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City council minutes reveal Black life in Charleston and Greenville, South Carolina, 1850-1900

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ABSTRACT

HISTORY

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CITY COUNCIL MINUTES REVEAL BLACK LIFE IN
CHARLESTON AND GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA, 1850-1900

Advisor: Dr. Janice Sumler-Lewis

In this dissertation, the writer has been concerned with the life of blacks in Charleston and Greenville, South Carolina during slavery, Reconstruction and early segregation. Throughout history, the black segment of the population has played an important role in the development of their cities. However, the institutions of slavery and segregation created a distinct economic, political and social order for blacks.

As blacks struggled to improve their life style, they found the city government to be an avenue of change. The writer has selected city council minutes as a means of filling in a portion of the missing segment of history. It is hoped that the material in this dissertation uncovered the vital role blacks played in shaping the communities of Charleston and Greenville, South Carolina.
CITY COUNCIL MINUTES REVEAL BLACK LIFE IN
CHARLESTON AND GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA. 1850-1900

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

BY

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DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

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The author gives praise to the Supreme Power who has been a guiding force throughout his life, because with His help all is obtainable.

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This study is dedicated to the fond memory of Bertha Lee Glymph, the aunt, whose love and encouragement during my childhood made me feel that the completion of this document was possible.
PPEFACE

Throughout their history in this country, black Americans have worked endlessly to improve their condition. Even though the odds were often against them, black Americans made great strides to advance. The major focus of this research project was to examine how blacks in two Southern cities attempted to better their situation under the control of frequently oppressive white city governments. The research centers on the treatment of blacks as seen through city council minutes.

There have been studies which point to the treatment of blacks by masters and individuals during and after slavery, but few placed emphasis on their treatment by institutions, especially by city governments. The two southern cities of South Carolina revealed a portrait of blacks courageously facing restrictive situations during slavery, Reconstruction and segregation in the South.

The city council was selected as an institution of power and influence. City councils exercised control over many economic, political and social activities of their citizens and, in some instances, controlled religious activities. Throughout the history of cities, people were concerned about their immediate
needs, and their needs in America have often been satisfied by addressing any one of the many governmental agencies most responsible for citizens' immediate needs. The city fathers, in their roles on the city council, have over the years attempted to make the living conditions of the voting majority as comfortable as possible. Further, as a governing body, city councils have addressed many concerns facing their communities. In reality, however, the comforts and concerns of blacks were of little interest to city councils.

During the day-to-day operation of a city, varied concerns and problems came before a council. An examination of any city council's minutes revealed the issues that faced the city at a given period in history. The resolution of problems before a city council helped to develop the way of life for the city's population. City council minutes are a reflection of the economic, political and social desires of the people in a community.

During and after the period of slavery, blacks were forced to confront many decisions made by city councils which affected their lives. Black and white citizens often approached city councils with concerns involving their interaction with each other. Blacks
and whites in Charleston and Greenville, South Carolina were no different from others, in that they approached their councils for solutions to problems which developed in their lives. This examination of city council minutes revealed the attitudes and resulting treatment of blacks from 1850 to 1900.

This research project examined the economic, political and social status of blacks in Charleston and Greenville, South Carolina from the slavery era to 1900 through an analysis and interpretation of the minutes of each city council. The material uncovered in this research project revealed how two Southern cities operated during three distinct periods in American history.

During slavery, each city passed ordinances to control the slave population. Slave patrols were established and curfews were instituted as a means of controlling slaves. The period of Reconstruction saw the cities enact ordinances in conjunction with the new national mood. The cities abolished all ordinances recognizing the institution of slavery and in their place passed ordinances recognizing blacks as citizens. During the years of early segregation numerous blacks began appearing before the city councils seeking
improvements in their surroundings and municipal services.

Council minutes provide a vivid portrait of city government during the preceding decades. Other sources were examined to give a total picture of the events under examination. Throughout this research project, primary and secondary sources were utilized to detail various aspects of city life in the two cities. The study presents a picture of life in two South Carolina cities during the periods of slavery, Reconstruction and segregation, with special emphasis on black life. Blacks during the periods of study were often thwarted by federal and state laws and city ordinances. White citizens exercised the controlling power over these two South Carolina communities. The research, therefore, examined both the control exercised by whites and the reactions of the black population to the controls. Additionally, the research highlights the responses by black population to the various actions of the city councils.

The two cities of South Carolina were selected because of their differences. In 1870, the black population of Charleston was 26,173 and in Greenville
These figures are representative of the period under study. In 1870, the population of Greenville County was more than seventy-five per cent white, while the population of Charleston was proportioned in the reverse. These figures changed very little over the next fifty to sixty years.

Located in different areas of the state, Charleston in the southern area (low country), on the Atlantic coast, and Greenville in the northern area (up country), at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the two cities were settled at different times. Charleston was settled in 1670 and is the oldest settled area of the state, while Greenville was settled much later in 1786. The two cities were different with respect to economic endeavors. Charleston during its early history was one of the premier port cities of the South: shipping became one of the city's major economic enterprises. There was also a profitable rice and sea-island cotton industry found in regions surrounding

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The area which later became Greenville was an area that low-country residents of South Carolina visited to avoid the often extremely hot summers of the low country. Greenville's early economic history involved the textile industry. Large cotton plantations and some of the region's first textile mills were found in this area of South Carolina. In spite of their differences, however, each city's economical enterprise utilized blacks in great numbers.

The periods of slavery, Reconstruction and segregation produced dramatic changes in the relationship between blacks and whites. During each period, both the people and their many institutions were affected. The dramatic events of those eras profoundly impacted all the people of South Carolina.

By examining city council records, the investigator explored the economic, political and social history of blacks in Charleston and Greenville, South Carolina from the slavery era to 1900. Throughout American history blacks have lived in cities and played vital roles in city life. Little has been

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written about early black life in cities, although contemporary research deals in depth with blacks in cities today and the enormous problems they currently face.

Early in American history, blacks in cities faced a different way of life from the lifestyle experienced by their counterparts on rural plantations and farms. Although black life was different, there was one common aspect evident in both the urban and rural settings - a repressive life. Repression continued as black Americans lived first as slaves, later as newly freed persons during Reconstruction, and finally, as second class citizens under segregation laws.

An investigation of city council minutes uncovered an everyday view of black life in the two cites. Few research projects have used city council minutes as a primary research tool for examining life in cities. The thrust of this research provided a different methodology by which research on city life may be approached. It is the writer's hope that the material in this project will serve as a starting point for other research projects which examine black life in cities. The research revealed the role of the nineteenth-century governmental agency which had the most effect upon the day-to-day life of blacks. During
the periods selected, slavery, Reconstruction and early segregation, great changes were witnessed in the nation and the research attempted to determine how two Southern cities reacted to the changes.

The researcher was concerned with whether the differences in the cities played any role in the treatment of blacks. Thus one major reason for this research project was to determine whether in an urban setting during slavery, Reconstruction and early segregation the size of the black population had any effect upon economic, political and social conditions.

Chapter I provides the historical setting in which the major research occurred. Historical overviews of the two cities, Charleston and Greenville, South Carolina, are presented with emphasis on blacks. The chapter explores the economic, political and social atmospheres of each city.

Chapter II addresses the role and structure of city councils in the state of South Carolina. The formation of city councils in the state was examined to determine how they operated within the state. Federal and state laws and city ordinances were examined to determine the legal foundation upon which South Carolina city councils operate.
Chapter III begins with a brief discussion of slavery in the United States and South Carolina. The chapter presents ordinances passed by city councils as the cities moved to control slaves within their jurisdiction. Petitions made by slaves and white citizens during the period under study are analyzed.

Chapter IV describes Reconstruction in the nation and South Carolina from 1865 to 1877. The chapter focuses on the postbellum changes brought about nationally and on the state level. The examination of the city council minutes provided the responses of Charleston and Greenville to developments after slavery. The minutes of the city council revealed how the councils adjusted to the new status of blacks in the nation.

Chapter V, early segregation, deals with the years from 1880-1900. This chapter gives an overview of segregation practices in the South. The chapter explores the treatment of blacks by the councils in Charleston and Greenville. The chapter also reveals the response of the councils to the numerous requests made by blacks as they attempted to better their lives.

The conclusion summarizes the research findings and draws a conclusion about why blacks in each city found it necessary to approach their councils for needed assistance.
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CHAPTER I

THE SETTING: CHARLESTON AND GREENVILLE

The state of South Carolina, in which the cities of Charleston and Greenville are located, lies on the southeastern Atlantic seaboard of the United States. The state covers 31,055 square miles, and 599 miles are coastal land. Although appearing on the map roughly as an equilateral triangle, the state can more accurately be viewed as a triangle with a 190 mile base resting on the Atlantic Ocean, and its apex 235 miles to the northwest, resting on the crest of the Blue Ridge Mountains.¹

The chief physical feature of South Carolina, though not the most picturesque, is the fall line, which roughly cuts the state along a diagonal between the North Carolina boundary in Chesterfield County and the Georgia boundary in Aiken County. It separates two regions commonly known as the Up Country and the Low Country — regions which differ in custom, history, and

livelihood. ² (see map - page 3)

When people began to spread over the state, the fundamental physical fact influencing its internal history was the existence of the two geological and topographical regions dividing it into Up Country and Low Country. Conventionally it is said that these sections are divided by the fall line; but the sand hills, thrust between the two distinctly Up and Low Country sections, make it difficult to say exactly where the social and economic dividing line lies. For the middle belt, fall line, is thirty miles wide in places, but generally much narrower, and does not fully partake of the characteristics of either section. As natural conditions were conquered, the economic, social, and political contrasts and conflicts that marked earlier periods have diminished. Nevertheless, their influence has been so profound that it is impossible to understand the history of the state without a knowledge of them. ²

The main section of the Up Country composed of the Piedmont Plateau, with its rolling hills, ragged woods,


³Wallace, South Carolina--A Short History, 4.
small farms, and newly developed industries, is the location for the city of Greenville. The soil of this region is red clay, originally covered with a thin but rich layer of forest-formed humus. The soil of the region is best suited for crops of corn, cotton and vegetables. In the Low Country, where the city of Charleston is located, lie alluvial regions and much swampland where, since the state's beginning, large plantations have depended chiefly on a single crop—first indigo, then rice and later cotton. Tobacco has recently become of considerable importance in the Low Country, as well as truck or vegetable crops.

Charleston County, in which the city of Charleston is located, stretches from the mouth of the South Santee River to the mouth of the South Edisto River, 91 miles of coast on the Atlantic Ocean, and has a total area of 888 square miles. The coast line is made up of a chain of islands, which forms both a natural barrier to the mainland, and small inlets reaching like fingers into the sea. The farm lands of Charleston County have been brought to a high degree of fertility by careful and scientific agriculture and it has produced an abundance of the staple crops of the

South Carolina—A Guide, 8.

Ibid., 9.
south - rice, cotton, and garden truck vegetables. The famous Sea Island cotton, with its silky staple, is indigenous to this particular region, where it was developed to perfection through a long period of cultivation years. “

The development of rice cultivation had a great impact upon the course of South Carolina history. Although it was eventually a predominant crop, the mastery of this cultivation took several years to achieve, for rice was a crop that Englishmen, even those from the Caribbean, knew little about. White immigrants from areas of northern Europe knew nothing about the cultivation of rice. The local Indians, who gathered wild rice, had little knowledge about rice cultivation. But, even after initial efforts to cultivate rice were discouraging, rice became the main economic crop during the first fifty years of settlement in South Carolina. During the eighteenth century, rice was the major exported crop of South Carolina. “ It is interesting to note that the cultivation of rice in South Carolina coincided with

“South Carolina--A Handbook, prepared by The Department of Agriculture, Commerce and Industries and Clemson College (Columbia, South Carolina, 1928), 298.

the increase in slave population.

Charleston, one of the largest cities in the two Carolinas, is on one of the best harbors on the South Atlantic coast. The harbor combined with the energies of its people who developed its resources have made it a notable port of commerce for two and one half centuries. It is one of the most historical cities of the United States and has preserved the favor of its early establishment. Named for King Charles II of England, the county was organized in 1768, but its boundaries have been altered several times since. Charles Town, as it was originally called, was settled in 1670 by English pioneers who established themselves on Albemarle Point, westward across the Ashley River from the present location. Oyster Point was higher and better adapted for defense, and was selected for the site of the "great port town" laid out in 1672 by instruction of Lord Ashley-Cooper, one of the Lord Proprietors. The colony increased as settlers from Barbados, England and Virginia moved across the river in 1680 and Charles Town became a "City State." For many years its history was the history of South Carolina. It was the center from which colonizations

*South Carolina--A Handbook*, 298.
radiated and the capital of the province until 1786, when Columbia was founded for that purpose. 9

The elaborately graded society planned by the Lord Proprietors proved too complicated for a new colony; however, remnants of the system survived in distinctive cliques through wars, earthquakes and depression. Descendants of extensive landholders or prominent statesmen among early settlers clung to the family pride that neither misfortune nor modern invention was able to shake. "In Charleston what one is, is important, so it is said, but equally or more important, so it is said, is what one's ancestors have been and how much land they have held." 10

Provision crops, naval stores, and Indian trade gave the colony its start, but rice and later indigo brought it wealth. It was not long before Charleston became a flourishing urban center for opulent planters, who maintained "county seats" on Low Country rivers.11

The influx of French Huguenots and of French Catholics from Acadia in the seventeenth century gave

9South Carolina--A Guide, 188.
10Ibid.
11Ibid.
the city a cosmopolitan atmosphere, which was increased in the eighteenth century by the arrival of Scots and South Germans. The nineteenth century saw the immigration of North Germans and Irish. A writer of the nineteenth century described Charleston as "owned by the Germans, ruled by the Irish and enjoyed by the Negroes." Issue may be taken with the end of this statement, because life for Negroes was far from enjoyable under slavery. The different creeds which were represented added depth as well as variety to spiritual and intellectual life. Social ideas remained English and an English gentry, recruited from planters, successful merchants, and tradesmen, developed in the colony, achieving in three generations distinguished standards of education and political leadership. A public library, the first in the American colonies, in 1698, a free school in 1710, a theater in 1735, a group of professional men nationally and internationally known, and the practice by the wealthy of sending their sons to England or the Continent for training were the more obvious signs of this development. 

The first shipload of English colonists to South Carolina brought three black slaves in 1670. A year

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12 Ibid., 189.

13 Ibid., 188-189.
later Islanders brought more blacks from Barbados, and the Barbarian system of plantation life was introduced in the new settlement of Charles Town. By 1698, rice and indigo were being cultivated in the new province. The slave population had increased to such an extent that the province, fearing insurrection, passed an act to encourage the importation of white servants, one for each ten blacks. ¹⁴

The idea of importing whites as servants did not prevail in the colony of South Carolina. New England and British traders found the slave trade to be very profitable. Additionally, blacks were better adapted in clearing swampland than whites. By 1765, blacks in the state outnumbered whites and continued to do so until the twentieth century, with the exception of the period from 1790 to 1890. Blacks were shipped from the West Indies but most came directly from the Gold Coast and Gambia areas of Africa. ¹⁵

The vast majority of blacks were worked as field hands on the plantations, while a select group was trained in the domestic arts. Many were cabinetmakers, blacksmiths, carpenters and trained as

¹⁴Ibid., 45.
¹⁵Ibid.
other craftsmen. Slaves handled the bulk of the
domestic drudgery; worked in shops and factories; built
the streets, bridges, and municipal installations; some
even acquired mechanical skills. Their masters
often hired them out and received most or all of their
cash wages, which sometimes amounted to as much as
$1.00 a day. Some slaves were permitted to retain part
of their earnings, and were able to purchase their
freedom. The fact that black artisans outnumbered
whites and that their masters were eager to convert
black labor to money in Charleston led first to a deep
antagonism between the groups and then to legal
measures for the benefit of the white artisans.17

In the late 1800s, hundreds of free blacks were
in South Carolina, most of them were in Charleston.
Some owned plantations and even slaves. The 1864 tax
book of free persons of color in Charleston reported
approximately 240 slaves who were owned by free persons
of color. Some free persons of color owned large
amounts of real estate. R. E. Dereef owned $26,000.00
in real estate and Maria Weston owned real estate which
amounted to $41,500.00. The occupations of the

17Richard Wade, Slavery in the City--the South
free persons of color were varied. These occupations included, washers, mantua makers (needle point) seamstresses, laborers, carpenters, blacksmiths, house servants, barbers, and fishermen. In 1790, the mulattoes and others of mixed blood organized the Brown Fellowship Society to which only free brown men were eligible for membership. Membership in the organization was restricted to free brown men with white ancestral backgrounds. The object of the society was expressed in the preamble of the rules and regulations:

Whereas we, free brown men, natives of the city of Charleston, in the State of South Carolina, having taken into consideration, the unhappy situation of our fellow creatures, and the distresses of our widows and orphans, for the want of a friend to relieve them in the hour of their distress, sickness and death; and holding it an essential duty to mankind to contribute all they can toward relieving the wants and miseries, and promoting the welfare and happiness of one another, and observing the method of many other well disposed persons of the state, entering into particular societies for this purpose, to be effectual, we therefore, whose names are underwritten, to comply with this great duty, have freely and cheerfully entered into a society in Charleston, and state aforesaid, commencing the first of November, 1790 and have voted,

agreed and subscribed to the following rules for ordering and conducting the same. 19

The Brown Fellowship Society continued for nearly 150 years, and in 1890 its name was changed to the Century Fellowship Society. Members' descendants still reside in Charleston, but the official group is no longer in existence. During the society's existence, it educated children, supported orphans, helped widows and the needy, and sometimes purchased freedom for other blacks. It had its own bank, church and cemetery. Members of the society were particularly anxious to preserve the integrity of their group and would not associate with whites or other blacks, except as necessary. There was antagonism, which can be illustrated by the fact that neither group was permitted to utilize the banks, churches, and schools that the other used. 20

The discrimination practiced by the Brown Fellowship was directed, not only against slaves, but against free persons with dark complexions. The charter of the mulatto fraternity proclaimed that membership was limited to "free brown men." Apparently the members of the Brown Fellowship viewed the dark men of Charleston City as a class somewhat above the status of

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19A Guide to Palmetto State, 46.
20Ibid., 48.
of slaves but beneath the status of free mulattoes. The elite mulattoes separated themselves from free blacks because dark skin was associated with slavery. Even though there were wealthy men of dark hue such as Samuel Creighton, whose estate was appraised at $3,540.00 and more valuable than that of John Weston, a mulatto member of the Brown Fellowship, the dark skin of Creighton associated him with the dreaded black majority; therefore, he could not join the society. A phobia of dark-skinned people existed within the mulatto community. As early as 1790, the Afro-American community was divided, not only between slave and free person, but between mulatto and black. It is somewhat difficult to determine the precise date at which the color-consciousness of mulattoes was incorporated into their society. Perhaps the color line was established during the period after the Revolutionary War when the number of dark-skinned people gradually began to increase. Fearing submersion by people of dark complexion, the mulattoes of Charleston sought to maintain what they perceived as a special relationship with the white aristocracy and separated themselves from the majority of Afro-Americans, attempting to form a distinctly
separate class.  

