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Things hidden: an introduction to the history of Blacks in Spartanburg

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An Introduction to the
History of Blacks in Spartanburg

by Dwain Pruitt

Sponsored by The City of Spartanburg’s
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Cheryl Harleston, Director

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I would like to dedicate this work to the late Mrs. Norma Jane Sims who, by dying with grace, faith and good humor, gave new meaning to life for all who knew her.

I would also like to dedicate this project to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Marion B. Pruitt, and my brother, Craig. Their support over the years made taking on such a daunting task seem possible.

During the Depression, the federal government sponsored a variety of activities designed to get people back to work. One of those activities was the WPA or Work Projects Administration. Among other things, the WPA hired historians to do local histories. Part of those histories was the collection of slave narratives. Interviews with former slaves or their descendants were conducted throughout the state. The interview below is the only known interview conducted with a descendant of slaves in Spartanburg.

The interview was conducted on February 28, 1939 by R. V. Williams. Lewis' experiences and lifetime of work are prime examples of the lives lived by blacks in Spartanburg in the early twentieth century.

This is the story of an old Negro who has been a cook, butler, gardener and a librarian's assistant. He is Sam Lewis, and is employed at present as a handy-man in a private home in Spartanburg. He worked for twenty years in Kennedy Free Library, and, at one time, was the only employee in addition to the librarian.

"I was born on February de twenty-fust," Sam said, "but I don't 'member what year. I was born on Major Hart's place in York County. My folks belonged to Major Hart. It was slavery time, and day stayed on dere atter de war was over. I could find out from my sistah dere just how old I is. She got it writ down in de Bible. All I knows is dat I'm in de sixties."

Sam said that his mother died when he was eight years old and he remembers the coffin that Major Hart bought for her.

"I jus' don't 'member how dey worked de money muthas them days, but us allus had plenty to eat. When I got old enough to work, us jus' kinda rented from de Harts. Dey furnished us wid mules and groceries and clothes, and us work on de farms. When lay-by time come, day tuck out de rent an' what day done give us. Sometimes, us raised 'nough cotton and corn to come out ahead wid some cash, and sometimes us come out in de hole if de crops is bad.

"Dere's one thing I sho' 'members well, and dat was de [Charleston] earthquake in 1886. I' se a pretty big boy. De Harts had jus' bought me new shoes. Shoes in them days had brass around de toes of 'em. I sho' was proud of dem shoes. Us walked seven miles to York to see what de 'quake had done dere. I' members us saw two stores wid the roofs caved in."

"Dat 'quake was a bad thing. When it come, I run out de house and got under it. Dat was a crazy thing to do but I was so scared dat I didn' think 'bout de 'quake mightn shake de house down on me."

Sam said that he came up to Spartanburg in 1887 and went to work as [sic.] a cook.

"I first worked for Miss Webber, but she moved away right after I come here. Den I got a job cooking for Dr. rigby. De next job I had was when I went to Millwater, New Jersey. I worked for a German up dere who raised flowers and plants for a living. He didn' pay me but three dollars a week and my board, but I sho' learned a lot 'bout flowers from him. I' se been growing flowers ever since, and I' se made good money workin' in people's flower gardens. I think it was 'bout 1901 when I was dere, 'cause I know it was after de Spanish-American War."

Sam said he remembers the day the Spartanburg company left for Florida because he had attempted to enlist on that day and
got so big dat dey changed de ole system from dem plain numbers to de new system [de Decimal System]. I nevah could figure it out. An' dey had to take on extra help, an' so many people started coming dat it tuck up all my time to keep de building in shape. Lots of dem flowers and de rubbish what you see down dere come out of me. I jus' gib it to 'em.

When I first started workin' dere, sometimes de streets was so muddy in de winter time dat it would take me 'bout an hour to git to de library. I'd leave home at five o'clock in time to git de fire started. I'se never late to work de whole time I was dere. And I was nevah out 'count being sick 'cept one time. Dat was in 1929. I got de chills, and I didn't work except off and on for 'bout three months. Sometimes, I made good money, dere, and sometimes I didn't. De depression sho' hurt us. De city and county cut down on what dey had been gibbing to keep up de library. Dat cut me down, too. But during de war, lot of dem soldiers from New York used to come down dere. Some of dem give me tips. Jus' hard to say what I did make dere, but I reckon I made 'round nine dollars a week for de whole time I was dere.

Dey married my wife died dat year. She been sick mos' all de time since our baby was born. Dat was 'bout 1902, as I see remembers. De baby was born dead, an' I'll allus believe it was 'cause dat nigger doctor didn't know what he was doing. Little while befo' the baby was born, a man come to me as [sic] say he's jus' come to town, and dat he wants to build a reputation. I don't know much about 'bout dem things, but I seen tol' me he sho' messed up things up when de baby was born. I wish I had got me a white doctor. I had been working for Doctor Blake in space time, and he told me later dat he would have done it for nothing. I reckon dat's de worst thing I ever come over to me.

