon Negro Suffrage: The Case of Georgia,” \textit{Journal of Politics}, 21(1959), p. 508.} The county unit system denied blacks and urban areas political power. For the reasons previously stated and, because of race prejudice which legally and socially prevented blacks from having power, blacks in the Black Belt of Georgia including Burke, Liberty and Screven counties, although they were the majority of the population had no political power.

Through this system, the sparsely populated rural counties had more votes in the legislature than the largely populated urban areas.
The rural white voters were Eugene Talmadge’s people and from them he gained his power. Gene Talmadge is also of interest because in 1941 he created a national furor when he discharged three faculty members in the state university system for allegedly advocating racial equality. The regional accrediting bodies withdrew accreditation from the university system which was not restored until the educational institutions were removed from political control; this occurred after the election of Ellis Arnall in 1943.\(^\text{156}\)

The end of World War II was of significance to Georgia and the United States because both had become more industrialized after the end of World War II. Agriculture in Georgia continued to decline in economic importance. Blacks had become more assertive politically, socially and economically especially in the city of Atlanta which was becoming a strong force economically in the region. But politically there were still problems within the state.

One of the most famous was the multi governors incident which began with the death in 1946 of Eugene Talmadge who had won his bid for governor that year but dies before he could take office. Whereupon, Eugene’s son, Herman, was elected governor by the state legislature, but the new lieutenant governor, M.E. Thompson, also claimed the office, and the outgoing governor, Ellis Arnall, refused to step aside until the issue was resolved. During this melee, on July 17, 1946, all blacks in Georgia were able to participate in the state primary election because the US Supreme Court had struck down

\(^{156}\) Cook, Governors of Georgia, p. 248.
the white primary on April 1, 1946 in the Primus King decision.\textsuperscript{157} The number of blacks who were registered to vote in Georgia increased dramatically during this time due to the efforts of the All Citizens Registration Committee, the NAACP, the Atlanta Urban League, the Atlanta \textit{Daily World}, and Atlanta University faculty members.\textsuperscript{158} In many areas of the state, black churches were burned, crosses were burned in yards, guns were fired in black sections and other warnings were given to blacks to discourage them from exercising their right to vote. Yet in spite of the intimidation tactics 85,000-100,000 blacks in Georgia voted in the primary with 98 percent supporting James V. Carmichael but the purges, county unit system and other means available in rural counties “enabled Talmadge to carry the rural counties.”\textsuperscript{159} Determined to be governor, Herman Talmadge took over the executive office for two months, until the Georgia State Supreme Court ruled that under the law Ellis Arnall’s term continued until the next election. When informed of the Court’s decision, Arnall resigned which permitted Lt. Gov. Thompson to become the acting governor. On March 19, 1947, the Supreme Court ruled that Thompson was the legal governor.\textsuperscript{160} Undaunted, Herman Talmadge ran for governor in


\textsuperscript{159} Grant, \textit{Black Experience in Georgia}, p. 365.

\textsuperscript{160} Cook, \textit{Governors of Georgia}, pp. 260-263.
1948 and won with assistance from the Klan and other intimidation tactics.\textsuperscript{161} The county unit system enabled Herman Talmadge to avoid a runoff election to win the governor’s race in 1948 although his opponent received ninety-five percent of the black ballots.\textsuperscript{162} Herman Talmadge ran in 1950 for governor and won again, in this election. In the 1950 gubernatorial election, Talmadge received 53\% of the Black Belt vote and 54\% of the rural vote.\textsuperscript{163} Geographically, Talmadge had the majority of the votes in the lowlands, Black Belt and mountain areas in addition to the rural areas.\textsuperscript{164} Thompson had the majority of the votes in the Piedmont area, metropolitan areas and towns.\textsuperscript{165} Herman Talmadge was aided again by the strength of the rural community and the county unit system. Herman, like his father was against desegregation and fought hard to keep the races separated. Herman Talmadge reported to the General Assembly in 1954 that, under his administration the salaries of white and black teachers with equal qualifications had been equalized, all the new hospitals had facilities for blacks, rural areas had new hospitals constructed and that the farm income had increased.\textsuperscript{166} As governor, Herman (later U.S. Senator Herman Talmadge) attempted to “make Georgia into a modern,

\textsuperscript{161} Grant, Black Experience in Georgia, p. 368.
\textsuperscript{162} Bernd, “Recent Restrictions,” p. 509.
\textsuperscript{163} Numan V. Bartley and Hugh D. Graham, Southern Elections: County and Precinct Data 1950-1972, (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), pp. 97-99. Talmadge received 58.5\% of the Burke County vote, 38.5\% of the Liberty County vote, 54.8\% of the Screven County vote and 49.3\% of the total vote in Georgia. Black Belt area votes does not indicate whether blacks actually cast votes for Talmadge.
\textsuperscript{164} Ibid., p. 99. Talmadge received 56\% of the lowland votes, 52\% of the mountain area votes.
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid. Thompson received 56\% of the Piedmont area vote, 56\% of the metropolitan area vote and 53\% of the town votes.
progressive state. He imposed [sic] a statewide 3 percent sales tax and used the money to spend more on education...new industries were attracted..."new roads were built and there were advances in "mental health and agricultural research." But true to his segregationist beliefs, Herman Talmadge also "experimented with a registration system designed to prevent 80 percent of Georgia’s blacks from voting." This ploy was abandoned because the educational requirements would have also disfranchised many rural whites. But there was at least one law passed during Herman Talmadge’s term as governor which was beneficial to black school children. “In 1951, Georgia enacted a Minimum Foundation Program for Education financed by a 3 percent sales tax. Over half the new money was slated for black schools, although the school population was only one-third black. For the first time in some Georgia towns, black students went to the new school, while whites went to a separate but older building.” This however did not stop later governors from preventing black children from obtaining a quality education.

Governor Marvin S. Griffin (1955-1959) in his progress report in 1957, claimed to have seen the need for improvements in black education and stated that his administration made a conscious effort to address those needs. Griffin won the 1954

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168 Ibid.
169 Ibid.
170 Grant, Black Experience in Georgia, p. 374.
governor's race with less than a majority of the state’s votes and similar percentages geographically and demographically. Griffin claims to have constructed more schools for blacks than previous administrations and to have appropriated funds for teacher salaries, textbooks, and transportation, for black children in Georgia schools. Contrary to Griffin’s claims of assisting blacks in Georgia, historian Robert Dubay stated that “Griffin practiced the ‘old ways of segregation, cronyism, and outright corruption.” However, Griffin has received credit for the creation of a Rural Roads Authority that improved the roads in the rural areas of Georgia. Under Governor S. Ernest Vandiver (1959-1963) “the legislature passed...laws against school integration that authorized the governor to close any school ordered to integrate, allowed state income tax credit for contributions to private schools, and let the state pay the legal expenses of any school system taken to court for its failure to abide by integration orders.” Georgia was trying valiantly to circumvent the Brown ruling by keeping Georgia schools segregated as long as possible. The elders of Keysville revealed that the black public school was closed in defiance of Brown. During Vandiver and Griffin’s terms in office the civil rights movement was born with the involvement of prominent Georgians such as Martin Luther King, Jr.

171 Bartley and Graham, Southern Elections, p. 99. Griffin received 36.9% of the total state votes, 35% of the lowlands, 40% of the Black Belt, 34% of the piedmont, 40% of the mountain, 32% of the metropolitan, 34% of the town and 40% of the rural votes.
173 Grant, Black Experience in Georgia, p. 370.
174 Ibid., p. 379.
The active participation of Atlanta blacks in the Civil Rights Movement is attributable to their ability to vote and assume office after Reconstruction and to “play a substantial role in its politics either as direct players or as an issue around which to rally white voters” after disfranchisement. The dominant political forces in 1868 within the Georgia General Assembly changed the election of city councilmen from a ward based system to an at-large system to dilute the “black vote in wards where Atlanta’s blacks were a majority.” Because blacks had little to no say in politics in Atlanta during the 19th and early 20th centuries, they “forged their own institutions, amenities, and place within Atlanta” such as “the Masons, black churches, the Butler Street YMCA,” black schools, colleges and other self help groups and organizations. Another reason for the birth of the Civil Rights movement in Atlanta was the existence of an educated black middle class who resisted violently the racism of the South, hence the Atlanta Race riot of 1906. Atlanta blacks were however “able to express their grievances and bargain for some redress through bond, tax, recall, and other special-election voting as well as in general elections even with their limited voting strength” but blacks in Black Belt Georgia were unable to influence politics in a similarly effective manner. In 1946, after the Primus King decision, black voters in Atlanta registered in record numbers by mobilizing and organizing to from the All Citizens Registration Committee with support from the local NAACP chapter, Atlanta Urban League, and the Atlanta Civic Political

175 Bayor, Race, p. 4.
176 Ibid.
177 Ibid., p. 6.
League.\textsuperscript{179} In the 1949 Atlanta mayoral race, Atlanta blacks used racial and class voting coalitions to gain political power and influence. A political success for Atlanta blacks was the “citywide primary victory of Rufus Clement, Atlanta University’s president, over a white opponent for a seat on the school board” in 1953.\textsuperscript{180} In 1965 Q. V. Williamson became the first black alderman on Atlanta’s city council in the 20\textsuperscript{th} Century.\textsuperscript{181} Many of the black leaders in the Civil Rights movement either were born in Georgia or were educated in one of the black colleges or universities in Atlanta, for example Martin Luther King, Jr., Lonnie King, Julian Bond, and John Lewis. Several of the important black organizations of the Civil Rights Movement were headquartered in Atlanta, such as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). “The first lunch-counter desegregation suit to go to the federal courts came on August 3 1960, when Austin T. Walden filed class-action suits against the state, Fulton County, and the city of Atlanta for maintaining segregated eating facilities.”\textsuperscript{182} By 1960 the vote had become very important in Atlanta elections as well as in presidential elections but “of Georgia’s 36 counties with a black majority, only Liberty County had majority black registration” although this registration did not translate into votes or voting power.\textsuperscript{183} The Civil Rights Movement tactics were

\textsuperscript{178} Ibid., p. 9-17.
\textsuperscript{179} Ibid., p. 23. This group later became the Atlanta Negro Voters League in 1949.
\textsuperscript{180} Ibid., p. 29.
\textsuperscript{181} Ibid., p. 42.
\textsuperscript{182} Grant, \textit{Black Experience in Georgia}, p. 393.
\textsuperscript{183} Ibid., 401.
undertaken in Alabama and in southwestern Georgia in Albany, known as the Albany Movement which was viewed by many as a failure. Grant does not view the Albany Movement as a failure because "it brought together the freedom-ride impulse, the SCLC's spiritual power, and SNCC’s non-violent guerrilla warriors for voter registration and grass-roots community organization...Albany showed that rural blacks could be activated and, once on the move, would never go back to 'their place'...class lines collapsed...future leaders were trained and lessons were learned that were used in later successes.  

Carl E. Sanders (1963-1967) became governor by winning 58.1% of the total state votes which included a majority of the votes in the metropolitan, town, lowlands, Black Belt and Piedmont areas. As governor, Sanders reportedly initiated a new education program, Minimum Foundation Program for Education (MFPE) which required "that local systems pay up to 20% of school costs" and "strengthened the power of the State Board of Education to set truly meaningful standards for Georgia's schools." This was the precursor to Governor Joe Frank Harris' Quality Basic Education (QBE) program. Sanders also maintained that during his tenure as governor he had established a water quality control board, reorganized the state health department;
and made other education achievements such as the creation of more junior and senior colleges and raised teacher's salaries. During Sanders term as governor, several important voting rights decision were handed down by the US Supreme Court. One case was Fortson v. Toombs 379 U.S. 621 which on January 18, 1965 the US Supreme Court declared that the Georgia legislature was malapportioned and that a new state constitution could not be placed on a ballot for adoption until the General Assembly was constitutionally reapportioned. Another voting rights declaration by the US Supreme Court was Wesberry v. Sanders 376 U.S. 1 (1964) that reversed the lower court decision, remanded the case to the District Court and strengthened the one man, one vote premise in Baker v. Carr 369 U.S. 186. In addition to the voting rights cases, were US Supreme Court decisions on 14th Amendment due process violations such as the decision in Wright v. Georgia 373 U.S. 284 that was decided on May 20, 1963; this was a case involving six young Negroes who were convicted of breach of the peace for playing basketball in a public park that was mainly used only by white people in Savannah, Georgia. The US Supreme Court reversed the lower court decision. The Heart of Atlanta Motel Inc. v. US 379 US 241 (1964) was another important US Supreme Court decision which held that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 provision that forbade discrimination in public accommodations was constitutional.

187 This case was appealed in Fortson v. Toombs 379 U.S. 621 at which time the US Supreme Court on May 16, 1966 affirmed the prior judgment. A later Georgia reapportionment violations case was Georgia v. United States 411 U.S. 526 (1973).
Another governor who was a staunch segregationist was Lester Maddox (1967-1971) who was not as adamant about race after the election because blacks had become more powerful politically by using the vote. In the 1966 governor’s race, there was no clear winner, which necessitated a runoff election between Lester Maddox and Ellis Arnall, the write in candidate. Maddox received 54.3% of the total state votes in addition to a majority of the votes in the lowlands, Black Belt, mountain, towns and rural areas. This election was “thrown into the Democratic-dominated legislature, where Maddox” won. After becoming governor, Maddox “desegregated state facilities, stopped state troopers from referring to blacks as ‘niggers,’ initiated federal food programs and prison reforms, did not close schools, increased the budget for education and helped raise teachers’ salaries by one-fourth.” Maddox did not make any black appointments to higher office in state government during his term as governor. But during Maddox’s term as lieutenant governor, Leroy Johnson (the first black Georgia state legislator since Reconstruction) ascended to the powerful position of chairperson of the Senate Judiciary Committee. This was an example of how important the black vote and federal

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188 Grant, Black Experience in Georgia, p. 429. Lester Maddox in his autobiography, stated that he was and is a segregationist not a racist but makes no distinction between the two. Lester Garfield Maddox, Speaking Out: The Autobiography of Lester Garfield Maddox, (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1975), p. 44.

189 Bartley and Graham, Southern Elections, p. 107. Maddox received 62% of the lowlands, 56% of the Black Belt, 49% of the piedmont, 56% of the mountain, 41% of the metropolitan area, 55% of the towns and 64% of the rural area votes.

190 Grant, Black Experience in Georgia, p. 479.


192 Grant, Black Experience in Georgia, p. 429.
legislation had become since passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. If black people had not used their power at the ballot box their concerns would have been ignored. An example of the political and social change that was occurring in the United States and the south was the U.S. Supreme Court declaration in 1963 that the county unit system was unconstitutional.\textsuperscript{193} This decision was significant politically for blacks and citizens in urban areas because the locus of power was removed from the sparsely populated white rural areas to the densely populated rural black and urban areas.

An important milestone for blacks in Georgia was the barring by the Georgia legislature of Julian Bond from assuming his duly elected state legislative seat in 1966 and the declaration by the U.S. Supreme Court that Bond's 1st Amendment rights had been violated. Julian Bond was seated one year later.\textsuperscript{194}

One of the shining moments for Georgia was the election of one of Georgia's former governors to the highest political office in the United States. The election of Jimmy Carter in 1976 as president of the United States. Jimmy Carter became governor of Georgia by winning a runoff election because in the first election no candidate received a majority of the votes. Carter won the runoff election against former Governor

\textsuperscript{193} Ibid., p. 372. \textit{Gray v. Sanders} 372 U.S. 368 was argued on January 17, 1963 and decided by the US Supreme Court on March 18, 1963 at which time the judgment was vacated and the case was remanded so that the decision would conform to their opinion. The US Supreme Court found that the county unit system violated the equal protection clause of the 14\textsuperscript{th} Amendment and violated the one man one vote rule.

\textsuperscript{194} Ibid., p. 428. Bond was seated after the declaration of the US Supreme Court in \textit{Bond v. Floyd}, 384 U.S. 116, that the disqualification of Bond was a violation of his constitutional first amendment freedom of speech right.
Sanders by receiving 59.4% of the total votes cast.\textsuperscript{195} "There were tinges of racism to his [gubernatorial] campaign, but Carter ... later surprise[d] supporters and foes alike. Carter said in his inaugural address that 'no poor, weak, or black [sic] person should ever have to bear the additional burden of being deprived of the opportunity of an education, a job, or simply justice,' and 'the time for racial discrimination [was] over.'"\textsuperscript{196} As governor, Jimmy Carter reorganized the state government which had not been reorganized since Richard Russell's governorship in 1931. The reorganization plan which became law included:

Functions were consolidated into 22 budgeted state agencies, each agency's own table or organization was made more rational, and increased central control was established over electronic data processing, purchasing, printing, personnel recruitment, and the investment of state funds. State planning and budgeting were combined into a single office. A new department of natural resources combined, except for forestry, the disparate agencies working in that field; likewise the agencies dealing with physical and mental health, welfare, vocational rehabilitation and the like were put under the umbrella of a single department of human resources.\textsuperscript{197}

During Carter's term as governor, the United States' first state-operated rural development center opened at Tifton in south Georgia in 1972 to look for "new crop possibilities, ways to process more of Georgia's agricultural products inside the state rather than outside its borders, development of small towns, and manpower training."\textsuperscript{198}

\textsuperscript{195} Bartley and Graham, \textit{Southern Elections}, p. 111. Carter received 66\% of the lowlands, 60\% of the Black Belt, 55\% of the Piedmont, 63\% of the mountain, 47\% of the metropolitan, 64\% of the towns and 67\% of the rural votes.

\textsuperscript{196} Grant, \textit{Black Experience in Georgia}, pp. 436-437.

\textsuperscript{197} Peirce, \textit{Deep South States}, p. 324.

\textsuperscript{198} Ibid., pp. 376-377.
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Carter distinguished himself from prior Georgia governors through the appointments of many blacks to important State positions and portraits of prominent blacks were on permanent display for the first time in the state Capitol. Also during Carter’s gubernatorial administration, the city of Walthourville was incorporated by an act of the state legislature on March 22, 1974. 199

In 1973, there were two important events in black Georgia politics. Maynard Jackson was elected the first black mayor of Atlanta, Georgia whereupon he became the first black elected mayor of a major southern city. “On January 3, 1973, Andrew Young became the first black person to represent Georgia in Congress since Jefferson Long a century before.” 200 Andrew Young represented the 5th US Congressional district from 1973 until 1977 when he was appointed to the post of US representative to the United Nations during the Carter administration.

The current state constitution was adopted in 1982. There are currently 159 counties in Georgia, most of which have boards of commissioners. The 1982 state constitution restricted the number of counties to 159. Georgia’s cities have mayors who are elected in odd years by the populace to serve four year terms. The state has two senators and eleven representatives in the U.S. Congress.

Governor George Busbee (1975-1983) directed many programs to assist Georgia’s cities and towns improve economically. One of Busbee’s programs was the Governor’s Community Betterment Program which was initiated in 1976 by the Department of Community Affairs “to encourage local self-improvement projects through active citizen participation in local government.”

Busbee’s successor Joe Frank Harris (1983-1990) improved Georgia’s educational system through implementation of the Quality Basic Education Act. Governor Harris also created The Office of Rural Development (ORD) in 1988 to address the needs of rural development in Georgia. The ORD was to serve as a “liaison for state assistance to rural counties and cities.” The ORD is no longer in existence due to lack of funding.

By the 1990s, Georgia’s economy centered on manufacturing and service industries. In 1990, a significant percentage of the Burke County employment sector was dependent upon the transportation, communications, public utilities sector (12.6%) and the services sector (21.0%). In 1991, most residents of Screven County were employed in the manufacturing sector (46%), the second largest sector was services

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202 Joe Frank Harris, Governor’s Policy Statement 1990, (Atlanta, GA: Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget, 1990), p. 42.
204 Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Region 7, Economic Development Workbook, May 1993, pp. 90, 122.
(22%) and the government/public sector was the third largest (15%).\textsuperscript{205} In 1990, most residents of Liberty County were employed in the federal government (civilian) sector (29.0%), the second largest employment sector was the retail sector (19.2%) and the third largest employment sector was services (15.7%).\textsuperscript{206} There are no manufacturing industries in Keysville, Oliver nor Walthourville. There is a service industry in Keysville (a nursing home), no service industry in Oliver and an airport in Walthourville. There are also no federal government installations within Keysville, Oliver nor Walthourville.

Georgia has distinctive political groups, the urbanites, the suburbanites and rural Georgia. "Politically, rural Georgia divides into three regions: north Georgia, an Appalachian territory with few blacks; the Black Belt, which cuts across central and southwestern Georgia and finally south Georgia, where whites form a heavier majority than in the Black Belt."\textsuperscript{207} Reapportionment in Georgia has benefited blacks greatly by enabling black voters in Black Belt areas and metropolitan areas the opportunity to elect blacks to local, state and national offices. An example of the Georgia General Assembly’s attempt to weaken the voting rights of blacks in Georgia was the action taken as late as 1971 by the legislature at which time they “gerrymandered the [5th US Congressional] district [of Georgia] to cut black voter strength from 40 percent to 35

\textsuperscript{205} Joint Screven County, City of Sylvania, City of Hilltonia, City of Newington, City of Oliver and City of Rocky Ford Comprehensive Plan: 2015, March 1993, pp. 53-54.
\textsuperscript{206} Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Region 8, Economic Development Workbook, May 1993, pp. 106, 122, and 130.
\textsuperscript{207} Peirce, Deep South States, p. 311.
percent, but the Justice Department disapproved of the plan under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act.²⁰⁸

Blacks have made many gains and have become stronger in Georgia. But there are still struggles against sexism, racism and classism. As late as 1991, “voting-rights lawsuits continued and Georgia continued to rank near the bottom in voter turnout. In a 32 percent black ten-county area of South-Central Georgia, employment in the better professional and technical jobs increased 28 percent for white residents but only 1 percent for blacks from 1976 to 1981. In 1986, State Representative Tyrone Brooks...released a study showing that blacks accounted for only 6.5 percent of Georgia’s elected officials (about four hundred).”²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ Grant, Black Experience in Georgia, p. 437.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., pp. 457-459. Neither the Georgia Secretary of State’s Office nor the Georgia Department of Archives and History keeps archival voter registration information or voter turnout per telephone call to each on November 8, 1996. The Georgia Secretary of State Office does have the state active voter list by race by gender by age as of May 1, 1996. A modern voting rights violation case was City of Rome v. United States 446 U.S. 156 (1980).
Chapter 3

Government Structure and Black Participation in Keysville

Keysville is located in the northwestern section of Burke County. The city of Keysville has a long history as a city because it was incorporated by the state legislature in 1890. In its infancy, in 1900, the population of Keysville was 101. In 1900, Keysville was a thriving city. The city was a link in the Augusta Southern railway. Keysville had a “post office, express and telegraph service and was the chief trading center and shipping point for that section” of the state. A small portion of Keysville is located in Jefferson County but due to the size and the extremely small population (less than 20), this portion of Keysville will not be examined in this paper.

Keysville is named for one of its first residents, Reverend Joshua Key, Sr. who was also reportedly a large slave owner in this area prior to the Civil War. In 1830, Reverend Key Senior had 106 slaves, in 1850, he had 102 slaves and as late as 1860, Key Senior had 128 slaves. As a result there were white Keys and black Keys. The

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1 Allen D. Candler and Clement A. Evans, eds., *Cyclopedia of Georgia: Volume 2 (F-N)*, (Spartanburg, SC: The Reprint Company, 1972), p. 417. No record exists as to who incorporated Keysville. The city was incorporated because of its transportation advantages, the fact that it was located within one of the highest cotton production counties in the state and the other amenities within Keysville.

2 Ibid.


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townsfolk report that the black Keys are descendants of the slaves owned by Joshua Key.\(^4\)

Keysville also has a rich Afro-American history. An educational institution, Boggs Academy, was located in Keysville that when “founded in 1907 became Georgia’s first accredited black secondary boarding school.”\(^5\) Boggs was a premiere boarding school in the United States for Afro-Americans. Two present Keysville residents, Mayor and Mr. Gresham are graduates of Boggs Academy. The school is now closed and has been converted into Boggs Rural Life Center, Inc. whose mission is to serve as a place for learning/demonstrating creative approaches to human and community development; educate, train and disseminate information on issues important to rural life, and to be used as a conducive environment for meetings and retreats.\(^6\) The author attended one such meeting sponsored by the Georgia Association of Black Elected Officials (GABEO) entitled “Establishing An Institute For Rural Governance and Development” on October 22-23, 1993. The revised use of the campus facilities of the former Boggs Academy by a new organization dedicated to improving rural life is

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\(^4\) Ibid. At least one of the slaves listed in 1850 for each Joshua Key, was a male mulatto. The black Keys could be descendants of each Joshua Key, Junior and Senior.


\(^6\) Franklin D. Williams, Executive Director, Boggs Rural Life Center, Inc., Concept paper for an Institute for Rural Governance and Development, dated October 15, 1993.
evidence of the commitment from the community to improving life in rural Georgia, particularly in Keysville without sacrificing their African American heritage.

The history of the city of Keysville began with the 1890 incorporation papers of Keysville which stated that the city corporate limits “shall extend one-half mile in every direction from the school house” which was located in Keysville in 1890 but burned down in 1900. The school was named Keysville Academy. The non-existence of Keysville Academy, became very important in the 1980s because there was a dispute regarding the city boundary. The original incorporation papers for the city of Keysville stated that the city government would consist of a mayor and five council members who were to be elected every year. The first election for city officers was to take place January 1891, at which time the mayor and councilpersons were to take the oath of office and the provisions of the act that incorporated the city would take effect. The city government existed until conducting its last city election in 1933.

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8 “Don’t Appoint Town’s Council, Harris Advised,” Atlanta Constitution, April 7, 1987, p. 5B. No records exist regarding Keysville Academy in the Keysville City Hall, Burke County Courthouse, Burke County Historical Society nor the Georgia Department of Education.
11 “Don’t Appoint Town’s Council, Harris Advised,” p. 5B. The author during the weeks of July 1-12, 1996 and on November 1-2, 1996 reviewed the True Citizen newspaper issues of the 1930s, and found no mention of the cessation of the city government in Keysville. The author was unable to check the Atlanta Journal Constitution newspaper index because there is no index prior to 1944. Neither the Burke County Courthouse, Burke County Historical Society, County Library nor the Keysville city government, have any information on the cessation of the city government in Keysville. Per a telephone conversation with Mayor.
interviewed could remember why the government had been abandoned. There is speculation that government functions were suspended because whites feared a black takeover of the city government because blacks were the majority of the population.\textsuperscript{12} The 50 year nonexistence of a city government apparently did not create a serious hardship for Keysville residents. As will be made clear later in this chapter, the life of the black residents of Keysville was indeed difficult. The black residents of Keysville did remark in the 1980s that a city government would have made a difference in their lives. Because there was no government, the city did not provide essential services such as fire, police and water/sewer for its residents. This inactive and nonexistent city government may have continued for more years if not for the request of an unknown woman for a beer license from the city of Keysville. The residents reported that they assumed that the city had been dissolved. The residents were not aware that the city’s incorporation was still in effect and that the government merely needed to be reactivated. The black citizens of Keysville upon learning that the city government could be reactivated set about trying to make reactivation happen. The black citizens of Keysville wanted a city government because they believed “a city could bring police and fire protection, and water and sewer services to the 285 mostly black and mostly poor residents.”\textsuperscript{13} The black residents of Keysville in 1985 formed the Keysville Club which later became the Concerned Citizens

\textsuperscript{12} Grant, \textit{Black Experience in Georgia}, p.445.

\textsuperscript{13} David Corvette, “Keysville’s Long Sleep May End,” \textit{The Atlanta Journal and Constitution}, April 12, 1987, p. 1C.
of Keysville, an organization founded to resurrect the city government of Keysville. The black citizens formed the Concerned Citizens of Keysville because they wanted to improve the living conditions of Keysville residents, empower the people regarding work and work schedule, to get school age children fair treatment in the school and to resurrect the city government so that citizens would be provided city services. Mr. Quinton Gresham was the president of Concerned Citizens of Keysville.\textsuperscript{14} To get more blacks involved in the fight for a revived city government and as a means to empower the blacks of Keysville, Emma Gresham and others held a voter education drive in Keysville. An important coalition was formed when the Christic Institute--South held workshops with the black Keysville residents regarding how to organize and how to get people to sign petitions.\textsuperscript{15} The young people of Keysville, The Junior Concerned Citizens, were also involved in the empowerment struggle, especially in improving the physical environment.\textsuperscript{16} These efforts enabled Mayor Gresham and five black Keysville citizens in 1985 to qualify to run for the vacant offices of mayor and five city council seats. These six individuals wanted to conduct elections for the vacant city seats. There was apparently “no opposition,” therefore “no actual election was held...the six were sworn in

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{15} Interview by author with Mayor Gresham on July 25, 1994 in Keysville’s City Hall. Mayor Gresham was first contacted by Christic Institute. Mayor Gresham’s daughter attended a workshop that was unrelated to Keysville, but met an individual who was affiliated with Christic Institute. Mayor Gresham’s daughter was referred to Louis Pitts who called Keysville. Through Mr. Pitts and Christic Institute’s assistance, Keysville obtained a grant to pay the attorney fees for their reincorporation. Per telephone interview with Mayor Gresham on March 18, 1997.

as mayor and council." Opposition to the blacks as Keysville city government officials did exist because five hours after the swearing in, a Burke County judge granted a restraining order which had been filed by six white residents, which prevented the newly sworn officials from taking office. The white residents filed the restraining order on the grounds that there was a discrepancy regarding the city boundary which made unclear who was eligible to run for city office and who was eligible to vote in a city election.