In 1843, free black men formed their own organization, the Humane Brotherhood. Membership was limited to no more than thirty-five "respectable free black men" according to its rules. The organization's interpretation of "dark" was flexible enough to admit several men who were listed in the federal census as mulattoes, but the majority of the members were black. The purpose of the Humane Brotherhood was the same as the Brown Fellowship Society. It provided sick benefits, burial expenses and an annuity for widows and orphans of deceased members. Like the Brown Fellowship Society, the Humane Brotherhood purchased and maintained a burial ground for its members. The cemeteries of the two societies stood side-by-side on Pitt Street, separated by a sturdy fence. 

It has been said that the fence symbolized the color barrier that cut through Charleston's free colored society. But, like other fences, it was not impenetrable. Free blacks and free mulattoes knew one


another, talked to one another and did business with one another. but, on the whole, free blacks and free mulattoes did not socialize with one another and they rarely married one another. 23

The care with which free mulattoes policed the color barrier is illustrated in the minutes of another free mulatto organization in Charleston, the Friendly Moralist Society. Founded in 1838, the Friendly Moralist Society, required that a prospective member be certified by three existing members as "a bona fide free brown man; over the age of eighteen; of moral character and of good standing in the community." This requirement was backed by a strict penalty should it be charged and proven that any member is not a bona fide free brown man, he shall immediately be expelled and each of his recommenders shall be fined two dollars. 24

The time and energy the organization spent screening the racial credentials of prospective members signified that all agreed it was of the utmost importance to determine whether a candidate was a mulatto or not. In theory, one drop of white blood

23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
made a man eligible for membership. In practice, ancestry was difficult to prove and an applicant's claims could be outweighed by skin color or personal associations.  

Early in the history of Charleston there developed competition between black and white workers. Adding to the competition was the fact that many of the masters had certain slaves trained as carpenters, wheelwrights, cobblers, and whatever trades could be utilized in the plantation unit. Often these slaves were hired out and the masters assumed the wages. This condition rendered the situation more acute for white artisans, and as early as 1742 a grand jury in Charleston noted that there was a "want of a law to prevent the hiring of Negro tradesmen to the great discouragement of white workmen coming into the province." 

By 1766, a number of craftsmen had organized in Charleston, more for mutual pecuniary assistance than to secure wages and hourly regulations. At the end of the Revolution, Charleston was partially in ruins and when rebuilding was begun in 1783 the carpenters and 

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Ibid.

bricklayers were accused of forming a "combination" to force a wage of $3.00 a day. The workers denied the charges, but declared the depreciated currency made higher wages essential. The South Carolina Convention for ratifying the Federal Constitution discussed the subject of white and black competition. By this time, free blacks had established themselves in trades. One speaker at the convention stated, "cheap Negro labor was steadily undermining the white artisan class in South Carolina." The cause of the problem was that owners preferred to continue to hire out their slaves and collect the wages instead of permitting free labor, white and black, to become established. 27

In South Carolina from 1800 until the Civil War, labor was consolidating and becoming more vocal. A Carpenters' Society in 1809, a Clerks' Union in 1825, and a Printers' Organization in 1834 were among the groups to form programs. The Apprentice Library Society of Charleston, which began in 1841, was outspoken in its opposition to the employment of black mechanics. 28

In Charleston there were some whites who opposed the state law prohibiting the education of slaves and

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27Ibid., 75.

28Ibid.
restricting education of free blacks, a law that was sometimes ignored. Before this law was passed, some slaves had attended plantation schools with their masters. A few free black children were sent North and even abroad for schooling. During this period of the early 1800s, the Grimke sisters, Sarah and Angelina, who grew up in the city of Charleston, rebelled against the slavery system and were outspoken abolitionists who worked for education of blacks. 29

Life was prosperous and on the surface untroubled, but South Carolina, like much of the South, was on an unstable economic footing because of two things. First, it had a "one crop" economy. Most planters cultivated the principal money makers rice or cotton. The 1850 national census report stated that 215 million pounds of rice had been produced in the United States, and almost 160 million pounds of it had been grown on the coastal belt of South Carolina. Secondly, cotton and rice required large acreages and hard cultivation. Large portions of the profits were invested in more

slaves to work the large plantations. 30

From 1850 to the start of the Civil War, Charlestonians concerned themselves with more slaves and land. In 1850, the question of slavery in the Mexican Cession had to be settled. The Charleston City Council had provided funds to pay for uniforms for the Charleston Company of the Palmetto Regiment during the Mexican War. At the end of the war, the Palmetto flag was the first to rise over the walls of Chapultepec, when Santa Anna and his troops were forced to leave Mexico City. Charlestonians felt strongly that Southerners should be permitted to take their slaves into the land they had helped to obtain. 31

In 1860, Charlestonians turned their attention to the defeat of the Union in the Civil War. With the news of the Secession Act, most of Charleston was overjoyed. Shops and offices closed; church bells rang; guns roared; and men ran shouting through the streets. 32 It was April 12, 1861 when fighting started off the coast of Charleston at Fort Sumter. The bombardment was furious and constant. Fort Sumter's defenders fought back and fought bravely, but

30Ibid., 28.
31Ibid., 29.
32Ibid., 30-31
they were no match for the artillery of the Confederacy. People of Charleston climbed on rooftops to watch the attack and cheered on the Confederacy. The Charleston Battery and all the wharves were crowded with spectators. The sounds of the cannons were loud and terrifying. The city's houses and buildings shook and rattled. 

With the start of the war, Charleston settled in for the arduous trial that lay ahead. Troops moved in and out of the city and fortifications were built throughout the city. The Union Navy blockaded Charleston harbor, but, at least in the early years of the war, the blockade was ineffective. Blockade running became a way of life, a lifeline for the South.

Throughout the Civil War, Charleston was a high-priority target for the Union because it was the South's second largest port and because it was the "Cradle of Secession," the symbolic mother city of the Confederacy. The siege of Charleston began on April 7, 1863. The most powerful armada of the war was assembled at Port Royal, and soon the deadliest ships

\[\text{Robert N. Rosen, A Short History of Charleston (San Francisco: Lexikos Press, 1982), 105.}\]

\[\text{Ibid., 106.}\]
of the Union Navy - seven ironclad monitors arrived in Charleston. The lower part of Charleston was bombed and shelled on and off until the surrender in 1865. Those who could, left Charleston for Columbia or the Up Country. Others removed themselves North of Calhoun Street, where the shells generally did not reach. There were few civilian casualties, but the city was almost destroyed. By 1864, the town presented the most extraordinary appearance. Downtown Charleston became a ghost town. A witness reported,

The whole life and business of the place were crowded into the few squares above Calhoun Street, and along the Ashley, where the hospitals and the prisoners were and the shells did not reach... To pass from this bustling, crowded scene to the lower part of town was... like going from life to death. Charleston was abandoned by the Confederate Army in February of 1865, following General William Sherman’s capture of Atlanta and then Savannah in December of 1864. 

At the end of the war, Charleston was in ruins. Grass grew in the principal streets, the water front was deserted, rotted wharves and fire-blackened
walls were reminders of the dreadful fire of 1861 and the years of bombardment. The once wealthy and powerful planters, factors, merchants, and professional men were impoverished and without a voice in community control. In attics were trucks of worthless Confederate money. The city, state and entire South were under military rule. Regiments of Negro troops had been brought in to take charge of the area in which blacks formerly were slaves. As one black said, "freedom was free-er in Charleston."  

Blacks' behavior toward whites changed during this period. Old courtesies were still shown by many blacks to their old masters, but many others were determined to exercise their new independence. Black Charlestonians now could talk in public in groups, keep dogs and guns, and smoke cigars. They could even go to the Battery, a place legally off limits to them prior to the war.

The violence of the Reconstruction period resulted in extreme changes for the state. Four hundred thousand blacks were freed in South Carolina. Black troops occupied Charleston which was once the proud

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38 Our Charleston, 29.
40 Ibid., 113-114.
capital of black slavery. But, during the period of the Reconstruction in Charleston emphasis was placed on economic recovery from the war. Cotton production started immediately after the war and the number of bales shipped from Charleston doubled between 1866 and 1869. By 1873, Charleston was beginning to show signs of recovery.  

As Charleston struggled to reestablish its economic footing, two catastrophes struck in the 1880s: a cyclone in 1885 and an earthquake in 1886. The cyclone badly damaged the Battery sea wall and flooded the city. On August 3, 1886, the Great Earthquake struck causing destruction to buildings and lives. As if Charleston had not had enough, the Great Hurricane of 1893 struck the city seven years later. The natural disasters of the late 1880s and early 1890s caused the rice farmers to abandon their crop.  

The years immediately before and after 1900 saw the city of Charleston seeking to regain from her rivals her former importance as a commercial port. The refusal of any railroad system to bid for a South Carolina Railroad which would run from Charleston to Columbia (S.C.) and North Augusta (S.C.) was a

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41 Ibid., 114-119.

42 Ibid., 125.
revelation of Charleston's unimportance. The efforts of Charleston's business men were doubled and a new day dawned with the lease of the railroad by the Southern Railway, penetrating the most valuable non-coast regions between Ohio and the Gulf. 43

The new spirit found expression in the South Carolina Interstate and West Indian Exposition, December 1, 1901, to May 31, 1902, which was intended to advertise the city's commercial advantages. The exposition stimulated Charleston's energies and awakened the state to Charleston. 44

As Charleston was moving forward, other areas of the state were also taking shape. In the Piedmont or Up County section of the state, the area of Greenville was developing. Founded eighty-five years after Charleston, Greenville demonstrated a different pattern of development. The geographical location helped to foster a different way of life for the settlers of Greenville than in Charleston.

In 1776, Greenville was part of the Cherokee Indian nation. Lying to the east, along the present line of Spartanburg County, South Carolina, were the settlements of hardy pioneer backwoodsmen.

43Ibid., 31-32.
44Ibid., 34.
The early settlers of the area were of Scotch, Irish and English stock who moved down into upper Carolina from Pennsylvania, Virginia and North Carolina. In time there were several trading posts located in the area, but the main one was operated by Richard Pearis on the falls of the Reedy River. 

Richard Pearis was an Irishman of some education and great ability who moved from Virginia with his wife, a Cherokee woman, around 1766 and established a trading post. Near the trading post Pearis erected a corn mill and was able to carry on a profitable business with the Indians. His holdings of land were extended each year until the outbreak of the Revolutionary War and at that time he is said to have claimed title to territory ten miles square. 

With the successful end of the War in 1783, steps were taken to incorporate the Cherokee Acquisition of 1777 into the new State of South Carolina. At first the new territory was placed in Ninety Six but the General Assembly realized that the Districts were too large so on March 22, 1786, a law establishing

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"Ibid., 3-4."
Greenville County and five other counties which had comprised the Ninety Six District was enacted. 

The law stated:

An ordinance for establishing a county and county courts in the New Ceded Lands on the North Side of Saluda River: Whereas, the inhabitants of the new ceded lands on the north side of Saluda River below the Indian line, have experienced many inconveniences by being annexed to some of the counties here-to-fore established:

Be It Ordained, by the Honorable Governor, the Senate, and House of Representatives, now met and sitting in General Assembly, and by the authority of same, that a county shall be established in the new ceded lands by the name of Greenville, and shall be bounded by Saluda River and the South fork thereof, the Old Indian Boundary and the North Carolina line, and shall be entitled to county courts to be held on the third Monday in February, May, August and November; which courts shall hold, exercise and enjoy the several powers and jurisdictions which are by law vested in the said county courts heretofore established. 

Before this law was enacted, however, the new territory had to be opened for settlers. South Carolina had no money to pay her soldiers during the Revolution; in lieu of the debts, lands in the new acquisition were offered on the basis of ten dollars per hundred areas for debt payments by the State. On May 21, 1784, what later became Greenville County was officially opened for settlers with a Land Office at

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^7Ibid.

^8Ibid.
Pendleton and within two years practically all of the desirable lands in the county had been taken, largely by Revolutionary soldiers.  

Greenville is supposed to have derived its name from the verdant appearance of the country. But on the other hand, old tradition has it that the name was derived to honor Major General Nathaniel Greene of the American Revolution. The principal argument against its having been named for General Greene is the fact of the final "e" in his name having been dropped in the name of the district and village, while the name of the Revolutionary hero has been spelled Greene and in some instances in old manuscripts the name of the area has been spelled "Greeneville". These facts only add to the doubt about the true derivation of the county's and city's name.  

In 1790, just six years after Greenville county had been opened to settlers, the population was 6,500, all of which except 600 were white. But about this time there was heavy migration to the more westward states, and the white population of the county remained very nearly stationary until the days of the war.

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49 Howel I. Early Greenville Pioneers, 4.

50 Ibid., 4-5.
between the states.  

For many years after 1800, Greenville drew heavily upon the population of Virginia, North Carolina, and the coastal section of South Carolina, but despite this constant immigration the area still had a small population. Modern methods of farming were unknown, and only a few years served to "wear out" the hill plantations which had been so eagerly sought. The older residents, who had witnessed the deterioration in the productivity of their lands, sold out to the newcomers at any price and moved on in search of something better. The early settlers were of pioneer stock and no doubt welcomed the opportunity to escape the few bonds of civilization which were beginning to tie them down.

The first settlers of the area engaged in the growing of tobacco, corn and wheat as their principle agricultural pursuits. Wheat and corn mills were built at the falls of water courses where grain was converted into flour and meal. Much of the flour went to Charleston and Augusta, along with the tobacco, which

=1James M. Richardson, The History of Greenville County, South Carolina (Atlanta: A. H. Cawston Publisher, 1930), 71.

were the main money crops for the area. But, there was little need for money because of the industriousness of the settlers. Cattle, hogs, and poultry were grown for meat; sheep were kept for wool and flax grown for linen, from which the housewife made cloth for the family clothing. The needed tools, farm implements and wagons were made at the plantation forge; horses for plantation use and some for sale, were raised; whiskey and brandy for home consumption were made, the first from corn and rye and later from peaches picked in the extensive orchards in the area. Only such things as sugar, coffee, and spices were purchased. The standard of living was not complex and wants were few. Living meant hard work, but the people had been accustomed to that for several generations. 53

Near the close of the eighteenth century the cotton gin was invented and within a few years the cultivation of cotton became the principle industry of the state. But, the first quarter of the nineteenth century had passed before Greenville county was growing cotton to any considerable extent. The successful cultivation of cotton at this time depended primarily upon an abundance of slave labor and this was lacking in Greenville. The early settlers, for the most

53 Richardson, History of Greenville, 71.
part, were poor and owned no slaves, but with the passing of years and moving away of many of the pioneers, some wealth began to accumulate, and with it came slave ownership. By 1830, much cotton was being grown in the county, but not to the neglect of other crops. *

A digest of the population of the county from 1790 to 1860, as taken from the United States Census reports, should be of interest:

TABLE 1

Population, County or District of Greenville

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Free Negroes</th>
<th>Slaves</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1790</td>
<td>5,888</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>606</td>
<td>6,503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>10,025</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1,439</td>
<td>11,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>10,739</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2,353</td>
<td>13,133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>11,017</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3,423</td>
<td>14,530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>11,285</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5,064</td>
<td>16,481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>12,491</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>5,305</td>
<td>17,839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>13,370</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>6,691</td>
<td>20,156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>14,631</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>7,049</td>
<td>21,892</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: James M. Richardson, The History of Greenville County, South Carolina (Atlanta: A. H. Cawston Publisher, 1930), 71.

With the increase in slave ownership, the more wealthy of the farmers added gradually to their land holdings, and by 1860 there were a number of large plantations in the area of Greenville, the newly acquired slaves were employed in growing cotton upon a large scale, but never to the extent that the industry

* Ibid.
reached in other parts of the state. On the large plantations, the planters lived in comparative luxury, but the great mass of the people remained small land owners, living in primitive style until long after the close of the war of 1860. But with the coming of the railroad in 1853, the value of all farm lands, farm implements and live stock was $2,506,891.00; while ten years later the value had jumped to $4,594,700.00. Although farming was the principal industry during this period, there were a number of small manufacturing plants located at the falls of many of the streams throughout the county. For the most part the plants were sawmills, grist mills and wheat mills. Within the early village there was an iron working plant, also a large carriage factory which supplied vehicles for hundreds during the first half of the century. Blacksmiths, gunsmiths, and wagon makers were much in demand to supply the needs of the residents and several shops were operating in the area. In 1824, there were two textile manufacturing plants in the county.