De library in 1936 'cause de board hired a man who couldn't do as much as I could, an' dey was payin' him more than I was gettin'. I don't want to talk 'bout dat. But even [sic] day, I goes over dere an' does odd jobs for dem.

My next job was wid de beautification people. I got dat job 'cause I knows so much 'bout flowers and plants and things. Den I tuck dis job here [Lewis was a butler who when this interview was conducted] 'cause it ain't no WPA job, an' 'cause ever now and then somebody say WPA going to cut out. See dat big garden back dere? De boss done let me have dat to grow stuff in. De work here ain't hard. I does 'bout a little of all kind of things 'round here. I keeps de grass and de hedge cut and looks atter de shrubbery. I helps keep de house clean. I gits through 'bout three o'clock. Dat gives time to work in de garden, or to work in other people's gardens. I even got a couple of days not makin' so much right now, dis cold weather, but when warm weather comes, I'se hoping to make more money dan I ever have befo'.
Perhaps the most important question that one can ask about a book is why it was written.

This book has two "whys" at its origin. Things Hidden: An Introduction to the History of Blacks in Spartanburg began in December 1994 with a request from Cheryl Harleston, the Director of Community Relations for the City of Spartanburg. Mrs. Harleston wanted me to research significant firsts and other leaders in Spartanburg's black community for a series of public service announcements to air during Black History Month 1995.

As a historian with interest in black history and in historic preservation, I agreed, thinking that the job would be fairly easy and quite fun. While the task did prove to be academically "fun" and appreciated by the community, which prompted this expanded version, it also proved to be enormously trying. The last textual history of Spartanburg County was published in 1940 as a part of the Federal Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration. Anyone familiar with books written in that time period can attest, blacks received only passing mentions, usually associated with slavery or Reconstruction. Later works like Dr. Philip N. Racine's Spartanburg County: A Pictorial History, published in 1980, have not sought to be exhaustive histories like the WPA project and, even though they certainly portray blacks much more positively and frequently, still focus on the "big" people, places and events of Spartanburg history. Even a passing knowledge of American history makes it obvious, therefore, that the lion's share of contributions by blacks be afforded to white male citizens since they controlled society.

While their emphasis, approach and age made most of the standard resources of less use than one might have hoped, perhaps the biggest problem that I faced was a lack of knowledge. Though a lifelong resident of Spartanburg, I was poorly versed in the city's history in general and that of the black community in particular. Hoping to solicit some aid from the community, I sent a letter to the Spartanburg Journal-News requesting that persons with information mail suggestions to me at home. In total, I received one letter, sent anonymously and reprinted in the Appendix:

You can write about how Tee Ferguson snifflw up his career, and [sic.] about blacks cry about every thing [sic.] that white men does. write [sic.] in [sic.] that they are giving [sic.] free rides to Africa, and [sic.] how the black population is acount [sic.] for 90% of the crime in America. And how ya'll [sic.] ruined our schools, and [sic.] that our jobs can come (sic.) of your color. How you are spitting out more baby's [sic.] than the law [sic.] allows.

This letter represents the first "why" of this project. For far too long, the history of Spartanburg has been told solely through the eyes of the Scotch-Irish immigrants who tamed the wilderness of the Upcountry in the late 18th century. Entire books have been dedicated to these praiseworthy settlers, traditional texts fail to detail the role of the black slaves that accompanied these early pioneers and how these hardy people also helped to build and defend a civilization literally carved off the wilderness. The accomplishments of blacks in Spartanburg are similarly glossed over or completely overlooked.

This work, therefore, purposes to relay examples of black participation in the shaping of the general history of Spartanburg within a beltier perspective and in the context of the nation as well as to cite examples of the triumphs of black citizens of Spartanburg within their own segregated world. In thi effort, black participation will be treated for as the rights of citizenship in the world's rights struggles of the 1960's. By doing so, it is hoped that the reader will fully realize how wrong the attitude expressed above is. Black citizens of Spartanburg were not and are not merely societal burdens; rather, Spartanburg's black community has served and is serving itself and the greater community even in the face of ugly examples of racial prejudice and violence.

In this regard, this work is not finished. Just as any history can be improved and reworked, this book is but a foundational study. Things Hidden is the result of an intensive solo research effort conducted over a period of only two months due to personal time constraints. Unless resultively, in certain that significions persons and events have been slighted. Persons with fantastic information or photographs have been missed as have been other bibliographic sources. Moreover, with rare exceptions, my research efforts have been centered on the city of Spartanburg itself. There is much that should be done on a county-wide level if a proper picture is to be painted. No one is more aware of these shortcomings. I will have to be the liability of others to continue this research, adding to this manuscript and correcting its errors.

It Is in this last statement that we find the second "why" of this project. This book was written with young people in mind. Most young people will be as ignorant of their history as I was in December 1994. The bulk of the information included in this manuscript was culled either from seldom popularly read history textbooks, this is the case for newspapers and life stories. While old books will always be available in dusty corners of libraries, the same is not true of our precious human histories. Unless we actively seek out these senior citizens, we risk losing our past and the pride and sense of self that it should instill. Even though it is a cliche, there is no present without the past.