This dispute continued until 1987 when the black residents took the action of filing suit against Georgia Governor Joe Frank Harris and other state officials, charging them with violating "state and federal law by refusing to appoint a slate of governing officials for Keysville." As a result of this suit, the attorney general advised the governor not to call for an election nor fill the vacancies and that the citizens must have the law changed to allow elections to take place. This cursory dismissal of the plight of the black citizens in Keysville led them to seek help from others. The black residents sought and received help from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the aforementioned Christie Institute—South, State

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17 "Keysville's Long Sleep May End," p. 7C.
18 Ibid.
19 Donna Williams Lewis, "Harris Sued for Not Naming Officials to Govern Keysville," Atlanta Constitution, April 30, 1987, p. 1C. Between 1985 and 1987, Mayor Gresham and Christie Institute—South continued to write letters to Governor Joe Frank Harris requesting that he appoint officers to fill the vacancies in Keysville as prescribed in the Georgia Constitution Article V, Section II, Paragraph VIII, and Section 45-5-1 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated. But Section 21-3-408(b) and Section 36-30-13 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated call for vacancies to be filled by a special election which was accomplished by the Burke County Election Superintendent to occur in January 1986.
Representative Tyrone Brooks and Burke County Commissioner Henry Lodge. A major concern for the black residents of Keysville was the lack of water lines for the residents. Mayor Gresham stated that most black people in Keysville did not have running water in their homes. The white residents of Keysville had working wells, running water and septic tanks, making a water/sewerage system less important for them. If you had a working well, or barrels on the ends of your house to catch rainwater, or were able to drive or walk to the creek and carry the water back to your home, then you had water in Keysville. Many of the black residents did not have a well and were dependent upon the kindness of others for water or used one of the methods mentioned above. As late as 1987, there was no public water system in Keysville. The political/social struggle in Keysville was not only a struggle between the classes but also a racial struggle. The white Keysville residents continued to fight the resurrection of Keysville’s city government and the resultant black city government. The election in 1985 showed that blacks would control the city government if the elections were ever validated. Obviously after so many years without a government, one controlled by blacks must have been a frightening prospect for the white residents. Ken Daniel, a lawyer from Augusta, Georgia, represented the white residents who opposed the election of city officials in Keysville. There were 20 white residents who pursued legal actions against reviving the city of Keysville government. Daniel argued that there was uncertainty over the boundaries of Keysville. Presumably Daniel had another deed and map that if accepted...
as truth would have changed the racial demographics of Keysville drastically by giving the city a majority white population.\textsuperscript{22} Lewis Pitts, attorney for Christic Institute—South, discovered that the information given by Mr. Daniel regarding a different location for Keysville Academy was incorrect. Mr. Pitts asserted that Mr. Daniel may have knowingly misrepresented the facts.\textsuperscript{23} The state proved less than helpful in resolving the election dilemma.

In 1985 the state attorney general gave the residents of Keysville four ways to revive their government: 1) to request that the governor appoint individuals for the positions of mayor and council members; 2) file suit in state court to have the office declared vacant which would allow the governor to appoint individuals for those positions; 3) hold a town meeting to elect temporary officers until an election could be held according to the incorporation document of 1890; or 4) to request that the General Assembly pass an act to fill the temporary offices and a means of electing permanent officers.\textsuperscript{24} Later the state attorney general recommended that the governor not appoint individuals to the vacant position but that the state legislature change the law.

\textsuperscript{22} Steve Goldberg, “Keysville Election Still In Limbo: Blacks, Whites Both Vote to Sue,” \textit{Atlanta Constitution}, October 27, 1987, pp. 1B and 4B.

\textsuperscript{23} Letter sent to Daniel from Pitts which is now a part of the Keysville file at the Georgia Archives. Letter was dated October 27, 1986. Pitts also requested that the U.S. Justice Department investigate Daniel for criminal violations of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

\textsuperscript{24} Letter from Assistant State Attorney General H. Jeff Lanier to Preston B. Lewis, Jr., County Attorney of Burke County, dated August 2, 1985. Letter from Laughlin McDonald, ACLU attorney to Governor Joe Frank Harris, dated January 9, 1987.
A special election for council members had been scheduled by the Burke County Election Superintendent for January 1986 but was canceled by court order. The 1986 election was canceled "based on lack of proper public notice of the election, lack of defined municipal boundaries, improper qualifying of candidates and failure to comply with the Georgia Municipal Election Code." State Attorney General Mike Bowers had possible solutions to this problem. Bowers "suggested two approaches to the boundary problem--an amendment to the act incorporating Keysville or a court action that would allow a Superior Court judge to ‘determine the boundaries of Keysville from the evidence presented.’" Governor Harris’ office followed Bowers’ advice to take no action, thereby preferring to allow the state legislature to exercise their decision making power. The state attorney general’s office also indicated that the Burke County Election Superintendent needed to set an election date because the state had no jurisdiction in this matter. A new date of January 1988 was set for city elections in Keysville even though there was still a question about the city boundaries.

There were two slates of candidates for the January 1988 elections. The black citizens ran a full slate of black candidates; the opposition consisted of four white candidates and one black candidate. Daniel continued to protest the electing of city candidates.

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25 “Don’t Appoint Town’s Council, Harris Advised,” p. 5B.
26 Ibid.
officers by filing motions in court that the vote would violate the 1985 injunction and because the city limits still had not been determined.\(^29\) In December 1987, prior to the January 1988 elections, a Burke County judge blocked the elections.\(^30\) The black residents, with the assistance of the ACLU, filed a counter motion in U.S. District Court. “U. S. District Judge J. Owen Forrester ruled that voters in Keysville could go to the polls to vote in city elections.”\(^31\) The U.S. Justice Department had already approved of elections being held in Keysville in accordance with the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The Justice Department agreed to send two federal observers to monitor the Keysville polling places to “watch and record activities during voting hours and during the counting of ballots after polls close to enable the Justice Department to determine whether minorities are able to vote without interference.”\(^32\) The election was held on January 4, 1988 at which time, Mrs. Emma Gresham was elected mayor in addition to four members of her “all-black slate” to the vacant city council seats.\(^33\) Notably this was seen as a great victory by the black residents of Keysville. One of the whites, James Poole, Jr., who had been protesting the elections also won a council seat and continued his fight against the election even though he had won a council seat. The white citizens of Keysville who had fought the other elections continued to fight this election also. The contention of the

\(^29\) Steve Goldberg, “2 Slates of Candidates Qualify in Keysville,” Atlanta Journal Constitution, December 5, 1987, p. 32A.

\(^30\) Steve Goldberg, “Burke County Judge Blocks Keysville Vote,” Atlanta Constitution, December 31, 1987, pp. 1B and 4B.

\(^31\) “Keysville Vote Set Again for Monday,” pp. 29A and 33A.

\(^32\) Ibid., p. 33A.

\(^33\) Steve Goldberg, “Keysville Blacks Claim Victory in City Election,” Atlanta Constitution, January 5, 1988, p. 1A.
white residents was that there were “41 voters” (blacks) who were not eligible to vote in
the election because they lived outside the city’s [disputed] boundaries. 34 The white
residents were not the only ones to contest the election. “The town’s black residents
challenged 23 registered voters, including 19 residents of a local nursing home.” 35 There
was a concern by the black residents about vote tampering via absentee ballots. The
white residents said they were not only challenging black voters but also white voters;
this was done to avoid a cry of racial discrimination from black residents towards the
white residents of Keysville. 36 In spite of the questions surrounding the election votes, the
challenged ballots were counted in the totals. In addition, the challenged voters “were
asked by election officials to pinpoint their house on an aerial photograph of the town. If
they couldn’t tell whether they lived within the boundaries set...they were driven to their
homes to determine if they were eligible to vote.” 37 At the urging of State Representative
Tyrone Brooks, the state attorney general Mike Bowers accepted the city boundaries as
delineated by Henry Key, who in 1987 was the oldest living resident of Keysville (but
has since died) and was also a descendant of Joshua Key. Another reason given as to
why the elections were being contested was because there apparently was also an
economic concern regarding the city services. Once the government was in place and

34 Ibid., p. 12A.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
operating the business fees were actually less than $20 per business per year.\textsuperscript{38} Prior to the levying of the business fees, the white citizens believed they would bear an unusually large portion of the burden of payment for any new city services and that new city business license fees would be more than they could bear. There was a belief that the blacks in the city would not be able to support the city financially because most of the blacks were at or below the poverty level in terms of their wages and living standard. An anxiety existed regarding the cost of the water system construction but this was paid for by state and federal grants, which alleviated any burden of payment by the residents of Keysville for the building of the water system. The opposition forces to the water system were also concerned with being solely responsible for the operation costs of the water system once in place. Possibly since the citizens were not accustomed to paying for their water, any amount would appear unreasonable. Because this fight was occurring in a small, rural, southern city between blacks and whites, the poor and the wealthy and a city which formerly had no black elected official or any government for over fifty years, the author concludes that the legal dispute was racially and class motivated. The newly elected black city officials of Keysville “charged that the lawsuits against them were racially motivated and designed solely ‘to harass and intimidate newly elected black

\textsuperscript{38} Per telephone conversation with Mayor Gresham on March 18, 1997, the city follows the Georgia Department of Community Affairs guidelines regarding setting the business license fee amount. Other revenue sources in Keysville are property taxes, and local option sales tax from Burke County. Other revenue raising powers available to Keysville and other municipalities in Georgia by the State Constitution are tangible and intangible property taxes, alcoholic beverage excise taxes, local option mixed drink tax, franchise taxes, insurance premium taxes, hotel-motel tax, occupation taxes, real estate transfer tax, licenses, fines and forfeitures, user charges, building permit fees, intergovernmental revenues, other revenues, revenue from investments and borrowing funds. J. Devereaux Weeks, \textit{Inventory of General}
Burke County Commissioner Henry Lodge and State Representative Tyrone Brooks (both black elected officials) also stated that “racism has been the core of the problem in trying to reactivate a city government in Keysville.”

Apparently the business leaders were so afraid of the presumed exorbitant new business license fees that in October 1988 the owners of the Keysville Convalescent and Nursing Center (the largest employer in Keysville) “filed suit in Burke County Superior Court to block collection of the city’s new business license fees.” In 1988 there were only four businesses in Keysville: a nursing home, two small grocery stores and a pool hall.

Soon after the 1988 election “the black residents filed a federal lawsuit against Burke County and the State of Georgia and the white residents also filed to ask for a review of Judge Forrester’s decision to allow the election to occur.” A panel of three federal judges (one of the three judges was Judge Forrester) reviewed Judge Forrester’s


39 “Keysville: To Be a City or Not to Be?,” Atlanta Constitution, October 19, 1988, p. 1C.

40 “U.S. Judge Clears Way for Keysville Election,” Augusta Chronicle and Augusta Herald, January 1, 1988, p. 2A. Burke County Commissioner Henry Lodge was a plaintiff in the US Supreme Court case Rogers v. Lodge 458 US 613 (1982) that was decided on July 1, 1982. This was a voting rights case that struck down the Burke County at-large voting system for electing County Commissioners because it violated the 14th and 15th Amendment rights of Burke County black citizens.

41 “Keysville: To Be A City Or Not To Be?,” p. 6C.

42 Per telephone conversation with Mayor Gresham on March 18, 1997, the number of businesses in Keysville has not changed. The businesses that existed in Keysville in 1988 are still in existence.

43 Steve Goldberg, “3-Judge Panel Will Hear Challenge to Keysville Election,” Atlanta Constitution, January 6, 1988, p. 9A.
decision. Apparently neither the white residents of Keysville who were contesting the elections nor their attorney had a problem with Judge Forrester reviewing his own decision because the author could find no evidence of an objection by the white residents who originally filed the petition. The "panel of three federal judges ruled...that a Georgia judge erred when he tried to stop Keysville’s...election..." After this ruling, Attorney Ken Daniel (representing the white residents) filed a new challenge in Burke County Superior Court. In spite of all the judicial fighting, the black residents had accomplished a great deal and were intent on celebrating.

The new mayor and all council members were inaugurated. The inauguration ceremony was held one day after what would have been Martin Luther King Jr.’s 59th birthday. This ceremony was the culmination of a great deal of hard work and perseverance. The celebration was for the new city government and in memory of Martin Luther King Jr. But this was not the last legal victory the black residents would have to celebrate regarding the elections. In May 1988, Georgia Superior Court Judge William F. Grant upheld the elections of the Keysville city officials but also requested a final review of the election process by the U.S. Justice Department. The request for a review was not a crushing blow if a blow at all. State Attorney General Mike Bowers

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responded to Judge Grant’s request. Bowers informed Judge Grant that Grant’s court did not have the authority to order Bowers “to submit the order for Justice Department review because the attorney general” was “not a party to the court proceedings involving the Keysville elections.”  

This response from Bowers was viewed by the black Keysville residents as another victory.

The white residents appealed the three judge panel’s decision to the U.S. Supreme Court which refused to hear the case allowing the prior ruling to stand. This preceded a new election in 1989 (as mandated by the 1890 corporate city charter) whereupon Mayor Gresham was reelected mayor and blacks were elected to all five council positions. The one white city council person, Poole, did not run for reelection. Now the city government of Keysville had a black in every elected city office. This was a city that prior to 1985 had no elected officials especially black elected officials and in 1989 all the elected city officials were black. Mayor Gresham’s platform before becoming mayor was to have a government which would represent all the people, a water and sewer system, and new jobs for the residents. Mayor Gresham also promised to provide a health clinic for residents, remove trash, provide fire protection and to combat crime. To prevent future legal fights over the legitimacy of the new government, Mayor Gresham and the other council members petitioned the Georgia General Assembly to approve a new charter for

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47 "Bowers Wants Keysville Election Order Reviewed," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, June 18, 1988, p. 16D.


49 Ibid.
Keysville. State Senator Bill English from Swainsboro introduced the bill before the state legislature to grant the city of Keysville a charter. In 1991, the state legislature reincorporated the city of Keysville thereby granting the city of Keysville a charter. The confusion of the city boundaries was settled within this new incorporation of Keysville. The city government was to consist of a mayor and five council members, who would serve for a term of four years after having been a resident of Keysville for 12 months immediately preceding an election of city officials. Election dates, procedures and vacancies in office were also addressed in the reincorporation document. This document repealed the original incorporation document of 1890. Keysville’s residents and new government would now be able to deliver the mayor’s platform promises to the citizens.

The difficulties encountered by Mayor Gresham in her numerous attempts to resurrect the City government of Keysville were the Southern racial political power struggles as referenced by Mack Jones. The whites of Keysville in their repeated attempts to prevent

51 Tommy Tomlinson, “English Will Introduce Legislation to Give Keysville Charter,” Augusta Chronicle, February 14, 1989, pp. 1A and 5A. Per telephone conversation with Georgia Department of Community of Affairs and Georgia House of Representatives State Planning and Community Affairs (SPCA) Committee on March 18, 1997, and Chapter 31 Incorporation of Municipal Corporations from the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, the procedure for a municipality of be granted a charter is for a representative from the Georgia General Assembly from the area to introduce a local legislation bill before the Georgia General Assembly verifying that the proposed municipality meets all eligibility requirements for incorporation, the Georgia General Assembly votes and the municipality is either granted or denied a charter.

52 State of Georgia, Local and Special Acts and Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia 1991, (Atlanta, GA: State of Georgia, 1991), p. 4571. “The boundaries of this city at all times shall be shown on a map, a written description, or any combination thereof, to be retained permanently in the office of the city clerk of the city and to be designated, as the case may be: ‘Official Map or Description of the Corporate Limits of the City of Keysville, Georgia.’”
the lawful ascension to power of a black mayor and an all black city council were

"motivated by the canons of white supremacy seeking to maintain superordinancy at the expense of their black compatriots and the latter trying to throw off white domination." 54

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53 Ibid., pp. 4571 and 4579. The 1991 reincorporation papers repealed the incorporation of the City of Keysville in 1890 in its entirety. Section 7.14 and Section 7.15, pp. 4602-4603.

For years, students and scholars of politics have surmised that "demographic characteristics are closely associated with electoral participation."¹ Mack Jones has said that in order to study black politics thoroughly, the social, economic and political aspects of the community must be researched.² In addition to Mack Jones, other scholars have also stressed the importance of studying the significance of race within a community and its effect on the socioeconomic status of blacks.³ Scholars of black voting behavior and black elected officials in southern states utilized different principles prior to and after passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.⁴

Based on the aforementioned frameworks, this chapter will attempt to examine the socioeconomic and political changes that have occurred in Keysville, Georgia focusing mainly on the changes since Emma Gresham became mayor.

**History of Burke County**

Keysville is located in the coastal plains area of the state, within Burke County, one of the oldest counties in the state. "Burke County...located on the eastern edge of Central Georgia,...is bounded to the north by Richmond County, Jefferson County to the west, Emanuel, Jenkins, and Screven Counties to the south, and the Savannah River and South Carolina to the east." Burke County “has an area of 832 square miles and is the second largest county in” Georgia. Burke County, named for Edmund Burke, the English statesman and orator, was created in 1777 from St. George parish (one of the original parishes of Colonial Georgia). Burke County’s political history dates back to the American Revolution during which time several important skirmishes occurred on its soil. One of those was the encounter at Burke County Jail where the patriots repelled the British. Also during the Revolutionary War, Rebel Caesar, a black slave of Burke County, secured his freedom by saving the life of himself and his master from the British.

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6 Ibid.
soldiers by taking the soldiers captive and then handing them over to American troops.9

In the 1790s, portions of Burke County were taken to create other counties, namely
Screven County in 1793 and Jefferson County in 1798.10 In its early development Burke
County, similar to the state at large was mainly an agricultural area. Burke County and
the state of Georgia continued to be agricultural economies well into the 1800s.

**Demographics of Burke County**

Before the invention of the cotton gin, the main agriculture yields in Burke
County were cattle, hogs, sheep, timber products, sugar cane, corn and other grains.11
Cotton production in Burke County flourished with the assistance of the cotton gin, in
addition to the staple crops which were still grown in Burke County, but cotton became
the cash crop, just as in most of Georgia.12 Cotton production was a labor intensive
endeavor which led to the need for more slaves in those areas where cotton was
cultivated. This was also true for Burke County which had an increase in its slave
population from 2,403 slaves in 1790 to 5,904 by 1820.13 Between 1790 and 1820, the
slave population increased 59.3%. Correspondingly, the white population decreased as
the slave population increased. The white population in Burke County in 1790 was 7,064

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9 Hillhouse, *History of Burke County, Georgia*, pp. 41-42.
10 Ibid., p. 75.
11 Ibid., p. 61.
12 Ibid., p. 62.
13 Ibid.
but had decreased in 1820 to 5,673;\(^{14}\) representing a decrease of 20%. One reason for the white population decline was that large landowners were acquiring a larger percentage of the land because they needed additional land to grow and cultivate more cotton, therefore the small farmers had fewer acreage to farm and were forced to move westward (to present day Alabama and Mississippi) to locate land for their agricultural endeavors. This trend continued into 1860 at which time most slaveholders in Georgia had 10-15 slaves on farms of 100-500 acres.\(^{15}\) At the beginning of the Civil War, Burke County had the largest number of slaveholders (720) in addition to the largest number of slaves (12,052) of the three counties researched in this paper.\(^{16}\) The end of the Civil War lessened the South’s necessity for more farm workers; abolished slavery and forced the South to rebuild. Georgia’s rebuilding after the Civil War was traced in Chapter 2. Many of Georgia’s newly freed persons either stayed where they had formerly been enslaved or migrated to other cities within Georgia or neighboring states to find family members and better employment. The Census Bureau records for Burke County denoted an increase of 9.56% in the black population in 1870; some of which is attributable to births, and the remainder to migration from within Georgia and from neighboring states. Burke County in the late 1800s remained one of the largest counties in area size and one of the largest

\(^{14}\) Ibid.


\(^{16}\) Ibid. All see Table 2-3.
cotton producing counties in Georgia. “In 1880, Burke County was one of the leading counties in agricultural products.”

Burke County in the 20th century is no longer a predominantly agricultural economy due to the mechanization of farming, the increased use of chemicals, tenancy, the Depression and the growth of industrialization in Georgia which all led to the decline of agriculture. The industries that grew in Georgia were lumber, flour and grist mills, tanneries, distilleries, brickyards, and naval stores all of which were low-paying industries that demanded little skill. Because the rural areas of the state had little to offer the rural population, individuals who were able migrated to the cities. Black migration was not profound within Georgia until after 1915, “when blacks began leaving in large numbers for cities of the North.” The lure of better jobs in the North, the Depression, the boll weevil devastation and the oppression suffered by blacks in Georgia led to their migration from the state. Similar to other Black Belt counties, the black population in Burke County has remained in the majority since 1820.

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19 Ibid., pp. 288-289.
TABLE 4-1
POPULATION BY RACE FOR BURKE COUNTY FROM 1790 TO 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POPULATION</th>
<th>1790</th>
<th>1800</th>
<th>1810</th>
<th>1820</th>
<th>1830</th>
<th>1840</th>
<th>1850</th>
<th>1860</th>
<th>1870</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FREE BLACKS</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>13,436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLAVES</td>
<td>2,392</td>
<td>2,967</td>
<td>4,691</td>
<td>5,820</td>
<td>6,642</td>
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Source: US Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

The 1990 Census documents that there are more blacks than whites in Burke County with a total population of 20,579; of that number there are 10,741 blacks [52%] and 9,747 whites [47%]. Although blacks in Burke County have been the majority of the population since the 1820 Census, numbers alone do not dictate who has the political, economic and social control. Southern mores dictate that whites, even though the

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20 Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population and Housing Summary Tape File 3A, CD ROM.
minority population in Burke County, wield power in this county as in the other areas of the South. The historically less than human legal and social status of the enslaved numerically majority population rendered them unable to rule politically, economically and socially within Burke County prior to the Civil War. During Reconstruction blacks’ legal status changed but the dominate power within the county politically, economically and socially remained with the numerically minority white population. The Georgia Voting Registration record for Burke County in 1867 indicates that 2,549 blacks registered to vote and an additional 52 registered to vote in 1868 for a total of 2,601 for that time period.\textsuperscript{21} During the same years the number of whites who registered to vote in Burke County was much lower than the number of blacks. In 1867 the number of whites in Burke County who registered to vote was 795 and an additional 7 in 1868 for a total of 862 for that time period.\textsuperscript{22} The low voting registration figures for the white population of Burke County were a result of the decreased white population in Burke County after the Civil War. As late as 1890 there were 325 black registered voters in Burke County and 166 white registered voters but by 1902 there were no black registered voters in Burke County and 291 white registered voters.\textsuperscript{23} Mack Jones noted that “voting in itself is not power;” nor is “having a black majority in itself power.”\textsuperscript{24} Disfranchisement through

\textsuperscript{21} Georgia Registration Record, 297/10 Negative GRG 4-349.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
legal means were administered to prevent blacks in Burke County, as in the rest of Georgia, from obtaining political control; the methods included the white primary, the county unit system and at large voting, the last of which, remained in place in Burke County the longest and disfranchised blacks until the mechanism was struck down by the US Supreme Court in Rogers v. Lodge 458 US 613 on July 1, 1982. The US Supreme Court held and affirmed the lower district court and Court of Appeals decisions that the at large electoral system policy was maintained for “invidious purposes in violation of appellees’ 14th and 15th Amendment rights and ordered the county to be divided into districts for purposes of electing County Commissioners.”

This declaration by the US Supreme Court resulted in the election of the first two blacks to the Burke County Commission in 1982 which was a major accomplishment for a county that had maintained a large black population since 1820 but had no blacks on the county commission. The power struggle by blacks in Burke County was another indication of the pervasiveness of racism and the motivation of whites through white supremacy “to maintain superordinancy at the expense of their black compatriots” in rural Georgia.

The counteractions of the black residents of Burke County which led to the US Supreme Court decision was evidence of the political empowerment of blacks in addition to the

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25 Rogers v. Lodge 458 US 613 (1982). In Mobile v. Bolden 446 US 55 (1980) the racially discriminated party has to prove purpose or intent but in Rogers the US Supreme Court declared that the racially discriminated party only has to prove effect. The Rogers decision is viewed as a major victory for minorities in voting rights cases.

blacks of Burke County changing their subordinate status by “trying to throw off white domination.” within the formal political structure where the conflict was “played out.”

The political activity of the black Burke County residents in the US Supreme Court case was also an example of nonelectoral political participation by blacks who used the agency during the post Civil Rights era to gain their political rights. Local custom, police forces, the Georgia Constitution of 1877, disfranchisement provisions, and candidates for governor who ran on a black disfranchisement platform all contributed to the lack of black political participation in Georgia post Reconstruction. Although blacks were disfranchised in Burke County, just as in other Black Belt counties in Georgia, they remained the majority of the population in those areas of the state because their labor was necessary for crop production.

The total population in Burke County grew steadily between the three decennial censuses of 1970 from 18,259 to 19,425 in 1980 and 20,579 in 1990. These increases reflect a steady 6% increase every ten years since 1970 which includes births and inmigrants to the county. The migration figures for Burke County show that the County gained 200 whites between 1975 and 1980 but lost 477 blacks during the same time period. The largest percentage of the Burke County population in 1970 and 1990 was

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27 Ibid.
in the 5-14 age group at 24.5% in 1970 and 18.4% in 1990. During this twenty year period, the percentage of the 5-14 age population decreased despite remaining a large portion of the population. The Burke County figures in 1970 were in line with the State and the nation but the 1990 figures were not. The largest percentage of the national population in 1990 is in the 25-34 age group (17.4%). The state’s largest population is also the 25-34 age group (18.1%).

The state and national computations represent the aging of the baby boom population. The county patterns indicate that a larger percentage of Burke County’s population are the children of the baby boomers and are therefore in the non-voting, non-working, dependent category which presents an added strain on the economy due to the fact that these individuals are not able to work and will be cared for by a smaller employed population, the generation between the baby boomers and the baby boomlets. Also due to the large proportion of children, the county must spend large amounts of money on food and education which will lead to changes in the patterns of consumption. An additional strain on Burke County is the fact that the largest percentage of the population are rural residents (72.3%); over 80% of whom are native to the area. Because the residents of Burke County live in a rural area then these residents

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Liberty County had more inmigrants than outmigrants for both racial groups; Screven County lost blacks and gained whites.

30 Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Region 7, Economic Development Workbook, p. 6.

31 Ibid., p. 8.


33 U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, CD-ROM.
will “pay a substantially higher share of their income to maintain” county services.\textsuperscript{34}

The large native population shows that there is stability and little outmigration in Burke County. Those who could leave have already left, those who remain do not have the skills to be competitive in the higher demanding job markets in the metropolitan areas just as those who migrated “often found their education and job skills were not comparable to those of their urban counterparts” thereby “rural migrants were sometimes unable to make the necessary adjustment to their new environment and many required public assistance” even in the 1990s.\textsuperscript{35} The large rural population in Burke County hinders growth because rural or nonmetropolitan areas must compete against one another for the limited federal funds set aside for such areas and for corporate leaders who are seeking to relocate, expand and desirous of new markets.\textsuperscript{36}

Racially the Burke County white population has increased significantly since 1970 from 7,298 to 8,957 in 1980, and in 1990 the total was 9,780 due to better job opportunities within the County and the nearby metropolitan statistical area.\textsuperscript{37} Burke County experienced a 34% increase in its white population between 1970 and 1990 which

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{35} Dr. Horace E. Hudson and Susan R. Boatright, *Growth and Change in Georgia’s Social, Economic and Demographic Environment*, (Athens, GA: Cooperative Extension Service, The University of Georgia, 1995) p. 7.
\item \textsuperscript{37} Georgia Department of Community Affairs, *Region 7, Economic Development Workbook*, p. 12.
\end{itemize}
did not elevate this population to majority status during this time period. The black population in Burke County in 1970 was 10,956, in 1980 the amount was 10,437 and in 1990 the count was 10,758. In spite of the fact that there was a slight drop in the black population in Burke County, the black percentage of the population remained over 50% between 1970 and 1990. The black percentage of the Burke County population achieved a high of 60% in 1970. The Burke County black population figures outdistanced the national and state percentages for the same years. These figures show how unique Burke County is in comparison to the state and the nation.