From its early beginnings as a county in 1786 and down through the years, Greenville has been a site for industry. Its rapidly falling streams permitted the

**Ibid.,** 71.

**Ibid.,** 72.
use of water power by the industrious citizens and helped to continue the development of the area as a site for manufacturing. 

The first mill of any probable record was the large grist mill at the falls of the Reedy River, erected by the Indian Agent, Richard Pearis, before the American Revolutionary War. To the mill he added a large saw-mill for cutting timber. In 1776, after Pearis cast his lot with the Loyalists, his mills and trading post were attacked and destroyed by an armed party of patriots. Pearis' claims for losses in the case are recorded in the British Court of Claims at Halifax, Nova Scotia. 

In 1815, Lemuel Alston who had accumulated large holdings which comprised a site in the Greenville village, sold 11,000 acres to Vardry McBee of Lincolnton, North Carolina. Although McBee did not move to Greenville until twenty years later, he did start constructive development of his new purchase, industrially, educationally and religiously. He sent artisans skilled in various trades, began some manufacturing and gave land for the establishment 

Ibid. 

Ibid.
of a male and female academy and two churches.  

About the time of McBee's purchase, there occurred the beginnings of a movement which was described as "The New England Migration" in the area of Greenville. Skilled weavers moved down from New England into Spartanburg and Greenville counties. The weavers came to the area to establish small plants for spinning and weaving to use the available water power, ready materials and cheap labor for cotton manufacturing.  

In the early 1800s, slaves were used to some extent in the newly growing southern textile industry and quite frequently they worked side by side with white workers. In late 1816, the first group of manufacturers migrated to the South. The first group reached the Spartanburg District near Greenville and immediately set up a small yarn mill on the Tyger River. This was the start of what was to be a thriving textile industry in upstate South Carolina, the Piedmont. By 1860, there were at least ten cotton 

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Ibid.

mills in the back country district of Greenville, Spartanburg and Pendleton. Yet, in only one instance did the mill owner use slave labor and in that case one of the partners was a well-to-do planter and slave owner rather than a recently arrived manufacturer from the North. The planter and mill operator was John Ewing Calhoun, a kinsman of John C. Calhoun. In 1829, Calhoun entered into a partnership with Thomas Elliott to operate a small cotton mill and wool factory five miles from Pendleton. Calhoun was to construct the building and furnish the necessary slave labor, while Elliott was to supply the machinery and superintend the factory.62

Throughout the South, slaves were used in the textile mills. But, this practice was curtailed with the increase price of slaves during the period of 1820 to 1860. It was about 1850 that the high cost of slave labor in South Carolina tipped the scale in favor of whites as textile employees.63 Planters found it more profitable and less complicated to have slaves work at menial jobs as field hands where they would not be in direct competition with whites for employment.

62Ibid.

63Ibid., 169.
While McBee was establishing his early grist mills at Reedy Falls in Greenville, other pioneers were going forward with manufacturing efforts. Adam Carruth started a cotton mill in 1812 but a later venture of his was unique for Greenville. During the War of 1812, the federal government awarded a contract to Elias Earle for the manufacture of muskets for the fledgling army which was fighting the British. Earle transferred this contract to Adam Carruth and on November 14, 1816, he signed a contract with the government to furnish the Ordinance Department with 10,000 muskets to be delivered at the rate of 2,000 per year. By 1820, Carruth had manufactured and delivered 2,250 muskets. The value of his factory was reported to be $60,000.00 and his annual payroll and the armory's productive capacity was reported to be $30,000.00 worth of guns per year. 44

There was another unique manufacturing plant on the Reedy River, the Greenville Coach Factory. In 1835, Ebenezer Gower came to Greenville from Massachusetts, and in partnership with Thomas Cox, started the coach business. It is reported that by 1856 the Greenville Coach Factory employed 100 men and

44Ibid., 36.
sold $80,000.00 worth of vehicles a year making it the largest coach factory in the South. 

The Civil War brought another unusual industry to Greenville – the Confederate Gun Factory. Built in 1861 along the Greenville and Columbia Railroad on land furnished by Vardry McBee, the plant was established and operated by George Morse (supposedly a relative of Samuel Morse of telegraph fame) who was an inventor and designer of guns for Confederacy. At the factory, Morse produced his famous Morse Carbine, using a metal-cased cartridge. The factory manufactured 1,800 of these carbines and 200 muskets. The plant also produced cannon balls and shells for the Confederacy. The factory was burned by The Stoneman’s Raiders of Sherman’s Army in 1864. 

Because of the war between the states, Greenville, in addition to the Confederate Gun Factory, turned practically all of its industrial production to serving the Confederacy:

The Batesville Cotton Factory and three other textile plants in the county manufactured cotton goods exclusively for the army, while a number of wagon makers and gunsmiths of

<sup>The Proceedings and Papers of Greenville Historical Society, 41.</sup>

<sup>Ibid.</sup>
Greenville furnished such supplies as they were able to turn out. In the town of Greenville, the Gower, Cox and Gower Carriage Factory furnished its entire output of wagons to the ordinance and quartermaster departments of the Confederate States. By 1865, these two departments owed the firm $140,000.00. Just before the close of the war, the Ordinance Department paid $70,000.00 in Confederate money which became useless before it could be utilized. The balance was never paid. 

After the Civil War, Greenville staged a recovery. The Gower, Cox and Gower firm, with great retrenchment, managed to survive. Several of the textile plants either closed or were transferred to new owners. During this period of recovery, Greenville's industry virtually stood still. About this time, George W. Sirrine came to Greenville to become superintendent of the Gower Firm. T. C. Gower left the firm and Henry Markley came in as a partner. It was a long salvage operation but, by 1876, the firm issued a new catalogue and began to resume its former operations.

The period from 1883 to the turn of the century saw Greenville making steady progress industrially. Railroads from Charlotte, North Carolina

"Ibid., 41.
"Ibid., 42.
"Ibid., 41-42.
to Atlanta, Georgia promoted industrial growth. The Airline Railroad, now the Southern Railroad, and later, the Greenville and Laurens Railroad, together with the Columbia and Greenville Railroad, built before the Civil War, gave new life to growth in industry. The gas and electric plant of the Asburys and a new power generating plant at Saluda River Dam created the energy for increasing industrial plants. At about the end of the nineteenth century Greenville families who had long been leading merchants became intrigued with the idea of becoming cotton manufacturers. 70

With the new interest, the Poes, the Morgans, the Beatties and the Woodsides moved into Greenville with new mills. In fact, more than ten mills were built in Greenville between 1895 and 1901, giving real substance to the later claim of Greenville as the Textile Center of the South. Along with the textile plants also came some diversified industries. The enterprising young and newly organized Board of Trade in Greenville published an interesting booklet in 1901 and another in 1903. In the booklet, the Board of Trade listed some of the growth and achievements of the growing little city. Among the industries listed were: The Virginia-Carolina Chemical Company, which made

70 Ibid., 42.
fertilizer; and the Farmer's Oil Company, which was an oil mill. There were also three large iron foundries, two flour mills, one roller cover shop, one suspender factory, two large lumber and mill work plants and a bobbin and shuttle factory. Featured also was Greenville's new industry, the Seidenburg Cigar Factory. The Cigar Factory was housed on East Court Street in a new building financed through a cooperative of Greenville citizens, which began operation in 1901.\footnote{Ibid., 44.}

The cities of Charleston and Greenville, South Carolina both have rich histories. From the early beginning of each city the pioneers worked to develop their land which was suited to agricultural endeavors. Although Charleston's major commercial enterprise became its great harbor, agricultural products inland were shipped to market through Charleston's harbor.

The early pioneers of each city were mainly white citizens, which was typical for the southern area. However, a close examination reveals that blacks were in each area from the start of the settlements and played significant roles. Blacks even outnumbered whites in Charleston for several years during the time
span under study. Each city was founded during the period in American history when slavery was legal and both slaves and free blacks were in the up and low areas of the state. Any study of American history will reveal the vital labor force blacks provided and the demands placed on them to produce. In the two South Carolina cities under investigation in this study, black labor and the vital part it played in the community will be exposed in the research material of this project.

In each city, blacks lived and worked under the numerous city ordinances passed by the city council. The quality of life for blacks in each city in large measure was determined by the ordinances passed by the councils, some of which blacks requested. Because of their persistence, blacks, initiated actions through their appeals to city councils. Many of these ordinances and actions determined the fate and future of blacks in South Carolina.
CHAPTER II

THE HISTORICAL VIEW OF CITY COUNCILS

The original colonies of America were primarily made up of people from England and these people transported their form of government, including city government, to the colonies. The first American city was established after the first permanent settlement, Jamestown, was settled. ¹

South Carolina history does not record the exact date of the first municipality in the early colony. ² We do know however, that settlements preceded cities. In 1520, the first European settlement in South Carolina was established. San Miguel, a Spanish settlement, was settled in the area of Winyah Bay (near the present city of Georgetown) on the South Carolina coast. The French also established a


settlement in South Carolina in 1562 called Charlesfort in the same area, but neither settlement lasted very long. ³  

The first settlement in South Carolina which lasted was founded in 1670 by Englishmen on the banks of the Ashley River, called Albemarle Point. The settlement was later moved to Oyster Point an area between the Ashley and Cooper Rivers. By 1679, the Oyster Point was renamed Charleston and in 1680 the settlement developed into a city which became the seat of South Carolina government. ⁴ During the early years Charleston grew and emerged as one of the largest cities in all the colonies. Charleston was the center of life for the colony as a commercial, political and social beacon during the early part of the colony. Early population records indicate that in South Carolina, Charleston was a desirable place to live. In 1700, over half the colony’s inhabitants lived in Charlestown. By 1763, the population had risen to 8,000. When the first national census was taken in 1790, Charleston was the fourth largest city in the

³Ibid.  
newly formed nation with a population of 16,359. =

Earlier on June 23, 1722, Charleston had become South Carolina's first legally incorporated city. The city charter stated that there was to be a mayor, six aldermen and twelve councilmen all of whom were to serve for life, with the power to name their successor. Strong opposition delayed the enactment of the charter for fifteen months. Charleston had the distinction of being the only city incorporated during the colonial period in South Carolina. 4

In 1783, Charleston became the site of South Carolina's first incorporated municipality by legislative enactment. The reasons for this incorporation were set forth in the preamble to the charter:

Whereas, from the extent and population of Charleston, its growing importance, both with respect to increase of habitants and an extensive commerce with foreign nations, it is indispensably necessary that many regulations should be made for the preservation of peace and good order within the same: and whereas, from the many weighty and important matters that occupy the attention of the Legislature at their general meeting, it has hitherto been found impracticable and probably may hereafter become more so, for them to devise, consider, deliberate on, and determine, all such laws and regulations, as emergencies, or the last local

4Ibid., 4.
5Ibid., 6.
circumstances of the said Town, may from time to time require. 

The newly incorporated city had a city government made up of a mayor, aldermen and a large number of councilmen. There was also a recorder who was the legal adviser and like the mayor was appointed by the governor. "

During the early history of Charleston little distinguished an alderman from a councilman. Aldermen performed some special functions which were usually judicial in nature. The city council passed ordinances, handled the city's revenue and administered other business. The city's court was made up of the mayor, aldermen and a recorder. The make up of the city court revealed that there was no separation of power; council not only passed the laws, but also punished those who dared transgress the law. "

When the Revolutionary War ended, a large number of cities were incorporated. These new cities were established under different charters which granted voting privileges to larger numbers of citizens and allowed more people to seek elected office. The mayor was not an elected official, but was selected by

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7Ibid.
8MacCorkle, American Municipal, 26.
9Ibid., 27.
aldermen from their body to serve as the presiding official. The length of the term of office also changed during this period. Tenure for an alderman was extended while a councilman's term of office was shortened to two or three years. Later the office of mayor became an elected position which helped the position gain independence and power within city government.  

In 1783, Charleston's city council was made up of thirteen wardens, one from each ward. The qualifications for warden were the same as for a member of the South Carolina House of Representatives. The mayor was elected from the wardens and a special election was held to fill the vacancy. Many males were reluctant to serve in elected positions because of the time required. They felt that the time spent as an elected official could be used for personal gain. Any white male not willing to serve as a warden was fined twenty pounds and refusal to serve as a mayor carried a fine of thirty pounds. Service on the city council was for one year out of seven for males under fifty years of age. Anyone found guilty of wrongful conduct while in office was fined two-hundred pounds.  

Ibid., 28-29.

Sherrill and Stoudemine, Municipal Government, 7.
The time for council meetings was not specified. The mayor called meetings at his discretion. The city council of Charleston had the power to acquire, manage and dispose of property and to make needed rules and ordinances... "respecting the harbor, streets, lanes, public buildings, work houses, markets, wharves, public houses, carriages, wagons, carts, drays, pumps, buckets, fire engines, the care of the poor, the regulations of seamen or disorderly people, Negroes and in general, every other by-law or regulation that shall appear to them requisite and necessary for the security, welfare and convenience of the said city or the preserving of peace, order and good government within the same..." 12 The council also had the power to collect taxes, to collect fines for the violation of city laws, and to appoint and fix salaries of local officers all subject to change by the state legislature. 13

The first half of the nineteenth-century councils continued as the controlling governmental body of the cities. As the role of city councils increased, many of the functions of council were carried out through committees. As a means to help with the workload,

12Ibid., 7-8.

13Ibid., 8.
police, fire production, schools, streets and other needed services of cities were assigned to committees. Even with the establishment of committees however, the whole city council retained formal control of municipal affairs. 14

In the mid-1800s, the work load for city councils continued to grow. It was during these years that councilian supremacy was at the pinnacle of American city government. With the growth of cities and the increase in responsibilities of city councils came a decline in the caliber and competence of councilmen. The problems in city government during this period caused many cities to turn to state legislatures for assistance on the local level. In many cases, functions were taken from the council and given to state-appointed boards or given to boards directly by the people and later appointed by the mayor. These changes increased the power of the mayor. 15

When the Civil War ended in 1865, cities in America experienced some of their most rapid growth. The years from 1865 to 1890 brought an increase in localities, as city populations grew by twenty to


15Ibid., 31-32.
thirty per cent throughout the nation. As during the mid 1800s, the period after the Civil War with the increased city population there was also an increase in the work load of the city council. One manifestation of the increase in city responsibility was that cities began to take on the job of providing service once handled by the private sector of the city. Water and fire protection, control of public health and public transportation were city responsibilities.

The greatest change in South Carolina cities during this period was the procedure for incorporating cities. Up until 1896, the state legislature incorporated cities by individual enactments. By 1896, the state legislature had incorporated at least 250 municipalities in the state of South Carolina.

The municipalities in the state as interpreted by the State Supreme Court acquired their power because:

It is a general and undisputed proposition of law that a municipal corporation possesses powers and no others: First, those granted in express words; second, those necessarily or fairly implied in or incident to the powers granted; third, those essential to the declared objects and purposes of the corporation—not simply convenient, but indispensable. Any fair reasonable doubt concerning the existence of

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"Sherrill and Stoudemire, Municipal Government, 8."
power is resolved by the courts against the corporation, and the power is denied.  

The South Carolina Supreme Court's interpretation of municipal power reveals that the state has unlimited power over cities. In essence cities must look to the state for their rights, powers and privileges. "Since the municipalities are creatures of the state, they possess only such powers as given to them (directly or clearly implied) by the state constitution or by the state legislature."  

The cities cannot pass any ordinances which may be in conflict with state law.  

A 1950 survey of ninety South Carolina municipalities revealed that ordinances have been passed to govern almost every type of municipal activity, but the majority concerned annual appropriations and business licenses. The cities passed ordinances governing traffic regulations, street paving, sewer, water and electric fees and building regulations. The majority of the ordinances passed by cities in South Carolina complied with laws passed by the General Assembly of the state.  

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17 Ibid., 19.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid., 28.
20 Ibid., 29.
CHAPTER III

SLAVERY UNDER MUNICIPAL RULE, 1850-1865

The development of slavery in South Carolina mirrored the institution's development in other English colonies. At the start of English settlement in America, there were no plans to establish Negro slavery. Yet, in less than a century, the foundations of the peculiar institution were in place as slaves provided the chief supply of colonial labor. The first Negroes landed in Virginia in 1619, and little is known about their precise status during their first twenty years. Between 1640 and 1660 there is evidence of enslavement, and after 1660 slavery crystallized on the statute books of Maryland, Virginia and other colonies. By 1700, when Africans began flooding into English America, they were treated as somewhat deserving a life and status radically different from English and other European settlers. The Negro had been debased to a condition of chattel slavery; at some point, Englishmen in America had created a legal status which ran counter to English law. ¹

There was no precedent in English law for slavery, so Negroes were absorbed into a growing system of servitude based upon English apprenticeship and vagrancy laws which spread to all the colonies. The fact that Negroes were an alien race bearing distinctive physical marks was doubtless the basis for differential treatment from the beginning and later facilitated their enslavement. But, it was not due solely to differences in race that Negro slavery grew and finally supplanted white servitude. There were powerful economic factors, such as the demand for a cheap and permanent labor supply, which decided the fate of the Negro. Court decisions and statutes only gave legal sanctions to customary practices to what was becoming an established fact. Later, because of the invention of the cotton gin in 1793 and the rise of the textile industry in England, the slave system became the foundation of the economy of the South.  