The interest among the Cherokee that is instructive. According to the tribal elders, the Cherokee nation will not be destroyed by war or any other outside source. Regardless of what happens physically to a people, they believe it will endure. Whatever the future has in store, then, will cause the destruction of the Cherokee? Only when the elders can no longer get the young to stand still long enough to listen to their stories can the Cherokee be destroyed for, without their stories, there are no Cherokee. It is time that Spartanburg's black community relearns the wisdom of this belief. And it is in respect for that tradition that this book is written. It is written in hopes that some might stand still and listen.

Dwain Pruitt
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Chapter One: African origins, slavery and early South Carolina blacks

The first blacks to arrive in South Carolina were, like most of the Africans ultimately brought to North America, from western Africa. Since Africa was divided into tribal groups and not nations as we would define the term, it is difficult to say precisely from where and from which tribes black South Carolinians came. According to The Historical and Cultural Atlas of African Americans by Molefi K. Asante and Mark T. Mattson, "more than one hundred African ethnic groups" were involved. As the sixth edition of The African-American Almanac points out, these ethnic groups came from an area encompassing the modern nations of Senegal, Gambia, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Upper Volta, Ivory Coast (Côte d’Ivoire), Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Cameroon, Gabon, the Congo, and the Republic of the Congo. This will be discussed later, while it seems likely that the bulk of blacks to reach South Carolina were shipped from the large slave forts of Ghana, South Carolina's blacks came from all over this slaving zone.

African slavery did not begin with the arrival of the first Europeans. By the time the Portuguese launched the European slave trade in 1441 A.D., African slavery was centuries old. It was common practice for prisoners of war to be enslaved and forced to perform menial tasks. Furthermore, many African leaders also practiced an odd mixture of royal worship and political pragmatism. Throughout history, many peoples have believed that the gods had specially chosen the ruler and his family, making it a sin to spill royal blood. On the continent, this view was also held. Therefore, in a power dispute, a ruler could not simply kill a relative as he could an enemy. Murdering a royal might result in mutiny. In this environment, one of the most efficient ways to be rid of the source of the problem was to sell him (or her) into slavery. Not only would a potential problem be gone, but there was also a tidy profit made, be it money or some desired item. This profit motive should not be underemphasized.

This tradition, then, explains why African tribal leaders let the Atlantic slave trade begin (they sometimes encouraged it as well, as we shall see later). Arab slavers bartered with African kingdoms for slaves and other items with the blessings of wealthy rulers seeking more riches long before Europeans ever reached African shores, which explains why some Asiatic peoples have Negroid features. The arrival of Europeans, when viewed from this perspective, meant only new trading partners to the chieftains. They were special potential partners, though, because they came with exotic new goods like firearms, alcohol and, perhaps, enough from a modern perspective to change the world. In this era, seeing a perfect image of one's self was impossible. Imagine how impressive this must have been for a ruler who viewed himself as divine!

This description should in no way be read as to say that all African rulers were pompous egomaniacs with no sense of responsibility for their people. While it is correct to say that, in many ways, African rulers brought the horrors of slavery on themselves, it is unfair to lay the blame completely on them or to label them all as failures. Even though the African slavery system was centuries old, it was not a system based on a doctrine of race; there was no sense of the perpetuation of the race or the capture. Unlike the European treatment of Africans, Africans generally allowed their prisoners of war some upward mobility. Moreover, African slavery did not involve mass relocations of whole peoples. This is distinctively different from the European trade that uprooted between 15 and 50 million people. And it should be quickly added that many outgunned African leaders warred vigorously with Europeans before falling to their superior firepower. They had simply failed to understand the European's motivation behind the Atlantic slave trade or his view of the African. This might just be the biggest misunderstanding in history.

What was the European motivation? The answer to the question is more complicated than one might realize. The beginnings of European exploration in Africa and the subsequent enslaving of Africans can be found in the Middle Ages. Space does not provide for a detailed discussion of this fascinating story, but a brief presentation of the essentials is necessary for a clearer understanding of what caused slavery to develop.

The term "the Middle Ages" refers to the period from 476 to roughly 1450. After the fall of the Roman empire, Europe was chaotic. There was no central political authority and various barbarian hordes swept across Europe in murderous waves. This instability cut most Europeans off from the world around them. For most people, life began and ended within in a 10 to 20 mile radius of their birth place. Intellectually, Europe was limited to the thought of the Church. Most of the writings of the ancient Greeks and Romans were lost or destroyed in the fighting. With nothing in the physical world seeming to be sure, people had to place their faith in God and His Church if life was to have meaning.