Income

Burke County’s household income is slightly lower than the state average. Most households in Burke County earn between $15,000-$24,999. The median household income for Burke County in 1989 is $17,667. The state on the other hand shows the largest number of households in the $20,000-$29,999 category. The low household

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39 Ibid.
40 Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Region 7, Economic Development Workbook, May 1993, p. 14. The state figures were never more than 27% (in 1990) and the nation’s percentage black population reached a high of 12.2% (in 1990).
41 U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, CD-ROM. The income figures were the income of the households in 1989. The total number of households counted in Burke County in the 1990 Census for the household income figures is 7,065 households.
42 U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, CD-ROM. Median is a type of average which is the midpoint or the middle value of a range of values meaning half of the values were above that number and half were below. This is not the same as midrange or mode. Where one or a few values were unusually high or low, it is better to compute the median. Dunn, Selling the Story, p. 156.
43 Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Region 7, Economic Development Workbook, p. 22. The total number of households counted in the state of Georgia in the 1990
income for Burke County is an indication of the lack of high paying jobs for the citizens. Well, over 30% of the Burke County residents lives below the poverty level. Of the children in Burke County who are 18 years of age or younger, 41% live below the poverty level. Nationally, “a disproportionate number of the poor are women and children in female-headed households...” In Burke County the female headed household poverty level figures are alarming. The percentage of female headed households who live below the poverty level is 59%, those with related children under 18 years of age is 66% and with related children under 5 years of age is 73%. One reason for the high poverty level among female households is due to the lack of federal or state programs designed to eliminate poverty. Furthermore the educational system will be adversely affected by the children from female headed households because “children from single-parent homes have a higher incidence of school-related problems. The

Census for the household income figures is 2,366,575. U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, CD-ROM.

44 U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population and Housing Summary Tape File 3A, CD-ROM. In 1990, the poverty threshold is $6,652 for a one person household, $13,359 for a family of four and $26,849 for a family of nine or more. The total number of persons in Burke County whose poverty status could be determined is 20,319 and the total number of individuals who were designated as below the poverty level is 6,147. Burke County reported 5,367 families for whom poverty status was determined and of those 1,392 families are living below the poverty level and 1,084 of those families are black.

45 U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, CD-ROM. The total number of related children under 18 years of age in Burke County in 1990 is 6,833 and the number living below the poverty level is 2,774.

46 Dunn, Selling the Story, p. 104.

47 U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, CD-ROM. The total number of female householder families in Burke County is 1,656 and the total number of those female householder families who live below the poverty level is 970. There are 188 black families with related children under 18 years of age (with 92 of those families with related children between the ages of under 5 years to 17 years) and 841 black female householder
increase in female heads of households is associated with the growing number of children living in poverty, who also are more likely to perform poorly or drop out of school. If this condition of poverty remains uncorrected, the problems associated with these educationally disadvantaged children will be a major cost burden on this community.

**Education**

Most individuals in Burke County who are 25 years old and older are high school graduates. Of those who have completed elementary school, high school or four years or more of college, the largest number are those with an elementary or high school education. As of 1990, 55.3% of Burke County’s population has graduated from high school and 9.6% of the county’s population has completed four years or more of college. The Burke County education attainment figures for high school graduate and bachelor’s degree or higher are significantly lower than the state figures. The percentage of Burke County’s population that is under 25 years of age would account for the small number of college graduates in addition to the large minority and rural populations. There are no post-secondary institutions within Burke County which

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families (with 675 of those families with related children between the ages of under 5 years to 17 years).


50 U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, CD-ROM.

51 U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, CD-ROM. The percentage of the Georgia population of persons 25 years and over who are high school graduates or higher in 1990 is 70.9% and the percent with bachelor’s degree or higher is 19.3%.
hinders county residents who desire a college degree. The closest institution of higher learning is in neighboring Richmond County in the city of Augusta. The small number and percentage of college graduates in Burke County discourages high technology industries from locating in this county. The globalization of the economy and the “changing means of production from a manufacturing and natural resource-based economy to an information and service-retail-driven economy will require an increasingly educated and highly skilled work force.\textsuperscript{52} Historically, income rises with educational attainment and age although there are gender differences in spite of education and age with women earning less than men at all levels.\textsuperscript{53}

**Employment**

The employment of Burke County residents changed very little from pre-Civil War through 1960 at which time most men in Burke County were employed as farm laborers or farm managers and women were employed as private household workers or farm laborers, regardless of race.\textsuperscript{54} After 1960, the economy of the state of Georgia became less concentrated in agriculture and began to grow in the manufacturing sector.\textsuperscript{55} Mechanization and reliance on chemicals in farming were contributing factors to the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{52} Hudson and Boatright, *Growth and Change in Georgia's Social, Economic and Demographic Environment*, p. 2.
\item \textsuperscript{53} Dunn, *Selling the Story*, p. 114.
\end{itemize}
decrease in the agricultural economy in addition to the lingering effects of the Depression, the reduced price of cotton and the boll weevil devastation. By 1970, the Burke County worker population was employed mainly in manufacturing (32%) at percentages slightly higher than the state (27%).\textsuperscript{56} By 1990, the largest percentage of Burke County’s residents are employed as equipment operators, assemblers and inspectors (16.3%).\textsuperscript{57} The largest percentage of the state’s residents in 1990 are employed in professional and technical and clerical professions (16% for both categories).\textsuperscript{58} The fact that fewer residents in Burke County have four years or more of college is one reason why the county residents are not in the professional, technical or clerical professions in great percentages, in addition to the fact that the employers of these type positions are not located in Burke County but are in the neighboring metropolitan areas. Another reason is the number of manufacturers (20) in Burke County who collectively employ 1,728 people; half of these companies employ fewer than twenty people; none of these companies is located in Keysville.\textsuperscript{59} The US Department of Labor projects that employment in manufacturing, construction, agriculture, and forestry will


\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.

continue to decline through 2005 as they have throughout the 1990s. "Operators, fabricators, and laborers and precision production, craft, and repair occupations are expected to account for more than 1 million" of the jobs that will be lost through 2005.

In 1990, over 59% of the persons who are 16 years of age or older in Burke County are employed. This is an indication that for many within the population who are desirous of employment within the County will not be successful in finding employment. From 1970 to 1990, the number of residents in Burke County who are in the work force increased from 5,690 to 7,905. Burke County experienced a 39% increase in its work force between 1970 and 1990 due to the natural maturation of the population and immigration. Most Burke County residents worked and lived in their county of residence therefore fewer of these residents commuted to their job. In 1970, 19% of the Burke County work force commuted to their job; in 1990 that percentage jumped to 37%. The average travel time for these commuters is 24 minutes which suggests that the commuters may have traveled at least as far as Augusta. But the

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62 U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, CD-ROM. The total number of individuals in Burke County who are 16 years of age and over is 14,440 of that 8,624 are in the labor force and 5,816 are not in the labor force.

63 Georgia Department of Community Affairs, *Region 7, Economic Development Workbook*, p. 30. This figure differs from that above because the Georgia Department of Community Affairs only acknowledged the number employed in the civilian labor force.

64 Ibid.
destination cannot be determined with certainty due to the large area size of Burke County.\textsuperscript{65} Although the number of commuters increased between 1970 and 1990, 63% of the Burke County workforce did not commute outside the county to their jobs but remained within the county. This is a good sign of a strong economy although the increase in workers who commute outside the county for jobs is an indication that for some individuals the job market of Burke County does not adequately meet their needs. The state workforce shows a similar, if not as dramatic increase in workers commuting.

Unlike the state, the unemployment percentages in Burke County increased slightly between 1980 (10.5%) and 1990 (10.6%) but in comparison to the state, the county percentages are high and are double the unemployment percentages for the state.\textsuperscript{66} Another indication that not all residents who desired employment are able to obtain employment.

In spite of the unemployment figures, Burke County has experienced a steady growth in employment since 1970.\textsuperscript{67} For the region, the largest percentage of total employment was in the manufacturing sector in 1970 and 1980 but in 1990 the largest

\textsuperscript{65} The author drove on numerous occasions from Augusta to Waynesboro, the Burke County seat, from Atlanta to Waynesboro and from Atlanta to Augusta between 1994 and 1997. The average travel time between Augusta and Waynesboro is 30 minutes in various driving conditions. Burke County is not included in the Augusta Metropolitan Statistical Area according to the US Census Bureau. See Appendix for Georgia Metropolitan Statistical Area map.

\textsuperscript{66} Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Region 7, Economic Development Workbook, p. 32. The Georgia unemployment percentage in 1990 is 5.7%. The Burke County unemployment rate is 14.4% in 1989.

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., p. 36.
percentage is in the services sector.\textsuperscript{68} The county’s economy grew also because of Georgia Power’s Plant Vogtle nuclear power plant.\textsuperscript{69}

Since 1970, Burke County experienced a dramatic decline in its farm employment from 1,214 to 880 in 1990.\textsuperscript{70} There are 334 fewer farm related positions which is a 27.51\% decrease. As of 1990, less than 10\% of the total jobs in Burke County are dependent on farming.\textsuperscript{71} Factors in this county which prohibit a prospective employer from locating or relocating in this county include: limited public sewer system, few college educated residents, no colleges or universities (within the county) and the large number of female headed households living below the poverty level. Other factors that will affect employment in Burke County in the future according to the US Department of Labor are a slowdown in employment growth, new jobs in service-producing industries, the projected goods-producing sector decline and the projection that the fastest growing and highest paying jobs will be those that require the most education and training.\textsuperscript{72}

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., p. 38.
\textsuperscript{69} Georgia Department of Community Affairs, \textit{Burke County Comprehensive Plan 1990-2010, Part 1 Inventory & Assessment}, January 1991, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{70} Georgia Department of Community Affairs, \textit{Region 7, Economic Development Workbook}, p. 42.
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid.
Housing

As of 1990 most homes in Burke County had water but not a public sewer system. The majority of the homes in Burke County have a septic tank or cesspool. From 1977 to 1995 the fair market value of real and personal property in Burke County has increased each year.

Social Services

Burke County contains the cities of Blythe, Girard, Keysville, Midville, Sardis, Vidette, and the county seat of Waynesboro. The county is responsible for education on the elementary and secondary levels countywide. The county provides emergency medical services countywide.

Demographics of Keysville

The Census Bureau reports that the city of Keysville has 168 female residents and 144 male residents for a total of 312 residents. The females represent 54% of the population. The males represent 46% of the population. The majority female population and the majority black population are catalysts for the election of a black female mayor and also for the black citizens involvement in the re-establishment of the city government. All residents of Keysville live in a rural area, with the majority classified as living in rural nonfarm areas. The total number of residents living in the rural farm area

73 U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary Tape File 3-A, CD-ROM.
74 Ibid.
is thirteen and 299 living in the rural nonfarm area. The rural nonfarm residents are 96% of the population which is evidence that agriculture is no longer the driving economic force in Keysville. The decreased dependence on farming is one reason why Mayor Gresham desires an industry in Keysville that will provide employment for the residents. The city of Keysville’s diminished dependence on farming is in line with the state of Georgia and the nation.

**Income**

The 1990 Census documents 1989 income for 107 households in Keysville. Most households in Keysville earn less than $10,000 per year in income. The median household income in Keysville is $11,875. The Burke County median household income is $17,667. The city of Keysville’s median income is much lower than the median income of the county. This disparity is due to the size of Keysville and no large

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76 U.S. Census Bureau, *1990 Census of Population and Housing Summary Tape File 3A*, CD-ROM. The total number of households in Keysville for which income could be determined in 1989 is 104. The total number of family households is 89 with a median family income of $11,250.

77 Ibid. The total number of households in Burke County for which income could be determined in 1989 is 7,065. The total number of family households is 5,367 with a median family income of $21,349.
industries thus Keysville residents are employed in low paying low skilled positions. The low income of the residents negatively impacts on the types of services that the City of Keysville is able to provide to the residents. One of Mayor Gresham’s campaign goals addressed the income disparity between Keysville residents and that of Burke County residents. Mayor Gresham is hampered in effectively altering this situation by the lack of economic opportunities in Keysville. Most residents of Keysville are wage earners mainly from nonfarm income. A majority of the households have a mean wage and salary income of $17,952. The next highest group of income earners in Keysville are those individuals who receive social security income and public assistance income. Wage earners represent 81% of the residents of Keysville in addition 39% of whom are living below the poverty level. A majority of Keysville residents are 18 years old or older although 23% are age 65 years and older. The voting age population of Keysville is 71.2% of the population with 76.5% black voting age population.

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Source: US Bureau of the Census

78 Ibid. Mean is an average that is computed by summing all the values under scrutiny and dividing by the number of values. Means can be subject to wild distortion by an especially high or low value. Dunn, Selling the Story, p. 156.

79 U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population and Housing Summary Tape File 3A, CD-ROM.
As long as the voting age population in Keysville is majority black, it is not necessary that Mayor Gresham form coalitions with other racial groups to gain community support for her political agenda but she must form coalitions within the black community across gender and class lines. The majority black voting age population has enabled Mayor Gresham to remain in office. The voting age population includes a slightly larger percentage of young adults (31%) who live below the poverty line in Keysville as opposed to the elderly (29%). This is due to the lack of competitive jobs in Keysville for young adults which also accounts for the small population. The total percentage of the voting age population living below the poverty level in Keysville is 30.4%. The percentage of children under 18 years of age living below the poverty level in Keysville is 60%. This is an alarming percentage. In addition 65% of the children under 5 years of age live below the poverty level. The percentage of children between the ages of 5 to 17 years of age who live below the poverty level in Keysville is 58%. The total percentage of children in Keysville living below the poverty level is high compared to Burke County (40.6%). The majority of individuals (77%) who live below the poverty level are black of which 56.38% are voting age population. Mayor Gresham has been unable to reverse this condition due to the lack of economic resources in Keysville.
TABLE 4-3
POVERTY RATES FOR KEYSVILLE RESIDENTS BY RACE AND AGE

| AGE  | ABOVE POVERTY LEVEL |  | BELOW POVERTY LEVEL |
|------|----------------------|  |----------------------|
|      | BLACK | WHITE |  | BLACK | WHITE |
| UNDER 5 | 8     | 0     |  | 13    | 2     |
| 5-17  | 20    | 8     |  | 28    | 11    |
| 18-64 | 77    | 37    |  | 34    | 13    |
| 65-74 | 34    | 4     |  | 14    | 2     |
| 75+   | 6     | 8     |  | 5     | 0     |
| TOTAL | 145   | 57    |  | 94    | 28    |

Source: US Census Bureau

The largest employer in Keysville is the nursing home which is not a high paying employer. The other businesses in Keysville are a grocery store/gas station, a grocery store owned by blacks, a fish fry establishment and a night club. None of which would give a large number of people an income to raise them above the poverty line.

Education

There are no schools in the city of Keysville. Prior to desegregation there were black elementary and high schools in Keysville but these were discontinued after desegregation and with the consolidation of the elementary and secondary schools by the county. Presently all elementary and secondary students attend Burke County Elementary and Burke County High Schools. The city does have a Vision of Literacy Program which provides adult education (completion of General Equivalency Degree) and after school tutoring for the citizens of Keysville although no higher education is
provided by the city or the county. The closest college or university is located in Augusta, Georgia, a city more than 30 miles away from Keysville.

The residents of Keysville do not possess the educational training and skills to compete in the fast-growing occupations of the 21st century which will require at least a college degree or some specialized training which would include vocational training. The fastest-growing and highest-paying jobs of the future will be those that require the most education and training. Therefore Keysville residents will not be able to compete for these positions nor will companies attempt to recruit them or relocate to this city. In Keysville, a majority (92%) of the individuals who are 25 years of age or older have attained at least a high school education. Only 8% of the 25 years old and over population has some college or above.

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80 There are no statistics on the number of individuals who have availed themselves of the Vision of Literacy Program because the city of Keysville does not keep a record of such statistics therefore the efficacy of this program cannot be determined.


Employment

The city of Keysville has 49% of its eligible working population actually working. The unemployment figure for Keysville is high in comparison to the other cities in this paper and in comparison to Burke County. The Keysville unemployment percentages are 20% of the employable population (this excludes those of retirement age) and 10% of the total population over 16 years of age (this includes everyone over the age of 16). The Burke County unemployment figures are 59.7% of the total population over 16 years of age are employed and 8.2% are unemployed. Keysville has more female residents over 16 years of age than male residents, but more males are employed. The males have a larger percentage employed in the labor force (46%) but the females have a lower unemployment percentage. The female percentage employed in the labor force is 34%. When comparing the gender unemployment percentages for the total persons 16 years and over, the female unemployment percentage is significantly lower than the male unemployment percentage. The female unemployment percentage for persons 16 years and over is 7.81%. The male unemployment percentage for persons 16 years and over is 12.5%. The women in Keysville are employed although in low income occupations.

"An increasing share of rural workers hold jobs paying so little that they would not earn enough to raise a family of four above the poverty line even if they worked full time, year round."83 The unemployment figures in Keysville are high but are not unusual for a rural

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area. "Unemployment rates are particularly high among nonmetro minorities and teenagers."\textsuperscript{84} Racially there are no unemployed white males in Keysville but there are 13 unemployed black males. Keysville has 2 unemployed white females and 8 unemployed females. The number of blacks (males and females) who are not in the labor force (33 black males and 57 black females) is larger than the number of whites who are not in the labor force (10 white males and 24 white females).\textsuperscript{85} The individuals who are employed in Keysville commute approximately 25 to 26 minutes to work.\textsuperscript{86} The percentage of Keysville residents who commute to work is 80.5% which is much higher than the Burke County figure (37%).\textsuperscript{87} The Keysville residents are workers who are mainly employed in service occupations (24); manufacturing, durable goods (16) and health services (41).\textsuperscript{88} The health services workers include the individuals who work at the nursing home in Keysville. Even though a large portion of Keysville’s eligible population is employed these individuals are traveling away from their homes to their jobs.

**Social Services**

Burke County is responsible for education of all the cities within the county including Keysville. The City of Keysville contracted with the county and is jointly

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., p. 54.
\textsuperscript{85} U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population and Housing Summary Tape File 3A, CD-ROM.
\textsuperscript{86} Ibid. This figure includes individuals who travel to Waynesboro, Augusta and other neighboring cities and towns.
\textsuperscript{87} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid.
responsible for the following services: police protection, fire protection, emergency services and street services. The City of Keysville is separately responsible and provides to residents the following services: garbage services, recreational services and adult education. The city officials hope in the future to attract industries to Keysville so that the young people will be able to work where they live but a major complication is the fact that the city does not have a sewer system. Mayor Gresham wants Keysville to be a city that holds on to its young people and in this way grows and prospers. The current nonexistence of a sewer system, the lack of service-producing industries, and the lack of professional specialty job openings within Keysville are all reasons why Keysville has not experienced significant growth in its population or economy. The rural characteristics that negatively affect the ways that rural governments similar to Keysville provide services, are isolation, low population density, lack of fiscal resources and the lack of an adequate supply of trained personnel.89

Questionnaire Responses

Mayor Gresham became mayor of Keysville after an election on January 4, 1988; her first elected political position.90 The author outlined in Chapter 3 the history of

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90 The author made an initial site visit to Keysville on July 25, 1994, met and interviewed Mayor Gresham, Mr. Gresham and other residents of Keysville. The author also
the struggle Mayor Gresham and the black council members had to endure before becoming elected officials of Keysville. Because of the difficulty incurred in obtaining the position of mayor, Mayor Gresham has no aspirations to seek a higher office. Mayor Gresham assumed power as an elected official at a time when others her age had retired and after she had retired from her previous occupation as a teacher. Upon retirement, Mayor Gresham returned to her childhood home to live. The lack of city government and services spurred Mayor Gresham to action. Minion K. C. Morrison and other scholars have studied rural black mayors and focused on the mobilization of the mayors and their constituents, the style of the mayors and the theory of heroic invention. The author will borrow from this framework and apply it in this chapter and the subsequent chapters on the respective mayors and cities. The term of mayor in Keysville is 4 years as set forth in the incorporation documents from the Georgia General Assembly and is a part time position. The form of government in the city of Keysville is a strong mayor form of government. The last city government to operate in Keysville prior to Mayor Gresham’s

resided in the county during the week of August 5-10, 1996 and made telephone calls and site visits to Keysville. The author of this paper sent questionnaires to all five city council persons. After three mailings, only two responses were received. The respondents were a black female and a black male. The information from those questionnaires is incorporated within this questionnaire section.

91 Minion K. C. Morrison, Black Political Mobilization: Leadership, Power, Mass Behavior, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), pp. xvi-21. The focus of Morrison’s book is “how far the mobilization campaigns went toward the goals of community activation and acquisition of political resources” (p. 244). Mobilization as defined by Morrison is “the collective activation and application of community or group resources to the acquisition of social and political goods” (p. 244). Heroic invention is understood by the author to mean an individual who commits extreme acts in a creative or imaginative manner (pp. 95-96). Per Hanes Walton there are three styles of black politicians: black boss (one who rules using machine politics), black activism (politicians who uses rhetoric) and black accommodationist. Hanes Walton Jr. Black Politics: A Theoretical and Structural Analysis, (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1972), p. 208.
administration was 1933, over 50 years ago. The racial and gender composition of the five member Keysville city council is as follows: two black females, two black males and one white male. For the two questionnaire respondents, the election to the city council of Keysville is their first elected political position. The female states that she ran for office because she has a desire to serve her community. Neither city council person has aspirations for another political office. None of the council members is assigned an area of authority due to the small size of the city. The mayor has two members on her staff, both of whom are black females and are part time employees. Keysville has a city hall (a converted trailer) which is the location of the mayor's office. The citizens of Keysville are able to contact Mayor Gresham at home and at city hall regarding city and personal business; this is an example of the rural lifestyle and rural politics. Both council persons agreed that the mayor has a staff, but incorrectly stated that there is only one part time person (black female) who is compensated with pay. Mayor Gresham has an economic plan for Keysville which involves securing funds for a sewage system which would make Keysville more attractive to new industries. The council persons concur. The female councilperson suggests that the economic development plan of the mayor contains more items such as low income housing, small industry and an elementary school. This response is more in line with the answer given by the mayor.

There are no records from that administration either at the Keysville City Hall nor at the Burke County Courthouse.
For a small city there are several important services which the city provides its citizens either solely or jointly with the county. Those services are as follows:

- police and fire which are provided jointly by the city and county
- emergency services (e.g. ambulance) provided jointly by the city and county
- water provided by the city
- garbage services (e.g., pickup, disposal) provided by the city
- street services (e.g., paving, repair) provided jointly by the city and county
- recreational services (e.g., parks, pools) provided by the city
- public education (e.g., elementary, secondary) provided by the county
- adult education (e.g., literacy) provided by the city

The administration prior to Mayor Gresham’s did not provide the above services or any service to the citizens of Keysville. The city will be able to provide more services because Keysville’s received $8,000 from Governor Miller in 1994 to repair the city hall and for the Vision of Literacy program. Effective April 1996, Keysville was awarded a sewer loan/grant by the State of Georgia. Also in 1996, a local resident of Keysville, Mr. Wright, who is a deputy for the Burke County Sheriff’s Office was asked and accepted the appointment of Keysville Sheriff, to be paid by the City of Keysville. As of June 1996, the city council voted to accept the bid of Tony Lane for garbage

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93 City Council Meeting Minutes dated March 8, 1994.
94 City Council Meeting Minutes dated April 8, 1996.
95 Ibid.
As of August 7, 1996, the City of Keysville city council created a water board to oversee the City of Keysville Water System. The city council meeting minutes also indicate that street lighting and street paving are priority items that the city provides to residents. Both city council respondents indicate that no city services were provided by the prior administration. The most important service the female respondent wants the city to provide that it is not providing at present is sewer service and the next most important service is public education. The male respondent believes all services not currently provided by the city to be most important and wants to see the city provide these services, such as police and fire protection; emergency services; sewer; street services; recreational services; and public education. In addition to the services that are provided by the city of Keysville to the citizens (at the time the questionnaire was completed), Mayor Gresham wants to provide other important services such as sewer, street services and elementary public education. The sewer and street services could be provided by the city if they receive funding from the state or federal governments or from a private funding source. As stated earlier, the county is responsible for elementary public education. Mayor Gresham believes that the most important current issues small towns and cities face are elementary school education, housing and crime. The council persons have differing opinions regarding the current issues small towns and cities face in

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96 City Council Meeting Minutes dated June 1996, no date is given, just month and year.

97 City Council Meeting Minutes dated August 7, 1996.
rural areas. The male believes all the city service areas he wants Keysville to provide to be the most important current issues facing small towns and cities in rural areas. The female lists three issues in order of importance: poverty, housing, and crime. Crime and crime prevention are issues addressed in the City Council meeting minutes; there is much discussion regarding burglar bars on the windows of City Hall and the installation of street lights on dark streets. The City Council Meeting minutes also reflect discussion about the installation of a Keysville Municipal Court judge whose duties would include levying fines against individuals who broke the law within the city limits of Keysville. The potential exists for more revenue for the City from this action. The Municipal Court judge position was finalized December 11, 1995 at which time Judge Kathy Grunewald was sworn in.98

By virtue of the size of the city of Keysville and the racial disparity in the population, the actions and decisions of Mayor Gresham are questioned by whites in the community, such as her long distance calls or National Conference of Black Mayors workshop expenditures. The questions that are raised are whether the telephone calls are actually business calls or is the Mayor charging the City of Keysville for her personal telephone calls, whether the workshops are necessary since Keysville is such a small city what relevance could the workshops have, and is the mayor charging the City of

98 City Council Meeting Minutes dated December 11, 1995.
Keysville for her personal trips. In spite of the dissecting of her actions, Mayor Gresham has found that her male counterparts and other city officials do accept her as mayor. The male council person disclosed that he did not accept Mayor Gresham as his mayor but gave no reason why or how those feelings have been exhibited. The female city council person revealed that she did accept Mayor Gresham as her mayor. In view of the fact that there have been no elections for mayor since 1988 is another indication that the residents of Keysville accept Mayor Gresham as their mayor. Mayor Gresham’s daily activities include but are not limited to the following: read all communications and answer same; write city ordinances; work with the library, the city sponsored tutor services, adult education programs; volunteer for programs sponsored within the City; represent the city in an official capacity on the County, State and National level; preside over City Council meetings; network; attend meetings on grants; meet with prospective businesses and meet with constituents and residents.

Small cities and rural areas have often relied on the federal government to remedy their problems; Mayor Gresham believes that there is no best method to address the concerns of the rural cities and towns but that all avenues must be explored and that

99 The City of Keysville 1996 budget indicates that Mayor Gresham’s expenses included travel of $1,000, and the Mayor’s discretionary fund of $500. The total telephone expense for 1996 is $5000, no indication who made these calls.

100 The author visited the Burke County Courthouse on August 1, 1996 and spoke to the Burke County Voting Registrar and was informed that if there is no opposition for mayor then no election is scheduled for that office because it is assumed that the incumbent mayor will vote for herself and by doing so will win by at least one vote.
coalitions should be formed with individuals, groups, and other governments sympathetic to helping rural areas. The city council persons who responded also believe that there is no best method to address the concerns of a rural town or city but that one must approach both the state and federal governments for assistance.

Keysville is a small city and as such has no major industries. Mayor Gresham is desirous of industries such as textile or any industry that do not destroy or harm the environment. The female is the only one of the two council persons to list the nursing home as an industry in Keysville. The male desires an electronics industry within Keysville. The female would like textile, lumber, and metal-working industries to operate in Keysville. Most of the employed citizens in Keysville work for the Keysville Convalescent Home, the major employer. The female city council person named the Keysville Convalescent and Nursing Home as the major employer in Keysville. The male council person did not give a response. More industries in Keysville would increase the city budget. The municipal revenue powers as of the Georgia Constitution of 1983 include tangible and intangible property taxes, local option sales tax, alcoholic beverage excise taxes, local option mixed drink tax, franchise taxes, insurance premium taxes, hotel-motel tax, occupation taxes, real estate transfer tax, licenses, fines and forfeitures, user charges, building permit fees, intergovernmental revenues, other revenues, revenue
from investment and borrowing funds. The Keysville revenue sources are tangible and intangible property taxes, local option sales tax, franchise tax, insurance premium taxes, alcohol beverage excise tax, licenses, user charges and donations/grants. The Keysville budget shows that the monthly deposits and monthly expenditures fluctuate which results in monthly ending balances that vary from $14,448 to $973 within a 14 month period. The deposits rarely exceed the expenses. The budget for 1996 (the only yearly record available) shows revenue of $57,083, and expenditures of $57,083. The largest expenses are administrative and office expenses. Under the other revenues provisions, the City garnered funds from the annual "Come Back to Keysville Day Festival."