Negroes were a part of the early development of the founding of Carolina. The proprietors of the colony encouraged the importation of Negroes as early as 1663. The proprietors offered each original settler

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twenty acres for every Negro man slave and ten acres for every Negro woman slave brought into the colony in the first year of the colony's settlement. Within twenty years of the colony's settlement, the Negro population was equal to the white population. By 1715 the Negro population exceeded the whites, 10,500 to 6,250 and in 1724 there were three times as many Negroes as whites in the colonies. 

As the Negro population increased in Carolina, the enactment of legislation aimed at controlling slaves was instituted. The Carolina colony in 1686 forbade Negroes to engage in any kind of trade and restricted them from leaving their master's plantation without a pass. In 1722, white justices were authorized to search Negroes for weapons and to take any weapon, unless the suspect could produce a permit for them. The slave patrols were given the authority to search Negroes and to whip those found to be dangerous to peace and good order. Every slave state established restricting laws for Negroes, called Slave Codes. Besides establishing the property rights of those who owned human chattel, these codes supported

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masters in maintaining discipline and provided safeguards for the white community against rebellion. In addition, the codes held slaves as thinking beings, morally responsible and punishable for misdemeanors and felonies.

Basically, the Slave Codes were very similar. In the deep South, the codes were considerably more severe than codes found closer to the North. The similarities were due in part to the fact that the new states patterned their codes after the old state’s codes with only minor variations in details. South Carolina’s Code of 1712 was almost a copy of the Barbadian Code; Georgia’s Code of 1770 duplicated South Carolina’s Code of 1740; and later the gulf states borrowed heavily from both. The codes served as a means of placing regulatory laws on the slave population.

The codes rigidly controlled movement and communication of slaves. A slave was prohibited from hiring his own time, finding his own employment, or living by himself. A slave was not to preach, except to his master’s own slaves on his master’s premises in the presence of whites. A gathering of more than a few slaves, usually five, away from home, unattended by a

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white, was an "unlawful assembly" regardless of its purpose or orderly decorum. Also, no person, not even the master, was to teach a slave to read or write, employ him in setting type in a printing office or give him books or pamphlets. These few examples illustrate the great efforts carried out by state legislatures to control the actions of slaves.

Additionally, Southern cities and towns supplemented the state codes with more regulations. Most of them prohibited slaves from being on the streets after curfews or living in dwellings separate from their masters. Richmond, Virginia required Negroes and mulattoes to step aside when whites passed by, and barred them from riding in carriages except in the capacity of menials. In Charleston, South Carolina slaves could not swear, smoke, walk with a cane, assemble at military parades or make joyful demonstrations. In Washington, North Carolina an ordinance stated, "all disorderly shouting and dancing, and all disorderly... assemblies... of slaves and free Negroes in the streets, market and other public places were prohibited."  


Violations of the state and local codes were misdemeanors or felonies subject to punishment by justices, sheriffs, police and constabulary. Whipping was the most common form of public punishment for less than capital offenses.

The largest proportion of blacks—men, women and children—were field hands, assigned to growing tobacco and the other marketable crops during early years of the southern colonies. This was the real purpose for which slavery had evolved, and it represented the institution in its most impersonal, burdensome and typical form. A smaller, but still important number of slaves were household workers and personal servants of the master’s family. Almost all accounts of slaves who enjoyed some reasonable treatment or some bond of affection from their masters refer to blacks from the household staff. Over the years, there has developed a tendency to view this group of slaves in a romantic light, but it must not be forgotten that they were slaves.

A third group of the slave labor force was composed of skilled and semiskilled craftsmen. In


time, blacks performed substantially all of the work on plantations in certain trades, especially carpentry and cooperage. They were also proficient millers, tanners, shoemakers, wheelwrights, spinners and weavers. Not only did these slave artisans perform tasks necessary for individual plantations, they were also instrumental in the commercial development of the southern colonies.\textsuperscript{11} Slaves were not treated the same because conditions varied from region to region, plantation to plantation and master to master.

Black life during the period of slavery was rigidly controlled by city ordinances in Charleston, South Carolina. In almost every area of life, city ordinances were passed to make sure blacks were restrained. City council ordinances passed from 1790 to 1844 reveal the controlling efforts of the councils before 1850. Ordinances passed prior to 1850 were not repealed and were still enforced during the latter era of slavery. A brief review of selective ordinances enacted prior to 1850 will reveal the energy exercised by the city council in controlling Blacks.

On October 28, 1806, several ordinances were passed for governing Negroes and free persons of color within the city of Charleston. It was unlawful for

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid.
slaves to occupy houses without a ticket from the owner. The tickets were written permission given to slaves which served as passes or notices allowing slaves to be in a certain place or to move their residence. Transgressors received twenty lashes unless the owner of the slave paid a five dollar fine. No grown Negroes or other person of color could attend funerals or assemble or meet together unless some white person was present. The ordinance stated that "no assembly of Negroes or persons of color for the purpose of dancing or other merriment without written permission from the Warden of the Ward in which it is to take place would be allowed." 14

Slaves were not allowed to operate any mechanical business for their personal benefit. Only those slaves that were fishermen could own boats. Under the ordinances of this period, slaves could not buy, sell or trade goods and the penalty for slaves was the forfeiting of goods. 15

It must be noted that not all the ordinances were for control, but some ordinances addressed the treatment of slaves. An 1814 ordinance stated that it

14The General Ordinance of the City of Charleston, South Carolina 1790-1844 (Charleston, South Carolina: Lucas & Richardson, Co., 1845), 110.

15Ibid., 174-175.
was unlawful for slave owners to have slaves appear in the streets in irons or irons around slaves' necks, heads, legs, hands or any part of their body. The ordinance farther stated that "slaves must not be permitted or suffered to appear in the streets, or any public part of the city, without sufficient clothing."  

But the majority of the ordinances passed during this period pertained to the control of Negroes which attested to the fear or apprehension whites had of blacks during slavery. Throughout the period of slavery, one of the greatest concerns of whites was keeping blacks, slaves or free people of color in their place. Slavery was not only a labor system, but a system of racial dominance. Whites realized that without control over blacks the notion of white supremacy would be weakened and the task of keeping blacks in place would be impossible.  

Therefore, in the effort to maintain domination over blacks, whites instituted numerous methods of control. In 1819, an ordinance even prohibited Negroes and free persons of color from using blasphemous language or speaking loudly or from using indecent words, and if found guilty, they would receive stripes not exceeding

14 Ibid., 174.

15 Frazier, The Negro, 43.
In essence, the ordinances passed from 1850 to 1865 were a continued effort of the council to restrict the economic, political, and social activities of slaves and free persons of color. Under a series of ordinances passed in 1806, slaves or persons of color were not allowed to smoke a pipe or cigar, in any street, lane, alley or open place of the city. They were not allowed to walk with a cane, club or other stick, except those used by the blind or infirm and transgressors would receive a number of lashes. 

This ordinance may have been passed as a means of insuring that blacks were not to appear in public with any item associated with being a gentleman, or of the social status of whites. These were just a few ordinances found in the Charleston City Code of Ordinances of 1790 to 1844 which reveal the efforts of the city to exercise its power over slaves and free persons of color. The years following 1844 showed that the city continued this effort.

Although slaves and free persons of color in Charleston and most areas of the United States were not


1 "Ibid., 173."
afforded the right to political participation, they were expected to support the government financially. On October 4, 1853, several free persons of color were fined ten dollars each for not paying city taxes. Apparently, W. N. Ford, Richard Delaware, R. Owens, S. Blake, S. Judy, Jas. Vanderhost, P. Lopez and G. Fleming found the idea of paying taxes somewhat contradictory because they were fined for not paying taxes. \(^1\) During the period of the 1850s up to 1865, punishment for nonpayment of taxes by slaves or by free persons of color was a common concern of the council. The police report made to the council on March 3, 1858 listed 59 colored males and 35 colored females who had been arrested for nonpayment of tax capitation. \(^2\) The council minutes gave no explanation as to why the free blacks did not pay their taxes. The conditions of the time probably made it difficult for free blacks to amass the needed revenue. The taxes were one of the restraints placed on free persons of color during this period. Free blacks were not a welcomed segment of most city populations during slavery, and often cities worked to make life difficult.

\(^1\) Charleston City Council Minutes. October 4, 1854, 203.

\(^2\) Charleston City Council Minutes, March 3, 1858, 13.
for them. Enforcing tax laws on a group of people who had very limited income added to the problems facing free blacks.

On January 8, 1850, an ordinance was passed to alter and amend an earlier ordinance of the city which regulated the collection of city taxes. Section One provided that every horse and mule used in the city would be taxed, while troopers' horses were exempted. Section Two provided that every slave in the city be taxed. The tax placed on every slave within the city or employed within the city under twelve years old was $1.50 and over twelve was $2.50 per year set in 1845. The payment of the tax placed on slaves was paid by the slave owner, but the tax was a small penalty in comparison to the free labor and money provided by the slave to his master.

The motivation behind the institution of slavery was economic profit, and this motivation never escaped the slaveholders. Even in the cities where the profitable slave labor was not as prevalent as on the plantation, slaves were still an economic investment. Throughout the period of slavery, blacks indirectly or directly provided financial benefit to the cities of

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20 Charleston City Council Minutes, January 8, 1850, 320.
the South. Initially, a tax was placed on each slave, which was paid by the slaveholder, but the slave's worth to the master exceeded the tax in labor. The January 5, 1858 city tax report stated there were 16,105 slaves in Charleston at a tax of $3.00 each netting the city a revenue of $48,316.00.  

Throughout the period of slavery, one of the major concerns of the controlling class was to stop slaves and free persons of color from having freedom of movement. Numerous ordinances were passed in Charleston to restrict the movement and general social activities of Negro people. Because an 1836 ordinance forbade slaves or free persons of color from assembling, unless a white person was present, many slaves found themselves listed in a police report. In each police report to the council from 1850 to 1861 punishment for loitering generally led the list of crimes for slaves and free persons of color. In June of 1855 eighteen Negroes were fined twenty dollars each for loitering. On March 2, 1858, fifty-eight males and one female were arrested and fined for loitering.  

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21 Charleston City Council Minutes. January 1858, 284.

22 Charleston City Council Minutes. June 1855, 157 and March 1858, 373.

23 Ibid.
Those arrested for loitering were usually away from their owners' property without permission. The record implied that slave owners and other whites felt the best way to keep control over slaves was to keep them at work and to know where they were at all times. The city passed and enforced its loitering law to serve this purpose in the community.

Another common practice used during this period to control the activity of slaves was to place them in jail under what was termed "committed for safekeeping." In several police reports the number of slaves incarcerated for safekeeping was higher than for loitering. In the report for November 27, 1857, thirty-nine males and one female were committed for safekeeping in the city jail of Charleston. On March 2, 1858 and March 16, 1858 the total number committed for safekeeping was fifty-four males and eleven females. 24

This practice of incarceration insured that the slave would be kept out of trouble. The master of a slave in safekeeping could be assured that the slave would be ready for work and not very likely to be

24 Charleston City Council Minutes, November 1857, 251 and March 1858, 373.
arrested. Safekeeping was a great ally of slavery and the economy it produced.

Separation and control of the slaves and free persons of color were not only a great concern during the life of the blacks, but also after their deaths. The city of Charleston had strict laws concerning the separate burial of the races. On April 12, 1859, the Brown Fellowship Society, which was made up of free black men (mulattoes) for the benevolent aid to free persons of color of the city, approached the council with concerns of burial arrangements. The Brown Fellowship Society petitioned the council for the right to continue to use their separate burial grounds in the city cemetery. Prior to 1859, the Society was granted the right to bury its members and family in a burial area separated from whites, slaves and free blacks (darker skinned blacks). The council referred the request to the Board of Health, who found no reason to discontinue the practice. Therefore, on June 7, 1859, the council passed an ordinance which stated that as of January 1863, it shall be unlawful to inter, within the city limits, any person of color, free or bond, except in Potter's Field, but makes no mention

\[\text{Charleston City Council Minutes, April 1859, 46.}\]
Blacks and the operation of the fire department remained a concern in 1859. An ordinance which was first passed in 1841, regulated slaves' participation at fire departments and fires. The ordinance stated that it was unlawful for a slave or person of color to attach himself to a fire engine or to attend a fire unless he is engaged in saving or guarding the property of his owner or employer. Violators were to be punished by the city guard. The ordinance did allow slaves and free persons of color to attach themselves to an engine and fire department if they were distinguished by a Fire Badge. In 1859 there was still concern about men of color and the operation of the fire department in the city. During this year a petition came before the council involving colored men at fire houses at improper hours. Also, the petition stated "that false alarms of fires are often given by Negroes, who loiter at shops until bells ring and who thus in the confusion and noise escape detection and even to have a run with the engine and receive pay for

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28 Charleston City Council Minutes, June 1859, 73.
29 Charleston City Council Minutes, May 1841, 78.
labor." The petitioner demanded that the fire department correct such action immediately.

Interracial entertainment was prohibited as well, but during the years of 1859 and 1860 the city of Charleston saw several petitions by entertainers to present programs or acts to racially mixed audiences. R. J. Greenwood petitioned council on December 6, 1859, to exhibit the Panorama of the Pilgrim's Progress at the Institution Hall, and to admit colored persons along with whites. In March 1860, D. Carl Boyd petitioned the council to exhibit the Buckley's Minstrel Troupe and to admit persons of color. T. U. Tidmarsh petitioned the council to present the Nixon's Royal Circus to a mixed audience at the Citadel Green in 1860 and Blaisdell and Fitz came before the council for permission to exhibit the Swiss Bell Ringers at the Institution Hall and to admit persons of color. Each of these petitions met with favorable consideration by the council and the petitioners were required to pay the usual twenty-dollar-fee for a license. For reasons not given or because of the nature of the act, a petition by Donnetti and Wood for permission to

28 Charleston City Council Minutes, July 1859, 108.

29 Charleston City Council Minutes, December 1859, 3 March 1860, 16 and October 1860, 35.
exhibit a troupe of tamed animals at the Charleston Theater denied the admission of colored people, but allowed the show to be presented to whites. 30

In March of 1858 several ordinances were passed involving the taxing of slaves and persons of color. The ordinance stated that every slave brought into the city was subject to a tax of ten dollars and that it was the duty of the city assessor to ascertain the number of slaves for sale and to tax the owner. Section four of the same ordinance outlined tax regulations for free persons of color. Free males of color carrying on a business or earning an income would be taxed ten dollars. Free males of color sixteen to twenty-one would be taxed five dollars, free females fourteen to eighteen would be taxed three dollars and dollars. The ordinance farther stated that any free person of color who was unable to pay the tax was left free females eighteen to fifty paid a tax of five to the mayor's decision and that all taxes were paid during June. Any transient person who entered the city and sold slaves, horses or mules paid a tax of five dollars on every one hundred dollars sale. 31 There

30 Charleston City Council Minutes, December 1859, 17.

31 Charleston City Council Minutes, March 16, 1858, 8.
were many reasons for the tax on free persons of color, but the major issue was debatable. Cities gained financially from those who were able to pay the tax while it discouraged others from living in the city.

One of the many controversies during the period of slavery was the act of slaves hiring themselves out. The controversy arose because of competition between white workers and slaves and the money slaves would acquire from being hired out. Because of the controversy most southern cities had regulations governing this economic endeavor. On March 16, 1858, the Charleston city council heard a petition which stated that any person owning or having slaves would be fined five dollars for allowing them to be hired out. The fine of five dollars would be split between the city and the informer. Actions concerning this petition were postponed. The petition was read again on February 28, 1860, but it was not passed because the council felt it would be improper to cause so many slaves to change their occupations. Many slaves were seamstresses, nurses, mantua-makers, or wash women. The tax would have caused families to be deprived. The refusal of the council to pass an ordinance

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"Charleston City Council Minutes, March 1858, 9 and February 1860, 96."
governing slaves' ability to hire themselves greatly illustrates the important role slaves played in the work force in the city.

Greenville, South Carolina, a city which is located in the Up Country of the state, was settled much later and during the period of slavery had a small slave population. Although the city of Greenville had fewer slaves than Charleston, there was also great concern about the control of slaves in this area. Throughout the period of slavery, numerous legislative problems concerning this issue came before the city council.

As the slave population increased in Greenville, measures to repress their actions evolved in the form of city ordinances. On October 11, 1845, an ordinance was passed which attempted to provide an orderly means of restraining slaves in the city. This ten sectioned ordinance contained duties of the slave patrols and who was to serve on patrol. The ordinance stated that the clerk of the council was to keep a roll of all persons responsible for duty. Patrol duty was daily for two hours in the afternoon and two hours after 9:00 p.m. The major responsibility of the patrol was to deliver, to the town constable, all slaves found on the streets without permission. Slaves with permission from their
master or in the company of a white person over the age of ten were not arrested. The patrol ordinance also explained what action was to be taken by the patrol after a slave was apprehended. It was the duty of the town constable to inflict twenty lashes upon the slave unless the owner or person having charge of such slave appeared and paid the fees of imprisonment.\textsuperscript{33}

After the passage of this ordinance, the problem of controlling slaves within the city of Greenville remained unsolved. On September 27, 1851, a special night meeting was called to consider making the patrol more efficient. A motion was made that the patrol should be divided into thirty companies of five each and that they patrol all night once a month. This motion was tabled until the number eligible to patrol could be ascertained by the town constable.\textsuperscript{34}

The council minutes between 1845 and 1851 reflected great concern for developing constraints over slaves in the city. An ordinance passed in 1845 proved unsatisfactory to the citizens of Greenville. Growing out of concerns of the citizens, the 1845 ordinance was amended. On October 6, 1851, in order to keep peace

\textsuperscript{33} Greenville City Council Minutes, October 11, 1845.