As has often been the unfortunate case, religion, when combined with ignorance, bred fear. Most Europeans had no knowledge of the black peoples living to their south in Africa. Those who did have contact with them through trade often were both jealous of the increasing power of some of the tribal African's rulers as well as mistrustful of them. This mistrust was due to the normal uneasiness that one feels around those who are different as well as because of a European color prejudice against the color black. In Christian times in many other religions, the color black is associated with darkness, evil and death. In a superstitious era, black-skinned peoples were often associated with demons, a literal extension of how the Bible uses color symbolically. This view of the demonic black was strengthened by the nature of the African continent. Imagine how shockingly different Africa must have seemed...
to Europeans in the Middle Ages. Animals that surely seemed otherworldly roamed hills covered with plants that the Europeans had never seen before. Furthermore, the Africans themselves were emotional, which wore little to no clothing and practiced elaborate, colorful rituals that predated Christianity by centuries. In short, both the land and the people were polar opposites of one another and, in the Christian mind of the Middle Ages, these differences showed who was of God and who was of Satan.

This early mistrust and feeling of religious and cultural superiority grew into something much deeper with the coming of Islam and its rapid expansion out of Arabia. After the death of the prophet Muhammad in 632, the Muslims, filled with religious zeal, set out to conquer and convert the world for Allah. It was only logical that they start by going into northern Africa along existing trade routes. Despite some bloody African resistance in several areas, Islam soon spread from modern day Egypt to the western coast of the continent, taking in millions of black converts. The armies of the Crescent then turned their attentions on Christian Europe. In 711, Catholic Spain fell before armies of “heathens” that had black faces. The Muslims then marched into the south of France. Even though they were finally beaten back in 732, Islam was now forever branded with a black face as white Christians stood against black infidels. Now the blacks were not only culturally inferior and not Christians, they were now also dangerous invaders. Fear of the different, religion and political terror had now combined in shaping Europe’s view of Africans.

To these were added another important development. The late Middle Ages saw a rise in European fortunes. After Rome fell in 476, Europe also lacked a centralized financial order. As the Middle Ages progressed, a middle class of merchants began to develop out of the centuries old feudal system as wars ceased and order was reestablished. At the time, most of the power rested in the hands of the nobles, not the king, and they opposed changes in the status quo. Hoping to create a mutually beneficial arrangement, the merchants allied themselves with the kings. In exchange for their financial support, the kings would make certain concessions to increase their prominence. The kings usually agreed.

This political backscratching resulted in both the kings and the merchants having more money and control. After almost 1000 years of gluts, prosperity was finally on the rise. This prosperity sparked a long dead optimism. With the rise of the middle class and the growth of towns and universities, Universalitas came to symbolize a rediscovery of the theocratic-Roman tradition, which had been preserved by the Muslims, during the Crusades. After centuries of believing man to be cursed and despised by God, prosperous Europeans slowly began to feel in charge of their own destinies and desireous of money, leisure and adventure, especially as gold-based trade with Asia opened.

This historical economic shift is called the Commercial Revolution. The change in thought that caused it is called the Renaissance, the “rebirth” of European society. The two combined to give birth to exploration. The Renaissance and its revival of interest in the capabilities of man created the desire to explore the world and the Commercial Revolution provided the capital to finance the trips and the profit incentive to pursue them. The Asian trade was based on gold, which increased the demand for gold in Europe. Furthermore, the land trade with Asia was long, dangerous and costly. For trading to be more profitable, a new sea route was needed. Hence, the gold trade would eliminate the middle man was needed. In 1441, the Portuguese explorer Dinis Dias landed in northern Africa. Part of his cargo upon his return was a group of African slaves. Subsequent Portuguese missions slowly made their way south around the coastline of the continent, mapping every stage of the journey and making contacts on the continent. By 1488, they had sailed to Africa’s southern tip and entered the Indian Ocean.

As African goods trickled back into Europe, demand skyrocketed. People newly convinced of the importance of enjoying life refused to be denied any desire and the European traders based in Africa had to secure “permission” to trade in his old, gold and slaves Europe desired. By 1460, 700 or 800 slaves were being shipped to Portugal annually. These slaves were then sold into other countries, increasing international demand for African servants.

As the slave trade grew, some Africans profited handsomely. Whites rarely, if ever, ventured into the interior of the continent. Tropical diseases, wild animals and unfriendly natives were only the top of the list of good reasons for Europeans to stay on the western coast where they would be able to pull out quickly if necessary. Instead, black traders who were aware of the European demand handled the business, as John Hope Franklin points out in the most famous of black history texts, From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans:

The usual procedure [for Europeans] was to go to the chief of the tribe and to make arrangements with him to secure "permission" to trade in his old, gold and main. The chief, after being properly persuaded with gifts, then appointed various assistants who were at the disposal of the trader. Foremost among these was the caboceer, who assumed the responsibility of gathering up those to be sold—at prices previously agreed upon between the trader and the chief...