Mayor Gresham states that many of the individuals who work outside Keysville commute at least 30 miles to Augusta, Georgia, to work, doing brick work or nursing. Both council persons state that few citizens actually work in the City of Keysville and that those who work do so in Augusta, Georgia. Based on the number of businesses within Keysville, and the small number of jobs those businesses could provide, the

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102 Per telephone conversation with Mayor Gresham and City Clerk Prophet on March 18, 1997.
103 City Council Meeting Minutes, February 14, 1994 through April 1995.
104 City of Keysville 1996 Budget.
105 Ibid.
106 City Council Meeting Minutes, October 9, 1995.
citizens in Keysville must commute elsewhere within the county or outside the county for work. The council persons who responded to the questionnaire do not appear aware of the number of citizens who work within the county or in Waynesboro, the county seat.

The major health needs of the City are not direct costs of the city because the City of Keysville did not have a doctor nor a hospital but there is a clinic next door to the City Hall which is open Mondays and Fridays and is operated by the county. The Georgia State Office of Rural Health was helpful in assisting Keysville in obtaining a grant for the Boggs Rural Life Center in Keysville. The grant is designed to improve access to health care and social services, develop community leadership and implement local entrepreneurial activities in the African American community. Boggs Rural Life Center also received $318,780 from the Kellogg Foundation.107

Mayor Gresham has several campaign issues in her platform. Those issues in order of importance are: water/sewer, education, health care, housing, crime and poverty. All of these are issues which would be important to any mayor, whether a small or large city but the Mayor has been hampered in achieving most of these goals because the residents do not have the educational background to sustain a business which could provide the citizens with a high salary nor does the city have an operating sewer system.

107 Interview conducted by author with Ms. Patricia Shaw, Primary Care Development Specialist, Georgia State Office of Rural Health on July 19, 1994. This information was in a letter from Ms. Shaw to Ms. Mable Cain Gresham, PRC Grant Program Manager, Georgia Department of Human Resources, dated August 4, 1994.
which would be necessary for a large industry. Only two of Mayor Gresham's campaign
issues have come to fruition: water and health care. Education as a campaign issue
cannot be fully addressed by an elected official in Keysville directly because the primary
and secondary level schools are under the control of the county. Mayor Gresham's
influence at the county level is her ability to lobby the county commissioner and voice
her concerns and those of her constituents. The adult education provided by the City of
Keysville is not on the baccalaureate level or higher but assists individuals with
acquisition of the GED. Housing in Keysville consists of mobile homes and older homes
because there has been little economic growth in Keysville even during Mayor Gresham's
tenure which could change because Keysville is located within a rural empowerment zone
and is eligible for federal funding. The immediate benefit for Keysville from the rural
empowerment zone program is funding for a Human Resource Building. Future benefits
for Keysville include vocational training and self-reliance programs for women and
children on public assistance. The author was not able to secure crime statistics on
Keysville. The poverty rate in Keysville was addressed earlier within the paper. The
minority poverty rate and unemployment in Keysville is high compared to Burke County.
Mayor Gresham is unable to reduce either the poverty rate or unemployment rate in
Keysville and will continue to encounter difficulty in these areas because of the lack of
service-producing industries, and the lack of professional specialty job openings within
Keysville. In 1994 Governor Miller awarded Keysville a $41,315 employment incentive
grant.\textsuperscript{108} The council persons agree that one of the campaign issues of Mayor Gresham is water. The male respondent noted that other campaign issues of Mayor Gresham are crime, housing, water/sewer, education and health care.

Mayor Gresham believes that the difficulties she encountered before becoming mayor and afterwards are due mainly to her being a black female, which is a unique position. Black women “suffer more than double jeopardy in...political office: they suffer the disadvantages in political life of both their race and ethnicity, and their gender.”\textsuperscript{109} The male council person did not feel that a black female mayor of a southern rural town faced difficulties in the job. The female believes that a black female mayor of a southern rural town faces difficulties in the job because of her race.

Because Mayor Gresham can not govern alone and she has formed coalitions with elected officials in the state legislature, the county commission and around the United States. One of the individuals who has been very helpful to Mayor Gresham is State Representative Tyrone Brooks. Mayor Gresham has also formed coalitions with individuals associated with interest groups who are not necessarily from rural areas; these individuals are black, white, female, male, from urban areas, from rural areas, and Democrats. The city council persons who responded to the questionnaire also state that there are individuals in the state legislature on whom they can rely to get things done for

\textsuperscript{108} City Council Meeting Minutes dated April 11, 1994.
\textsuperscript{109} R. Darcy, Susan Welch and Janet Clark, \textit{Women Elections, & Representation}, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), p. 34.
Keysville. These individuals are black, female, male, from a rural area, and Democrats. The female also listed individuals who are white.

Mayor Gresham believes that the state legislature does listen to and helps the rural areas. Some state offices which are particularly helpful to Mayor Gresham are the Department of Community Affairs, Rural Program with financial assistance and the Governor’s Discretionary Budget with the Adult Education project. On the federal level, Representative Cynthia McKinney is very supportive of Mayor Gresham and the Keysville struggle. Mayor Gresham has taken advantage of several federal programs for Keysville, such as a community development block grant for the water system. This program is specifically designed for rural cities and towns. The city council persons also agreed that the federal government and state governments listen to and help rural areas. The female states that Keysville has received financial support from the state legislature to repair the Keysville City Hall and financial support for the adult literacy program entitled Vision of Literacy. Keysville also received financial support from the federal government in the form of a grant for their water system per the female council person. The male council person noted that Keysville received federal money for Keysville’s education program.

Mayor Gresham noted that Keysville experienced a decline in its male population between the ages of 20-40. There did not appear to be an outmigration of the females. Both council persons remarked that Keysville is not experiencing a decline in its
population. But the male council person stated that Keysville experienced an increase in its population because blacks age 20-40, females age 20-40, and males age 20-40 are immigrating.

When Mayor Gresham was elected mayor of Keysville, she became the first black elected official in her city. Mayor Gresham’s supporters when she ran for her present position were blacks, men and women. Mayor Gresham stated that whites, women and men, did not support her in the beginning but now they are supportive. The group which Mayor Gresham believes accorded the most support when she campaigned for mayor was the Keysville Concerned Citizens, the black citizens group. The male council person gave a conflicting, unclear statement that he believed that black and white women and men all reacted positively and negatively to Mayor Gresham becoming mayor. The author is unable to understand this response in light of the difficulty Emma Gresham encountered upon first seeking the position of mayor of Keysville and the court battles. The black female council person believes that black women and men responded positively to Mayor Gresham as mayor and that white women and men reacted negatively to Mayor Gresham becoming mayor. This belief is given validity by the newspaper coverage and the litigation pursued by whites prior to Mayor Gresham’s becoming mayor.

The election ballots in Keysville are non-partisan in accordance with the new charter. The city council persons both identified themselves as Democrats. Mayor
Gresham’s family is very supportive of her becoming mayor of Keysville. Family members were very visible during the campaign and they also contributed money to her campaign. The city council persons received moral support from family members. The male council person’s family campaigned for him when he ran for city council.

Although Mayor Gresham did not refer to her campaign objectives as a women’s agenda she does believe that a women’s agenda exists with issues such as family and children programs, adult literacy, school dropouts and pregnancy. The mayor did not have a women’s agenda when she ran for mayor according to the city council persons. Neither one believes there is a women’s agenda. The issues of Mayor Gresham’s campaign are women’s issues even though neither the Mayor nor the city councilpersons refers to the issues as such. R. Darcy et al, state that women candidates and women elected officials are “more likely to give priority to women’s issues and those focusing on families and children.”\footnote{10} The women’s issues promoted by Mayor Gresham are education, water, and health care.

Mayor Gresham belongs to two women’s organizations, the Women’s State Commission and the National Conference of Black Mayors Women’s Coalition. Neither of these organizations assisted her in becoming mayor. The female council person does not belong to any women’s organizations. The male council person is a member of the Masons. These individuals were elected to the city council without assistance from an

\footnote{10} Ibid., p. 182.
organization. Mayor Gresham and the woman council person were not supported by women’s organizations yet they were elected to their respective positions which is contrary to scholars contention that women when running for elected office on the local level, are more likely to receive organizational support from women’s organizations and to be actively involved in civic activities.\textsuperscript{111} Neither Mayor Gresham nor the woman council person received financial assistance from a women’s organization. Mayor Gresham is active in civic activities such as the Keysville Concerned Citizens. Similarly the black male’s winning is unusual because he too received no support from male organizations and won without “being recruited by a party or civic group.”\textsuperscript{112}

Mayor Gresham is a native of Keysville and a college graduate and also completed some graduate work. Before returning home to Keysville in the 1980s, Mayor Gresham was a school teacher in Augusta, Georgia and returned to Keysville upon retirement. Mayor Gresham is a mother and a grandmother. Her annual income (excluding her husband’s income) is between $31,000 and $40,000. Mayor Gresham was between 51-60 when she was elected mayor of Keysville in 1988. The female council person is a high school graduate with some business college and technical college. The male council person did not respond regarding his highest level of education. The female council person is retired and her annual income is $10,000-$20,000. The male city

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., p. 37.

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., p. 38.
council person received the same annual income. The female council person was between the ages of 51-60 when first elected to office. The male council person was between the ages of 41-50 when first elected to office. The three city officials of Keysville who completed the questionnaire are blacks who are over 40 years of age when they were first elected to their present positions. Scholars have concluded that community’s with high socioeconomic levels, especially better-educated individuals with high incomes are more likely to have proportionally more women available for officeholding. This is not true in Keysville, the residents socioeconomic levels are low but the city council consists of two black women and the mayor is a black woman. Scholars found that “being in the South has no relationship to proportion of women on the council, while community size has some.” Mayor Gresham and the woman city council person have education levels beyond other community members yet similar to that of successful women candidates studied by scholars who found that “candidates and public officials are much better educated than most of the general population.” Educational background is viewed by scholars as an important component of a candidate’s qualifications in addition to previous political experience. None of the respondents to the questionnaire had previous political experience except for their

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113 Ibid., p. 45. There is no indication from the City of Keysville Budget whether the city council nor the mayor actually received a salary.
114 Ibid., p. 47. There is no information on cities less than 50,000 population.
116 Ibid., p. 70.
involvement with the Keysville Concerned Citizens. The noninvolvement in politics of the women is not surprising because scholars have found that women have little officeholding experience because they have not been legally able to hold office as long as men. The same would also hold true for black women, especially in the South because the majority of black elected officials were elected after the passage of the Voting Rights Act. The city council persons questionnaire responses reflect that they appear to be in accord with what the mayor has accomplished for Keysville although the responses, also reflect that the black female council person and the mayor are more compatible in terms of their plans for Keysville. In spite of the large percentage of the voting age population that lives below the poverty level, Mayor Gresham has served in her executive municipal capacity since 1988 without electoral opposition and without interference from the lower socio-economic group. But Mayor Gresham must address the economic concerns of this group in order to remain in office or to pave the way for another black or black woman mayor.

Based on the information gathered and presented above, the author has concluded that no statistics are available to verify whether Mayor Gresham has been able to change the lives of Keysville residents in the area of education. Accomplishments of Mayor Gresham and members of the Concerned Citizens of Keysville include the city government reincorporation and subsequent city services. These are examples of black

\[117\] Ibid.
political participation which contrary to studies of blacks in politics, was not “greatly affected by social position,” because the black community was involved regardless of social standing. The health and aesthetics of the lives of the citizens of Keysville will also improve at the completion of the sewer system. The citizens of Keysville are able to conduct city elections because of the actions of Mayor Gresham and the Concerned Citizens of Keysville. The items listed are examples of political and social empowerment as defined in Chapter 1. Economically, the City of Keysville is typical of most rural southern cities in the few job opportunities available, high number of female headed households below the poverty level, and high unemployment. All of the items above are indications that the social condition of the majority of the residents of Keysville has been positively impacted somewhat by Mayor Gresham but the economic condition has not been positively impacted. The political changes that have occurred in Keysville have been due largely to the political style of Mayor Gresham which is black activism. By this the author means, a black politician who “combines rhetoric and organization with programs. ‘He [She] will attempt to employ whatever programs the local, state, or national government agencies have created to help solve the pressing socioeconomic needs of his [her] black constituency.’” Mayor Gresham goes beyond government


119 The percentage change in the assessed fair market value of real and personal property in Keysville from 1988 to 1995 was a 45% increase. The percentage change in the assessed fair market value of real and personal property Keysville from 1977 to 1988 was a 78% decrease.
programs that will assist her constituency and actively seeks private programs and grants also. The negative impact of these actions is that this creates a dependency on such programs. “The poverty of this area makes it “relatively easy for the acquisition of base economic resources,” which “is at another turn one of the most serious impediments to complete mobilization or rearrangement of resource allocations” therefore the power that has been gained is “limited and of a short-term effect, without access to some economic means with which to drive needed welfare programs.”

The economic base of Keysville must be enhanced to decrease the dependence of Keysville on outside sources, government and private.

The political accomplishments in Keysville are a testament to the tenacity of the citizens, the mobilization of the community and the heroic invention of Mayor Gresham. Black women historically are underrepresented as local officeholders and only a few have served as mayors which represents an ethnic bias in representation. The number of black women mayors in Georgia has remained in the single digits with an even smaller number in rural Georgia.

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120 Morrison, Black Political Mobilization, p. 252.
121 Blacks are the majority population and political group in Keysville. As of August 1, 1996, Burke County Registrar’s Office lists 177 total voters in Keysville of whom 141 are black and 36 are white. Ibid., pp. 96 and 244.
122 Darcy, Welch and Clark, Women Elections, pp. 33 and 35.
CHAPTER 5

A DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF OLIVER, GA

Based on the framework from Chapter 4 relating demographic characteristics to electoral participation and the relationship between race and the socioeconomic status of blacks, this chapter will examine the socioeconomic and political changes that have occurred in Oliver, Georgia focusing mainly on the changes during Mayor Justine Brown’s tenure.

History of Screven County

Oliver is located in the coastal plains area of the state, within Screven County. As reported in Chapter 3, a portion of Screven County was originally contained within Burke County before Screven was created in 1793 as a separate county. Screven was a part of St. Matthew Parish in 1758.1 Screven County was also formed from a portion of Effingham County in 1793.2 Upon its creation, Screven became the 14th county established in Georgia.3 The county was named for General James Screven, a Revolutionary War hero who was killed in the battle of Medway Church in Liberty

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1 Dixon Hollingsworth, ed., The History of Screven County, Georgia, (Dallas, TX: Curtis Media Corporation, 1989), p. 9.
3 Hollingsworth, History of Screven County, Georgia, p. 18.
County in 1778. Screven was subsequently parceled to form other counties, namely Bulloch in 1796 and Jenkins in 1905. Screven is physically “located in east-central Georgia within the southeast portion of the Central Savannah River Area,...is bounded by the Savannah and Ogeechee Rivers; the County has a total area of 650 square miles or 416,000 acres.” The county seat of Screven County is Sylvania. Screven County is not included in the Metropolitan Statistical Areas of Savannah (which is the closest) or Augusta.

Screven County’s political history dates back to the Revolutionary War with an American defeat at The Battle of Brier Creek. Screven County has several historical sites and buildings. There are two large historical plantations located within Screven County, in addition to churches and farms which have historical significance. The first church in Screven County is the Little Ogeechee Baptist Church (though not the county’s oldest church building) organized in 1790 in Oliver (the area which later became the city

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7 See Appendix for State of Georgia Metropolitan Statistical Area map.

8 Hollingsworth, Screven County Through the Years, p. 4.

of Oliver) and proceeds now with church services in the 1990s.\textsuperscript{10} This is only one of the historical sites located in Oliver. A distinguished visitor to Screven County in 1791 was George Washington, who is reported to have billeted in Oliver (the area which later became the city of Oliver) during his first term tour of the states.\textsuperscript{11} Another distinction for Screven County was in 1843, the world’s longest railroad (the Central of Georgia Railway), traversed from Savannah through Screven County to Macon; a stop on this railway was known as Number 4 and later acquired the name Oliver.\textsuperscript{12} Screven County also suffered losses during the Civil War particularly to its railroad. General W. T. Sherman in his march to the sea from Atlanta to Savannah, stopped in Oliver, Screven County, boarded at the Lufburrow House, destroyed the rail lines, quartered his horses and men in the cemetery of the Little Ogeechee Church and laid waste to the headstones, many of which remain in the same position.

**Demographics of Screven County**

The population of Screven County in 1800 was 3,019, of that number there were 766 slaves, and 2,253 whites.\textsuperscript{13} The slave population in Screven County increased between 1800 and 1860 not due to the invention of the cotton gin but due to the increased

\textsuperscript{10} Hollingsworth, *Screven County Through the Years*, p. 4. This area was incorporated as the City of Oliver in 1912 by the Georgia General Assembly.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., pp. 4-5. This railroad stop was incorporated as the City of Oliver in 1912 by the Georgia General Assembly.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p. 6.

production of rice. The total population of Screven County fluctuated between 1800 and 1830, steadily grew through 1920 and decreased after the Depression. Blacks were a majority of Screven County’s population from 1840 through 1960. Prior to the Civil War enslaved Africans were the majority of the population and were used in the production of cotton and rice. Post Civil War Screven County, the newly freed persons remained as farm workers, mainly tenant farmers and laborers. Screven County remained an agriculture based economy through 1950. After 1950, agriculture was on the wane due to farm mechanization, chemical use, soil infertility, soil erosion, residual effects of the boll weevil infestation and the Depression. Also blacks had migrated to the cities and to the North by 1950 for the economic reasons stated above and because of the social oppressions. The population of Screven County oscillated between 1970 and 1990. The population in Screven County was 12,591 in 1970, then increased to 14,043 in 1980 and declined to 13,842 in 1990. These figures represent an 11.53% increase in population between 1970 and 1980 and an 1.43% decrease in population between 1980 and 1990.

In 1850, Screven County produced 510,550 pounds of rice and 3,936 bales of ginned cotton as compared to Burke County which produced 36,389 pounds of rice and 19,175 bales of ginned cotton. This is an unusually high rice production for a non-coastal county. Liberty County produced 223,297 pounds of rice in 1840 and 1,892,462 pounds of rice in 1850. US Census Office, *The Seventh Census of the US: 1850*, (Washington, DC: Robert Armstrong, Public Printer, 1853), pp. 369-384.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 5-1</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>POPULATION BY RACE FOR SCREVEN COUNTY FROM 1790 TO 1990</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POPULATION</th>
<th>1790</th>
<th>1810</th>
<th>1820</th>
<th>1830</th>
<th>1840</th>
<th>1850</th>
<th>1860</th>
<th>1870</th>
<th>1880</th>
<th>1890</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FREE</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>4,888</td>
<td>6,613</td>
<td>7,506</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLAVES</td>
<td>766</td>
<td>1,816</td>
<td>1,833</td>
<td>2,366</td>
<td>2,623</td>
<td>3,673</td>
<td>4,530</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHITES</td>
<td>2,253</td>
<td>2,657</td>
<td>2,090</td>
<td>2,387</td>
<td>2,162</td>
<td>3,173</td>
<td>3,742</td>
<td>4,287</td>
<td>6,173</td>
<td>6,916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>3,019</td>
<td>4,477</td>
<td>3,941</td>
<td>4,776</td>
<td>4,794</td>
<td>6,847</td>
<td>8,274</td>
<td>9,175</td>
<td>12,786</td>
<td>14,424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLACKS</td>
<td>10,946</td>
<td>12,165</td>
<td>13,850</td>
<td>11,621</td>
<td>11,607</td>
<td>10,148</td>
<td>7,825</td>
<td>5,881</td>
<td>6,379</td>
<td>6,186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHITES</td>
<td>8,306</td>
<td>8,037</td>
<td>4,919</td>
<td>8,882</td>
<td>8,746</td>
<td>7,849</td>
<td>7,090</td>
<td>6,694</td>
<td>7,596</td>
<td>7,591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>19,252</td>
<td>20,202</td>
<td>23,552</td>
<td>20,503</td>
<td>20,353</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>14,919</td>
<td>12,591</td>
<td>14,043</td>
<td>13,842</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Department of Commerce. Census Bureau
Totals included blacks, whites and others.

In 1990 the Census Bureau reports 1,377 persons in Screven County who are 0-5 years old, 2,234 persons who are 6-15 years old, 6,941 persons who are 16-54 years old, 1,640 persons who are 55-64 years old and 2,061 persons who are age 65 and over.\(^{16}\)

There are more elderly white females in Screven County than other groups in the county and more working age females, black and white. The number of working age individuals in Screven County outnumber the very young and the elderly. The county patterns are in line with the State and the nation for 1990 with the largest population in the working age groups (ages 16-55). These figures represent the aging of the baby boom population.

\(^{16}\) US Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, CD-ROM.
which as it continues to age will present a financial strain on the governments for services because the younger group is much smaller.

The majority of residents of Screven County live in a rural area. In 1990, there are 10,973 persons in rural Screven County and 2,869 persons in the urban area of the county. As long as the majority of residents of Screven County live in a rural area then they will pay “a substantially higher share of their income to maintain” county services.

The large rural population hinder growth in Screven County because rural or nonmetropolitan areas must compete against one another for the limited federal funds set aside for such areas and for corporate leaders who are seeking to relocate, expand and are desirous of new markets. A positive population indicator in Screven County is the fact that over 80% of the Screven County population are native to the area. The large native population shows that there is stability and little outmigration of natives from Screven County but the declining population indicates that there is also little inmigration.

The racial composition of Screven County did not change significantly between 1970 and 1990. The black population of Screven County was 5,881 in 1970, 6,379 in

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17 U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, CD-ROM.
20 U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, CD-ROM.
1980 and 6,186 in 1990.\textsuperscript{21} The white population in Screven County was 6,694 in 1970, 7,596 in 1980 and 7,591 in 1990.\textsuperscript{22} Therefore in 1970, blacks were 46.71% of Screven County’s population, blacks in 1980 were 45.42% of the population and in 1990 blacks are 44.69% of Screven County’s population. At no time since 1970 were blacks a majority of Screven County’s population; this is unlike other Black Belt counties. Therefore after 1970, Screven County was no longer a Black Belt county because blacks were no longer the majority of the population.

Screven has been an important transportation hub for the area. Within the county there is the Savannah river, the Ogeechee River and the “main part of the Central of Georgia railway” which ran through the southern portion of the county during the early 1900s.\textsuperscript{23} The railway remains important to the city of Oliver because the city hall of Oliver, an historical landmark, is located near the railroad tracks.

The major highways which intersect the county are U.S. 301 and Highways/State Routes 21 and 24 with Oliver’s city hall located on Highway 21. The local railway service is provided by Norfolk Southern and Ogeechee Railway and local air transportation for Screven County is provided by the Screven County Airport.

\textsuperscript{21} US Department of Commerce, US Census Bureau.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{23} Candler and Evans, \textit{Cyclopedia of Georgia}, p. 260.
Income

"In 1990, farming was the source of 13.7% of local earnings and 11% of local employment." Since the 1970s, farming has become less important as a source of income and this is due in part to the decrease in the number of farms in Screven County. In 1900 there were 2,275 farms in Screven County of which 1,039 were black tenant farmers. By 1920 the number of farms in Screven County was 3,636 of which 2,189 were black tenants and owners. By 1940, the number of farms in Screven County was 2,320 with 1,178 black farms. There were 1,127 farms in Screven County in 1970. The number of farms in Screven County by 1987 had decreased dramatically to 304 of which 40 were black operated. The reasons for the decline in the number of farms in Screven included the Depression, the boll weevil infestation, soil erosion, soil infertility, farm mechanization, chemical use and the inability to make a living farming due to low cotton prices. For Screven County, as most of Georgia, the other counties examined in

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this paper, and the nation, farm related income decreased because of the reasons stated above. The income source in 1990, for Screven County residents is mainly from wages and salaries (43%). "In terms of occupation, production (non-farm) workers comprised the largest proportion of Screven County’s labor force in 1990 with 40% while technical and sales workers made up the second largest segment of the labor force with 24%. Services and professional workers each comprised 14% of the local labor force, while farming/forestry occupations comprised 8%." Unemployment in Screven County is 9% which is higher than the State (5%) and the nation (4.4%). "The magnitude of actual unemployment may be considerably higher than the official unemployment figures indicate" for the following reasons: "undercount of unemployment is regarded as especially large in rural areas because they ‘contain disproportionately large numbers of both discouraged workers and involuntary part-time workers and unemployment among young adults remains high.” Screven County has a high household income. Most households in Screven County earn over $20,000 per year in income. But few families earn more than $100,000 per year. The county’s figures are in line with the state which

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30 Joint Screven County Comprehensive Plan: 2015, p. 56.
31 Ibid., p. 57.
32 Ibid., p. 59.
34 Governor's Development Council, Council of Economic Development Organizations, Economic Development Workbook, Region 8, (Georgia Department of Community Affairs, May 19, 1993), p. 22. Households and families are not synonymous. Households include anyone, related or unrelated, living in the residence. Families include all related persons living in the residence.
shows most households earn between $20,000-$29,999 per year. In Screven County, 22.85% of the population live below the poverty level. Of the children in Screven County who are 18 years of age or younger, 28.67% live below the poverty level. For female headed households the poverty level figures are high. The percentage of female householder families who are below the poverty level is 52.47% total, with related children under 18 years of age, 59.37% and with related children under 5 years of age, 63.87%. These percentages are alarming. Racially there are 149 white families who live below the poverty level (21.98%), of which 68 are female householder families (10%); there are 521 black families who live below the poverty level (76.84%), of which 400 are female householder families (59%). In Screven County there is a larger percentage of the black female headed household families who live below the poverty level than the white female headed household families which is an indication of the disparity that exists between the black population and the white population in Screven County just as it exists in the State and the Nation. The reasons for the high percentage of female headed household families who live below the poverty level include the fact that there are few employment opportunities within Screven County for women outside manufacturing and the need to commute outside the county for job opportunities. “Historically, males have earned more than females and whites have earned more than blacks on average.”

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35 US Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population and Housing Summary Tape File 3A. The total number of families who live below the poverty level in Screven County is 678.

future growth of Screven County is negatively affected by such large percentages of the population living below the poverty level. The poverty rates in Screven County reflect a similar trend in the country through the 1980s and into the 1990s, whereby rural poverty grew faster than urban poverty and became more entrenched. Another reason for the high poverty level among female headed household families is due to the lack of federal/state programs designed to eliminate poverty. The effect of female headed households on the educational system is discussed in Chapter 4.

To combat the further erosion of the economy, Screven County has instituted several programs to provide employers and residents education and training opportunities to decrease the population living below the poverty level such as the Ogeechee Technical Institute which is based in Statesboro, Georgia but offers courses in Sylvania as a state operated technical school. Screven County also offers on-the-job-training to Screven County employers under the Federally funded Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). A program the county must also institute is child daycare so that the female heads of households in Screven County may have the opportunity to avail themselves of the training programs. The distribution between the workers of Screven County who worked within the county and the number of residents who worked outside the county is roughly equal.

Education

Screven County provides for the educational needs of the county’s young people who are elementary and secondary age. There are four schools located in Sylvania, (one of which is a private school) for all children from kindergarten through 12th grade. Prior to desegregation there were separate schools for blacks and schools for whites in Screven County.