\textsuperscript{34} Greenville City Council Minutes, September 27, 1851.
and good order in town, the new ordinance was passed. This more efficient ordinance provided for greater restraints on slaves. The changes in the first patrol ordinance brought about additional regulations for the slave population. The new ordinance stated that there shall be thirty patrol companies of five men, who would patrol all night after the town bell was sounded. Section Four of the redefined ordinance was added because of problems with serving on patrol. The section stated that any captain who is absent from duty without a valid excuse or who acts disorderly or neglectfully while on duty shall be fined, not less than five dollars, and the same was true of a private, but the fine was two dollars.  

After the passage of this ordinance, many incidents came before the council surrounding its enforcement. It is interesting to note that as many white citizens were involved in failures to serve on the patrol as slaves for violating the ordinance. On May 20, 1852, Mr. J. H. Randolph was fined for being absent from patrol duty. Mr. Randolph gave illness as his excuse, but the council decided to let the fine

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25 Greenville City Council Minutes, October 6, 1851, 57-59.
Service on the patrol became such a problem that at one time the issue of female participation was raised. But, on October 20, 1855, it was determined by the council that no female who owned slaves should be "compelled to compound in lieu" of patrol duty. In an attempt to solve the problem of citizens not wanting to serve on patrol duty, the council passed an ordinance in September of 1855 which stated that anyone not wanting to serve patrol duty would pay $2.50. Even with the passage of the ordinance allowing citizens an opportunity to waive patrol duty, there were still problems surrounding patrol duty.

For example, at the March 2, 1858 meeting concern was expressed about persons defaulting on their patrol duty. At the September 18, 1860 meeting, questions were raised about changing the present patrol system to make it more accountable, but council ruled that there would be no changes. The city clerk was ordered to make a report at the next meeting of all who were liable to serve on the patrol. The council also found

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Greenville City Council Minutes, May 20, 1852, 68.
Greenville City Council Minutes, October 20, 1855, 95.
Greenville City Council Minutes, September, 1855, 93.
It necessary to address the problem of nonpayment of the patrol tax. The council ordered that the time for payment of the tax be extended and that every person liable to patrol duty who failed to pay the tax would be required to perform patrol duty for the remainder of the year.

Continuing into the year of 1862, the council was confronted with the problem of citizens not fulfilling their duty on the patrol. Eighteen cases involving patrol default came before the council on April 1, 1862. At the same meeting, the town clerk reported 74 persons performed patrol duty and 65 paid patrol exemption tax. On May 2, 1862, the council heard a report which stated that ten citizens had defaulted on patrol duty; each was excused and no reason was given for excusing the offense. On July 1, 1862, ten cases of patrol duty default were heard by the council: four were fined one dollar and six were excused.

Although during this period Greenville had a small slave population, the number of free persons of color increased. In that regard on October 2, 1860, Warden Elford gave notice that at the next council meeting an

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"Greenville City Council Minutes, February 16, 1861, 177.

"Greenville City Council Minutes, April 1, 1862, 191-192: May 2, 1862, 198; and July 1, 1862, 205."
ordinance would be introduced relative to free

Negroes. The ordinance introduced at the November
6, 1860 council meeting required free persons of color
in the city to be able to show their papers of freedom
upon request.

Throughout the period of slavery, the economic
endeavors of slaves and free persons of color were a
constant concern of the white citizens of the South.
In Greenville, slaves and free persons of color
approached the council with request to conduct
business within the city. The response of the council
was often confusing because no reason was given for
permission or rejection. On February 7, 1856, the
petition of John, a slave of J. Clowes, to keep an
oyster saloon was granted. But, on January 20, 1856,
the application of Wilson, a slave of V. McBee, for
permission to run a shop for the purpose of carrying on
the business of barbering was rejected. In the case of
Wilson, the council used as the reason for denial the
city ordinance forbidding slaves to rent houses.
However, only two months later, R. C. Clayrank,
guardian of Zion Collins, a free person of color, gave

\[\text{Greenville City Council Minutes, October 2, 1860, 53.}\]

\[\text{Greenville City Council Minutes, November 6, 1860, 61.}\]
his consent for Zion to have a stand for the selling of
bread and such articles as the town council of
Greenville would permit. The council granted Zion
Collins permission to establish his stand. At the same
meeting on March 4, 1856, a petition was received from
Mr. McBee to give his slave Wilson permission to carry
on the business of barbering in said town. the council
did not grant permission. It must be noted that the
McBees were one of the most prominent families in
Greenville. They were one of the pioneering families
which had helped to settle the city. When the council
rejected their request, the family held large amounts
of real estate in the city. The rejection by the city
council may suggest a political move by the council for
some unknown reason.

The information found in the Greenville council
minutes reveals that generally slaves and free persons
of color were not a great threat to the white citizens
of the city. Nevertheless, an ordinance was passed on
October 1, 1861, which prevented slaves and free
persons of color from trading in provisions within the
city.

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"Greenville City Council Minutes, October 2, 1860, 53.
"Ibid."
Under the ordinance which governed slaves and free persons of color, involving business transactions, the city sued Thomas Steen, a white man. Thomas Steen used the service of slaves in his store. This was against a city ordinance of October 1, 1861, which prohibited slaves from trading. Steen plead guilty, and the fine was excused. The council notified Steen to discontinue the use of any slave or free person of color in his store, otherwise, the ordinance would be enforced for the next offense. Again, city ordinances of this nature were generally passed as a means of controlling blacks and to avoid giving them an equal status with whites. 45

In 1862, the question of slaves hiring themselves out came before the city council. The marshall was concerned with the failure of citizens to comply with the ordinance prohibiting slaves from being hired out. After considerable discussion by council, the issue was tabled. 46 The minutes did state that slave owners and tax-paying citizens benefited from slaves being hired out. And this reason alone was possibly the

45Greenville City Council Minutes, February 3, 1863, 203.

46Greenville City Council Minutes, February 5, 1862, 188-189.
greatest influence upon the council allowing slaves to be hired out. The economic benefit from this practice outweighed the fear of giving slaves too much freedom and responsibility.

During the year of 1863, a growing concern developed over persons of color holding meetings contrary to the city ordinance which prohibited meetings unless a white person was present. On April 7, 1863, the council discussed what course should be pursued in reference to persons of color meeting, but no conclusion was reached.  

The city council minutes of Charleston and Greenville disclosed a concerted effort by the councils to control slaves and free persons of color in their respective cities. Numerous ordinances were passed during this period which helped strengthen control over the slave population. The minutes revealed that when an issue came before the councils concerning slaves or free persons of color, they did not hesitate to pass an ordinance which regulated those persons living in the city.

The material presented from each city's council minutes showed that the two cities were different in

"Greenville City Council Minutes, April 7, 1863, 311."
many areas, but their efforts to suppress slaves and free persons of color were very similar. In each city, ordinances were passed which restricted the movement of slaves. The cities passed ordinances which not only regulated movement by requiring that slaves have written permission, they also monitored meetings and how they were held. Although, slaves and free persons of color lived under the restrictive atmosphere created by slavery, many attempted some form of economic endeavor. In each city, slaves came before the council to request permission to carry on businesses. In many instances, permission was granted; however, the councils passed ordinances which strongly controlled business endeavors of slaves and free persons of color. Still, the Negro population resisted by disobeying the ordinances and repeatedly requesting permission from the councils to carry on a business.

In Charleston and Greenville, the council minutes reveal an overriding concern with controlling blacks' movement, but it was found that a greater concern was on slaves hiring themselves out. Competition developed between blacks and whites for jobs in Charleston and
Greenville. White citizens in these cities requested their council to restrict blacks from being hired out. However, in each city, the proposed ordinances failed. Apparently, the financial aspects of the hiring out system exceeded the racial considerations.
CHAPTER IV

RECONSTRUCTION, 1865-1877

This chapter will examine the period of Reconstruction in the United States and South Carolina, a time of great changes. As the nation worked to rebuild and to reunite after the Civil War, South Carolina also worked to bring about some semblance of order after the war. Economic, political and social changes abounded in all areas of southern life. The ending of the Civil War ushered in a period of great adjustment for the nation. This chapter will present the findings about Charleston and Greenville, South Carolina during Reconstruction, as the two cities worked to adjust to a new way of life and a new era.

The problems facing the South after the Civil War were numerous. The rebuilding of the war-torn South and the reorganizing of the economy which was no longer based on slave labor were important problems of the southern people. At the end of the war there was no civil authority in the Carolinas, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Texas. Many Southerners left their farms and the South after the war. There were also many who decided to start over, but did not know
where to begin. The South faced immediate problems at the end of the war. The countryside had been devastated by the Union forces and many dwellings had been burned.  

Burned-out plantations, weeds growing in fields, and railroads without tracks or bridges marked the trail of the conquering Union armies. There was much confusion in the South with the end of Confederate authority. "Thousands of black freedmen and white refugees suffered from disease, exposure and hunger after the war."  

"After having moved through the South as destroyers, Union soldiers remained as restorers."  

The Freedmen's Bureau and Northern relief agencies wasted little time before coming to the aid of the devastated South. The 200,000 occupation troops functioned as the main source of law and order. The Union army placed the ex-Confederate states under martial law. Military courts punished criminals, and Freedmen's Bureau courts regulated relations between  


3 Ibid.
former slaves and their former masters. Hospitals managed by the army treated thousands of Southern civilians, both black and white. "During the summer of 1865, the Freedmen's Bureau issued 150,000 daily rations (one-third of them to white refugees), and the army fed at least as many more Southern civilians." 11 The Freedmen's Bureau continued to provide food relief even after the postwar crisis in the South ceased and between 1865 and 1870 the Bureau issued almost twenty-two million rations. 12

The newly freed blacks not only needed food, clothing and shelter because of the war, but they also faced political problems. White Southerners were not ready to give up their controlling status. In September of 1865, the South Carolina legislature enacted a "Black Code" which in effect, legally placed the status of the Negro midway between slavery and freedom. 13

The Freedmen's Bureau overruled or suspended the more oppressive features of the "Black Codes" adopted by Southern states. One of the first tasks facing

11Ibid.
12Ibid.
elected legislatures under President Johnson's Reconstruction program was the passage of laws to regulate the new status of blacks. The new laws authorized freedmen to own property, make contracts, sue and plead in the courts, and contract legal marriages. Under pressure from the Johnson administration and the Freedmen's Bureau, Southern states also permitted the testimony of blacks in court cases where blacks were parties. But, the codes prohibited blacks from juries and interracial marriages. Some of them required segregation in public accommodations and prescribed more severe punishment of blacks than whites for certain crimes. "Blacks were fined for seditious speeches, insulting gestures or acts, absence from work, violating curfew and the possession of firearms."

Many of the provisions of the "Black Codes" raised an outcry from abolitionists. But, the North as a whole, was in no position to condemn them, for numerous Northern states excluded blacks from juries, banned racial intermarriage, permitted discriminatory law enforcement, and allowed or required segregated

"McPherson, Ordeal by Fire, 512.
Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, 232."
accommodations and schools.

The provisions of the "Black Codes" in relationship to vagrancy, apprenticeship, labor, and land, however, provoked accusations of an intent to create a new slavery. The Mississippi and South Carolina Codes were passed first, and they were very harsh. They defined vagrancy in such a broad fashion as to allow magistrates to arrest almost any black man whom they defined as unemployed, fine him for vagrancy, and hire him out to a planter to pay off the fine. Both states required blacks to obtain special licenses for any occupation other than agriculture. Mississippi prohibited former slaves from renting or leasing land outside cities. South Carolina defined white employers as "masters" and black employees as "servants."

Several states stipulated that freedmen under eighteen without adequate parental support (the courts defined "adequate") could be assigned out as apprentices, with their former owner given preference as the master. Some states forbade employers to entice laborers away from their jobs by offering higher wages.

Northerners looked upon the "Black Codes" as an underhanded attempt to re-enslave black people. On

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*McPherson, Ordeal by Fire, 512.

*Ibid.
January 1, 1866, General Dan Sickles, the Union commander in South Carolina, declared the "Black Codes" illegal. He decreed: "All laws shall be applicable alike to all inhabitants." Within the next 12 months, the legislature amended some portions of the codes and repealed others so that Negroes enjoyed practically the same legal rights as whites.

With the changes brought on by the ending of the Civil War on the national and state level, there were also changes in the cities of the South. Many of the early city ordinances, which were instituted in Charleston and Greenville as control measures over blacks, were often removed from the ordinance books. Often because of federal and antislavery pressure, Southern cities reluctantly adopted changes caused by the war. The ordinances of Charleston and Greenville, South Carolina suggest these states instituted changes which reflected the modified racial attitude of the period.

Following the Civil War and emancipation, the city council of Charleston passed an ordinance on January 2, 1866 in response to the new national mood. The


\[2\] Ibid.
ordinance stated, "A bill in relation to colored persons and offenses committed by them: Whereas slavery has been extinguished in this state, by action of the proper authority of all laws in reference thereto have become of no further force or effect. Therefore, be it ordained that all ordinances and part of ordinances and regulations which recognize and enforce the rights and duties growing therewith or which create and punish offenses against such rights or against the public policy in reference to slavery be and the same are hereby declared to be of no effect." The passage of this ordinance revoked all previous ordinances passed by the city of Charleston recognizing slavery. The new ordinance made all ordinances instituted to control and punish slaves unenforceable.

Charleston rapidly placed a new ordinance on the books in relation to the end of slavery. The ordinance was passed on January 16, 1866. Although the council moved to recognize the end of slavery, problems developed between blacks and whites of the city. Early in 1866, an alderman addressed the council in a lengthy statement about the problems in the city which he characterized as being caused by the colored soldiers. Three suggestions were made to afford the Charleston

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1 Charleston City Council Minutes. January 2, 1866, 423.
police the necessary means to keep order and peace in the city: First, the colored soldiers were to be removed from the city. Second, the colored population was to be made amendable to civil law, and third, "a sufficient stand of arms and ammunition be furnished for the use of the police." The tone of the comments about the colored soldiers in the city revealed that they were not welcome and their departure was greatly desired by the council. The minutes further revealed that several riots had occurred stemming from the presence of the colored soldiers in the city. The presence of black men in uniforms was threatening to many citizens.

On July 10, 1866, a special meeting of the city council was called to discuss a problem which had developed because of colored soldiers in the city. The mayor wanted action taken to bring peace to the city again. The mayor stated that colored soldiers were freely using fire arms in the crowded marketplace. In the discussion, it was mentioned that on December 28, 1865, colored soldiers from the 33rd and the 35th Regiments engaged in a quarrel and guns were used. During the quarrel, guns were discharged and a colored man passing by was shot and killed. There was little

"Charleston City Council Minutes. March 4, 1866, 211."
effort made to find the guilty party. The council continued with a discussion of several other incidences, on February 9 and 10 when two riots developed involving colored and white soldiers, which were of great concern to the council. 

The council and citizens of Charleston were faced with a new group of liberated inhabitants. The council felt that if the blacks were not suppressed, they would pose a threat to the city. The council moved fast to control the colored soldiers within their city.

There were many concerns facing the South after the Civil War, but one of the most important was relief to the needy. At the December 18, 1866 council meeting, the large population of black paupers which had developed since slavery was mentioned. The need for more room at the Alms House, an asylum, which housed the two races together and had become repugnant, was discussed. The minutes revealed that the two races were housed together, which caused overcrowded conditions. The council was upset with the growing number of paupers and not the racial composition of the Alms House, because housing the two races together was

18 Charleston City Council Minutes, July 10, 1866, 86.

18 Charleston City Council Minutes, December 18, 1866, 35.
not a new practice at the institution. The council made no reference to problems at the Alms House, possibly caused by white paupers.

During the Reconstruction years, Charleston city government witnessed a growing concern about the social conditions of the black population. In November of 1871, the City Health Department reported that the Smallpox Hospital at the Public Cemetery had been converted into an Old Folks Home for colored paupers. The mayor had reported its creation in his annual report of 1872. The Old Folks Home for colored paupers, which was established in 1857, by a city ordinance, made provisions for the support of disabled persons of color. Out of benevolent concern or guilt growing from the institution of slavery, the citizens of Charleston attempted to provide care for the sick and aged blacks. In the January 1872 financial statement of the city, $6,317.48 was reported as being spent for the operation of the Colored Old Folks Home.

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17 Charleston City Council Minutes, November 24, 1871, 139.
18 Charleston City Council Minutes, January 8, 1872, 205.
19 Charleston City Council Minutes, January 15, 1872, 225.
At the December 31, 1874 council meeting, the expenses for the Old Folks Home were outlined from 1870 to 1874:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Expenses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>$6,884.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>$6,317.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>$3,515.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>$3,906.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>$5,501.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the same meeting, the City Board of Health reported that because of the city ordinance requiring all to be vaccinated for smallpox during the year, there were three whites and twenty-nine blacks and colored which had benefitted from the vaccination. ²⁰

The report continued by stating that the most terrific disease for the colored race was consumption. The report stated that prior to the war consumption was rare among the colored race, but since the war, deaths from consumption had increased. A general hope was that with education, enlightenment by religion and moral culture and an increased knowledge of how to improve their temporary condition by industrious labor, an improvement in their health status would occur. ²¹

²⁰Charleston City Council Minutes, December 31, 1874, 203.
²¹Ibid.
The deaths from consumption were outlined in the minutes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1872</th>
<th>1873</th>
<th>1874</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>64</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The health report further stated that philanthropy and religious humanity, in general, must deploy the sad fate of this race and there should be greater efforts in this behalf or the destiny of the American Indian awaits them. The report was not optimistic when reporting the number of stillborns in the city. For the year of 1874, there were 26 whites and 147 colored and black stillborn deliveries. The director of the city health department added that he believed, "a number are put away in vaults, gardens and rivers and feels with the growing number of black deaths, the race would decrease and disappear."