It was necessary for the trader to consult with his physician and other advisors concerning purchases. Frequently the prospective slaves had been so cleanly shaven and soaked in palm oil that it was most difficult to ascertain their ages or physical condition.5

Though it was profitable, trading in slaves was not at all easy in the beginning of the trade for Europeans or their African allies:
domination depended on agriculturally rich colonies and free labor to grow, tend and care for the crops. The supply of blacks in Africa seemed inexhaustible and a godsend. The resulting systematic enslavement of blacks forced Europeans to justify slavery with doctrines of racial inferiority that ultimately led to racism. But, even more importantly, this enslavement brought millions of diverse blacks into bondage together. If they were to survive, they would have to learn to communicate with one another and adapt to a terrifying new world.

Chapter Two: English settlements and expansion into the Upcountry

The wealth of the Spanish enterprise in the Caribbean attracted the attention of the three other major European powers of that time: the Dutch, the French and the English. Space necessitates that this work focus primarily on the colonial efforts of the British.

The British were at the same time among the first of the Europeans to reach the New World and the last of the Europeans to enter the Great American Land Grab. Ironically, they were still able to win it. The Spanish were entrenched in the Americas after 1496. Hoping to get involved at the very beginning of the rush, John Cabot sailed from England to Newfoundland in 1497 at the crown’s request. He thereupon claimed all of North America for England. At that time, however, England was a very weak nation and lacked sea power. Despite having claimed North America, it could neither reach it effectively nor demand that its claim be respected. In fact, the British claim would be ignored for 60 years.

By the 1560’s, Spain had made extensive explorations into South Carolina (it seems that the Spanish explorer Juan Pardo even made it as far inland as Spartanburg County by 1567. The so-called “Pardo Stone,” located in the Spartanburg County Regional Museum, appears to have been used by the Spanish as a road marker). They had also managed to beat off a French incursion into Spanish-controlled portions of Florida and South Carolina in 1565. However, attacks on the Spanish were growing more and more frequent. Both the British and the French sponsored privateers, mercenaries paid by a government to legally engage in piracy, disrupting the Spanish trade. Spain soon found itself overextended and struggling to keep up with a rising Britain. By the late 1500’s, the British were increasingly daring. In 1585, Sir Francis Drake led a raid through the West Indies and burned St. Augustine just for good measure on his way back out in 1586. Fearing the loss of Florida if it stayed in South Carolina, the Spanish pulled out in 1587, leaving South Carolina to its native inhabitants for the next 83 years.

In 1588, the war between Spain and Britain came to a head. Through an extraordinary bit of luck—or divine intervention, as the British later claimed—a gale destroyed the bulk of the Spanish fleet before it could reach an unmatched British navy. With Spain out of the way, the British could easily move into North America. And move they did. After a few mishaps in the 1590’s, the British established their first colony at Jamestown in 1607. In 1619, a Dutch trading ship (keep in mind that the Dutch dominated transatlantic trade at this time) brought the first boatload of African slaves to the British colonies as indentured servants. An indentured servant was someone who agreed to work for another person for an agreed upon period of time in exchange for his or her

Cotton picking in Spartanburg, County, 1900.
passage across the Atlantic. This was not at all unusual for the time. Many of the early Americans came to the colonies in this way and, once they gained their freedom, began to farm. In fact, some of these newly freed became wealthy enough to pay for several other persons--white and black--to come to America.

63 years later, the British established the Carolina colony. In 1663, King Charles II granted exclusive land rights to eight men who had supported him in reaching the throne as a show of thanks. These men were called the Lords Proprietors and they wished to use it as they saw fit as long as they paid the crown its taxes. Rather than take British citizens from England to make up the new colony, the Lords Proprietors made a deal with British citizens living on the small, overcrowded island of Barbados, which the British had colonized in 1627. These Barbadians made the first British explorations in the Carolinas, paving the way for the group that was to come from England a few years later.

Even though Barbados was a small island, it had something in abundance: black slaves. John Hope Franklin points out that the number of blacks on Barbados grew from a "few hundred" in 1640 to 6,000 by 1645 when sugar became profitable. By the end of the century, close to 80,000 Africans could be found there and all were slaves. Life for these Africans was harsh, primarily because Barbados was viewed by the British as only a money making operation. It was generally held that the climate of the West Indies was too oppressively hot for any European type of breeding; consequently, the men who established huge plantations rarely cared to visit for extended periods of time and cared even less what life was like as long as money was made. Spending money to make white workers comfortable was not done in the 17th century, so imagine how little plantation owners intended to spend their profits on slaves. Though it now seems callous to believe as such, the Africans were viewed as work animals and, therefore, quite expendable. Quite literally, there was no one just like him coming in on the next boat.

What was life for a black slave arriving in the New World? The long voyage to the Americas took four to six weeks by ship. These ships were overcrowded, unsanitary and disease-ridden. As a result, the slaves who did not die or commit suicide--numbers vary as to how many Africans did not survive the so-called Middle Passage. Among those who did died, 10 million are estimated to have not survived--were often in horrible physical condition. Not wanting to lose a sale, the traders washed and oiled their vessels at the docks in hopes of concealing injuries and the like. The unhealthiest of the lot were rounded up into pens and offered to interested parties at bargain basement prices. The enterprising business man could buy several sickly men at something like a penny per pound and then buy more in the same condition, saving himself the cost of a healthy young male.