As early as 1794, Screven County had a public school fund but no public school until 1852, at which time the school operated with tuition fees not public funds. The first public school to operate in Screven County with public funds was Sylvania High School in 1903 in Sylvania, Georgia. In 1916, there were 62 public schools operated by the county. Through the efforts of the black legislators in the Georgia General Assembly during Reconstruction, Screven County for the first time made provisions for the education of black young people in the county. In the “1916 report on the county school system” there were “listed 23 Negro schools [the report]...gave no details about them” other than the fact that “most of them were adjacent to a church or lodge...” The

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40 Ibid., p. 5.
41 Dixon Hollingsworth, ed., The History of Screven County, Georgia, (Dallas, TX: Curtis Media Corporation, 1989), p. 87.
42 Hollingsworth, Annals of Screven County, Number 2, Education in Screven County, pp. 11-12. The author telephoned the Georgia Department of Education on March 18, 1997, no information exists on the segregated schools in Georgia, no idea where the information can be found.
city of Oliver had one black school and one white school at that time. “By 1936, the number of white schools [in the county] had been reduced to nine.”43 One of the white junior high schools was located in Oliver.44 Prior to the Brown decision of the US Supreme Court, Screven County in August 1952 announced its “biggest building program in the history of the system, with $1,333,000 to be spent on new buildings and improvements, mostly for the county’s Negro schools.”45 This project was completed in 1955 with only four black schools remaining in Screven County from the 23 listed in 1916.46 One of the new buildings in Screven County for black students was Central High School; this school was to serve black high school and elementary students in the entire county.47 Desegregation did not occur immediately after the Brown decision in 1954. The desegregation plan of the Screven County Board of Education in 1966 was “based on a policy of freedom of choice to be offered annually in all schools without regard to race, color, or national origins.”48 This was a tactic to circumvent the desegregation order of the Court while allowing the status quo to remain. The Screven County Board of Education freedom of choice plan was rejected by the US Commissioner of Education “as

43 Hollingsworth, History of Screven County, Georgia, p. 87.
44 Ibid.
45 Hollingsworth, Annals of Screven County, Number 2, Education in Screven County, p. 14.
46 Ibid. Consolidation of schools had contributed to the decrease of black schools in Screven County and throughout the State of Georgia.
47 Hollingsworth, Screven County Through the Years, p. 16.
48 Hollingsworth, Annals of Screven County, Number 2, Education in Screven County, p. 20.
being in non-compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.” "In 1969, Screven County was ordered by Judge Alexander Lawrence of the federal court in Savannah to desegregate its schools” afterwards “...the transition occurred without...” incident. The Screven County public school system was completely desegregated by the 1970-71 school year. By 1987, the only public schools in Screven County were the aforementioned elementary school, middle school and high school. Presently, there are three public schools in Screven County to serve all the kindergarten, elementary, middle and high school young people. There are no colleges, universities or technical schools in Screven County, although there are places of higher learning in neighboring counties, such as Georgia Southern University in Statesboro, (Bulloch County), Ogeechee Technical Institute in Statesboro, (Bulloch County) (offers some courses in Sylvania, the county seat of Screven County) and Savannah State University in Savannah, Georgia, (Chatham County). Screven County offers a prospective business an educated populace and in turn offers prospective residents a high earned income. But Screven County has not always been a place where blacks could prosper.

49 Ibid.
50 Hollingsworth, History of Screven County, Georgia, p. 87.
51 Hollingsworth, Annals of Screven County, Number 2, Education in Screven County, p. 21.
52 Hollingsworth, History of Screven County, Georgia, p. 87.
“In 1939 in excess of 90% of minority families in Screven County existed in a sharecropping farmer status.”53 Because blacks were sharecroppers, it was difficult for them to improve their lives. They for the most part owned very little. “A small percentage of minority farmers did own their land, mainly from inheritance and a few sharecroppers were able to buy land with profits earned from hard work and good management.”54 The young people who lived on these farms found it difficult to obtain their education. “Many minority students who lived on large farms and who were required to do the seasonal farm work were in school for only three to five months during a school term.”55 Not only was obtaining an education difficult for blacks but during the Depression there were other hardships blacks endured such as racism, segregation and poor housing accommodations. There have been significant changes in Screven County since 1939. J. Tolbertte Lacy, a longtime resident of Screven County, stated in 1939 when I came to Sylvania, only one black family home had indoor, sanitary toilet facilities. Funds from V.A., F.H.A. and other sources, and substantial regular income from steady jobs have transformed the Screven County Community from a panorama of substandard, dilapidated houses, especially in the outlying strictly rural areas, to a county with a large percentage of standard housing. Many of the new homes are mobile homes, but they are none-the-less decent with modern facilities.56

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53 Ibid.
54 Ibid., p. 88.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid., p. 89.
The majority of the individuals in Screven County who are 25 years old and older are high school graduates (58.9%). Few persons have a college degree or higher (8.6%). The majority of the white residents are high school graduates (69.64%). A higher percentage of the black population as compared to the white population of Screven County are high school graduates (92.8%). The percentage of the white population that has an education beyond high school is quadruple (30.36%) the black population that has an education beyond high school (7.2%). According to the US Department of Labor, factors that will affect employment in Screven County in the future include the projection that the fastest growing and highest paying jobs will be those that require the most education and training which includes vocational. The black population of Screven County will be adversely affected because they did not acquire the educational attainments to meet the employment challenges of the 21st Century.

The largest percentage of Screven County’s workers are employed as machine/equipment operators, assemblers, inspectors and precision production. The second largest percentage is in clerical and services (other than household) at 12.1% and 12.7%, respectively. The largest percentage of the state’s residents are employed in

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57 U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, CD-ROM.
58 Ibid.
60 Ibid.
professional/technical and clerical professions. The fact that fewer residents of Screven County had four years or more of college is one reason why the county residents are not in the professional occupations in greater percentages.

In 1990, almost 60% of the persons who are 16 years of age or older in Screven County are employed.\textsuperscript{61} The number of residents of Screven County who are in the workforce increased between 1970 (4,577) and 1990 (5,626).\textsuperscript{62} The number of residents in Screven County who must commute to work increased from 16.1% in 1970 to 29.1% in 1990.\textsuperscript{63} Although a majority of the Screven County workforce did not commute to work the continuing increase in the percentage indicates that an increasing number of residents of Screven County are not able to find suitable employment within the county and have to travel outside the county. The state percentage of the population that commuted to another county is higher than the Screven County percentage.

Screven County has not experienced steady growth in employment since 1970 but has experienced growth in earnings.\textsuperscript{64} For the region that contains Screven County, the largest percentage of total employment was in the manufacturing sector in 1970 and 1980 but in 1990 the largest percentage is in the services sector.\textsuperscript{65} The US Department of

\textsuperscript{61} U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, CD-ROM.
\textsuperscript{62} Governor’s Development Council, Council of Economic Development Organizations, Economic Development Workbook, Region 8, p. 30.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., p. 36.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.
Labor notes that the manufacturing sector has declined and will continue to do so into the next century. Another declining industry in the US and the South is farming and as of 1990, a little more than 10% of the jobs in Screven County are dependent on farming.66

**Employment**

In the 19th century, Screven County had an agriculture based economy. The main crops were “cotton, corn, wheat, oats, potatoes, field and ground peas, rice, sorghum and sugar-cane.”67 By the late 1800s, cotton production was more prevalent than during the 1900s, and lumber became very important as an industry. The timber of the time consisted of “oak, cypress, ash, maple, poplar and the long leaf pine.”68 As of 1950, Screven County’s economic base consisted of “a couple of sawmills, and a couple of fertilizer plants.”69 The county economy was diversifying, becoming more industrial based and by the 1980s, there were four industrial plants in Screven County, one was BASF Fibers, Inc.70 The county and the county seat, Sylvania, in 1960, formed an organization to bring more companies to Screven County, “the Sylvania and Screven

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66 Ibid., p. 46.
67 Candler and Evans, *Cyclopedia of Georgia*, p. 260.
68 Ibid.
69 Hollingsworth, *History of Screven County, Georgia*, p. 77.
70 Ibid.
County Development Corporation, a private non-profit group. Three years later a public entity, the Screven County Industrial Development Authority was actualized. The establishment of these two organizations show the commitment Screven County has to improving the economic status within the county. The community also completed development of its industrial park and an industrial building to augment its solicitation efforts. Another powerful incentive Screven County initiated to attract new industries to the county was an offer “to a new or expanding industry investing $500,000 or more, financing with Industrial Revenue Bonds and leased through the Screven County Industrial Authority, a five-year (5) period of zero county property taxes, including school taxes. Screven County is one of only eight (8) counties in Georgia with this power.” The transportation facilities and easy access located within the county make it more suited to increased economic growth. As of 1991, the largest employment sectors for residents of Screven County are the manufacturing sector (46%) and services sector (16%). The largest employers in Screven County are King Finishing (400 employees), the Torrington Company (650 employees) and Sylvania Yarn Systems (formerly BASF Corporation with 250 employees). The major manufacturing industries in Screven

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71 Ibid.
72 Ibid.
74 Ibid., p. 5.
75 Ibid., p. 53.
76 Ibid., p. 54. Also per telephone conversation with Screven County Chamber of Commerce on August 28, 1997.
County also included, lumber and wood products, machinery production, textile mill products and apparel/textile products. "Rural areas that have done best include those with a diversified economy that is not heavily dependent on either agriculture, mining, or manufacturing and those adjacent to metropolitan areas." Screven County however did not fully diversify its economy and benefit from its geographic proximity to Savannah (the closest urban area). "In areas where geographical proximity puts residents within commuting distance of stronger urban economies, rural communities have been able to attract 'footloose industries' (for local employment), professional people who can work at home (bolstering the housing market and adding to property-tax revenues), and retirees and recreationers (adding to local service-sector employment)." As previously noted, Screven County did not have a large retiree population and the majority of the residents are wage earners who work outside the home. Most residents of Screven County though did work within the county (3,949 workers 16 years of age and over). In Screven County, as noted earlier, the agriculture base diminished (for the reasons previously stated) which empowered the manufacturing sector to become the largest employment sector with the service sector a distant second. The information presented regarding employment in Screven County indicates there are very few industries in Screven County

77 Ibid., p. 54.
78 Fitchen, Endangered Spaces, p. 68.
79 Ibid.
80 US Census Bureau. 1990 Census of Population and Housing. CD-ROM.
in addition to less opportunities for professional people, retirees and recreationers who desire employment.

Housing

Single family dwellings are the majority (63%) of the housing units in Screven County as of 1990 of which 74% of the occupied housing units are owner occupied, a rate that is higher than the state in 1990. The water source for most of the housing units surveyed are from individual drilled wells (3,374 housing units); sewage disposal is accomplished via septic tank or cesspool (3,998 housing units); and very few lacked complete plumbing facilities (287 housing units). The housing conditions above are not unusual for a rural area.

Social Services

Screven County contains the cities of Hilltonia, Newington, Oliver, Rocky Ford and Sylvania (the county seat). The county, based on mutual aid agreements and formal agreements is responsible for health care (including emergency services), garbage services, street services on state highways, recreational services, library services and a

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82 US Census Bureau. 1990 Census of Population and Housing. CD-ROM.
83 Ibid.
county wide police force, the Sheriff's Department, and for education on the elementary and secondary levels countywide.

**History of Oliver**

Oliver is located in the southern section of Screven County. The town of Oliver was incorporated as the City of Oliver on August 19, 1912 by the state legislature.\(^8^4\)

There are many historical buildings in Oliver, among them are several churches. The city was named for George Oliver, who was “born in Scotland in 1794 and died in Savannah in 1853,” and was “a contractor who built viaducts that carried the [railroad] tracks out of Savannah,” owned land in the area and gave the Central of Georgia Railroad the right of way when the city was made a permanent stop on the railway route.\(^8^5\) Prior to the railroad coming to Oliver, the town was a stop on the stage coach route between Savannah and Louisville (the former capital of Georgia).


\(^8^5\) Pauline Smith, “A History of Oliver,” Sylvania Telephone, February 13, 1942, p. 1. Dixon Hollingsworth, wrote the information on George Oliver in a history of Oliver for the book History of Screven County but did not include the information due to space considerations. The author of this paper acquired this information during one of the many research trips to Oliver. Also during the weeks of July 1-12, 1996, the author reviewed the US Census Bureau microfilm slave schedules and population schedules for 1820-1880 at the National Archives and Records Administration Southeast Regional office in East Point, Georgia for Screven County. Several Olivers were found in the 1820 records: William Oliver 18 slaves, James Oliver 12 slaves, Thomas Oliver 1 slave, Elijah Oliver 11 slaves and Moses Oliver 5 slaves. In 1830: Jacob Oliver 21 slaves, John Oliver 8 slaves, Thomas Oliver 19 slaves and William Oliver 28 slaves. In 1840: Martha Oliver 32 slaves, Hamilton Oliver 21 slaves and Elijah Oliver 11 slaves. The census records for Georgia for 1790-1810 were destroyed during the War of 1812 and no longer exist. There is no indication whether the George Oliver for whom the city of Oliver is named is related to the above named individuals.
History of Politics in Oliver

Oliver’s city government has been in place since 1912 when it was incorporated by the Georgia General Assembly. Prior to the election of Mayor Justine Brown in 1987, the individual who had served the longest term in office was J. D. Clarke (a white male) who had been mayor of Oliver from 1942 to 1983. Clarke was also owner of the Empire Lumber Company, a lumber mill company in Oliver which he sold to T. & F. Hardwoods, Inc. of Milledgeville in 1974. Clarke’s lumber mill employed 40 to 80 people and had at one time been “the biggest employer in the county, before the larger industrial plants” arrived. Clarke ran unopposed for the position of mayor until 1983. In January 1983, Clarke did not run for reelection. For the first time in over 30 years Oliver had a new mayor, Dan Boykin, (a white male) who was elected without opposition. Justine Brown and J.R. Wasdin (a white male) were also elected to two year terms on the city council in the 1983 election while three other city council members were elected to one year city council terms. Mayor Boykin served until September 1983, when “he resigned from the mayor’s job...after a controversy over a zoning

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88 Ibid.
90 Ibid.
ordinance." The 1984 election was distinctive in that two former mayors were elected to two year terms on the city council. Those former mayors were J. D. Clarke and Dan Boykin. The new mayor in the 1984 election was J. R. Wasdin, who had served as mayor pro tem after the resignation of Boykin. Justine Brown was previously re-elected in 1983 to an unopposed two year term on the city council. Justine Brown was elected to her first political position in 1979 to the Oliver city council at which time Ms. Brown became the first black elected official in Oliver. There was no information regarding this milestone in the local papers. 

Justine Brown was elected mayor of Oliver in January 1987, this election made her the first black elected mayor of Oliver and the first female mayor of Oliver. This was a smooth transition and changing of the old guard. Prior to this election, Ms. Brown had served as mayor pro-tem for two years. The local newspapers made more fanfare of the hotly contested election for mayor in 1984 than of the election of Mayor Brown in 1987. The author interviewed several residents in Oliver regarding the first election of Ms. Brown to the position of mayor and was informed that since Ms. Brown had served as mayor pro tem, then they saw her becoming mayor as a natural progression. Mayor Brown when asked by the author about her first election for mayor stated that she had no

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92 The author reviewed the microfilm of the Statesboro Herald, Savannah Morning News, Savannah Evening Press and Sylvania Telephone in 1979. There is no mention of Justine Brown's attaining elective office.
campaign because none was necessary; the residents accepted her as their mayor based on her past performance as mayor pro tem.

Demographics of Oliver

The Census Bureau reports that the city of Oliver population includes 125 female residents and 126 male residents for a total of 251 residents. The females represent 49.80% of the population and the males 50.20% of the population. Within the population of Oliver, males are barely more than fifty percent of the population, therefore not a majority of the population but a plurality. There are 125 black residents of Oliver, 119 white residents and 7 others. Blacks represented 49.80% of the total population and whites 47.41% of the total population of Oliver. Neither racial group is in the majority of the total population in Oliver but racially between the blacks and whites the blacks are in the majority (51.23%). The gender and racial composition of the city enables Mayor Brown to form coalitions with all groups. All residents of Oliver live in a rural nonfarm area with no City of Oliver residents classified in a rural farm area as defined by the US Census Bureau. Based on the area where the residents of Oliver live, agriculture is not

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93 U. S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population and Housing Summary Tape File 3A, CD-ROM.
94 Ibid.
95 Rural nonfarm and rural farm areas were US Census Bureau designations. Rural farm comprises all rural households and housing units on farms (places from which $1,000 or more of agricultural products were sold in 1989), rural nonfarm comprises the remaining rural. US Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population General Population Characteristics: Louisiana, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1992), p. A-11. A rural area does not apply only to farm residences...
a part of this culture economically, therefore Oliver’s economy is not dependent on farming. Within the city of Oliver, by the 1990s no economic base exist for farmers to shop or trade. The state and the nation are less dependent on farming during the 1990s than ten years ago but neither is totally independent of farming.

Income

The 1990 Census documents 1989 income information for 85 households in Oliver. The largest total number of reported households in Oliver earn $15,000 to $24,999 income in 1989. There are 18 households that earn $15,000 to $24,999 of which 14 are white households and 4 are black households. This is 21.18% of the households in Oliver. The total number of black households for which the 1990 Census documents 1989 income information is 35. The total number of white households for which 1990 Census documents 1989 income information is 49. The largest number of black households (10) in Oliver earn $5,000 to $9,999. The largest number of white households (14) in Oliver earn $15,000 to $24,999. The median household income in Oliver is $20,313 which is slightly less ($218) than the County median. The Screven County

or to sparsely settled areas, since a small town is rural as long as it is an area that has a population of fewer than 2,500 inhabitants and is outside an urban area. US Department of Agriculture, Agriculture Fact Book 1996, p. 230.


97 U. S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population and Housing Summary Tape File 3A, CD-ROM.

98 Ibid.
median household income is 1.06% higher than the median household income in Oliver. There are 65 family households in the 1990 Census survey for which 1989 income information is documented in Oliver. The median family income for Oliver residents is $24,688. The median family income for Screven County is slightly higher at $25,154 for a difference of $466. The survey indicates that the majority (81%) of the households of Oliver contain mainly wage and salary earners with a mean wage and salary income of $36,322. The household mean wage and salary income in Oliver is considerably greater than that of Screven County ($25,172). In Oliver and Screven County, 22% of the residents live below the poverty level. There are also fewer young adults (18%), elderly (38%) and children (29%) who live below the poverty level in Oliver in comparison to cities of similar size. Albeit the percentage of female headed household families who live below the poverty level in Oliver is high (57%). The percentage of female headed household families in Oliver with related children under 18 years of age who live below the poverty level is 72%; with related children under 5 years of age is 100%. When compared to the County figures, Oliver is similar in all other

99 Ibid. Family is defined as two or more people who were related by blood, marriage or adoption, and living under the same roof. Dunn, Selling the Story. p. 238.
100 U. S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population and Housing Summary Tape File 3A, CD-ROM.
101 Ibid.
102 Ibid.
103 Ibid.
104 In Oliver there were no white female headed household families, 3 black female headed household families with 8 related children under 18 years of age and no Asian or other race female headed household families.
households and families except female headed household families where the Oliver percentages are much higher than the county for female headed household families with children under 18 years of age. The Oliver female headed household income figures are high because of the lack of employment opportunities within Oliver which required that individuals seek employment in surrounding cities within the county, outside the county or in the closest metropolitan statistical area. The Screven County percentages for female headed household families with related children under 18 years of age is 59% and with related children under 5 years of age is 63%. The Oliver female headed household income figures are consistent with the poverty experienced in the entire South by this group. “Families headed by women experience the highest poverty rate of all family types. A higher proportion of families headed by women are poor in rural areas. Over half of the rural poor (51 percent) live in the South...”105

Oliver residents 16 years of age and older are 66.1% of the labor force with 83.1% of the males employed and 52.1% of the females employed including the females with children (64%).106 Racially in Oliver, most white households median income is $25,000 per year and most black households median income is $10,000 per year.107 Unemployment in Oliver is high (9.1%) and fewer Oliver men are unemployed (4.9%) than women (14.3%). The gender disparity for unemployed individuals in Oliver is significant and validates the female

106 U. S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population and Housing Summary Tape File 3A, CD-ROM.
107 Ibid.
headed household poverty figures. The age distribution of residents in Oliver indicates there are more adults than children and more young adults than retirees.

The agedistributionof residents in Oliver indicates there are more adults than children and more young adults than retirees.

Table 5-2
POPULATION BY AGE BY RACE AND BY GENDER IN OLIVER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>BLACK MALE</th>
<th>BLACK FEMALE</th>
<th>WHITE MALE</th>
<th>WHITE FEMALE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-17</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-54</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55+</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Commerce Department. Census Bureau.

In Oliver there are more adults living above the poverty level than children. The figures are not quite as dramatic when comparing adults and children who live below the poverty level in Oliver.

Table 5-3
POVERTY FIGURES FOR OLIVER, GA BY RACE AND BY AGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>ABOVE POVERTY LEVEL</th>
<th>BELOW POVERTY LEVEL</th>
<th>RACE</th>
<th>ABOVE POVERTY LEVEL</th>
<th>BELOW POVERTY LEVEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BLACK</td>
<td>WHITE</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>BLACK</td>
<td>WHITE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-64</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Commerce Department. Census Bureau.
Education

There are no schools in Oliver as of 1990 although prior to desegregation there was a junior high school for whites in Oliver. The black students of Oliver prior to desegregation attended school in Sylvania, the county seat of Screven County. Presently all students in Oliver (and all cities within Screven County) attend the three county schools from kindergarten through high school. There are no institutions of higher education in Oliver.

The majority of the Oliver residents for whom educational attainment was determined are high school graduates (88.41%). The total number of Oliver residents for whom educational attainment was determined is 138.108 For persons 25 years old and over in Oliver only 5.8% are college graduates. Racially, the percentage of whites who have obtained a high school diploma is higher (52.9%) than the blacks (34.1%). In contrast the percentage of blacks who had obtained an education beyond high school is higher (8.7%) than whites (2.9%). These educational attainment percentages in conjunction with the income percentages are reflections of the racial socioeconomic differences evidenced in the US as a whole and especially in the rural South. The Oliver figures are higher than the Screven County figures for high school graduates (37%) yet the same for college graduates. A majority of the Oliver residents (66%) who are 16

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108 Ibid.
years of age or older are employed. Statistics have shown that “the number of years of school completed is positively associated with a person’s earning power.”¹⁰⁹

Employment

The gender breakdown of the employed population is decidedly different. The male population is employed at a much higher percentage (83%) than the female (52%). A majority (60%) of the employed persons in Oliver commute to work (mostly outside the county) and are employed in manufacturing positions which is similar to Screven County where residents are also mainly employed in the manufacturing industry (67.38%). No industry existed in Oliver which necessitated that individuals who are desirous of employment had to commute outside Oliver to cities within the County or outside the County.

Housing

As of 1990, a majority of the structures (88.79%) in Oliver had public system water but no public sewer system. The sewage disposal used in Oliver is primarily septic tank or cesspool (84.48%). In Oliver a majority of the structures (94.8%) have complete plumbing facilities.

Social Services

Screven County is responsible for education of all the cities within the county including Oliver. The city of Oliver had mutual aid agreements and formal agreements with neighboring cities or the county for the following services: the city of Newington Police Department for police services (until October 1996 at which time Oliver hired a police officer), the city of Newington Volunteer Fire Department for fire service, Screven County EMS (Emergency Medical Services) Department for emergency medical services, and Screven County Hospital for doctor and hospital services. In 1994, the City of Oliver constructed a new water tower/tank and new water pipes throughout the city (an ongoing process) to replace the deteriorated water tower/tank and pipes. The city of Oliver has always provided citizens with water services for which the residents pay the City but there is no public sewer system in Oliver. Mayor Brown is attempting to secure a federal grant for a public sewer system.

Questionnaire Responses

Mayor Brown was elected mayor of Oliver on January 4, 1987. The transition from a white male led city government to a black woman led city government was

remarkably smooth for a rural southern city. Mayor Brown works full time as a middle school teacher in Screven County, serves on several boards in Screven County, is active in her church and other organizations in Screven County in addition to her mayoral duties in Oliver and has no aspirations for another or higher political office. Mayor Brown’s duties include but are not limited to the following: attend meetings in the county seat; complete paperwork as required by the federal, county and state governments for city governments; address problems of constituents (personal and city related) in person and via telephone; research funding sources for public sewer; request funds from other government entities for services that the city of Oliver can not afford; meet with businesses to encourage them to relocate to Oliver; attend meetings of the National Conference of Black Mayors; attend city sponsored functions; attend weddings, funerals, services and special functions at the churches in Oliver; visit with the infirmed and elderly of Oliver; oversee City Hall staff; personnel management; prepare agenda for and conduct monthly city council meetings, and prepare the City of Oliver budget.

For the two questionnaire respondents, the election to the city council of Oliver is their first elected political position.\textsuperscript{111} The female maintains that she ran because she

\textsuperscript{111} The author made a site visit to Oliver on July 22, 1994, met and interviewed Mayor Brown and one of the city employees. The author also resided in an adjacent county and traveled to Oliver and Screven County daily during the week of July 21-27, 1996, made telephone calls and site visits. The author of this paper sent questionnaires to all five city council persons. After three mailings, two responses were received. The author interviewed one city council person and other residents of Oliver at the home of the city council person during the week of July 21-27, 1996. The respondents to the questionnaire were one white female and one white male. The information from those questionnaires is incorporated in the questionnaire section above.
wanted to make things better and help improve the city. The male stipulates that he thought the city might benefit from having a business man on the council. Neither city council person has aspirations for another political office. Mayor Brown asserts that she sought elected office because she believes there is a need for black representation in city government which could be reflected best by a black elected official. The term of mayor in Oliver is 4 years with elections held in odd years and is a part time position. Neither Mayor Brown nor the city council members has ever received a salary. Both city council persons reflect that they are aware that the mayor’s position is part time but neither remembers the length of the term of mayor in Oliver. The uncertainty on the part of the council persons can be explained by the fact that Mayor Brown has been mayor of Oliver since 1987 without opposition as mayor.

The city of Oliver has a mayor-council form of government with a strong mayor type of government as opposed to a weak mayor type which is not unusual for a small city with a less complex administrative organization. The administration prior to Mayor Brown’s was also a strong mayor form according to Mayor Brown. The mayor and the council persons agree as to the type of government in Oliver prior to and during Mayor

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112 Weak mayor type is defined as the mayor had little to no executive power, is a figurehead. Strong mayor type is defined as the mayor performed the executive functions of government including budget development, personnel management and veto power. A clear distinction between cities in Georgia operating under the “weak” mayor and “strong” mayor structures cannot be made based on information available but the two versions of mayor-council government accounted for approximately 85 percent of the cities in Georgia. J. Devereaux Weeks and Paul T. Hardy, eds., Handbook for Georgia Mayors and Councilmembers, (Athens, GA: Carl Vinson Institute of Government, The University of Georgia, 1993), p. 18.
Brown’s tenure. Oliver has had a functioning city government since its incorporation in 1912. Until 1984, the mayor had been elected to a two year term in office and the city council members to a one year term in office. In 1984 and afterwards, all city council members are elected to a two year term of office and mayor to a four year term. The city charter mandates 5 members on the Oliver city council. Between 1994 and 1997 the Oliver City Council gender and racial composition changed: gained one black male and one white female and lost two white males due to illness and death. In 1997 the Oliver city council composition is one black female, two white females, one black male and one white male.

Mayor Brown and the questionnaire respondents agreed that the mayor of Oliver is not considered a member of the city council except in the event of a tie vote by the council. As of 1997, women are in the majority on the City council which would make the mayor’s tie vote crucial if the votes are made along gender lines.

No member of the city council is assigned an area of authority due to the small size and number of services provided by the city. The city of Oliver has a city hall, the location of the mayor’s office, which is one of the oldest buildings in the city. Oliver’s city hall building was formerly a bank. Mayor Brown’s constituents contact her at home, city hall or on her full time job. Oliver has 4 part time paid staff employees; 1 white female, 1 black male, and 2 white males (until June 1997 at which time the female resigned). The Oliver city hall is open from 9:00am until 1:00pm Wednesday through
Friday and the first Saturday of each month (same hours). The city council persons gave different quantities regarding the number of employees on staff. The council persons did agree that the staff members are part time. The discrepancy is due to the fact that the mayor is the person most closely involved in personnel administration on a continuing basis. Because this is a small city, the mayor has more discretion, control and latitude in the day to day operations of City Hall than would be possible in a larger city. The questionnaire respondents state that they have faith and trust in Mayor Brown in her judgment, decisions and city government operations.

For a small city there are several important services which the city provides its citizens either solely or jointly with the county or other governmental entities. Those services in Oliver are as follows:

- police and fire which are provided by the city of Newington (until October 1996 for police protection only)
- emergency services (e.g. ambulance) which is provided by Screven County Hospital and Nursing Services and the city of Sylvania
- water by the City of Oliver
- garbage services (e.g., pickup, disposal) by the Screven County Commission
- street services (e.g., paving, repair) by the city Oliver except state highways
- recreational services (e.g., parks, pools) by Screven County
- public education (e.g., elementary, secondary) by the city of Sylvania and Screven County
- library services by Screven County in the form of a bookmobile during the summer
The city council persons differ slightly on the services provided by the City during Mayor Brown’s term as mayor. Both agree that the city has always provided citizens with water services and that the city does not have a public sewer system. The female city council person responds that Oliver has city workers who scrape the dirt streets of Oliver and cut down the weeds. The male city council person responds that the city of Oliver provides police and fire protection, street services and recreation services with emergency services and garbage services provided by the County of Screven. These discrepancies are due to the lack of day-to-day oversight by the council of the activities of the City and the City Hall employees.