In the report of the director of the city health department, no mention is made of the fact that before the period, blacks were not included in the report. The findings of the department may not have been so startling if compared to previous years, but reports had not been kept on the health conditions and reasons

\[22\] Charleston City Council Minutes, December 31, 1874, 205.

\[23\] Ibid.

\[24\] Ibid., 206.
of death for blacks during the period of slavery.

During the period after slavery as during slavery, the economical gains remained an issue of great concern. On June 28, 1870, an ordinance came before the council which stated "An ordinance to insure to all the people of Charleston the enjoyment of their vested rights" to amend an ordinance entitled "An ordinance to regulate licenses and for other purposes." Section 3 of the ordinance stated that any person or persons applying for licenses shall receive the same only on condition that he or they will not, in conducting such business, make any discrimination between persons on account of race or color, and all persons having licenses already obtained, shall be allowed 15 days from the passage of the ordinance to return their license and receive from the treasure an amount to correspond with the unexpired time of the license and all persons not so returning their license within 15 days herein allowed shall be taken to have agreed to the conditions and provisions of this ordinance and shall be held liable for its requirements and obligations. Section 4 of the ordinance stated that "anyone violating any provision of the ordinance shall forfeit their license." The new ordinance was ratified
on June 28, 1870. This new ordinance was an attempt of fair treatment by the city in issuing licenses to all of the city. The passage of this ordinance also suggests that, before its passage, there was discrimination against blacks in granting licenses within the city. With all the control exercised by the white citizens over blacks, they still posed a threat as entrepreneurs in the city. But, the passage of this ordinance reveals that before and after slavery, blacks participated in the business world of the city.

Throughout the period of Reconstruction, black citizens appeared in the various police reports made to the city council. The reports revealed that blacks, like their white counterparts, greatest offenses involved disorderly conduct, larceny, and drunkenness. Police reports showed similar offenses for whites.

In 1877, the year which is often recorded as the end of Reconstruction, the mayor of Charleston made an address which discussed race relations and the appearance of colored aldermen in the Chamber of City Council. The council minutes referred to the topic of the mayor's address, but did not provide the contents

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2=Charleston City Council Minutes, June 28, 1870, 109-110.
3=Charleston City Council Minutes, 1865-1877.
of the address.

From 1877 to 1883, three blacks served on the city council: all of the aldermen were democrats. C. H. Holloway, a drayman, John R. Dourant, a carpenter and Clarence B. Nell, a barber, served in wards four, five, and six respectively. Although there were several blacks who served on the city council after slavery, research revealed that they were not actively involved in city government decisions. The names of three blacks appeared on the list of committee appointments, but the names failed to appear in the minutes as having taken part in the discussion or as initiators of ordinances.

In 1875, Samuel Holloway, a relative of C. H. Holloway, petitioned the city council for losses and damages resulting from his horse's fall through the planks at Sullivan's Island Ferry Company's Wharf. At the November 9, 1875 council meeting, the council awarded Holloway $23.90 for damages to his horse and carriage. The Holloway family was one of the most prominent black families in Charleston and their

27 Walter J. Fraser, Jr., Charleston. Charleston The History of a South Carolina City (Columbia, South Carolina; The University of South Carolina Press), 323.

28 Charleston City Council Minutes, August 5, 1875, 324.
ancestors were founding members of the Brown Fellowship Society.

Greenville, South Carolina also witnessed great changes during Reconstruction. During the years immediately following the Civil War, the city council of Greenville suspended its operation. The city was under the control of federal authorities from 1865 to 1870. In 1871, when the city council became operational again, black citizens approached the council with various concerns. The city council minutes of the period from 1871 to 1877 reveal that blacks of Greenville were interested in improving their conditions in the city.

One of the earliest requests made by blacks in the city involved access to neighborhoods. In June of 1871, a petition by various colored persons was read, which asked the council to open a street leading to Rutherford Street between Mrs. E. Fritz and B. F. Stanley’s residences. The mayor appointed a committee of two aldermen to investigate and consider the matter and make a report on the best arrangement in the matter. ²⁹ Zion Collins, a black grocer, and others approached the council with a similar request which

²⁹ Greenville City Council Minutes, June 6, 1871, 25.
asked to have a street opened from a point near Samuel Brown's home to a street running in front of the home of Jesse Marwell, a black carpenter. This request was received by the council. Actions taken in response to each of these requests did not appear in the council minutes.

During the period, blacks approached the council with economic requests. On July 4, 1871, Amanuel Ford, a blacksmith, petitioned for relief of double tax because of delinquent taxes. The council moved to release him from double taxes and allowed him to pay the tax for the year of 1870.

In their economic endeavors, blacks came before the council requesting licenses to operate various types of businesses. J. L. Southern and J. A. Green petitioned the council for reduction in the cost of a license to operate a billiard table for twenty-five dollars and the request was granted. On October 14, 1874, Robert Ward, a grocer, was granted a license as a retail liquor dealer. The petition of

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30 Greenville City Council Minutes, April 30, 1875, 220.

31 Greenville City Council Minutes, October 3, 1871, 40.

32 Greenville City Council Minutes, October 14, 1874, 179.
Harry Glover for a retail liquor license to operate a business at the Fair Grounds was heard, but permission was not granted. The next month, the council granted a request by Henry Bowman for renewal of his license as a retail liquor dealer. The place where the business was to be operated by a black played an important part in the decision of the council. An investigation of the 1880 city directory revealed the location of businesses. Black businesses were all located in the same area of the city. The business which was denied a license was to be located at the fair ground away from the area where blacks operated businesses. Although slavery was being abolished, segregation was becoming a way of life.

Blacks of Greenville found that their economic endeavors did not have to be exclusively in the private sector, and some attempted to secure employment with the city government. Henry Grantt approached the council for employment as a street worker and the council referred Grantt's request to the street

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33Greenville City Council Minutes, November 9, 1874, 183.

34Greenville City Council Minutes, December 15, 1874, 189.
committee. A petition was received by Manuel Fields to do the blacksmith work for the council. The petition was received and laid on the table.

Wilson Cook, a drayman, petitioned the council. He requested that a lamp be placed at his stable. The council moved that the matter be referred to the committee on gas and lights. On January 11, 1876, the committee proposed to place lamps at each stable in the city if proprietors would pay for the gas. Wilson Cook's request must have made the council realize that other stable owners would request the same, therefore, with the anticipation of another request, the council moved to make the stable owners partly responsible for the lamps.

During the year of 1875, the council had received several complaints about animals wandering loose in the city. On October 12, 1875, Alderman Shumate reported that "the committee that provided a place to impound cows, goats and hogs had secured a lot from Wilson Cook

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*Greenville City Council Minutes, January 5, 1875, 192.
*Greenville City Council Minutes, August 18, 1875, 249.
*Greenville City Council Minutes, September 14, 1875, 259.
*Greenville City Council Minutes, January 11, 1876, 292-293.
(colored). At a charge of three cents for hogs and five cents per day for cows, Cook was to feed and water the animals." 39

During the period of Reconstruction, blacks began serving on the police force in the city. In 1871 it was moved that the council enter into an election for a colored policeman. The vote was taken and Sandy Johnson was elected to serve on the police force. During the same meeting, it was moved that policemen would receive thirty dollars per month. However, the council minutes do not reveal whether there was a difference in pay because of race. 40 At the city council meeting of August 11, 1875, three men were elected to serve as policemen. "One man was colored and two were white. The colored policeman was Michael (Mike) Moore." 41 During the next month, charges were brought against Mike Moore by the Chief of Police, and the council moved that policemen found to be

39Greenville City Council Minutes, October 12, 1875, 269.

40Greenville City Council Minutes, September 26, 1871, 36.

41Greenville City Council Minutes, August 11, 1875, 246.
derelict in their duty would be reprimanded by the mayor. ^2

At the same meeting, two blacks petitioned for positions on the police force. William Taylor and James W. Odell approached the council for positions, and their request was laid on the table. Their request grew out of the charges being brought against Mike Moore. They felt that Moore was being removed from the force. However, Moore was not removed from the police force, but was assigned to attend to the mayor’s office. ^3 The change in assignment was a demotion to a position similar to a servant or janitor at city hall.

The city of Greenville had three fire departments in operation during the 1870s. The R. E. Lee Company, was white and the Palmetto and Neptune Companies were black. Throughout the period various allotments were made to the black fire departments. In April of 1872, the council moved that the Palmetto should receive a fire engine from the R. E. Lee Company and the motion carried. The council also moved that $75.00 be appropriated to assist the colored fire companies. This

^2Greenville City Council Minutes, September 14, 1875, 257.

^3Greenville City Council Minutes, February 8, 1876, 289.
motion was carried. The actions of the council revealed that the black fire companies were providing needed service to the city. In 1876, Alderman McBee of the committee on fire departments reported that "the engine of one of the colored companies was out of order and that he had directed the officers to carry it to Mr. Barr for repairs." 45

The years of the 1870s saw numerous requests by the blacks of Greenville for improvements to their cemetery. The trustees of the colored cemetery petitioned the council on May 6, 1872, for an application to enclose their cemetery grounds. The council resolved "that the colored cemetery grounds be enclosed by a board fence and that the contract for building the same be let to the lowest bidder and that the clerk (city) be instructed to advertise for proposals until May 20th." 46 In 1876, Alderman Gibreath stated that "the colored people asked council to aid them in caring for their cemetery." In response to the request by the colored citizens, Alderman Shumate moved that "Aldermen Shumate and

44Greenville City Council Minutes, April 30, 1872, 63.
45Greenville City Council Minutes, March 4, 1876, 302.
46Greenville City Council Minutes, May 6, 1872, 64.
Mauldin confer with the people and ascertain what was desirable and report at the next meeting." The committee of two reported that cows were entering the cemetery on the side near the colored school, and that the teacher had promised to have a gate fashioned in the fence.

In August of 1876, the trustees of the colored cemetery moved to take control of their cemetery. The council received an application from Alex Maxwell, F. A. Williamson and others of the Colored Public Graveyard, for a deed to said graveyard and for assistance. The application was referred to the cemetery committee.

From 1865 to 1877 the United States witnessed Reconstruction, the rebuilding of a nation after the Civil War. Simultaneously, states and cities also faced changes as they moved toward a new order. The Civil War brought many changes to the nation, one of which was the end of slavery and citizenship to black people. Later, black men were given the right to vote. The changes ushered in by the Civil War made it

47 Greenville City Council Minutes, March 14, 1876, 304.
48 Greenville City Council Minutes, April 11, 1876, 307.
49 Greenville City Council Minutes, August 9, 1876, 327.
necessary for changes on the state and local level throughout the South.

Charleston and Greenville, South Carolina experienced these same post Civil War changes. Each city found it necessary to abolish its ordinances governing the institutions of slavery. The various ordinances which had been passed as a measure to control blacks during slavery were repealed as the new order took shape. No longer could either city council legally pass ordinances which promoted slavery through restrictions in movement, occupation, gathering and education of blacks in their cities. A study of Reconstruction in each city revealed great changes and in many instances, adjustments as the cities moved toward a new way of life, one without slavery. In this region of agricultural dependency, slave labor had been the backbone of the economy. The social aspect of this change would see blacks move to a status of involvement where their multiple professions and talents become vital to the stability of the economy. In order for these changes to materialize, attitudes as well as law had to change.
CHAPTER V

SEGREGATION, 1878-1900

The end of the Reconstruction era in the South saw many concerted efforts by white southerners to reestablish their strong control over all aspects of life in the South. The primary means to establish control of their communities was by instituting segregation. Whites established legal segregation and revised customary segregation practices which separated the races and placed blacks in an inferior position.

The end of the Civil War and the start of Reconstruction brought emancipation for black slaves and gave them temporary civil rights, suffrage and even some access to public office. While the years following the war saw the beginning of blacks' efforts to acquire the basics of education, the period that followed witnessed much of what blacks had achieved completely destroyed.¹

The Civil Rights Act of 1875 was a visible sign

that Congress intended to give blacks some semblance of "social equality" in public life. The act stated that all persons within the jurisdiction of the United States were entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of accommodations. Accommodations—such as, facilities and privileges of inns, public conveyances on land and water, theaters, and other places of public amusements. This law was applicable to citizens of every race and color, regardless of previous conditions of servitude. Although the federal courts were given jurisdiction over offenses against this statute, blacks experienced considerable segregation and discrimination. The Civil Rights Act of 1875 irritated the majority of white Southerners because the law attempted to remove social discrimination from public life.

In 1883, the Supreme Court declared the Civil Rights Act of 1875 unconstitutional, thus opening the door for "white supremacy," the doctrine that blacks should be "kept in their place." When the decision was announced during a performance at an Atlanta Opera House, the audience broke into "such a thunder of

\[\text{\textsuperscript{2}}\text{Ibid.}, 579.\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{3}}\text{Ibid.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{4}}\text{Ibid.}\]
applause... as was never before heard within the opera house." An Arkansas newspaper expressed hearty agreement with the majority of the Supreme Court when it said, "Society is a law unto itself, which in matters in their nature overrides the statutes, therefore, against its decrees the written law is powerless." These two statements revealed the mood of the South. Southerners were overjoyed when the 1875 Civil Rights Act which outlawed discrimination was found unconstitutional in 1883.

The ruling of the Supreme Court left the way open for Jim Crow legislation in southern states and municipalities. The first stage in making white supremacy secure was the establishment of white control of political power by depriving blacks of the right to vote. Blacks were deprived of the right to vote through constitutional amendments by legislatures in the states of Mississippi in 1890, South Carolina in 1895, North Carolina in 1900, Virginia in 1901-02, Georgia in 1908 and Oklahoma in 1910. *


Once blacks were disfranchised, white supremacy 
became a way of life. With the establishment of white 
Democratic primaries, from which all blacks were 
excluded by rules of the party, whites planned their 
strategy in caucuses, and the party itself became the 
government in the South. Whites solemnly resolved to 
keep the races completely separate, for they felt there 
could be no normal relationship between the two races. 
After the Supreme Court in 1883 ruled the Civil Rights 
Act of 1875 unconstitutional, blacks were banned from 
white hotels, barber shops, restaurants and theaters. 
As early as 1885, most Southern states had laws which 
required separate schools. Southern states firmly 
established the color line with the adoption of new 
constitutions and in 1896 the Supreme Court 
strengthened segregation with its "separate but equal" 
doctrine in Plessy v. Ferguson.  

The decision in the Civil Rights Case in 1883 was 
an important stimulus to the enactment of segregation 
statutes. It gave the assurance the South wanted that 
the federal government would not intervene to protect 
the civil rights of blacks. The decision coincided 
with a series of political and intellectual

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"Franklin, John Hope, From Slavery to Freedom: 
A History of Negro Americans (Alfred A. Knopf 
developments that accelerated the program of segregation. The period witnessed the effective disfranchisement of blacks by various devices such as literacy and property taxes, secret ballot laws, character tests, poll taxes, complex registration procedures, long residency requirements and one white primary. Under the literacy test, those who could not read or write, and in Mississippi, South Carolina, Virginia and Georgia, those who could not also understand portions of the state and national constitution were disqualified to vote. Because of the high illiteracy rate among blacks at the turn of the century, but primarily because of the discriminatory administration of such tests by whites, blacks could not qualify to vote. White southerners also launched an intensive propaganda campaign of white supremacy, negrophobia and race chauvinism, supported by a sensational and irresponsible press that carried stories of alleged black brutality. In this climate, segregation took a giant step toward a fully developed white supremacy apparatus.

As the South moved to a society strongly rooted in a system of segregation, black citizens were somewhat


accommodating in adjusting to the new order of the day. In Charleston and Greenville, South Carolina the early days of segregation appeared not to be a great adjustment for black citizens. An examination of each city’s council minutes will reveal the response of blacks to their treatment by whites during the period.

In Charleston, South Carolina during the period of research, John Maurant, a black carpenter, was elected to the city council. Mr. Maurant represented Ward 5, a predominantly black ward. The council minutes reveal that Maurant played little part in the decisions of city government. 10

Although the minutes revealed that Councilman Maurant was not vocal in the decisions of the city council, actions were taken to improve the life of blacks within the city. These improvements may have been a result of his actions behind the scene. A report made on January 1, 1881, revealed the treatment of blacks at the local asylum. The report stated that at "the Ashley River Asylum, the institution for the old and infirm colored people and children of both sexes, there was a population of 88 males, 33 females and 8 children." The report continued by outlining the care given the inmates. "The rations furnished to the

10 Charleston City Council Minutes, April 11, 1880, 244.
inmates are good and wholesome, being beef, bacon, grits, meal, molasses, fish, bread and vegetables furnished by the farm; sugar and tea are furnished to those who are very old and sick. The number of paupers is at present 8, and the amount collected during the past year to October 31, 1880 is $553.72, leaving a balance due for the month of November and October of $130.20. The cost of supporting the institution and putting a fence around the farm was $5,959.05 and bills had been sent to the city treasurer. Part of the money used to finance the asylum was used to install gas lamps in the wards and kitchen. The report explained the need for gas by stating that the departments had been previously lighted only by oil lamps, "the insufficiency and danger of which is clear." The report ended with mention of religious services being held each Sunday and one day a week for inmates by ministers of various denominations. The minutes disclosed that the city was attempting to provide a place for blacks of the city who were unable to care for themselves. The report does not provide much information about the care of the inmates, but

11 Charleston City Council Minutes, January 1, 1881, 37.

12 Charleston City Council Minutes, January 11, 1881, 38.
typically asylum care left much to be desired.

In May of 1881 one of the greatest concerns of blacks during the period after slavery came before the council. The report presented by Alderman Upperhardt was entitled "Special Report on Education in Charleston." Alderman Upperhardt stated "that something needed to be done to educate the masses of children in our midst, white and colored, as to the large number (perhaps 4,000) for which there is neither schoolrooms nor enough money to employ teachers, although we pay a school tax. The tax which is 97 per cent paid by whites and 3 per cent by colored citizens whose children equal if they do not exceed in number the white children." Alderman Upperhardt ended by stating that the problem was so alarming that an appeal to Congress was needed. The concern of the Alderman about education in the city of Charleston indicated a need to provide education for the youth of the city.