Newly arrived slaves, after purchase, next underwent a breaking-in process. This was conducted either under the supervision of a seasoned slave or under a group of whites assigned to the task. "The mortality rate among newly arrived slaves," Franklin writes, "was exceptionally high, with estimates running to as much as 30 percent in a seasonizing period of three or four years. Outbreaks of diseases, changes of climate and food, exposure incurred in running away, suicide, and excessive flogging were the main causes of the high mortality rate." Conditions were so horrible that a 1790-91 British Parliament report revealed that punishment in Barbados was forced to work up until children and then were allowed a maximum one month of recuperation before returning to field labor. Pregnant women and nursing mothers deemed to be dawdling were beaten.

The field labor required of slaves was exacting. Their day during the growing season started at daybreak and ended at sunset. During the day, the slaves would only be allowed two breaks. The first was the thirty minute morning breakfast break (not that the simple, poorly balanced meals granted to the slaves would have taken more than thirty minutes to eat) and the two hour break during the hottest portion of the day. At this time, rather than doing field work, the slaves performed lighter chores around the houses or in smaller gardens. During the harvest season, slaves' days were even longer. Eighteen hour days beginning before sunrise and ending after dusk were standard.

In 1667, Britain responded to the large influx of Africans needed for labor with an act of Parliament to regulate behavior of the slaves. The Africans, subhumans of a "wild, barbarous, and savage nature to be controlled only with strict severity," could not leave the plantations without written passes, carry weapons or strike a Christian. If a Christian, a white man, were struck by slave, the slave would be beaten viciously. If there were a second offense, the slave would have his or her face branded with a hot iron. To further endorses this punishment it included suspending slaves from trees with ropes and then hanging weight around their necks and waists.

A great deal of time has been dedicated to the discussion of the treatment of and the lifestyles of the slaves on Barbados. This is because this system became the model for British slavery and the system that came to South Carolina was a British system and lasted from the foundation of the colony until 1865, forging the racial and social attitudes of the state's founders.

After a series of misfortunes including shipwrecks and desertsions and stops in Ireland and Barbados to pick up new colonists, the first of the English ships reached South Carolina in March of 1670. They landed somewhere on Bull's Island. They were warmly greeted by the Waccamaw Indians, who, after extending their hospitality, suggested that they sail further up what they later named the Ashley River (for Lord Ashley Cooper, the most significant of the Lords Proprietors) to settle. Approximately 132 settlers then landed at Albemarle Point and established the first
permanently British site in South Carolina. They called it Charles Town in honor of King Charles II.

It is difficult to imagine Charleston the city as it was in 1670. In a word, it was a wilderness. The first colonists had been lured to South Carolina by exotic tales of an American Garden of Eden. If this was the Garden of Eden, it definitely had gone to seed and was in bad need of weeding. The land was low, swampy, and unattractive. It was, in fact, unsuited to the tropical plants from Barbados that the settlers tried to grow there. It soon became incredibly hot and humid for the Old World Englishmen, who wore wool clothing. The heat combined with the swamp land to create a perfect breeding ground for malaria-bearing mosquitoes. If the malaria did not kill you, you could always wait for the dysentery, scarlet fever, diphtheria, measles, tuberculosis, smallpox, typhus or yellow fever that plagued the colony to try your luck.1

Another persistent problem for these early settlers was their mistrust of the Indians. Despite the efforts of the King and his agents on their behalf, the Charlestonians often mistreated the Indians and even tried to enslave them for back-up slave labor. Many natives developed the distinct impression that their strange new neighbors were not very friendly and reciprocated the violence. Ironically, this self-defense was later used to argue that the Indians were pagan savages just like the blacks, which made it perfectly acceptable to take their land.

Though there was no change in the master-slave relationship in Charles Town, the hostility of the environment and the neighbors forced the whites to place a greater deal of trust in their slaves. Blacks served as herdsmen and horsemen, guarding the colony's cattle. Furthermore, these early blacks also grew much of the food that was vital to the colony's survival. They even introduced yams and other foodstuffs to the area, providing that much more hope for the success of the colony. Blacks also gathered and cared for the timber needed for building homes and other protective structures. Finally, the fear of the Indians was so great that whites armed and trained blacks who later accompanied them in the field and in the event of raids.6

This fear of Indians and the boom in the colony's population after rice began to be grown in the 1680's increased the demand for slaves. In fact, it had been hoped from the beginning that Charles Town would stimulate the slave trade. Four of the eight Lords Proprietors had vested interests in the Royal African Company, the British monopoly on slave trade. If Charles Town became successful, it was reasoned, we will receive money both from the colony and from supplying the slaves that make it profitable (the slaves had not yet been enslaved in South Carolina, only transported). If the original settlers were offered 30 acres of land for every black man and 10 acres for every black female brought during the first five years. By 1698, however, South Carolinians so feared being outnumbered and overrun by blacks that they began offering money to those who imported white men, following up on a 1668 law that tightened the restrictions on slaves even more. It was too little, too late. By 1708, the number of blacks and whites in Charles Town was equal.