Mayor Brown states that the prior administration provided the following city services poorly to citizens: water, garbage services and street services; the following city services sporadically to citizens: fire protection and emergency services; and the following city services were not provided at all to citizens: police protection, recreational services and public education. The city council persons agree that the administration prior to Mayor Brown only provided water services on a regular basis to the citizens of Oliver. The male city council person states that the prior administration provided poor police protection. The most important service Mayor Brown would like to provide to citizens is more street lights. Services that the Oliver city council persons wanted the city to provide that it is not presently providing are public sewer services and fire and police
protection (which was accomplished in October 1996). Mayor Brown considers the most important current issues facing small towns and cities in order of importance are new industries, crime, poverty, housing, landfills and stores, such as mini-markets. The city council persons identified crime, one of the issues Mayor Brown delineated as most important for small towns and cities and added another, health care.

Mayor Brown states that her male counterparts and other city officials accept her as mayor and have not demonstrated a lack of respect for her as mayor. Both city council persons state that each accepts Mayor Brown as mayor of Oliver. The male city council person states the Mayor is the mayor and a very fine and dedicated one. An affirmation of this stance is Mayor Brown’s lack of opposition for mayor since 1987. Also the City budgets for the City of Oliver for the years 1992 and 1994 are balanced and in 1993 the revenue exceeded the expenditures by $2,051.

Small cities and rural areas have often relied on the federal government as the remedy for their concerns especially now with the implementation of empowerment zones and enterprise zones to assist rural areas. Mayor Brown is of the opinion that the best method for small rural towns and cities to have concerns addressed is first at the state legislature level then forwarded to the federal government. The Oliver city council persons agree with Mayor Brown that the best arena for small rural towns and cities to have concerns addressed is the state legislature. Neither Oliver or Screven County is located in a rural enterprise/empowerment zone in Georgia.
Oliver is a small city and as such has no major industries. Mayor Brown is desirous of attracting industries such as textiles, electronics and plastics. Both city council persons agree that Oliver has no industries but disagree on what industries they desire. The male city council person does not want an industry in Oliver. The female city council person is in agreement with Mayor Brown and wants a textile industry in Oliver so that the women will have jobs. More opportunity for employment for the females in Oliver will enable more of them to be employed, especially those who are heads of households and this will decrease the number of female headed households living below the poverty level. Mayor Brown must form a coalition with these individuals to petition the state and national governments for necessary funds to assist this population economically.

The introduction of industry into a small city will mean more jobs but will also place an added strain on city government because they would have to provide more services. A city without a public sewer system cannot accommodate an industry’s needs and therefore cannot improve the economy of the city nor the income of the citizens. Another impediment to an industry locating in Oliver is that Mayor Brown does not have an economic development plan. Oliver does benefit from the County economic development plan in that residents have employment opportunities in neighboring cities.

Mayor Brown states that the majority of Oliver residents work outside Oliver and commute to the neighboring cities of Rincon, Sylvania, Claxton and Statesboro and the
larger cities of Savannah and Augusta. This observation was not disputed by the city council persons.

The city of Oliver does not have a doctor or a hospital; these services are provided by the county seat, Sylvania. A member of the city council is a doctor (dentist) but not a medical doctor.

Mayor Brown has never had a campaign platform or campaign issues because she had no opposition in her election as mayor. The city council person respondents agreed that Mayor Brown did not have a campaign or campaign issues except to serve the community. As stated previously by the city council persons, they professed satisfaction with the job Mayor Brown has done such as the installation of the new water tower, new water pipes, the paved streets, installation of street lights on previously darkened streets and the creation of the police force. Similarly, Mayor Brown has experienced no difficulties as mayor because the citizens all know and trust her abilities and judgment. But Mayor Brown does believe that a black female mayor of a southern rural town/city could face difficulties but was unable to discern the most important factors between race and gender. An indication that for black women race is more important than gender as evidenced by scholars such as Darcy, Welch, Clark and Spelman. The city council persons indicated that the question could not be answered because there is no animosity toward Mayor Brown and therefore do not believe that a black female mayor would encounter difficulties.
Mayor Brown has formed coalitions with other elected officials such as one individual in the state legislature who is a white, male, Democrat from a rural area to assist in her goals for an improved Oliver. This coalition is not unusual in a state with a sizable rural population and that is still dominated by rural legislators. Because of the assistance Mayor Brown has received from the state legislature, she believes that the state legislature listens to and helps rural areas especially in the areas of special programs (such as AIDS), rural health, community development and area planning development commissions. Mayor Brown has taken advantage of federal programs through the Screven County Commission, especially in the area of economic opportunity. Both city council persons agreed that the state legislature listens to and helps rural areas. An example given by both council persons was the assistance from the State for the new water tower. Neither city council person believed that the federal government listened to or helped rural areas which was in contrast to Mayor’s Brown’s contention. In spite of their responses, both city council persons stated their awareness of federal programs which have benefited Oliver such as, Green Thumb (hire older people to work), federal food program for children and the grant for the water system. This is another indication of the distance between the mayor and the city council members to the ongoing, day-to-day activities of the city.

Mayor Brown states that Oliver has not experienced a decline in the population but has experienced an increase in population across all racial, gender and age categories.
Both Oliver city council persons agree with Mayor Brown that Oliver had not experienced an outmigration or decline in population. The male city council person responds that Oliver has not experienced an immigration of population. The female city council person replies that Oliver’s population has increased in the areas of black family households age 20-40.

When Mayor Brown was elected to the Oliver City Council, she became the first black elected official in her city. The number of black elected officials in Oliver increased in 1996 to 3. The city council persons acknowledge that Mayor Brown is the first black elected official in Oliver. Mayor Brown states than when she first ran for mayor all groups (racial and gender) in Oliver reacted positively to her as mayor. The city council persons acknowledge that all groups in Oliver reacted positively to Mayor Brown as mayor. No specific group assisted Mayor Brown in her campaign for mayor which was not necessary since she ran unopposed.

Mayor Brown considers her political affiliation to be to the Democratic Party. The city council persons of Oliver did not declare allegiance nor affiliation to a particular political group. The female city council member states that she votes for the individual not the party.

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113 There are no immigration figures from the US Census Bureau to corroborate the Mayor and city council persons beliefs.

114 There is no data available on the vote breakdown in Oliver for this election at city hall or at the Screven County Voting Registrar’s office.
Mayor Brown does not believe there are special problems faced by women elected officials not found by men; the problems would be the same. Neither city council member believes there are any special problems faced by women elected officials. Mayor Brown did not have a women’s agenda when she ran for mayor nor does she have a women’s agenda now. Mayor Brown does however believe there are women’s issues, such as abortion, health care, day care, and latch key children. The agenda of Mayor Brown is decidedly people oriented, to improve the lives of all citizens of Oliver as much as possible. Both city council members respond that Mayor Brown did not have a women’s agenda as a mayoral candidate. Neither believes there is such a thing as a women’s agenda.

Mayor Brown’s family has continued to be very supportive since she became mayor and has remained in office. Both city council persons families are supportive of their political activities in the form of moral support.

Mayor Brown is a member of a women’s organization, a black woman sorority, that gave her encouraging words when she first ran for office although no monetary funds. Research performed by Darcy, Welch and Clark reveals that women when running for elected office on the local level are more likely to receive organizational support from
women’s organizations and to be actively involved in civic activities. Neither city
council person belongs to a women’s/men’s organization.

Mayor Brown is not a native of Oliver but is a native of the neighboring city of
Guyton. Mayor Brown’s husband is a native of Oliver. Mayor Brown is a mother who is
still employed full time as a middle school teacher. The highest level of education Mayor
Brown achieved is a graduate degree. Mayor Brown’s annual income (excluding her
husband’s income) is between $21,000-$30,000. Mayor Brown was between 41-50 years
of age when she was first elected to the office of mayor. The female city council person
is a native of Oliver, a high school graduate, who has always been a housewife, only
income she earned is the $1 per month salary as a city council person (no city council
member has received this amount as of August 1997) and was between 41-50 years of age
when first elected to office. The male city council person is a college graduate with a
professional degree, earned over $60,000 annual income and was between 31-40 years of
age when first elected to office.

Mayor Brown believes city services improved during her administration over the
prior administration but this cannot be verified because there are no records from the
previous administration. Mayor Brown has remained in office unopposed since the first
election in 1987 due to incumbency. Voter discrimination does not factor into the

115 R. Darcy, Susan Welch and Janet Clark, Women Elections, & Representation,
election process in Oliver due to the racial balance in the population. The political style employed by Mayor Brown is accommodationist due to the racial makeup of Oliver. The Screven County Voting Registrar’s office as of July 1996, indicates there are 104 registered voters in Oliver of which 30 are black females, 16 are black males, 28 are white females, and 30 white males. The City improvements do not favor one racial group over another. Because of the voter composition of Oliver, Mayor Brown will remain in office by not threatening the white constituency by appearing to favor one race over another while addressing the needs and concerns of the black residents and the poor.

Because of the size of the city and the limited resources one indication that housing and employment have improved since Mayor Brown became mayor is the fact that the assessed fair market value of real and personal property has increased, though not steadily, since her term in office. Mayor Brown is also dependent on the federal government, state government or private funding sources for capital improvements.

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116 The percentage change in the assessed fair market value of real and personal property in Oliver from 1987 to 1995 is a 46% increase; from 1976 to 1987 is an 87% increase although the increase was not steady for each year, this was a cumulative figure.
CHAPTER 6

A DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF WALTHOURVILLE, GA

Based on the framework from chapters 4 and 5 relating demographic characteristics to electoral participation and the relationship between race and the socioeconomic status of blacks, this chapter will examine the socioeconomic and political changes that have occurred in Walthourville, Georgia focusing mainly on the changes since Carrie Kent became mayor.

History of Liberty County

Walthourville is located in the coastal plains area of the state within Liberty County which is the only coastal county of the three counties in this paper. Liberty County, one of the oldest counties in Georgia (the sixth county formed), was constituted from the parishes of St. John, St. Andrew and St. James in 1777.¹

Originally Liberty County was “acquired by [the] Creek cession of May 20, 1733.”² Liberty County was later divided to create McIntosh County (December 19, 1793) and Long County (August 14, 1920). The size of Liberty County is presently

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329,00 acres and 514 square miles. Prior to the creation of Liberty County, there was archaeological evidence that “Native Americans lived along the coast in 2500 BC.” The area was later explored and settled by Spanish explorer Menendez de Aviles who settled St. Catherines Island in 1565 in addition to establishments in Florida and South Carolina. The early English settlers in Liberty County were the Puritans from South Carolina who settled in the Midway District in 1752 after implementation of the 1748 land grants for plantation development of the area. “The early settlers of Liberty County brought their slaves with them from South Carolina” which was why there were few slave markets in Liberty County. The state legislature named the county, Liberty, to honor the Georgia delegation that signed the Declaration of Independence and the inhabitants of St. John’s parish who sent delegates to the Continental Congress, prior to the rest of Georgia. One of the Liberty County delegates was Dr. Lyman B. Hall who was also one of the Georgia signatories of the Declaration of Independence. Liberty County and its inhabitants were also involved in Revolutionary War skirmishes. One incident was the capture of Fort Morris at Sunbury in January 1779 by British General

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3 Per telephone conversation with Liberty County Zoning Commission Office on August 28, 1997.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
8 Georgia Department of Agriculture, Georgia: Historical and Industrial, p. 737.
Prevost from Colonel John McIntosh. Another skirmish between the American patriots and the British and Tories resulted in the death of General Screven near Midway Church in 1778. Two noted Patriot victories occurred in June 1779 in Liberty County.

Near a place called Hickory Hill...a detachment of Americans, under Major Cooper and Captain Inman, cut to pieces a party of the British. In another fight during the same month Colonels Baker and Twiggs, of the Georgia militia, defeated a party led by McGirth, the noted Tory chief, near Midway Church, and also defeated a reinforcement of British troops, killing their leader, Captain Muller.

The proximity of the area to Florida made it vulnerable to attacks by Native Americans in the period 1787-1799. Between 1787 and 1793, the area was raided persistently by Native Americans due to the close proximity of the Native Americans from Florida to the Liberty County area, the forests, swamps, rivers, and the coastal barrier islands. “During the Revolutionary War the great rice plantations of both Loyalists and Americans fell into disrepair and their slaves escaped, approximately 7,000 fleeing to the British lines, where they were granted freedom. Others fled into the back country to find refuge with the Creek Indians and into Florida with the Seminoles.” Researchers of Liberty County state that the close proximity of the Native Americans, the water ways and the Puritans

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9 Ibid., p. 739.
10 Ibid.
12 Georgia Department of Agriculture, *Georgia: Historical and Industrial*, p. 739.
themselves were reasons why slaves in Liberty County were not treated as harshly as
slaves in other sections of the state; slave narratives from slaves who resided in this area
are not available to confirm this belief. Nonetheless the institution of slavery continued
unabated. The heaviest black population in Georgia in 1790 was in Chatham and Liberty
counties. The reason for the large slave populations in these areas of the state was:

As the frontier advanced southward along the coast, these counties
composing the rice belt became inhabited with large slave populations
where desirable lands had been reclaimed and developed into productive
plantations. The successful production of rice benefited from cheap labor,
and Negro slaves furnished the only available supply. The slave
population increased as the rice belt advanced. By 1820 slaves numbered
70 percent of the total population of 33,691 in Chatham, Bryan, Liberty,
McIntosh, Glynn, and Camden counties; by 1850 they numbered 72
percent of the total of 52,350.

"It was the general custom of plantation owners in Liberty County to assign their
slaves work by 'tasks.' Many slaves completed their work in the middle of the
afternoon. They could then work in their own garden, go fishing or hunting, or simply do
nothing." In Liberty County, the Puritan Congregationalists who settled the area
believed, per researchers of the area, in a milder form of slavery than in the rest of the
state and therefore slave family breakups and cruelty were at a minimum and "many of

14 Ibid., p. 32
15 Ibid.
16 Groover, Sweet Land of Liberty, p. 35.
the slaves were allowed to accumulate property.”\textsuperscript{17} Also on Liberty County plantations, slaves’ medical needs were taken care of by the slave master’s wife; slaves were allotted extra portions of sugar cane syrup for ponderous work; slaves received at least a yearly supply of clothes and shoes and slave marriages were “encouraged by...owners to...whoever...whenever” the slaves chose.\textsuperscript{18} Slaves in Liberty County were “accorded a humane [sic] treatment [sic] not generally found in other parts of the South” because “though the [white] people of Liberty County were slaveholders and so subject to Southern sentiment, they never adopted the moral[e] of slavery. They never forgot that their slaves were human beings...they instructed them in the same moral ideas of virtue and right and truth which they held themselves.”\textsuperscript{19} An example of the apparent benevolence of the white slave holders in Liberty County was the fact that residents would not “allow the hunting of fugitives with bloodhounds within the borders of Liberty County. The result was that many a hounded fugitive sought asylum there and never in vain: his pursuers might come with guns and horses and hounds to the county line, but here their course was stayed.”\textsuperscript{20} The law that forbade teaching blacks to read and write was circumvented by Liberty County whites who instructed blacks in religious catechisms. Not all Liberty County slaveholders believed that slaves should learn to read and write nor that they should be taught these skills because some slaveowners believed

\textsuperscript{17} Donald L. Grant, \textit{The Way It Was In the South: The Black Experience in Georgia}, (New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1993), p. 90.

\textsuperscript{18} Groover, \textit{Sweet Land of Liberty}, p. 35.

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
that "Christian slaves [who] could read the Bible... were more prone to act upon insurrectionary thoughts than were the illiterate."\textsuperscript{21} But the slave owners who did ensure that their slaves received religious instruction, believed a slave who believed in Christianity "was less likely to be dissatisfied with his condition in life" and would not be "an immoral dishonest domestic" but "a faithful servant."\textsuperscript{22} Even with the seemingly commendable deeds enumerated above, the whites of Liberty County did not free their slaves but kept them enslaved because it was more expedient and the economy was dependent upon slave labor.

The first county seat in Liberty County was Sunbury, then Riceboro in 1797, then to the present site of Hinesville in 1837.\textsuperscript{23} The county prospered, so that by 1841 the city of Hinesville had established an educational institution, the Hinesville Academy for the white pupils.\textsuperscript{24} During the Civil War, Liberty County suffered a great deal of property damage and monetary loss, most notably the destruction of the city of Sunbury by the Union troops. During Sherman’s March to the Sea,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{21} Smith, \textit{Slavery and Rice Culture}, p. 142.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center, \textit{Comprehensive Development Plan: Liberty County}, p. N-31.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Groover, \textit{Sweet Land of Liberty}, p. 66. Hinesville Academy was later renamed Bradwell Institute and charged tuition and received state and county funds by 1919.
\end{itemize}
while consolidating the siege lines around Savannah, Sherman sent his cavalry south to destroy the Savannah and Gulf Railroad and to forage for provisions. Kilpatrick established his headquarters at historic Midway Church, and burned the town of Sunbury to signal its capture to Sherman.25

The town of Sunbury was never rebuilt after the Civil War and became a state historical site.

Because some slaves in Liberty County were allowed to accumulate property, Sherman’s March to the Sea hurt them more than blacks in other areas of the state.

Sherman’s forces sequestered the property of both blacks and whites, and because blacks in Liberty County had more to lose, they were hurt more than blacks elsewhere in the path of the Yankee juggernaut. Of forty-four claims from the county that were later filed against the federal government, twenty-seven, with an average value of over $1,000, were pressed by blacks. A congressional commission was established in 1871 to reimburse those who lost assets helping the Union.26

Because of the Puritan background of the early white settlers of Liberty County and the large percentage of blacks in the population after the Civil War, Liberty County claimed to have sent black representatives to the state legislature long after Reconstruction was overwritten.27 The Savannah Tribune of April 1876 carried “a resolution from Liberty

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26 Grant, Black Experience in Georgia, p. 90.
27 The Georgia Archives, Secretary of State chronological list of black members of the Georgia General Assembly from 1868 through 1990, shows only one black House member of the Georgia General Assembly, W. A. Golden from Liberty County, from 1868, expelled 1869-1870 then seated again from 1873-1874.
County inviting black victims of violence in other parts of Georgia to come there, for ‘plenty of good cheap land for rent or sale.’ By 1908, Liberty County blacks owned fifty-six thousand acres.”

The advertisement was a ploy to entice blacks to move to Liberty County as renters not owners. Although blacks were a majority of the Liberty County population after the Civil War, conditions did not improve for blacks politically in Liberty County. An example of the unwillingness of Liberty County whites to acknowledge the new freedmen’s rights was the poor enforcement in Georgia of the aims to safeguard black political rights under the 14th and 15th amendments under the Enforcement Acts of 1870 and 1871 that allowed the Democrats to win state and local elections in Liberty County “by refusing to count votes from the two largest black precincts.”

Although the voting population in Liberty County indicated there were more blacks than whites, the black vote threat was lessened by the purging of 1,000 blacks from the voting list by the county voting registrar in 1960. Prior to the purging in 1958, there were 2,472 black registered voters and 2,128 white registered voters. After the purging, as of March 24, 1960, the Liberty County voter registrar indicated there were 2,014 black registered voters and 2,017 white registered voters.

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28 Grant, *Black Experience in Georgia*, p. 147. See Table 6-2 for increase/decrease in black population between 1870-1910.

29 Grant, *Black Experience in Georgia*, p. 128.


31 Ibid.
denied at the time that the purges were racially motivated. The names were removed due to "failure to meet a state law requirement for voting at least once every two years.

Officials emphasized that all were advised by letter of the...removal and the need for re-registering." No mechanism was in place at the time by the county to re-register the purged blacks nor any whites who may also have been purged. An example of the empowerment of blacks in Liberty County was that after the purging incident the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) "opened a training center to teach the theory and tactics of peaceful protest at the Dorchester Community Center in Liberty County. By 1963, six hundred militant, nonviolent activists had graduated."32 Also in 1960, Ralph Quarterman, a black candidate ran unsuccessfully for a seat on the Liberty County Commission.33 Another black, Earl Baggs, also ran unsuccessfully against a white incumbent for a seat on the Liberty County Commission in 1962.34 The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in 1962 filed a complaint with the US Justice Department regarding invalidation of black ballots, invalidation of black absentee ballots, purged voters and other unlawful changes that had been made to the voter list in Liberty County.35 In 1962 in response to the SCLC complaint and after the FBI investigation, the US Justice Department "sent letters to voting officials in 48 Georgia

\[32\] Grant, Black Experience in Georgia, p. 393.


counties and 37 cities pointing out that segregated voting procedures [were] unlawful and [asked] that the practice be stopped voluntarily."

**Demographics of Liberty County**

The total population in Liberty County in 1790 was 5,355 of that number there were 4,025 slaves and 1,303 whites. The slave population in Liberty County increased slowly through 1860 due to the invention of the cotton gin and to the increased production of rice. Cotton production dropped dramatically in Liberty County by 1850 and rice production increased because tidewater rice plantations “were fewer, more isolated, more specialized, and since their labor-management needs were greater, [they] contained larger slave populations than plantations producing cotton, sugar, or tobacco” and implemented an “intricate system of irrigation” by taking advantage of the ample fresh water river tides, the Atlantic Coast and the swamp land. The population of

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39 Smith, Slavery and Rice Culture, p. 207. Tidewater refers to the rivers and coastal areas in the county.
Liberty County in 1890 was 12,887 which was an increase of 7,532 since the 1790 census. Between 1790 and 1890 there was a 140.65% increase in the population of Liberty County due mainly to the large number of slaves and those who remained after the Civil War.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 6-1</th>
<th>POPULATION BY RACE FOR LIBERTY COUNTY FROM 1790 TO 1890</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POP</td>
<td>1790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FREE</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLACKS</td>
<td>4,025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLAVES</td>
<td>1,303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHITES</td>
<td>1,303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL*</td>
<td>5,355</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.
*Total figures include blacks, whites, Asians and others. POP=population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 6-1 (continued)</th>
<th>POPULATION BY RACE FOR LIBERTY COUNTY FROM 1900 TO 1990</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BLACKS</td>
<td>8,614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHITES</td>
<td>4,479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL*</td>
<td>13,093</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Department of Commerce, Census Bureau
*Total figures include blacks, whites, Asians and others. Military personnel are counted in the population as long as they resided within the county at the time of the census. POP=population
During the time period from 1790 through 1860 all populations in Liberty County experienced a decrease in population. The largest decrease was in the number of free blacks in Liberty County which occurred between 1810 to 1830. There was also a decrease in the white population during the same time period. Whites were moving and settling westward. Free blacks were leaving at that time for reasons discussed earlier in Chapter 2. The population of Liberty County tripled between 1970 and 1990 because of the influence of Ft. Stewart.

In 1970, there were 10,928 persons in Liberty County who were 0-24 years old, 5,923 persons who were 25-64 years old and 797 persons age 65 and over.\(^{40}\) There were 62.61% more persons age 0-24 years old than over 25 years of age. In 1990, there were 28,478 persons age 0-24 years old and 22,646 persons age 25-64 years old and 1,940 persons age 65 and over.\(^{41}\) There were 15.83% more persons 0-24 years of age in Liberty County than persons age 25 and over. The percentage of young people in the Liberty County population during the 20 year time period was a reflection of the natural aging of the population and of the influx of individuals migrating into the county because of employment opportunities at Ft. Stewart for base personnel, civilians and businesses that were created within the county to respond to the needs of those associated with the military base.

\(^{40}\) Governor’s Development Council, Council of Economic Development Organizations, Economic Development Workbook, Region 8, (Georgia Department of Community Affairs, May 19, 1993), p. 6.

\(^{41}\) Ibid., p. 8.
### Employment

Liberty County is located in an area that has been referred to as the tidewater region, coastal area or rice coast because of the many rivers and tributaries in the area and the Atlantic Ocean which encouraged rice cultivation as early as the 1700s.\footnote{Smith, \textit{Slavery and Rice Culture}, p. 15.} “English settlements and Negro slavery in Georgia developed earlier along this coast, where a mild climate, moderately fertile soil, and accessible land attracted inhabitants.”\footnote{Ibid., p. 222.} The planters of Liberty County produced smaller quantities of rice and more cotton than in neighboring counties prior to 1850\footnote{Ibid., p. 64-75. Overseers were managers of plantations who had knowledge of rice planting intricacies. Drivers were foremen who directed the work of field laborers; they were also middlemen who represented management and were responsible for the successful production of crops, sometimes trusted slaves were given this job.}. Employment in colonial Georgia consisted of farming either as a small planter or a large plantation owner. Some whites were also employed as overseers or drivers.\footnote{ Ibid., pp. 64-75. Overseers were managers of plantations who had knowledge of rice planting intricacies. Drivers were foremen who directed the work of field laborers; they were also middlemen who represented management and were responsible for the successful production of crops, sometimes trusted slaves were given this job.} There was a slave system in place in Georgia, as in neighboring southern colonies but the slave system in coastal Georgia was unlike that of

\begin{table}
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
 & 
\textbf{Net} & 
\textbf{In} & 
\textbf{Out} & 
\textbf{Net} & 
\textbf{Net} & 
\textbf{Net} \\
\textbf{Migrants} & 
\textbf{Migrants} & 
\textbf{Migrants} & 
\textbf{Migrants} & 
\textbf{Migrants} & 
\textbf{Migrants} & 
\textbf{Migrants} \\
\hline
\textbf{STATE} & 185,725 & 636,155 & 450,430 & 103,944 & 19,518 & 8,480 \\
\textbf{LIBERTY COUNTY} & 16,757 & 22,570 & 5,813 & 10,750 & 461 & -5 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{1975-1980 Migration}
\end{table}

Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs, \textit{Georgia Today, Liberty County, Hinesville. Facts at a Glance.}
the rest of the state per researchers of the area. In colonial Liberty County, few slaves were bought or sold, most lived in two-room lumber cabins, with a chimney and they were allowed a garden. Slaves did not work on Sunday but attended mandatory church services. Researchers state that slaves had chickens, horses, cows and were allowed to fish at night but were expected to return to work the following morning. In addition to fishing, gardening, raising their own livestock, researchers further contend that the slaves were allowed to hunt raccoons and opossums for their own consumption and for sale to the master.\textsuperscript{46} These practices continued presumably until the Civil War. From 1800-1865, "the area had a predominant plantation culture with [the] economic focus on agricultural products such as...cotton."\textsuperscript{47}

After the Civil War, most individuals in the county were employed in agriculture. The major crops produced in Liberty County were cotton, rice, corn and sweet potatoes. See Table 6-3 below for amounts of each product and output.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\small
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{AREA} & \textbf{POUNDS OF RICE} & \textbf{BALES OF CORN} & \textbf{BUSHELS OF COTTON} & \textbf{BUSHELS OF SWEET POTATOES} \\
\hline
\textbf{STATE} & 22,277,380 & 17,646,459 & 473,934 & 95,325 \\
\hline
\textbf{LIBERTY COUNTY} & 1,219,430 & 131,845 & 2,090 & 95,325 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Agricultural Products in 1870}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{46} Groover, \textit{Sweet Land of Liberty}, p. 38.

\textsuperscript{47} Coastal Area Planning and Development Commission, \textit{Areawide Economic Base and Population Study}, (Atlanta, GA: Department of Community Development, 1975), p. 5.
Throughout the 1800s, Liberty county residents were mainly employed in agriculture. By 1879, 75 percent of farm laborers were black in Liberty County. There was a corresponding increase in the amount of goods produced between 1870 and 1880. Rice production doubled while the production for other crops declined greatly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 6-4</th>
<th>AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS IN 1880</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>POUNDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AREA OF RICE</td>
<td>OF CORN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STATE</td>
<td>25,369,687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIBERTY COUNTY</td>
<td>2,704,330</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau

By 1890, Liberty County was diversifying its economy. Other crops dominated the Liberty County economy as evidenced in Table 6-5 below. The bales of cotton produced by Liberty County was reduced because rice cultivation and production had increased due to the soil type. Rice production increased because of the large amount of swamp land in Liberty County, the decreased price for cotton and the decreased need for black farm laborers. Soil deprivation and soil depletion added to the decreased cotton products.

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By 1900 and 1910 for the entire county of Liberty, the largest agricultural product was cereals (corn). Also by 1900, the timber industry centering around logging operations had begun. This lessened the area used for crops which in turn decreased the need for agricultural farm workers.