Several years passed before the question of education again came before the council. On December 22, 1896, Alderman Laphraw presented a bill to establish an Industrial School for colored orphans in

12 Charleston City Council Minutes, May 17, 1881, 217.
the city of Charleston. The council received the bill. On January 12, 1897, a second reading of the bill to establish an Industrial School for colored orphans was heard. The Charleston City Yearbook of 1897 revealed in the section entitled "Ordinances Ratified During the Year of 1897," that the city council passed an ordinance to establish an Industrial School for colored orphans of the city of Charleston.

In 1897, Dr. Alonzo C. McClennan, a black physician, came before the city council on behalf of others with a request to establish a Charleston Training School for colored nurses. Dr. McClennan was concerned that the Board of Health would base its decision on the fact that there is no public institution within the state. The doctor asked the city council to appropriate money to establish a training program at either the Old Folks Home or the Alms House, which received colored patients. The question of the appropriation of money for training colored nurses was not heard by the council until 1901.

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14 Charleston City Council Minutes, December 22, 1896, 437.
15 Charleston City Yearbook 1897, 319.
16 Charleston City Council Minutes, April 13, 1897, 535.
On January 1, 1901, a petition was presented to the council to appropriate $1,000.00 for the hospital and training school for colored nurses. The request was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

In 1899, a petition by the Negro Cooperation and Protection Order of Charleston requested that Negro teachers be employed in the colored public schools of the city and that two additional schools be established that year. An examination of the Charleston City Directory for the year of 1899 revealed that the two public schools in the city, Morris Street and Shaw, had white principals and faculties which were predominantly white. The request of the Negro Cooperation and Protection Order was warranted based on the composition of the black schools in the city in 1899.

The results of the 1885 election of officers of the Commissioners of Public Lands contained the names of several blacks. Edward Fordham was elected keeper and gardener at the House of Corrections and Samuel

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17 Charleston City Council Minutes, January 8, 1901, 199.
18 Charleston City Council Minutes, May 23, 1899, 400.
19 Charleston City Directory 1899, 265.
20 Charleston City Council Minutes, May 23, 1899, 405.
Simson was elected grave digger at the public cemetery. Thaddeus A. Johnson was selected to supply the Ashley River Asylum with fresh beef at 4 cents a pound for the year. 21

The period of 1880 to 1900 saw the demand for street lamps and street improvement as the city grew through the twenty-year time span. Numerous citizens, groups and religious institutions approached the city council for street improvements. Rev. Parker, a minister in the city, came before the council with a request for sidewalks to be placed on Ashley Street. The committee reported that the order was approved and work would commence at once. At the same meeting a petition was presented to the council for a lamp to be placed at Carrere Court, in a black community. The council recommended that the lamp be placed on the north side of Cannon Street near Carrere Court. 22

In 1885, William Fields and Clib W. Curtis petitioned the council to have a pool of stagnant water located on Payne Street filled. The petition was referred to the Board of Health for action. 23

21 Charleston City Council Minutes, February 10, 1885, 68.
22 Charleston City Council Minutes, May 15, 1882, 34.
23 Charleston City Council Minutes, March 10, 1885, 322.
A representative of the Memorial Baptist Church came before the council with a request to put into good condition the pavement on the west side of Alexander Street between Judith and Chapel Streets where the church was located. In April of 1888, Thomas Young, a fireman in the city, approached the council to request that Rutledge and Lynch Streets be filled and graded. In 1891, the Morris Brown A. M. E. Church asked the council to move a street lamp from the front of the church. The petition was referred to the Committee on Lighting the City. At a November meeting in 1891, the Plymouth Baptist Church at the corner of Pitt and Bull Streets petitioned the council to pave with flags and curb sidewalk the street in front of the church and to extend the pavement to the pavement of Bethel Methodist Church on Wentworth Street. The request was referred to the Committee on Streets.

Resident and property holders of

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Charleston City Council Minutes, November 27, 1888, 450.

Charleston City Council Minutes, April 5, 1888, 103.

Charleston City Council Minutes, October 27, 1891, 464.

Charleston City Council Minutes, November 10, 1891, 473.
America Street appealed to the council to have their street paved and put in order. This request was also referred to the Committee on Streets. \(^2\) At a meeting on July 23, 1892, the council acted favorably on the request for paving America Street. \(^2\)

In the years that followed there were more requests for street lamps and street improvements. In April of 1892, the residents of Plymouth Street and other citizens asked that the west sidewalk on Pitt Street from Vanderhorst and Beaufain be properly curbed and flagged. The request was sent to the Committee on Streets. \(^3\)

The members of Zion Presbyterian Church on Calhoun Street asked the council to relight the gas lamp in front of their church. Their request was sent to the Committee on Lighting the City. \(^3\) John W. Marone came before the council with a request for a light to be placed at 95 Lynch Street, his request was

\(^2\) Charleston City Council Minutes, January 26, 1892, 562 and Charleston City Directory 1892, 53.

\(^2\) Charleston City Council Minutes, July 23, 1892, 599.

\(^3\) Charleston City Council Minutes, April 26, 1892, 41.

\(^3\) Charleston City Council Minutes, July 11, 1893, 437.
sent to the Committee on Lighting the City. On March 23, 1897 the Morris Brown A. M. E. Church petitioned the council to light the lamp on Morris Street below King and St. Phillips Streets. This request was referred to the Committee on Lighting the City.

The period of 1880 to 1900 witnessed many requests by blacks in an attempt to improve their economic situation and for relief of tax problems. Edward Willis, a laborer, approached the council in regard to reevaluation of his property tax on April 12, 1881. The request was sent to the Committee on Reimbursement and Relief which acted on requests of this type. A petition was heard from twenty-eight barbers protesting the enforcement of an ordinance requiring that all barbershops be closed on the Sabbath Day. Action on the petition was postponed pending a report from a special Committee on Revision of the Sunday laws. The special committee reported "that no changes

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Charleston City Council Minutes. February 26, 1895. 380.

Charleston City Council Minutes. March 23, 1897. 508.

Charleston City Council Minutes. April 12, 1881. 178.

Charleston City Council Minutes. May 17, 1881. 219.
be made in Sunday laws, but that the police, after the law has been published in the newspaper for one week, be instructed to enforce the same." The request of the barbers stemmed from many barbershops which opened on Sunday in violation of the Sunday law of the city. The race of the barbers requesting the enforcement of the Sunday law was not stated, but the Charleston City Directory of 1881 revealed that there were many black barbers in the city who would be affected by the decision of the council.

In 1882, a bill was read to grant privileges to certain people who had stalls in the public market. Alderman White moved to strike the $200.00 proposed charge for a public stall to $50.00, but the council finally agreed upon a $100.00 fee. In 1887, W. J. Black a black man, approached the council stating that he had taken out a license for a stall on September 1, 1887 and had paid the fee for the year. Mr. Black asked for a refund for the time which had passed before his license was granted. The petition was referred to the Committee on Licensing.

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3-Charleston City Council Minutes, June 3, 1881, 29.
37-Charleston City Council Minutes, April 5, 1882, 1; April 19, 1882, 18 and May 9, 1882, 26.
38a-Charleston City Council Minutes, October 25, 1887, 124.
Joseph Jenkins, a laborer, asked the council to pay for the loss of his horse, the same having been caused by the horse getting its leg caught in the drain trap at the drinking fountain on Ruthledge Avenue. The petition was referred to the Committee of Ways and Means.

Isaiah O. Weston approached the council with a request to erect a steam engine on a lot on the north side of Spring Street near Coming Street. The request was referred to the Committee on Steam Engines with power to act.

On December 22, 1891, a petition from the butchers of the city was read before the council. The butchers requested a reduction in the license fee for grocers. The City Directory for 1891 listed eight black butchers in the city who would be affected by the change in the license fee. The request was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

As time passed, blacks continued to approach the city council with requests which had an effect upon their economic endeavors. In 1894, a petition was heard from wholesale and retail fruit dealers of the city in reference to prohibiting the dealers from using

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\(^{36}\) Charleston City Council Minutes, August 13, 1899, 36.

\(^{46}\) Charleston City Council Minutes, October 27, 1891, 464.
any part of the sidewalk in front of their places of business for the displaying of fruit. The request for a change in the ordinance was referred to the mayor. The 1894 Charleston City Directory listed ten black fruit dealers in the city who would not benefit from the change in the law. 41

W. H. Grant petitioned the council to erect a steam engine on lot 136 at Live Street. Mr. Grant’s request was referred to the Committee on Steam Engines with power to act. 42 In December of the same year, Joseph Hair, a laborer, came before the council in 1895 with a request to erect a steam engine at lot 137 Newberry Street. Mr. Hair’s request was referred to the Committee on Steam Engines with power to act. 43

During this period the council received numerous requests from religious institutions. Old Bethel Methodist Episcopal Church requested to move their church from Calhoun Street to the opposite side of Calhoun Street. The church’s request was referred to the Committee on Streets and Brick and Wooden

41 Charleston City Council Minutes, November 13, 1894, 238 and Charleston City Directory 1894, 755-756.

42 Charleston City Council Minutes, December 10, 1895, 67.

43 Charleston City Council Minutes, February 26, 1895, 380.
During the same year the council heard a petition from Rev. A. Dobbs, pastor of Centenary Methodist Church to remove a small building from Morris Court and erect a wooden church building there. The request was referred to the Committee on Brick and Wooden Buildings. In 1890, the pastor of Emanuel A. M. E. Church, Rev. Bruce H. Williams, came before the council with a request to allow his congregation to use the old engineer house (fire department) on Chalmers Street during the construction of their new church. The request was referred to the mayor with power to act.

In contrast to the requests above, there were those who approached the council to complain about actions involving blacks. Mr. Opdebeeck and Mr. Percy Darcy complained of a nuisance caused by Mike Thomas' barroom on Market Street. The Chief of Police reported that Mike Thomas had kept a disorderly house which was a resort for thieves and the lowest class of Negroes, men and women. He recommended that the license not be

""Charleston City Council Minutes, April 11, 1882, 2.

""Charleston City Council Minutes, April 25, 1882, 13.

""Charleston City Council Minutes, April 8, 1890, 210."
granted. The report was adopted and it was ordered that Thomas’ application for a license be denied for the next year. 47

On April 9, 1895, C. W. Balley, along with other blacks, petitioned the council for permission to use the section of the water front immediately at the west end of Trade Street for purposes of a public bathing house. Their request was referred to the Committee on City Lands with power to act. 48

As the black citizens of Charleston, South Carolina found it necessary to approach their city council for requests to improve their lives, the black citizens of Greenville, South Carolina also approached their council with similar requests. During the period of 1880 - 1900, blacks took their concerns to the city council of Greenville on numerous occasions. In 1882, the black fire stations found themselves in trouble with the city because of a resolution passed that year. On April 4, 1882, the city council, in order to reorganize the fire department, passed a resolution

47 Charleston City Council Minutes, January 28, 1890, 166-167.

48 Charleston City Council Minutes, April 9, 1895, 418.
that stated:

Section 1. A pair of horses be purchased for the steam fire engines. That the fire company be allowed a membership of sixteen men, that said company be paid $20.00 per month for their services as firemen. That the drivers of the engines be employed by the city council. Section 2. Membership of forty men each and that each said companies paid $20.00 per month. Provided, that said companies be required to pay for all repairs to the engine and all other expenses they may incur. 

At the March 7 meeting, it was moved and resolved that the Palmetto Fire Company (black), having failed to comply with the terms of reorganization, be required forthwith to turn over their engine and other city property to the Chief of the Fire Department.

Numerous requests and concerns involving the black fire station continued to come before the city council. Although the Palmetto Fire Company was involved in a problem with the city in March of 1882, the council minutes did reveal that the problem was resolved, and later minutes disclosed that the company continued to operate. The Palmetto Fire Company petitioned the council for leave of absence on the fourth of July and

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⁴⁷ Greenville City Council Minutes, April 4, 1882, 2.
⁵⁰ Greenville City Council Minutes, March 7, 1882, 8.
the request was granted. At the same meeting the Neptune Fire Company petitioned the council for a new engine, action on the petition was suspended until funds could be found for the new engine. In December of 1882, the city's Committee on Fire Departments recommended that a new floor be laid in the Palmetto Engine House. The committee's request was referred to the chairman of the committee on fire departments. At the same meeting, the matter of building a new house for the Neptune Fire Engine was referred to the committee on fire departments. The council moved to hear a report at the next council meeting.

In 1882, steps were taken to purchase new equipment for the Neptune Fire Company. A committee of three was appointed by the mayor, with the mayor as chairman. The committee was directed to purchase a new engine for the Neptune Fire Company. In October of the same year, the street committee was instructed to ascertain information on terms for securing a new

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51 Greenville City Council Minutes. June 7, 1882, 14.
52 Greenville City Council Minutes, June 7, 1882. 9
53 Greenville City Council Minutes, December 5, 1882, 26.
54 Greenville City Council Minutes, July 20, 1883, 41.
engine house for the Neptune Fire Department. The new engine house for the Neptune Fire Company could be bought or leased and a report was to be made at the next meeting. At the December 4, 1883 meeting, the question of buying or leasing a site for a house for the Neptune Fire Company was continued in the report of the street committee. In the same month, on a motion by Alderman Harris, the mayor, city clerk, and the committee in charge of acquiring the site for the new fire house, were authorized to give Mr. William Wilkins the city's note for the purchase of the Neptune Engine House. The purchase note was set at ten cent per year. The motion was carried by the council. The numerous entrances in the council minutes involving the black fire companies reveal that they were an important department of the city. In 1884, Thomas Lewis, a black man, was elected Second Assistant Chief of the city's fire department.

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*Greenville City Council Minutes, October 2, 1883, 54.
*Greenville City Council Minutes, December 4, 1883, 59.
*Greenville City Council Minutes, December 20, 1983, 60.
*Greenville City Council Minutes, February 5, 1884, 64.
With the passing of time, the operation of the fire companies remained a great concern of the city. A motion was made in 1885 authorizing the Chief of the Fire Department to purchase a hose for the Neptune Engine at a price not to exceed $125.00. The chairman of the committee of the fire department petitioned the council to repair or replace the Palmetto Engine House at a January meeting. The fire departments approached the city council with requests for improvements in their facilities. On November 3, 1885, the committee on fire departments requested that a stove be purchased for the hall of the Palmetto Fire Company and that the Neptune Company asked for gas for their fire house. The petition was referred to the committee on fire departments with power to act.

The fire companies of the city not only served the city as protection from destruction by fire, but also often represented the city in ceremonial affairs. The Neptune Fire Company petitioned the council for permission to attend a tournament in Charlotte, North Carolina. 

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**Greenville City Council Minutes, January 6, 1885, 86.**

**Greenville City Council Minutes, January 12, 1885, 91.**

**Greenville City Council Minutes, November 3, 1885, 108.**
Carolina and to take their engine. The request was granted by the council. The Palmetto and Neptune Fire Companies petitioned the council to take their engines to Spartanburg, South Carolina on the fourteenth and fifteenth of May. The council decided to allow one engine to go and left the decision to the companies to decide which engine company would attend.

The fire companies found it necessary to approach the city for funds for repairs and equipment that were part of the general upkeep of the departments. A petition by the Palmetto Fire Company for a new engine was heard by the council in 1888. The request was referred to the Fire Company, with power to act. In June of 1889, a motion was heard for the hose reel of the Neptune and Palmetto Fire Companies to be painted. Alderman McPherson reported in 1890 that the fire engine of the Palmetto Company was broken, and moved that the Board of Fire Masters be instructed

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*Greenville City Council Minutes, July 5, 1887, 166.*

*Greenville City Council Minutes, April 24, 1888, 196.*

*Greenville City Council Minutes, February 7, 1888, 188.*

*Greenville City Council Minutes, June 19, 1889, 239.*
to ascertain how a new fire engine could be obtained and that a report be made at the next meeting of the council on such. At the same meeting, Alderman Hayne moved that the Board of Masters be authorized to have the Palmetto Fire Company engine repaired and put in working order. "Again, the condition of the fire engine of the Palmetto Fire Company was an issue which came before the council. In 1891, Alderman McPherson made a report from the Fire Committee that the Palmetto Fire Company engine was not in good repair. The matter was referred to the fire committee to report at the next council meeting. "News of the problems with the Palmetto Fire Company engine was not contained within the city, but was common knowledge in other cities in upstate South Carolina. Alderman McPherson of the fire committee read a communication from Mr. W. P. Bead of Westminster, South Carolina, which asked if the Palmetto Fire Company engine was for sale and if so at what price. The communication was referred to the fire committee for a report at the next council meeting. "

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"Greenville City Council Minutes, May 6, 1890, 286-287.

"Greenville City Council Minutes, January 6, 1891, 332.

"Greenville City Council Minutes, February 3, 1891, 336."
The two black fire companies of Greenville served an important role in the city and the support the city council provided to them showed that the companies were instrumental in protecting the city from fire. Alderman Furman came before the council with a request for the Palmetto Fire Company in 1891. He stated that the fire company's engine house was in need of a new roof and additional hose was also needed. Alderman Hayne moved that the fire house be covered and that 1,000 feet of hose be purchased. The council was in favor of the motion. " Again, in 1895 the Palmetto Fire Company approached the council with a request for needed repairs and equipment. The Palmetto Fire Company asked for repairs to their station house floor and additional fire hose. The request was referred to the fire committee with the power to act."