In 1711, the Carolina colony faced the first of three Indian wars, known as the Tuscarora War (1711-1712). The conflict resulted from the expansion of the English colony into Indian hunting grounds, abuses in the Indian trade (Charles Town, as the principal port of the southeast, controlled the exportation of animal skins used in fashion to Europe), the enslavement of Indians and racial animosity. The war started in North Carolina after the Tuscaroras were ordered to leave their land to allow for Swiss colonists. The Indians were defeated only after a contingent from South Carolina, made up primarily of Indians, intervened both in 1711 and in a revived conflict in 1712.

The next war began in South Carolina and was even larger in scope. In April of 1715, every major tribe in South Carolina with the exception of the Cherokee went on the warpath. Almost 100 whites were massacred at Port Royal, marking the beginning of the Yemassee War (1715-1716). Overwhelmed and refused help by the other colonies (even North Carolina), the 1,500 or so settlers were forced to arm the slaves. Unfortunately for the Indians, intertribal disputes wrecked their coalition. Longstanding animosities with the Creek brought the Cherokee, the largest of South Carolina's tribes, into the war on the side of the settlers, assuring the collapse of the revolution.

After 1715, South Carolinians were terrified. Not only had the Yemassee War pointed out that they were still minorities in a hostile world and that their neighbors could not be relied upon to provide aid in an uprising, but it also presented a serious question: What would happen if there were a large scale slave revolt like the Yemassee uprising? Blacks outnumbered whites by 1 to 4 in 1715, and it had already taken place in 1711 and 1714. Unlike the Indians, the slaves already were inside the city and on the plantations. They would not be seen streaming over the hills, thus allowing for the settlers to prepare a defense. By the time the slaves were noticed, it could be very well too late. In 1730, a plan was put forth by Governor Robert Johnson to establish 11 new townships covering over 20,000 acres north of Charles Town, creating a barrier to slow down invading Indians by giving them the choice of fighting the原件 before they reached the easy reaching by the Africans into smaller, less potentially dangerous groups. This decision was given even more emphasis after the 1739 Stono Rebellion, the first slave revolt in a British colony. On Sunday, September 9, a group of blacks working and started marching to Florida. They had heard that the Spanish were offering freedom to blacks and intended to escape slavery in South Carolina. This was, however, simply a ploy by the Spanish to create turmoil for the British and attract new laborers to Florida. These freedom seekers soon after their departure murdered two whites and seized guns and food for the
trip. Within hours, the group had grown to approximately 60-80. Fearing this, a posse intercepted the group and, in the ensuing bloodshed, at least 40 slaves were killed and hangings, beheadings and racial intimidation became the order of the day.

The Johnson plan resulted in the creation of Georgetown (1729) and Camden (1732) by the British and even opened up portions of South Carolina to other Europeans to increase the number of permanent white dwellers. It also decreased the number of slaves in Charles Town. In 1740, the number of blacks in the city had declined from 39,000 to 24,000.

The second westward expansion came during the 1750’s and it was this movement that brought the first permanent European settlements to Spartanburg County. As in 1730, the result of the expansion was increased tension with the Indians. The French and the British entered into conflict as British colonies continued to grow westward toward French holdings. Fearing that the British would seize their land and ruin their trade, the French began supplying Indians, which is why the conflict later became called the French and Indian War (1754-1763). Though this conflict did not directly impact South Carolina, it did encourage the Lords Proprietors of the Carolina colony and other colonial powers and settlers to want to move into the Upstate.

Who would these new settlers be? Surprisingly, these settlers came from the north:

Often agents of the landed proprietors organized and arranged for companies of immigrants. In the period of early settlement the approach to what is now Spartanburg County was easier from the Northern colonies than from Charleston (due to the wilderness-like conditions that still existed). ...[A]s these immigrants had to come with wagons and teams, there must have been practicable routes from the Alleghenies to the Southern slopes of the Saluda Mountains. It was...more natural for them to maintain intercourse with the Northern settlements.

Conclusion

The first permanent settlers in Spartanburg County arrived in 1761 and settled along the various branches of the Tyger River. They were Scotch-Irish and German farmers for the most part and had come to the Upstate from Pennsylvania. The settlement of Spartanburg County was the end result of almost 100 years of British rule in South Carolina. As a result, Spartanburg naturally inherited the status quo already prevailing in Charles Town. All of the social and political thought of the cultural center of the state, including attitudes about blacks, Indians and slavery, were transplanted to the new territory.