### TABLE 6-5
**AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS IN 1890**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA</th>
<th>BUSHELS OF CORN</th>
<th>BALES OF COTTON</th>
<th>POUNDS OF RICE</th>
<th>BUSHELS OF SWEET POTATOES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STATE</td>
<td>29,261,422</td>
<td>1,191,846</td>
<td>14,556,432</td>
<td>5,616,317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIBERTY COUNTY</td>
<td>108,075</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>1,842,542</td>
<td>71,205</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau

### TABLE 6-6
**AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS IN 1900**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA</th>
<th>BUSHELS OF CORN</th>
<th>BALES OF COTTON</th>
<th>POUNDS OF RICE</th>
<th>BUSHELS OF SWEET POTATOES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STATE</td>
<td>34,032</td>
<td>2,420,059</td>
<td>148,698</td>
<td>5,087,674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIBERTY COUNTY</td>
<td>166,550</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>28,131</td>
<td>50,475</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau

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During 1900-1920, natural forestation declined but reforestation, the paper pulp industry and naval stores industry began to rise. By 1990 few of the above crops were still produced in Liberty County.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 6-7 AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS IN 1990</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BUSHELS OF CORN X 1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STATE 37,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIBERTY COUNTY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


During the Depression most employed individuals in Liberty County were employed in agriculture. In 1934, there were 834 farms, encompassing more than 33,000 acres, that were operated by black persons in Liberty County; "of that number 560 were full owners of their farms, representing more than 23,000 acres. The majority of the black farmers in Liberty County in 1934 did not raise tobacco. Cotton [remained] their money crop. But...an oversupply of cotton on the national market...brought a low price." "To supplement their farm income, black men worked in sawmills, naval stores, or in the fishing industry. Many black women did domestic work or laundry for white persons. But farm and outside work brought in only enough money for a marginal

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51 Ibid., p. 6.
52 Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, p. 91.
existence." White and black males in 1934 worked at the same outside jobs because farming was no longer as profitable, "but few if any, white women did domestic work or laundry for other persons." Between 1920 and 1945, the effects of World War I and World War II boosted the economy of Liberty County because of the existence of Liberty ship construction facilities and Ft. Stewart. The number of farms decreased in Liberty County after the 1940 authorization by President Franklin Roosevelt for the Defense Department to purchase 525,000 acres for an antiaircraft training and firing center. The large amount of wooded area in Liberty County also made the area susceptible to fires, (including wildfires, incendiary fires, debris fires, fires caused by smokers and fires caused by machine) which also destroyed woods and farms. By 1960 the majority of black men were employed as laborers (not farm laborers nor mine laborers) and the black women were private household workers. In 1962 the total number of employed persons in Liberty County was 2,992 of which 144 were employed in agriculture, 680 in

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53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
56 "Acquisition of Land at Savannah Approved," Atlanta Journal, July 2, 1940, p. 9. This later became Camp Stewart which was later renamed Fort Stewart, contained 279,270 acres and included Liberty, Long, Bryan, Evans and Tattnall counties.
manufacturing and 565 in wholesale and retail trade.\textsuperscript{59} The placement of the army installation in Liberty County changed the economy and employment opportunities so much so that in the 1940s the city of Hinesville and Liberty County experienced a boom in population because of employment associated with construction of the army installation.\textsuperscript{60} In the early 1970s, Liberty County was similar to other rural coastal counties in Georgia with an economic base that was predominantly forestry and forestry products manufacturing oriented and therefore observed stagnant employment growth due to a labor intensity decline resulting from technological advances in the forest industry.\textsuperscript{61} In 1975 the important employment sectors in this region were retail and wholesale trade and services in addition to forestry products as the largest resource.\textsuperscript{62} By 1990, 15.94\% of the employed persons 16 years of age and older in Liberty County were in service occupations and 11.33\% in precision production, craft and repair occupations. The major industries in Liberty County in 1990 were retail trade with 22.01\% employed persons and public administration with 18.51\% employed persons. Growth continued in Liberty County because of Ft. Stewart and by 1994 there were 4,407 civilians employed

\textsuperscript{60} "Hinesville Has Boom Appearance," \textit{Savannah Evening Press}, September 16, 1940, p. 1
\textsuperscript{61} Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center, \textit{Comprehensive Development Plan: Liberty County}, p. H-4 and 5.
\textsuperscript{62} Coastal Area Planning and Development Commission, \textit{Areawide Economic Base and Population Study}, p. 6.
at Fort Stewart and 19,192 military personnel.\(^6^3\) The large number of military personnel and their families encouraged business growth. Fort Stewart also was the training center for National Guard troops during the summer who required off base amenities. Fort Stewart also allowed hunting on the reservation which encouraged hunters to frequent the businesses in the neighboring areas for supplies.

There are several community programs available through the Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center (CGDRC) and the Coastal Area District Development Authority (CADDA) to promote economic, social and physical development within cities and counties in their servicing areas, including Liberty County. The CGDRC manages a federal Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) program that prepares “disadvantaged young persons and adults for long-term unsubsidized employment.”\(^6^4\) CADDA manages an Employment Incentive Program (EIP) “to enhance job creation and/or retention” and “a multi-million dollar revolving loan fund” for federal Small Business Administration loan programs.\(^6^5\) The “Liberty County Economic Development Authority and the Liberty County Chamber of Commerce solicit new business and industry for the region and actively support existing establishments.”\(^6^6\) The Liberty County Industrial Authority

\(^6^3\) “Some Georgia Military Bases Are Vulnerable,” \textit{Atlanta Journal/Constitution}, April 14, 1994, p. A11. The employment figures are inflated because Hunter Army Airfield is included because it is considered a part of Fort Stewart although it is physically located in Savannah.


\(^6^5\) Ibid.

\(^6^6\) Ibid., p. E-15.
operate five industrial parks, “construct speculative buildings within their industrial parks to attract new business,” and operate the “Local Small Business Resource Center” to provide workshops on small business management.\textsuperscript{67} Another local organization, Forward Liberty, is designed to “establish clearly defined and complimentary roles for the various economic agencies within Liberty County,” such as the Liberty County Industrial Authority, the Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Development Authority and local government and business leaders.\textsuperscript{68} By 1990, “because Liberty County” is “competitive with most of the surrounding counties and the State” it is able to attract industries that require skilled and highly skilled workers.\textsuperscript{69}

\textbf{Income}

By 1900, residents of Liberty County supplemented their agricultural incomes and fed their families by “catching fish, crabs and some oysters, both for home consumption and for the market at Savannah” because fish were more plentiful than game.\textsuperscript{70} Many of the residents of Liberty County in 1900 were engaged in agricultural pursuits. There were 1138 black owned farms and 572 white owned farms in 1900.\textsuperscript{71} The number of black owned farms increased in 1910 to 1148 and the number of black tenant farmers

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., p. E-23.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid., p. P-4.
\textsuperscript{70} Georgia Department of Agriculture, \textit{Georgia: Historical and Industrial}, p. 737.
was 121. The number of white owned farms decreased in 1910 to 434 and the number of white tenant farmers was 96. By 1920, the number of black owned farms had decreased to 961 and the number of black tenant farmers had decreased to 220. The corresponding number of white owned farms had decreased in 1920 to 582 and white tenant farms had decreased to 600. In 1930 there were more black farms (834) than white farms (273) but still less than in 1920. During the Depression black families supplemented their incomes by planting crops other than cotton, such as rice, sugar cane, corn and vegetables, and working outside the home, both males and females. In 1940 the number of farms in Liberty County continued to decline for blacks (659) and whites (258). In 1950 the number of white farms (166) outnumbered the black farms (109) but were considerably less than in previous years. The decline in the number of black farms was in keeping with the decline of the black population during the same years. By 1960

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73 Ibid.
74 Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census of the US Taken in the Year 1920, Volume VI, Part 2 Agriculture, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1922), p. 302. The reductions would have been due to the decrease in the size of Liberty County after a portion was taken to form Long County in 1920.
75 Ibid.
77 Groover, Sweet Land of Liberty, p. 91.
most individuals in Liberty County were employed in manufacturing industries and wholesale and retail trade industries.\textsuperscript{80} By 1970, 1.7% of the jobs in Liberty County were dependent on farming with a steady decline in subsequent years.\textsuperscript{81} In 1970, 14% of the jobs within Liberty County were dependent on retail with a steady increase in subsequent years.\textsuperscript{82}

**Education**

Education was important to the plantation owners in Liberty County. An indication of the importance of education was the fact that slaves in Liberty County were given religious instruction as early as 1770.\textsuperscript{83} Reportedly “members of Midway Church felt so strongly about the religious welfare of their slaves that at one time they established a school to teach the slaves how to read and write. But state authorities closed the school since it was against the state law.”\textsuperscript{84}


\textsuperscript{81} Governor's Development Council, Council of Economic Development Organizations, Economic Development Workbook, Region 8, (Georgia Department of Community Affairs, May 19, 1993), p. 46. In 1980, 1% and in 1990, .6% of the employment in Liberty County was dependent on farming.

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., p. 106. In 1980, 16% and in 1990 19.2% of the employment in Liberty County was dependent on retail.

\textsuperscript{83} Groover, Sweet Land of Liberty, p. 35.

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid.
The Midway Church in Liberty County was one of only two Congregational churches in the antebellum Deep South. It welcomed blacks, both slave and free, but they had to sit in the balcony and could hold no offices in the church. One individual who gave religious instruction to Liberty County slaves was a free black man, Mingo.85

Mingo was described as a preacher who conducted religious services on several coastal plantations during the week. “One plantation owner, John Lambert, felt such a lively interest in the religious welfare of his slaves, that he employed Mingo to conduct regular services on his plantation.”86 When John Lambert, the aforementioned white member of the Midway community who was a supporter of Mingo, “died in 1786” stipulated in his will that proceeds from the sale of his estate be invested and used for a charitable aim such as “…the religious education of slaves in Liberty County.”87 One of Mingo’s followers, Jack Salturs, who at the time was enslaved, also gave religious instruction to other slaves and was “regarded so highly by members of Midway Church…that they bought him his freedom to devote his life to religious work.”88 There were later blacks who also gave religious instruction to slaves similar to those who have previously been named. There were also whites who were interested in slaves receiving religious instruction. “Reverend Cyrus Gildersleeve, pastor of Midway Church from

85 Ibid.
86 Ibid., p. 38.
87 Ibid.
88 Ibid., p. 35.
1790 to 1811, was the first person in Liberty County to attempt a systematic program of religious instructions for enslaved persons.\textsuperscript{89} In 1806, a meeting house for slaves was constructed by several plantation owners for reading services and as a “station” for Methodist circuit riders.\textsuperscript{90} The Sunbury Baptist Church in 1806 constructed its church building with a gallery for slave worshippers, and held Sunday afternoon services there for slaves.\textsuperscript{91} In 1831, plantation owners in Liberty County met to organize an association to create a systematic program of regular training and instruction for Liberty County slaves.\textsuperscript{92} This association did not succeed because the individuals who were hired to instruct the slaves “were not ministers and failed to interest the slaves sufficiently to promote their regular attendance at meetings.”\textsuperscript{93} Slaves church attendance was later addressed when funds from the Lambert Estate were used by the Midway Church Missionary Society and given to Reverend Charles C. Jones who preached in 1832 in “rotation each Sunday” at Pleasant Grove, North New Port, Midway, and the Fraser plantation.\textsuperscript{94} Reverend Jones did not preach in Sunbury because the Baptists had a church there nor at Walthourville because “there was no church in which he could conduct services.”\textsuperscript{95} Reverend Jones “preached at night during the week to slaves from

\textsuperscript{89} ibid., p. 36.
\textsuperscript{90} ibid.
\textsuperscript{91} ibid.
\textsuperscript{92} ibid.
\textsuperscript{93} ibid.
\textsuperscript{94} ibid., p. 37.
\textsuperscript{95} ibid.
about 50 plantations. Reverend Jones’ religious schools for slaves included one organized on August 18, 1833 at the Fraser Plantation for 50 black students (this school discontinued after one year due to lack of a building); another formed at Pleasant Grove on January 12, 1834 for 20 black students, and another at Midway on May 11, 1834 for 25 black students. All of the above named schools operated year round. Also in 1834 other schools were organized in Walthourville, Jonesville and Flemington for those slaves who came with plantation families during the summer but these schools operated only during the summer months while the families were on retreat. The slaves did not receive written instruction but “were taught by oral instruction only.” Although the plantation owners thought religious instruction was important they feared the power that knowledge would give slaves and that this would lead to ruin in the County. “By 1835, there were seven [white] schools on coastal Liberty County plantations. Thirty-six [white] instructors taught 450 [white] scholars. By 1839, there were ...seven [white] schools with 31 [white] instructors and 455 [white] scholars. By 1845, ...those numbers had increased to nine [white] schools with 34 [white] instructors and 647 [white] scholars.” In 1850 there were 5 white public schools with 151 white students in Liberty County; no free coloreds were attending school in Liberty County. In 1875

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96 Ibid.
97 Ibid.
98 Ibid.
99 Ibid., p. 38.
there were five private white high schools in Liberty County for white students with 213 white students, one white private high school was in Walthourville, (Walthourville Academy) with 48 white students.\textsuperscript{101} Liberty County in 1875 had 37 public schools with 1,463 students, of that 20 public schools were for 431 white students and 17 public schools for blacks with 1,032 black students.\textsuperscript{102} The percentage difference between the white and black students enrolled in public schools in 1875 was 139.5\% more blacks than whites. The large number of blacks attending public schools in Liberty County was an indication of the importance of education to the newly freed persons. In the state of Georgia by 1874 the state legislators recognized “the inadequacies” of the Educational system and organized “an interracial mass meeting in Liberty County” in 1876 “to support an increase in the school term from three to six months.”\textsuperscript{103} In 1898 Liberty County there were, “29 white schools with 703 pupils and 37 black schools with 831 pupils. Only one white school and eight black schools were operated by the Liberty County Board of Education in 1898.”\textsuperscript{104} In 1901 there were 33 white schools with 741 students and 33 black schools with 807 students.\textsuperscript{105} “In 1919 there were 98 white and black elementary schools in Liberty County.”\textsuperscript{106} By 1919 there was a private school,

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., p. 21.
\textsuperscript{103} Grant, Black Experience in Georgia, p. 227.
\textsuperscript{104} Groover, Sweet Land of Liberty, p. 66.
\textsuperscript{105} Georgia Department of Agriculture, Georgia: Historical and Industrial, p. 738.
\textsuperscript{106} Groover, Sweet Land of Liberty, p. 83.
Dorchester Academy, for black students located between McIntosh and Midway, that charged tuition, and was supported by missionary organizations and others, but received no state or county funds. Dorchester Academy which was started in 1878 and supported by the black members of the old Midway Congregational Church and the American Missionary Association (AMA) later became a regular graded school. William Golden sold one acre of land to the AMA for a structure for The Dorchester Academy. The Liberty County school system was consolidated in 1930 for white students which resulted in the following consolidated white schools in Liberty County: Fleming Elementary School, Bradwell Institute Elementary and High School, Dorchester Elementary and Junior High School, Taylors Creek Elementary and Junior High School, Providence Elementary School and Willie Elementary and High School. "There was little upgrading and consolidation of schools for black children" between 1919 and 1930. After 1930 there was no educational institution for blacks in Liberty County that received county or state funds. Dorchester Academy in 1930 was a tuition school and "the only institution of higher learning [sic] for black persons in Liberty County." By

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107 Ibid., p. 83.
108 Grant, Black Experience in Georgia, p. 226. "Black History Group Hears Liberty County Account," Savannah Morning News, August 17, 1977, p. 1. The Dorchester School officially closed in 1940. The building was used later and renamed the Dorchester Center, Inc.
110 Groover, Sweet Land of Liberty, p. 83. This is not the black Dorchester Academy in Liberty County but an institution with a similar name for white students.
111 Ibid.
112 Ibid.
1960 the majority of the persons in Liberty County who were 25 years old and over had completed 9.4 years of school.\textsuperscript{113} As of 1996, Liberty County contained five public elementary schools, three public middle schools and two public high schools. The residents of Liberty County were able to receive college degrees and post secondary education within the county through courses offered by Savannah Area Vocational Technical School, Armstrong Atlantic State University and Brewton Parker College at Fort Stewart and Bradwell Institute.

**Housing**

In 1960 in Liberty County for all occupied housing units, 54.8% had all plumbing facilities. In Liberty County in 1970, black households were surveyed and of the 1430 occupied housing units investigated 855 lacked plumbing facilities.\textsuperscript{114} In 1970, 67.2% of black households lacked plumbing facilities in Liberty County. In 1980, in Liberty County for all occupied housing units there were 4.1% units lacking plumbing.

"In the small municipalities of Liberty County the ratio of mobile homes was higher than that for the county as a whole in 1990."\textsuperscript{115} In 1980 there were 2,267 mobile homes in Liberty County which were 21.2% of the total occupied housing units in the


county. In 1990 there were 4,542 mobile homes in Liberty County which were 28.6% of the total occupied housing units in the county.

**Social Services**

Liberty County contains the cities of Allenhurst, Flemington, Gum Branch, Midway, Riceboro and Walthourville. Liberty County provides, to the cities within the county, police protection, hospital and health protection, and maintains the public recreation facilities. "There are two hospitals in Liberty County, one civilian and one military." The county is responsible for education on the elementary and secondary levels countywide.

**History of Walthourville**

Walthourville is located in the western portion of Liberty County. The town of Walthourville, settled in 1795, was first known as Sandhills, for the sandhills that adjoined "the head streams of the North Newport river," and served as a summer retreat from the swamps for wealthy plantation owners in the area. The town was later

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116 Douglas C. Bachtel and Susan R. Boatright, eds., *The Georgia County Guide, Thirteenth Edition 1994*, (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service, 1994), p. 90. The County does not have the figures for the individual municipalities. In the State of Georgia there were 154,976 mobile homes or 7.7% of the total number of occupied housing units.

117 Ibid. The County does not have the figures for the individual municipalities. In the State of Georgia there were 305,055 mobile homes which were 11.6% of the total occupied housing units.


named Walthourville to honor, Andrew Walthour, a wealthy resident plantation owner who donated land for the creation of a private high school for whites, Walthourville Academy, which was incorporated in 1823 by the legislature.\footnote{Candler and Evans, p. 517. Unable to find any information on Andrew Walthour or his property holdings from the Census records of 1790-1860. John B. Mallard, “Liberty County Georgia: An Address Delivered at Hinesville, July 4, 1876,” The Georgia Historical Quarterly, Volume 2, March 1918, No. 1, p. 14.} Evidence of Andrew Walthour’s importance in the community are legal documents dated as early as 1777, where Andrew Walthour was the executor of wills and estates and served on juries.\footnote{Caroline Price Wilson, 	extit{Annals of Georgia: Important Early Records of the State, Volume I Liberty County Records and a State Revolutionary Pay Roll}, (Vidalia, GA: Georgia Genealogical Reprints, 1969), pp. 20, 26, 32, 36, 41, 56, 57, 59, 72, 81, 108, 141.} Andrew Walthour additionally rendered service to the colonial government during the Revolutionary War.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 108, 141. This is the Comptroller General’s Office State of Georgia, March 5, 1924 of the Revolutionary Records which were the auditor’s journal showing the expenses of the Colonial Government and services rendered to the Colonial Government by Georgia citizens to General Anthony Wayne and his troops in their raid on Florida. Walthour and 14 other men received payment for collecting cattle for the Florida expedition and a steer from Edward Ball’s estate.} Andrew Walthour’s son, George W. Walthour by 1850 “owned more than 200” slaves and was “the largest property owner in Liberty County; in 1850 his rice yield was 195,000 pounds, and his Sea Island cotton, 45,000 [pounds]. Walthour’s estate had 300 slaves in 1860.”\footnote{Smith, 	extit{Slavery and Rice Culture}, p. 223.} George W. Walthour was a man of importance in Liberty County who, similar to Andrew Walthour, served as early as 1826 as an administrator of estates and property of others.\footnote{Smith, 	extit{Slavery and Rice Culture}, p. 223.} The town of Walthourville was an important shipping point for lumber, rosin and turpentine in the early 1900s because it
was a stop on the Atlantic Coast Line railway. By 1878, Walthourville consisted of 395 residents: 195 white and 200 black, "34 private dwellings, no hotel, 3 churches, 3 schools with 30 pupils, 4 mixed stores, 3 physicians, and 4 lawyers."  

**History of Politics in Walthourville**

Walthourville became a city much later than the other two cities in this paper and was incorporated by the state on March 22, 1974. Walthourville residents desired incorporation as a city to prevent the county seat of Hinesville from annexing Walthourville and its assets, namely the Liberty County Airport and Industrial Park. Preceding Mayor Kent’s term as mayor, the first mayor of Walthourville was a white female, Mrs. Lyndol Anderson. In 1974, the first mayor and city council of Walthourville were women who were also the incorporating officers of the city, who were to serve until the second Monday in January 1975. The city council and mayor were sworn in on April 10, 1974 in Walthourville. The first election for city officials

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129 Walthourville City Council Meeting Minutes, April 16, 1974.
of Walthourville was to be held “on the first Wednesday in December 1974 and on said date every four years thereafter, an election shall be held for the mayor and five” councilpersons. The city council term of office was to begin on the second Monday in January in the year following the respective election. The qualifications for mayor and city councilmembers are “must be at least twenty-one years of age, must meet the requirements of a qualified voter of said city...have been a bona fide resident of the city for at least one year in the case of a councilman and two years in the case of the mayor...” The all female city government of Walthourville was the first of its kind in the country. The first city council meeting was held on April 16, 1974 at which time they set the time and date for future meetings to be the second Tuesday of each month at 8:30PM. Mayor Kent was one of the inaugural members of the city council of 1974 as councilperson for Post 2. Also within the city charter, the Georgia General Assembly set the monthly compensation for mayor at $150.00 per month and $75.00 per month for each councilperson. At the first city council meeting on April 16, 1974, the city

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132 Ibid.


134 Walthourville City Council Meeting Minutes, April 16, 1974. The city council voted on May 12, 1987 to meet the second and fourth Tuesday of each month. Council began meeting twice monthly June 1987.

council in addition to setting the dates and time of future city council meetings, also elected a mayor pro-tem, elected a city attorney; discussed putting street lights and city limit and speed limit signs within the city limits; discussed collecting taxes on alcoholic beverages sold within the city limits; discussed qualifying and registering voters; discussed acquiring a firetruck and how it should be manned and maintained; voted to originate a bank account and to hold open council meetings. After two months in office, the city council voted to “do their job strictly on a non-salary basis” while in office.\(^{136}\)

This decision was made mainly because the City treasury had no funds with which to pay the city officials a monthly salary as stipulated in the city charter. The city of Walthourville treasurer’s report indicated that as of July 9, 1974, the city funds amounted to $158.65.\(^ {137}\) The city council voted in 1979 to amend the budget to add the salary of councilmembers and also stipulated that if a councilperson missed three consecutive meetings (except in case of emergency or sickness) then that councilperson would not be paid for meetings missed.\(^ {138}\) In 1987, the city council voted for a wage increase for the city council from $75 to $175 per month and an increase of the mayor’s monthly salary

\(^{136}\) Walthourville City Council Meeting Minutes, June 11, 1974.

\(^ {137}\) Walthourville City Council Meeting Minutes, July 9, 1974.

\(^ {138}\) Walthourville City Council Meeting Minutes, July 10, 1979. No mention in the minutes as to salary amounts.
from $150 to $425. In 1991 the council voted that all council members and the mayor should receive a raise; no money amount was disclosed nor an effective date.

At the July 9, 1974, city council meeting, the city council appointed a Municipal Superintendent and three voting registrars, a chief voting registrar and two deputy voting registrars. The city council voted to pay each poll worker $20 for working on election day December 4, 1974. On August 13, 1974, the city council decided to register voters on two days (whichever two days were convenient for the chief registrar) and that registration of voters should be completed by October 31, 1974. By September 10, 1974, 167 persons had registered to vote in the December 4, 1974 election. As of the last election in Walthourville in 1995, there were 274 black female registered voters, 171 black male registered voters, 115 white female registered voters, 92 white male registered voters, 6 other female registered voters and 9 other male registered voters for a total of 667 registered voters.

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139 Walthourville City Council Meeting Minutes, May 12, 1987.
141 Walthourville City Council Meeting Minutes, July 9, 1974.
142 Walthourville City Council Meeting Minutes, December 10, 1974. No mention in the minutes if this amount would be paid to the registrars also or if this amount was for future elections or only this election.
143 Walthourville City Council Meeting Minutes, December 10, 1974.
144 Georgia Secretary of State Voter Registration System Voter List by County for Liberty County, Walthourville City, August 28, 1995, pages 1-37.
On September 5, 1974, a special called meeting was held to issue a beer license (cost of $50) and to replace a council person who had resigned. Maxine Gaskin resigned as councilperson representing Post 3. Priscilla Huneycutt was appointed to replace Gaskin. The city council also decided at this meeting to name all streets in Walthourville after the governors of Georgia.

The first election of city officials held in Walthourville on December 4, 1974, resulted in the six women incumbents receiving the majority votes to remain in their previously appointed city positions. In 1974 there were 237 registered voters and of that number the turnout was 96 percent. The incumbents were challenged for their offices by men whom they handily defeated. Councilperson Kent’s opponent dropped out of the race before the election, therefore Councilperson Kent ran unopposed for her city council seat in 1974. By July 1975, the City had ordered and received new street signs. By June 8, 1976, the City had enough funds to deposit $700 in the First Federal Savings and Loan Association Hinesville Branch Office. During 1976, the City continued to erect street lights throughout the city. On October 12, 1976, the city council voted and changed the meeting time of city council meetings from 8:30PM to 7:00PM. A city councilperson

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145 Walthourville City Council Meeting Minutes, September 5, 1974.
146 Ibid.
147 “The Ladies Get the Vote,” Atlanta Constitution, December 5, 1974, p. 3D. Neither the city of Walthourville, the Liberty County Voter Registrar nor the Georgia Secretary of State’s Office have the racial figures of registered voters for any years other than 1996.
148 Walthourville City Council Meeting Minutes, June 8, 1976.
appointment was made on October 26, 1976 of Mrs. Molene Burke to replace departing Councilperson Priscilla Nicholson for Post #3. Molene Burke was the clerk for the City of Walthourville and continued in this capacity for the remainder of 1976. At the December 14, 1976, meeting, the council voted to accept Mrs. Jean Moore as the new city clerk beginning January 1977. In 1977, the Walthourville City Council voted to adopt the wastewater facilities plan as proposed by the city of Hinesville which stated that it would be better for all affected communities to have one treatment plant located at Fort Stewart. This would be especially true for Walthourville, because they did not have the funds to construct nor maintain a wastewater treatment plant. Water was a very important issue at the council meetings from 1977 through 1991. The city council during 1977, discussed borrowing money to finance a water system for the city which was not necessary because the City was able to purchase a water system worth $145,000.00 from the Liberty County Industrial Authority for $1.00. In 1978 the City of Walthourville established water meters and use and connection fees for commercial, industrial and residential water users to comply with state water quality requirements. In 1981, the City of Walthourville was awarded a CDBG (community development block grant) for water extension lines to supply water to all housing, business and industrial units within the city limits.\(^{149}\) The increase of water connection fees, the increasing number of

\(^{149}\) Walthourville City Council Meeting Minutes, April 7, 1981.
delinquent water bills and increasing usage fees were discussed in council meetings from 1977 through 1991.

From 1977 through 1991, the city council discussed garbage collection. Questionnaires were sent to residents for their input and no action was taken by the city council until 1991 at which time the county had begun charging the city for use of the county landfill.\(^{150}\) The city collected information from neighboring municipalities regarding their method of garbage pickup. After deliberation the city council devised a garbage collection fee schedule for residents and businesses.\(^{151}\) By 1992 the City of Walthourville purchased a garbage truck and curbside carts at which time the City operated and controlled refuse collection within the city of Walthourville.

The city council had met in the polling house until April 10, 1980, when work was completed on the new City Hall (the present structure). The first city council meeting was held in the new City Hall on May 13, 1980. The new City Hall was the old railroad depot that had been purchased on April 26, 1979, from the Seaboard Coastline Railroad and required extensive renovation to suit the needs as a city hall and a post office.\(^{152}\) The new city hall devoted approximately 800 square feet of space to the

\(^{150}\) Walthourville City Council Meeting Minutes, February 27, 1991.

\(^{151}\) Walthourville City Council Meeting Minutes, August 13, 1991. No other mention in later city council meeting minutes about garbage collection nor fees. Year of garbage truck purchase and curbside carts was gained from Mayor Kent’s written re-election platform speech for 1995.