During the years from 1880 to 1900 the black citizens of Greenville worked to acquire and control a public cemetery for burial. Because of the efforts of the black citizens, the city council realized that the black citizens were strongly in favor of a black public

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"Greenville City Council Minutes, August 4, 1891, 373.

"Greenville City Council Minutes, March 5, 1895, 595."
cemetery. In 1882, the council decided to purchase ten acres of land from John M. Jones for a colored cemetery at the price of $1,000.00. The terms offered to Mr. Jones were as follows: The council would pay $100.00 initially and a note for $400.00 would be signed, payable January 1, 1883 and an additional note for $500.00 issued payable January 1, 1884, at seven percent interest for the land would be offered to Mr. Jones for ten acres of land. At the April 4th meeting in 1882, the cemetery committee reported that the city attorney had examined the titles to the land offered to the city for a colored cemetery and had stated that a good title could not be obtained. He advised that the council should withdraw its offer for the purchase of said land made at the last meeting. The council minutes did not reveal how the controversy over the titles to Mr. Jones' land was resolved, but later minutes did show that the council moved to acquire the land. Minutes revealed that the land was purchased from Mr. Jones and that the black citizens had approached the council with requests for

71 Greenville City Council Minutes, March 7, 1882, 8.
72 Greenville City Council Minutes, April 4, 1882, 9.
Improvements in the cemetery provided for blacks before 1883. In 1883, black citizens asked the council to enlarge their cemetery and the request was referred to the cemetery committee. The request to have the black cemetery enlarged was placed in the hands of a committee consisting of Aldermen Wright and Rowland. This committee was given the power to act on the request.

On November 6, 1883, the question of purchasing land for a black cemetery came before the council again. The cemetery committee was authorized to offer Captain John M. Jones $125.00 per acre for the plot of land (about 12 acres) for a colored cemetery. Two petitions were presented by colored citizens on December 6, 1883, one favoring the purchase of Captain John M. Jones' land for a cemetery and the other favoring the purchase of a lot offered to the city by Mr. Thomas Glen. The council was unable to vote on the purchase of the property because of the absence of aldermen, and consideration of the matter was

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"Greenville City Council Minutes, June 6, 1883, 38.
"Greenville City Council Minutes, July 3, 1883, 41.
"Greenville City Council Minutes, November 6, 1883, 57."
postponed. At the February 5 meeting, the council voted in favor of purchasing the land offered by Captain John M. Jones at the terms stated at the November 6, 1883 meeting.

With the purchase of the land for a black cemetery completed, other necessary steps had to be taken to put the land in order for a cemetery. Upon a motion at a May 1884 council meeting, the cemetery committee was authorized to have needed streets, buildings, lots and burial plots laid off in the new colored cemetery. It was not until 1885 that the city put into motion actions to make the new colored cemetery useful. In March of 1885, a motion was made which directed the Cemetery Committee and the chairman of the Street Committee to arrange with W. C. Cleveland, an agent for Mrs. Choice, for constructing a street through Mrs. Choice’s land to the new colored cemetery. The city surveyor was also authorized to proceed to lay off burial plots in the new colored cemetery.

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77Greenville City Council Minutes, December 6, 1883, 60.
77Greenville City Council Minutes, February 5, 1884, 64–65.
77Greenville City Council Minutes, May 6, 1884, 70.
77Greenville City Council Minutes, March 9, 1885, 91.
While the work on the new cemetery was proceeding, petitions were being heard in the council from colored citizens who desired to be appointed sexton of the colored cemetery. Their petitions were referred to the cemetery committee to report at the next meeting. Further investigation of the city council minutes revealed that several years passed before the new colored cemetery was completed.

While the black citizens waited for the completion of the new cemetery, a motion was made in the council on November 3, 1885 authorizing the cemetery committee to have work done on the old colored cemetery as the committee deemed necessary. The chairman of the cemetery committee reported in December that according to the instructions of the council, "he had caused the old colored cemetery to be put in good order.

In 1886, the council moved to begin the work on the new colored cemetery. In that year the cemetery committee was authorized to have five to seven acres of land laid off for building lots; also to lay off a

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"Greenville City Council Minutes, October 6, 1885, 106.

"Greenville City Council Minutes, November 3, 1885, 108.

Ibid."
sufficient number of plots for burial purposes. It was not until April of 1887 that "the cemetery committee reported that arrangements had been made to survey and lay off lots in the new colored cemetery and that said lots will be offered for sale in a few days." The council heard a report from the cemetery committee later in 1887 that the new colored cemetery had been surveyed and a portion of it laid off into burial plots, after reserving ten building lots on the front line. At the June 22, 1887 council meeting, a motion was made and passed that the new colored cemetery be named Richland Cemetery because it was located along Richland Creek.

With the new cemetery named, the council moved to work on other needed facilities at the cemetery. Alderman McDaniel moved in 1889 that a house be built at the Richland Cemetery not to cost more than $250.00 and that the ministers of the colored churches of the city select a suitable man to take charge of the said

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Ibid.

Greenville City Council Minutes, April 5, 1887, 159.

Greenville City Council Minutes, May 3, 1887, 162.

Greenville City Council Minutes, June 22, 1887, 165.
cemetery with the rent free house under the supervision of the sexton of the Springwood Cemetery (white). A motion by Alderman McBee that Zion Turner be appointed as sexton of the Richland Cemetery was approved.

Several years passed before the council had to address concerns dealing with the Richland Cemetery. In 1894, a petition came before the council from Amos Tolbert and other blacks in regard to the colored sexton leaving bodies unburied through the night. The petition was referred to the cemetery committee. The cemetery committee decided to elect an assistant to Mr. Riser, the white sexton of the Springwood Cemetery, to work at either cemetery. Zion Turner and Isaac Johnson were nominated for the position. Isaac Johnson, a black blacksmith in the city, was elected sexton. Zion Turner was not satisfied with the

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*Greenville City Council Minutes, February 5, 1889, 227.
*Greenville City Council Minutes, February 7, 1889, 229.
*Greenville City Council Minutes, March 5, 1889, 231.
*Greenville City Council Minutes, February 6, 1894, 546.
*Greenville City Council Minutes, March 6, 1894, 548.
election. Turner, the ex-sexton of the Richland Cemetery petitioned the council. He asked that the council reconsider its action whereby he was discharged from the position of sexton. His petition stated that Isaac Johnson had been seen drunk since his election as sexton, the same offense which resulted in his discharge. Because of this evidence Zion Turner was restored to the position of sexton of the Richland Cemetery.

After years of slow progress, the Richland Cemetery was finally part of the city of Greenville and provided a service to the black citizens of the city.

The black church community in Greenville played a vital role in the lives of the black citizens. The churches of Greenville often found it necessary to approach the city council with various requests. The requests made by the black churches were outgrowths of community related concerns which affected its members. In 1883, the city council heard a report of the appraisal for the widening of McBee Avenue. In the report the projected damage caused by the widening included "the lot of the colored Baptist church which was one seventh of an acre." The council assessed the

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Greenville City Council Minutes, April 3, 1894, 553.
damage at $30.00 and agreed to move the church and put it in as good condition as it was in now." Months later, the Baptist church petitioned the council for an increase in the appraisal price of $30.00, for the land which was taken from them in widening McBee Avenue, and the petition was received as information. 24

Some of the requests of black churches in the city were granted with little difficulty. A request in 1883 made by the colored Methodist Church asked for a gas lamp to be located in the vicinity of the church. The request was granted by the council. In 1886, the pastor, deacons and trustees of Springfield Baptist church petitioned the city council to have an additional gas lamp located near their church. The church's request was referred to Alderman Finley. 25 Several months passed before the council declined to grant the Springfield petition. 26 At a council meeting in April of 1887, a petition from the pastor and trustees of the colored Methodist church was read which requested that a gas lamp be placed in front of

24Greenville City Council Minutes, January 16, 1883, 29.
25Greenville City Council Minutes, March 7, 1883, 35.
26Greenville City Council Minutes, January 5, 1886, 115.
the church. The request was referred to the Committee on Gas which estimated the cost of lights. In May the committee gave a report for piping of the proposed lamp which was submitted by Asbury and Son.

The request of Springfield Baptist Church for an additional gas lamp came before the council again in 1888. On a motion made by Alderman Finley, it was resolved that the money collected from the church for digging and locating the lamp be referred to the Committee on Gas Lighting.

During the period of 1880 to 1900 there were various economic concerns brought by blacks before the council. A petition from a committee of colored citizens of a Benevolent Society, was read to the council in 1884. The committee requested that the mayor prohibit the keeping of tables by other citizens in the vicinity of the Benevolent Society's tables at the May celebration. The request was referred to the

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*Greenville City Council Minutes, November 8, 1886, 156.

**Greenville City Council Minutes, April 20, 1887, 161.

***Greenville City Council Minutes, May 3, 1887, 162.

****Greenville City Council Minutes, September 21, 1888, 212.
mayor with power to act. Zion Collins approached the council for a license to sell spirituous liquor, and the license was granted. In 1887, Collins approached the council for renewal of his license to retail spirituous liquor, and the license was granted upon his compliance with state law.

In 1894, the council showed compassion toward a needy black citizen. Joseph Collins, a cripple, petitioned the council to allow him to peddle country produce without a license on the streets of the city. The request was granted by the council.

Black citizens also approached the council because of tax problems. "Several colored citizens complained to council about executions being issued against them for taxes." The finance committee reported that they had examined the matter and found that the City Clerk had done his duty. Henry Sims, a driver.

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100 Greenville City Council Minutes, April 1, 1884, 68.
101 Greenville City Council Minutes, August 21, 1884, 76.
102 Greenville City Council Minutes, August 2, 1887, 168.
103 Greenville City Council Minutes, January 2, 1894, 544.
104 Greenville City Council Minutes, July 1, 1890, 303.
petitioned the council for a refund of taxes paid on county property in the amount of $3.10. The council granted the request.  

In 1895, James C. Hill approached the council for a rebate on a license to manufacture bottled soda water. Mr. Hill's request was referred to the finance committee with power to act.  

On occasions the council heard complaints from blacks involving payment for damages owed them by the city. In 1893, Henry Griffin petitioned the council for damages to his horse which occurred on a city bridge. The claim was referred to Alderman Cleveland with discretionary powers to act.  

At a December meeting, Alderman Cleveland to whom the claim of Henry Griffin was referred, reported he had not yet been able to settle the claim. Alderman Cleveland, a committee of one, recommended that Henry Griffin be allowed $10.00 for damages to his horse and the recommendation was adopted by the council.

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105 Greenville City Council Minutes. March 5, 1895, 596.  
106 Greenville City Council Minutes. April 2, 1895, 606.  
107 Greenville City Council Minutes. November 7, 1893, 535.  
108 Greenville City Council Minutes. December 5, 1893, 538.
The council was faced with resolving another damage claim in 1895. Alderman Richie petitioned the council for Mr. J. W. Anderson for payment of $90.00 for damages that had been caused to his horse and buggy by falling off the Main Street bridge. Alderman Dean moved that a committee be appointed by the mayor to investigate the facts, and pay according to what they found to be the damages. The claim was referred to the committee with power to act and to settle. The committee reported on December 14 that the damages were worth $75.00, and they recommended that the council pay Mr. Anderson the amount as a settlement. The council adopted the committee's recommendation.

In 1890, black citizens moved to have a school established in the city for their children. In September of 1890, "the trustees of the city-graded schools appeared before the council and asked that a school house be built in the west-end for colored

105 Greenville City Council Minutes. January 2, 1894, 543.

106 Greenville City Council Minutes. December 3, 1895, 645 (Similar claims are cited on pages 96, 121 and 143).

107 Greenville City Council Minutes. December 14, 1895, 648.
children." In response to the request to build a school, Alderman Hayne moved that the question of appropriating $3,550.00 in bonds be referred to the city attorney. The city attorney reported in October that the city did not have the right to issue the bonds to build a school house for colored children.

The city council appealed to the state legislature for the right to issue the bonds to improve education in the city. The mayor read a bill passed by the legislature which authorized the council to issue $7,000.00 in bonds for the purpose of building a new graded school and improve other schools. The bill provided that a referendum be held January 27, to decide whether the bonds should be issued. The referendum resulted in a favorable decision to

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112 Greenville City Council Minutes, September 2, 1890, 320.

113 Greenville City Council Minutes, August 7, 1890, 315.

114 Greenville City Council Minutes, October 14, 1890, 324.

115 Greenville City Council Minutes, January 1, 1891, 330.
issue the bonds for school improvements. 

From 1880 to 1900 the practices of segregation began to unfold in the South. However, as in most cities following Reconstruction, segregation slowly began to emerge as a way of life.

The council minutes of Charleston and Greenville revealed that black citizens were not primarily concerned with the spread of discriminatory customs and segregated facilities, but were directly involved with improving their communities and their lives. In each city, blacks approached their city councils with numerous requests, which were either for personal or communal benefit. An examination of the minutes disclosed that blacks found the city governments of Charleston and Greenville open and responsive to requests. The minutes also revealed that blacks were forced to request benefits which white citizens already possessed. Public amenities, such as gas lamps, street improvements and public cemeteries, had been provided in the white communities. Black citizens were forced to appeal to the city councils in their respective cities, which shows the disparity in treatment by city governments and the willingness of blacks to assert their rights as citizens.

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Greenville City Council Minutes, February 3, 1891, 338.
CHAPTER VI
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The material in this dissertation explored black life, 1850-1900, in Charleston and Greenville, South Carolina as seen through an examination of each city's council minutes. The two cities were selected because they were different in locality, economic base, racial make-up and population during the periods under study.

The city council was selected as the primary source because in day-to-day life, it is the governmental agency which has the most immediate effect on the lives of citizens. The city council is also the governmental agency which can readily be held accountable for a community's way of life. The desires, aspirations and needs of citizens are reflected in the petitions and requests which come before city councils. The responses and reactions to these requests help to create the personality of the city.

The research revealed numerous encounters between blacks and their city councils from 1850 to 1900. During these years, citizens in both cities witnessed persistent efforts by the majority to control the
conduct of blacks within their communities. Ordinances were repeatedly passed for the purpose of restraining blacks. Although the slave population was much higher in Charleston than Greenville, there was no apparent difference in actions by councils in either city. The large black population found in Charleston during the period of slavery did not result in better treatment for free persons of color or slaves. City governments made no distinction between free persons of color and slaves; therefore, ordinances governed both groups. The only distinction was made by the free blacks themselves who attempted to structure a class above the slave population.

During the period of slavery from 1850 to 1865, ordinances were passed to control every aspect of life for blacks. The social, religious and economic life of blacks was greatly repressed by the many ordinances passed in each city. Throughout the period of slavery ordinances were passed which restricted the movement of slaves. Citizens in Charleston and Greenville worked to make sure slaves would remain under their control. Slaves were required to have permission passes; slave patrols were instituted, and curfews were enforced in each city as a means of controlling the movement of slaves. These restraints helped to monitor and curtail activities.
Although much energy was exerted to control slaves, they played a vital role in their respective cities. Slaves were the backbone of the work force and were often competitors with whites for jobs.

With the end of slavery emerged the period of Reconstruction from 1865 to 1877. Great changes resulted in each city as blacks who became citizens attempted to adjust to freedom. The councils in Charleston and Greenville moved to repeal city ordinances governing slavery. The ordinances which supported the institution of slavery by restricting and controlling economic endeavors of blacks were officially removed from the ordinance books.

An increasing number of blacks began to approach councils with requests for the removal of repressive ordinances from the city ordinance books. Blacks came before their city councils for permission to operate businesses, to build buildings, and to appeal for needed services. The newly acquired freedom allowed blacks the opportunity to gain services previously enjoyed by other citizens.

Blacks' greatest involvement in city government in Charleston and Greenville during the period of Reconstruction was directed towards acquiring city services. Repeatedly, on a personal level, blacks approached their councils with requests for street
Improvements and the installation of street lamps. Cooperatively, the black churches in each city moved to acquire needed and justified city services. As the black church grew during the period of Reconstruction, the councils witnessed numerous requests. The black church moved to establish city cemeteries, acquire building permits and to institute educational facilities. Throughout the period, blacks found it necessary to approach their city councils for city services generally afforded whites in the city.

The city councils of Charleston and Greenville continued to react to the new found freedom in the black community as segregation began to develop as an institution from 1878-1900. The council minutes in each city did not reveal attempts of the councils to institute segregated ordinances. However, ordinances governing the separation of the races were evident around the early 1910s. During the earlier period of segregation, blacks continued to approach their city councils for needed services. This period saw a move from personal requests to mutual or neighborhood petitions.

In each city, blacks made successful efforts to improve services such as streets through lighting.
Many of the efforts which began during Reconstruction continued during the period of early segregation. Blacks not only approached their city councils for services, but also appealed for participation on the city work force. The black cemeteries had black caretakers, and in Charleston the black citizens moved to employ black teachers and to establish a nurse’s training school. During the twenty-two years following Reconstruction blacks in Charleston and Greenville pushed for some parity from their city governments.

Over and over, in Charleston and Greenville, blacks petitioned their city councils. Although blacks were first considered non-citizens, and later second-class citizens, they played vital roles in their communities. Throughout American history, blacks have petitioned city councils for desired assistance and in many instances, the councils have reluctantly granted their requests. The recurring fact uncovered in this research was that no matter how difficult life was for blacks, they never ceased to struggle for first-class citizenship and a better way of life while contributing to the general welfare of their communities.
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