\(^{152}\) Walthourville City Council Meeting Minutes, April 26, 1979. The city borrowed $32,000 from the Coastal Bank of Hinesville, GA to renovate the depot building. The city agreed to repay the loan at the rate of $500 per month plus $5000 annually.
Walthourville Post Office pursuant to a 15 year lease agreement to be paid to the City of Walthourville.\textsuperscript{153} By 1981 the city council was querying other sources of revenue in addition to selling automobile license plates. One such source was renting the city hall for social functions but in 1984 the city council decided that the city hall building would not be used for social functions but for government meetings only.\textsuperscript{154} Another revenue source the city council explored was tax collection, especially on alcoholic beverages. The first city council granted business licenses, such as taxi service/car rental service, beer and wine licenses. The levying of beer and wine licenses did result in an 18.08% increase in the city general fund account in January 1978. From 1974 to 1996 the city grew in population and land area because individuals who lived near the city boundaries requested that their land be annexed and included in the city limits so that they would be able to connect to the city’s water line. Another revenue enhancing measure of the new city council in 1979, was to require that all utility companies that service the City of Walthourville pay the City of Walthourville 4\% of the gross sales of its products and or services to customers within the city limits.\textsuperscript{155} Another revenue enhancing measure employed by the City of Walthourville was to levy a premiums tax on insurance companies. The City of Walthourville in 1989 informed the State Department of Revenue that the city was not receiving local option sales tax from the county even

\textsuperscript{153} Walthourville City Council Meeting Minutes, September 12, 1978.
\textsuperscript{154} Walthourville City Council Meeting Minutes, April 10, 1984.
\textsuperscript{155} Walthourville City Council Meeting Minutes, January 9, 1979.
though it met all the qualifications of a qualified municipality and was eligible for said funds.\textsuperscript{156} The City needed these funds to help with road and street maintenance.

The city council discussed fire safety in Walthourville at their first city council meeting. The city council considered buying a firetruck that would be manned by volunteers from the local factories during the day and manned by the volunteer male residents of the city of Walthourville during the evening. A fire truck was obtained in September 1979\textsuperscript{157} and by 1991, the city of Walthourville had a fire department. In 1991, the city council voted to pay firemen $10 per fire and $4 per training session.\textsuperscript{158}

The 1978 city of Walthourville election ushered in a new council that had its first male member, James Chambless and the city’s first black woman mayor, Carrie Kent.\textsuperscript{159}

The city council under Mayor Kent’s leadership, sought in 1979 a community development block grant (CDBG) for renovation of houses in Walthourville.\textsuperscript{160} The city council also attempted to secure aid from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development to supply sewage services. In 1983 the City of Walthourville was awarded a $400,000 CDBG for neighborhood improvement for the period October 1, 1983, to January 15, 1985.\textsuperscript{161} By 1991, the City had expanded and grown to a point where

\textsuperscript{156} Walthourville City Council Meeting Minutes, April 25, 1989.
\textsuperscript{157} Walthourville City Council Meeting Minutes, September 11, 1979.
\textsuperscript{158} Walthourville City Council Meeting Minutes, February 27, 1991.
\textsuperscript{159} Walthourville City Council Meeting Minutes, January 9, 1979.
\textsuperscript{160} Walthourville City Council Meeting Minutes, August 21, 1979.
\textsuperscript{161} Walthourville City Council Meeting Minutes, October 11, 1983.
council members were assigned areas of authority. Those areas of authority and the responsible council members were as follows: Bobby Fabain, Fire Department; Patricia Green, Water Department; Jimmie Martin, Water Department; Henry Frasier Liberty County Planning Commission Meetings.¹⁶²

For the first time in 1988, the city council meeting minutes reflected that the city council discussed setting up a retirement plan for the council members and employees of the city.¹⁶³ By 1995, the city council had approved and adopted a Personnel Policy/Handbook for the City of Walthourville.¹⁶⁴

The last mayoral election in Walthourville in 1995 was a heated contest. Mayor Kent had two male opponents in the November 1995 election. But this election resulted in a tie between the two top vote getters (177 votes each) and a runoff election was set for December 1995.¹⁶⁵ Accusations were made against the mayor from her opponent regarding her honesty and the honesty of those in City Hall.¹⁶⁶ The mayor’s opponent attempted to clarify his statement regarding his accusation that Mayor Kent’s administration was not honest, by stating “We need to try to see about getting honest and

¹⁶² Walthourville City Council Meeting Minutes, January 8, 1991.
¹⁶³ Walthourville City Council Meeting Minutes, April 26, 1988.
¹⁶⁴ Walthourville City Council Meeting Minutes, July 25, 1995.
¹⁶⁶ Ibid. Mayor Kent’s opponent intimated there were improprieties in the counting of the votes in the November election because the election ended in an even tie. Also because the city clerk, a person loyal to the Mayor, was also the election supervisor.
fair leadership. I want full cooperation with the mayor and councilmembers.”

Further clarification was that he was not “making the remarks regarding the present administration. Instead he, said, he was commenting on how he would run the city.”

In spite of the hard fought race, Mayor Kent was able to win reelection after a third election (second run-off) in December 1995. Mayor Kent’s campaign issues were a sewage system, annexation and a Walthourville police department.

In 1996 the city council discussed the creation of a police force in Walthourville but decided to postpone implementation because the cost would be prohibitive for the city at that time. The approximate cost per year for a police force in Walthourville was estimated at $55,000. By August 1996 the City of Walthourville had entered into a contract with Liberty County Sheriff’s Department to provide two deputies to patrol the City of Walthourville exclusively (except in emergencies). The City of Walthourville provided the vehicle. The deputies were selected by the Sheriff of Liberty County with the approval of the Walthourville City Council. The deputies remain employees of the

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170 Walthourville City Council Meeting Minutes, January 9, 1996.
Liberty County Sheriff’s Department but are assigned permanently to the City of Walthourville, except in emergencies.\textsuperscript{172}

**Demographics of Walthourville**

Similar to most rural cities Walthourville does not have a public sewer system even though it has a large population in comparison to other rural cities. Mayor Kent continues to work hard to secure a federal grant for a public sewer system. The City of Walthourville provides water and street services to the citizens, such as paving and repair. The city of Walthourville was not financially able to purchase a new water tank nor a used water tank and therefore had to repair the old water tank in 1979. Walthourville is large in population size (in comparison to the other two cities in this paper) because of its close proximity to the army installation, Fort Stewart, the Liberty County Airport and the industries that are located in Walthourville. There are also small businesses located in the City of Walthourville.

The Census Bureau reports that the city of Walthourville has 523 black females, 457 black males, 449 white females and 478 white males for a total of 1907 white and black residents.\textsuperscript{173} There are 94 individuals in Walthourville who classify themselves as

\textsuperscript{172} Drue Miller, “Officials believe city’s new police force is cutting crime,” the Coastal Courier, October 23, 1996, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{173} US Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population and Housing Survey Tape File 3A.
other. The females represent 52.53% of the total population. The males represent 47.47% of the total population. The voting age population of Walthourville is 325 black females, 274 black males, 297 white females and 343 white males. The females of Walthourville are slightly more (622) of the voting age population than the males (617), racially there are more whites (640) than blacks (599). The voting age population figures indicate that the reason why the city of Walthourville has always had a woman mayor and the original city council was female cannot be due to gender dominance in the population but because the women formed gender and racial coalitions. Blacks represent 48.98% of the population and whites 46.33% of the population of Walthourville. Neither racial group is in the majority in Walthourville. All residents of Walthourville live in a rural nonfarm area. No residents of Walthourville live in a rural farm area as defined by the US Census Bureau. Based on the area where the residents of Walthourville live, agriculture is not a part of this culture economically, therefore Walthourville’s economy is not farm dependent. The state of Georgia and the nation are less dependent on farming now than ten years ago but have not become totally independent of farming.

174 These individuals include 5 who identified themselves as American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut; 32 who identify themselves as Asian or Pacific Islander and 57 who identify themselves as Other race. Some of these individuals may have been counted twice because this was self-identification. Ibid.
Income

The 1990 Census documents 1989 income information for 690 households in Walthourville. The largest number of reported households in Walthourville earn $15,000 to $24,999 in income in 1989. There are 229 households earning $15,000 to $24,999. This is 33.18% of the households in Walthourville. The next largest number of households in Walthourville earn $10,000 to $14,999. There are 130 households earning $10,000 to $14,999 income in Walthourville in 1989. This group represents 18.84% of the households in Walthourville. The median household income in Walthourville is $18,173. The Liberty County median household income is $21,596. This was a difference of $3,423. The Liberty County median household income was 18.84% higher than the median household income in Walthourville. There is a significant difference between the median household income of residents of Walthourville and Liberty County residents. There are 518 family households surveyed in Walthourville. The median family income for Walthourville residents is $18,258. The median family income for Liberty County was higher at $22,123. This is a

175 Ibid.
176 Ibid.
177 Ibid.
178 Ibid.
179 Ibid.
180 Ibid. Family is defined as two or more people who were related by blood, marriage or adoption, and living under the same roof. William Dunn, Selling the Story: The Layman's Guide to Collecting and Communicating Demographic Information, (Ithaca, NY: American Demographics Books Inc., 1992), p. 238.
181 Ibid.
difference of $3865. The Liberty County median family income is 21.17% higher than the median family income in Walthourville. The survey also indicates that the majority (87.83%) of the households of Walthourville contain mainly wage and salary earners with a mean wage and salary income of $19,682. The household mean wage and salary income in Walthourville is significantly lower than that of Liberty County ($25,169). In Walthourville, 23.05% of the residents live below the poverty level as opposed to 17.24% of Liberty County residents. There are 19.35% of the young adults, 56.63% of the elderly and 30.26% of the children residents of Walthourville who live below the poverty level. There are 56.38% of female headed household families in Walthourville who are below the poverty level. The percentage of female headed household families in Walthourville with related children under 18 years of age living below the poverty level is 55.13%; with related children under 5 years of age was 65.85%. When compared to the county figures, Walthourville is similar in all other households and families living below the poverty level except persons 65 years of age and over where the Walthourville percentages are much higher than the county. The county percentage for persons 65 years of age and over is 26.03%. “Senior citizens, often viewed as the most economically vulnerable part of the population and squeaking by on dwindling savings, actually have lower-than-average poverty rates. In fact they are the one group to see significant

\footnote{182} Ibid.
\footnote{183} Ibid.
declines in their rates...thanks to Social Security and pensions.” Yet the elderly in Walthourville are the largest percentage of the population living below the poverty level. The poverty rates of groups in Walthourville and Liberty County are consistent with the poverty experienced in the rural South. “Over half of the rural poor (51%) live in the South...” The age distribution of residents of Walthourville indicates there are more adults than children and more young adults than retirees.

Table 6-8
POPULATION BY AGE BY RACE AND BY GENDER IN WALTHOURVILLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>BLACK MALE</th>
<th>BLACK FEMALE</th>
<th>WHITE MALE</th>
<th>WHITE FEMALE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-17</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-54</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55+</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>1907</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Commerce Department. Census Bureau.

Education

In 1997 there are no schools in Walthourville. In the summer of 1834 a school was established in Walthourville and was supervised by members of the plantation families who spent their summers in Walthourville. There were no other schools in Walthourville for blacks nor whites. Presently all students in Walthourville attend the

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184 Dunn, Selling the Story, p. 104.
186 Groover, Sweet Land of Liberty, p. 37.
county maintained schools in the county seat of Hinesville from kindergarten through high school. There are no institutions of higher education in Walthourville.

A majority of the residents of Walthourville who are 25 years of age and over in 1990 are high school graduates or higher (68.5%).\textsuperscript{187} The city figures are much lower than the county educational attainment statistics (82.1%).\textsuperscript{188} The high school graduate statistics for Walthourville (36.88%) are slightly lower than the high school graduate statistics for Liberty County (39.99%). The percentage of residents of Walthourville who have obtained a bachelor’s degree (3.36%) is much greater than the percentage in Liberty County (.9448%).

**Employment**

Walthourville residents 16 years of age and older are 67.22% of the labor force with 84.4% of the males employed and 50.8% of the females employed including females with children (37.7%).\textsuperscript{189} In Walthourville, a very large percentage of the residents are employed. The unemployment rate in Walthourville is higher (9.1%) than the state of Georgia (5.7%) but lower than Liberty County (11.9%).\textsuperscript{190} Also fewer Walthourville men are unemployed (4.8%) than women (13.4%).\textsuperscript{191} A majority of the

\textsuperscript{187} US Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population and Housing Survey Tape File 3A.  
\textsuperscript{188} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{189} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{190} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{191} Ibid.
employed persons in Walthourville (59.98%) commute to work with a mean travel time to work of 19 minutes. The employed persons in Walthourville are salaried in service occupations, except protective and household (16.45%) and precision production, craft, and repair occupations (14.76%). The industries in which Walthourville residents are employed are retail trade (26.74%) and public administration (24.48%). The majority of the Walthourville residents who are employed as of 1990 are private wage and salary workers (59.38%) which is comparable to the county figure (55.36%). The residents of Walthourville who are employed by the government are federal government employees (65.87%). The close proximity of the army installation, Fort Stewart, was the reason for the large percentage of residents in Walthourville who are employed by the federal government. The majority of the county employed government workers are also employed with the federal government (62.74%).

The major manufacturing industries in Walthourville as of 1990 are Liberty Industries, Inc. (employs 100 people) and Waltrich Plastic Corporation (employs 80 people).\(^{193}\)

**Housing**

As of 1990, a majority of the structures (67%) in Walthourville have public system water. The sewage disposal used in Walthourville is primarily septic tank or

\(^{192}\) Ibid.

cesspool (72.92%). In Walthourville a majority of the structures (99.37%) have complete plumbing facilities.

Mobile home placement in Walthourville has been increasing since 1990. "This phenomenon was evidence of the need for immediate low cost housing. The temporary nature of this development may become detrimental to both the aesthetic quality of the area and the tax base." 194

Social Services

Liberty County is responsible for education of the cities within the county including Walthourville. Walthourville provides citizens fire protection (through its volunteer fire department), water services, garbage services, street services and police protection (as of August 1996).

Questionnaire Responses

Mayor Kent was elected mayor of Walthourville in 1978; this was not her first political position. 195 Mayor Kent was one of the first city council persons in Walthourville because she was one of the women who assisted in the incorporation of

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195 The author made a site visit to Walthourville on August 10, 1994, met and interviewed Mayor Kent only. The author also resided in an adjacent county and traveled to Walthourville and Liberty County daily during the week of July 28-August 3, 1996, in addition to telephone calls and site visits. After three mailings, and the aforementioned site visits, no responses were received from the city council members. During the weeks of December 22, 1996-January 4, 1997 the author also traveled daily to Walthourville to read the city council meeting minutes. No responses were received from the city council members by the author as a result of any of the site visits. The questionnaire information was from the mayor only due to the none responsiveness of the city council members.
Waithourville as a city in 1974. Mayor Kent has no aspirations for another political office. The term of mayor in Waithourville as set forth in the charter is four years. The mayor’s position in Waithourville is a full time position. The type of city government in place in Waithourville is a strong mayor type. Per Mayor Kent, prior to her becoming mayor, the type of city government in place in Waithourville was a mayor-council or weak mayor type. The city government of Waithourville consists of five members on the city council and the mayor who is not considered a member of the council. The gender and racial composition of the five member Waithourville city council in 1994 was one black female, four black males (no whites). As of 1997 there remain no whites on the city council, three black males and two black females. The Waithourville city council has been all black since 1991. Each council person is assigned an area of authority. Those areas are as follows: one female has authority over the water department; three males have authority over the garbage pickup, fire department and county planning board. The administration prior to Mayor Kent’s, according to Mayor Kent, provided no services to the citizens of Waithourville. In 1994, the services that Mayor Kent wanted to provide to the citizens of Waithourville are in order of importance: police protection, recreational services and sewer services. The issues in 1997 that Mayor Kent believes most important facing small towns/cities and rural areas are crime, new industries and housing.

Mayor Kent in 1994 had a staff of six, four of whom are full time and two were part time. The gender and racial composition of the city staff was as follows: five males,
(four black, one white) and one white female. In 1997 there are ten city employees, eight men (seven black and one white) and two women (one black and one white), all full time paid employees. The mayor’s office is located in City Hall. Constituents contact Mayor Kent at city hall during business hours.

Mayor Kent felt that her male counterparts and other city officials accept her as mayor. The federal government is the best method Mayor Kent believes for rural towns/cities to address their concerns. Mayor Kent felt that as a black female mayor of a southern rural city that difficulties in the job were due mainly to her being a black female; she did not elaborate.

The following industries are located in the City of Walthourville: plastics (Waltrich), the Liberty County Airport, a storage facility (A. C. White Storage) a car pound (Automotive Transport & Storage) and Liberty Industries. The major employers in Walthourville were Waltrich and A. C. White Storage. Mayor Kent desires the following industries in her city: textile, chemical and metal-working.

Most residents of Walthourville are employed in neighboring cities such as Hinesville at Fort Stewart. Mayor Kent has an economic development plan to encourage more employment, which was included in the Liberty County comprehensive development plan. The campaign issues Mayor Kent had when she ran for reelection in
1991 were crime, housing, water and attracting new industries and did not change discernibly in 1995.

Coalitions are necessary to conduct city business and Mayor Kent has one individual from the state legislature on whom she can rely to get things done for her city. This individual is a white male Democrat from a rural area. Because of this individual’s assistance, Mayor Kent thinks that the state legislature listens to and helps the rural areas specifically monetarily and in moral support. Mayor Kent believes that the federal government also listens to and helps rural areas specifically monetarily.

Mayor Kent believes the City of Walthourville is not experiencing a decline in the city’s population but an increase; mainly among those of retirement age. There is no data nor statistics from the US Bureau of the Census nor from other sources to substantiate this assertion.

Mayor Kent asserts that the blacks (women and men) in Walthourville reacted positively to her as mayor but that the whites (women and men) reacted negatively. The majority of blacks assisted Mayor Kent in her campaign for mayor, especially the black churches in Walthourville. The blacks of Walthourville even made monetary contributions to Mayor Kent’s campaign. When Mayor Kent first ran for mayor of Walthourville, the outgoing white female mayor did not endorse Mayor Kent but endorsed a white male for the position of mayor; which may have been race/class
motivated. Unlike the other two mayors in this paper, Mayor Kent has experienced opposition in her reelections for mayor from whites and blacks. The opposition appears to be a power struggle compounded by the mayor’s age and race.

Mayor Kent identified herself as a member of the Democratic Party. When Mayor Kent first entered political office her family was supportive but due to her advancing age they now want her to remove herself from politics.

Mayor Kent has never had a women’s agenda in her mayoral campaigns particularly because she does not believe that a women’s agenda exists. Mayor Kent does belong to several women’s organizations, such as the Business Women’s Bureau and the Auxiliary of Isles of Hope Pentecostal Church. Neither of these organizations assisted Mayor Kent in her political endeavors.

Mayor Kent’s highest level of education completed was the 11th grade, annual income is $10,000-$20,000 and was first elected to office between the ages of 41-50.

The budget for Walthourville reflects the larger population as compared to the other two cites in this paper. Between 1989 and 1990, the revenues of Walthourville increased tremendously because in 1990 they received their portion of the local option sales tax. The total revenues for Walthourville in 1989 were $96,355.61. The total revenues for Walthourville in 1990 were $163,844.22. These funds allowed the City of Walthourville to spend more for dues and subscriptions, advertising, travel and
workshops, repairs, maintenance and supplies for the fire department, professional services and contract services. In 1989 the difference between total revenues and total expenditures was $8179.64. In 1990 the difference between total revenues and total expenditures was $76,822.86.

The purchase of the fire and garbage trucks in 1992 greatly increased the expenditures for the City Walthourville by more than 2 ½ times. The total expenditures of the City of Walthourville in 1991 were $145,016.02. The total expenditures for 1992 were $414,050.46.

The total revenues in 1993 increased by almost $100,000 because the amount received from the insurance premium tax doubled and the City also received revenue from sanitation charges. The total revenue in 1992 was $205,231.99. The total revenue in 1993 was $295,626.34. In addition to the revenue increase the expenditures also increased. The following expenditures doubled: payroll taxes (general government); repairs, maintenance and supplies (general government and fire department); fire department salaries and sanitation equipment lease. General government insurance expenditures tripled. The largest increase was general government retirement which increased by 146%, which in 1992 was $952.83 and in 1993 was $6,493.96. A new expenditure for the City of Walthourville in 1993 was sanitation salaries.
The largest increased expenditures for the City of Walthourville in 1995 were streets and sanitation. The largest increase in revenue for the City of Walthourville in 1995 was business licenses. In 1994 the revenue received from business licenses was $4,121.00. In 1995 the revenue received from business licenses was $6,110.00. These indicate individuals in Walthourville who obtained businesses to work in the home and those who obtained licenses for businesses outside the home. As of June 1997, there were 29 businesses in the City of Walthourville and 68 business licenses in existence in the City of Walthourville.

In 1996 the greatest increase in revenues for the City of Walthourville was in local option sales tax which increased 87.8% from 1995 to 1996. The local option sales tax revenue received by the City of Walthourville was $133,049.69 in 1995 and $151,535.68 in 1996. The sanitation revenue continued to increase from 1995 ($74,716.75) to 1996 ($96,853.00) which was an increase of 77%. The expenditures also increased from 1995 to 1996 indicating the increased services the City of Walthourville provided the citizens, the increased demand for services from an increased population and an expanding government personnel. The general government office supply expenditure doubled between 1995 ($22,29.69) and 1996 ($5,046.41) and so did the travel and workshop expenditure from $5,310.40 in 1995 to $10,780.50 in 1996. The payroll tax expenditure increased 82.6% between 1995 and 1996 from $7,830.08 to $9,483.19. The total police department expenditure for 1996 was $39,869.80 which included the contract service cost
and capital outlay for the vehicle. The City of Walthourville also bought a new sanitation truck in 1996 which increased the sanitation expenditure 46% between 1995 ($97,005.96) and 1996 ($210,577.94).

The fact that Mayor Kent had a bitter reelection campaign in her last mayoral campaign was an indication that there was discord in Walthourville which may not be solely due to the mayor's advancing age but to the increased population, increased number of services the City provides citizens and the financial opportunities available and projected. Mayor Kent was able to remain in power by forming coalitions with the black males and black females. There appears to be a power struggle between Mayor Kent and those who want to be in control and want more input in the decision making process. But even in the face of this opposition, Mayor Kent was reelected to office by forming coalitions with the black females, white females and majority black males. Mayor Kent’s political style is black activist because she “makes existing programs more meaningful, by expanding them and supplementing them.”196 There was evidence of significant growth in Walthourville since Mayor Kent’s tenure as mayor such as, the number of businesses in Walthourville has increased, more property has been annexed into the city limits and the assessed fair market value of real and personal property has increased dramatically during her term in office.197 The accomplishments of Mayor Kent are unusual in light of the fact that black women historically are underrepresented as local officeholders and only a few serve as mayors which represents an ethnic bias in representation.198


197 The percentage change in the assessed fair market value of real and personal property in Walthourville from 1978 to 1995 was a 1689.99% increase. The percentage change in the assessed fair market value of real and personal property in Walthourville from 1977 to 1978 was a 3.95% decrease.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The definition of rural America has changed since the 1700s. Rural no longer equals farming but has become nonmetropolitan or any community that is not urban. Nationally, rural areas were less populated than urban areas and faced governmental obstacles such as providing critical services to residents (education, health care, police and fire protection); entice industries to relocate to rural communities to provide high wage jobs for residents; maintain and sustain population; encourage population growth through immigration and maintain a healthy natural environment. Some rural communities have provided the above services to their residents by formal and informal agreements, and mutual aid agreements with surrounding communities and through these instruments prospered, while others have experienced difficulties because of declining economies, inadequate infrastructure and resident outmigration.

The concerns of the mayors of this paper included those above in addition to employment, poverty, safety and welfare. Each mayor dealt with each component with different degrees of success.

The three cities in this study were in compliance with the Georgia General Assembly municipality incorporation requirements and therefore were referred to as cities
honored Mayor Gresham in 1989 with its highest award, the Papa Dent Award for the Elected Official of the Year.\(^2\) The author has already noted that Keysville prior to Mayor Gresham becoming mayor did not have a water system, nor sewer system, no fire or police but there was one nursing home which was the major employer. GABEO honored Mayor Gresham because under her leadership, Keysville had a new post office and day-care center and was at that time working on the water/sewer system and jobs for Keysville residents.\(^3\) As of 1991, Keysville had street lights, a volunteer fire department, a post office, a day care center, a library [a room within City Hall], a City Hall [a converted mobile home], garbage collection [performed by a local resident], a grant for an emergency water well, an adult literacy program and police protection [contracted with the County].\(^4\) Another major accomplishment of Mayor Gresham’s administration has been the installation of a water tower for the city of Keysville which provides running water to all residents of Keysville. The mayor is presently working on financing a sewer system for Keysville. Mayor Gresham and the black citizens of Keysville have shown the accomplishments of perseverance, empowerment and effective organizing. Mayor Justine Brown’s improved the lives of citizens of Oliver by providing police services to


\(^4\) “Keys to the City,” p. 12. “King Called Keysville Force,” Augusta Chronicle, January 17, 1989, p. 6A.
the citizens of Oliver. Mayor Carrie Kent’s fulfillment was in the areas of police and fire protection and garbage collection.

The further intent of this paper was to show that because these women have occupied the office of mayor, they have been able to improve the cities in the important areas of: education, employment, housing and health care. The black women mayors studied in this paper were not able to improve the cities in the areas of education (because for all three cities this is a function of the respective counties) nor health care (this too is a function of the respective counties). As human beings we acknowledge the importance of clean water to the human existence and maintenance of good health. In rural America, clean water is extremely important because of the remoteness of the areas and the contamination of wells. In this regard all three mayors were able to improve the health of the citizens, especially Mayor Gresham because Keysville did not have city provided water service. Mayor Carrie Kent was the most successful mayor in improving employment in her city of Walthourville, though this may have been as a result of other factors, such as the close proximity of Ft. Stewart. None of the black women mayors studied in this paper were successful in improving housing in their respective cities.

When analyzing the types of governments in place in the three cities in this paper, the mayors had personnel administrative power such as the power to hire and fire city employees without the city council approval, influenced policy, they all developed the municipal budget and performed the executive functions of government. From the
official city records the author was able to review, the record keeping was improved in the largest city. The smaller the city the less likely the record keeping was a priority because there were few records. The larger the city, the more paperwork was generated.

The author of this paper also analyzed the attempts of the three black women mayors to improve the socioeconomic status of blacks in their respective communities. The author found that the socioeconomic status of blacks in all three cities was not improved. The three cities had low black employment, high black unemployment, and a high number of blacks who lived below the poverty level, especially black female headed households. All conditions which are not exclusive to the rural South but also exist in rural America. These conditions would exist no matter who was mayor of these cities.

The findings within this paper are applicable to the three cities that were studied. There are more rural cities within the state of Georgia and within the United States that also deserve study although few of those cities have black women mayors. The study of black women mayors of rural cities, especially southern cities, has been largely ignored by scholars, as if the black women rural city mayors do not exist. The post-1960s studies on rural communities have been conducted mainly by rural sociologists not political scientists. Studies of mayors by political scientists, black or white, have concentrated predominantly on black male mayors of urban cities. Few political studies have focused on black women mayors, regardless of the population of the city. The author of this
paper only found one such study conducted post-1960s by a black political scientist of one black woman mayor (Unita Blackwell) of one rural Southern city (Mayersville, MS). The neglect is appalling in view of the statistics that confirm that a greater proportion of the women elected officials in the United States are black and that the numbers continue to increase. More United States cities have black women mayors and the numbers continue to increase even in the rural South. Black women elected officials accomplishments or failures need not be compared to white women elected officials nor to black men elected officials in order to be validated. Black women have been marginalized in the United States and this marginality is distinctly different “because she is a woman wishing to achieve in a male sphere, and...she is a black entering a traditionally all-white preserve. The special setting in which the black woman in politics finds herself necessitates specific research on her as a minority within a minority.”

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APPENDIX

286
LEGEND

- State
- County
- Lake/Pond/Ocean
- Expressway
- Highway
- Connector
- Stream

Military Area
National Park
City
County

Scale 1:686079

16 11 18 13 28 25
16 16 18 20 25 km
Source: US Bureau of the Census

LEGEND

State  Military Area
County  National Park
Lake/Pond/Ocean  City
Expressway  County
Highway
Connector
Stream

Scale 1:666079  16  118  120  122  125 mi
16  118  120  122  125 km
MAP OF OLIVER, GA

LEGEND

- State
- County
- Lake/Pond/Ocean
- Expressway
- Highway
- Connector
- Stream

Scale 1:686079

MAP OF WALTHOURVILLE, GA

Source: US Bureau of the Census
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