The Upstate was ill-suited for growing rice and indigo, the two principal crops of the time, prompting some to deem it a wasteland. Its perceived lack of fertile land meant that settlement and the advent of black slaves was slow. In 1790, almost 30 years after the settlement of the city, only 893 blacks versus 7,907 whites could be found in the upcountry. However, as we shall soon see, slavery was by then a Carolina institution and blacks would soon play a role in the early history of the county, even fighting in the American Revolution at the Battle of Cowpens.
Chapter Three: Early Spartanburg through the Revolutionary War

In the first two chapters, we have seen how color prejudice against black Africans developed and how it combined with African slavery and changes in European society to create the Atlantic slave trade. We have also considered the founding of the Carolina colony and the circumstances of its foundation insured the presence of Africans as slaves. Finally, we have also explored the causes of the westward expansion of the colony into the Back Country. In this chapter, the reader will be introduced to life in early Spartanburg and Spartanburg's role in the struggle for American independence.

The first white settlers to reach Spartanburg County ran into an immediate problem: their new home was in the middle of a Cherokee hunting ground and their presence threatened the natives' livelihood. The town of Spartanburg did not know where they were settling. Of course, the cleared land and foot trails should have given them a hint. Therefore, Cherokee opposition to the presence of their former allies was high. The Cherokee's power over all but the boldest of settlers out of the county until 1761. In 1761, the Cherokee were defeated by the British army in what is known as the Cherokee War (1759-61). Driven to the brink of starvation, the Cherokee were obliged to accept British overlordship, opening the door for scores of Europeans to claim, on average, 175 acres of land in the Piedmont.

Even though the Cherokee had cleared large tracts of land, the Back Country was still the wild and wooly frontier. Herds of wild animals ranging from buffalo to bear roamed freely and often came into contact with the settlers. A History of Spartanburg County relates two amusing examples. A Mrs. Ford, who, along with her husband, lived on the Enoree River, once had a panther (also called at this time a tiger, hence the name of the Tyger River) leap "over her shoulder into the cabin [where it] was shut on the poorest day with her husband." On another occasion, a Pocahontas River settler was forced to spend an entire night up a tree after being surrounded by a pack of wolves.

The Back Country was effectively cut off from Charles Town, the capital, and all of the official governmental services of the colony. As mentioned earlier, it was easier to reach Spartanburg from the capital by foot than from Charles Town. There were numerous rivers to cross and these rivers were alternately too swift or too slow and shallow to make the use of boats effective. In fact, as late as 1770, Lt. Gov. Bull refused to venture into the "uncivilized settlements" of the Upstate while touring the state. Furthermore, he declared that it would be impossible for the settlers to be represented in the colonial assembly given their distance from the port city.

This attitude from the colony's leaders translated into a lawlessness that made the Upstate part of the first American Wild West. The Nineteenth District, a colonial yoke or division similar to a county in which Spartanburg was located, was home to bands of thugs and renegades and yet the District had no police force or judicial courts. The settlers were on their own as far as Charles Town was concerned. In 1767, the denizens of Spartanburg took matters into their own hands, forming vigilante bands called Regulators who enforced frontier justice. Despite official protests, the Regulators were able to curb violence and, ultimately, get a court established in the District.

In summary, Spartanburg was a wild, somewhat dangerous place to live in the 1760's and 70's. The only issue at hand was survival. Cut off from "civilized" Charles Town, the rugged farmers of the Upstate had to be self-reliant. Life was work. This spartan lifestyle can best be seen in perhaps the best preserved example of Scotch-Irish farm architecture in the county, the William Place (see Williams Place photographs). Begun in 1776 by the Williams family, it expanded from one building to cover over 1500 acres. Despite the severity of the Irishman's lot, the William Place stood out in the neighborhood. This traditional view of the Old South to the contrary, this was the case in most of Spartanburg and the Back Country. Spartanburg never had a large slave population in the colonial period (even its Civil War-era slave population was relatively small, as we shall see). In the 1760's, only 10% of the state's blacks lived in the Back Country. This was due to the fact that the soil in this area was generally poorly suited to the major cash crops of the day (rice and indigo). This made investing in slaves a costly venture that was never going to produce a large profit for the landowner, who only grew enough food to survive. Moreover, most of the Back Country settlers were poor to begin with, meaning that they did not have the funds to construct plantations even if they wanted to do so. Those few who did purchase slaves only bought a few and labored in the field beside them, living life almost under the same grueling conditions facing slaves in the Low Country.

Travelers to the Back Country were not very complimentary of the lifestyle they encountered. In his unpublished dissertation, Spartan Slaves: A Documentary Account of Blacks on Trial in Spartanburg, South Carolina, 1820 to 1865, Dr. William Cinque Henderson quotes two descriptions given in the 1760's. The first is by Jonathan Mason:

Left Greenville...and rode through a miserable country with a tolerable road, and finally arrived after dark to a miserable hovel by the name of Wilkes. But one room, two beds full of vermin, and not a single thing of any kind to eat or drink; six or seven children crying in the house, and two drunken Scotch neighbors, drinking, reeling and smoking.

Another, even more unflattering description was given by an Englishman:

Left Greenville...and rode through a miserable country with a tolerable road, and finally arrived after dark to a miserable hovel by the name of Wilkes. But one room, two beds full of vermin, and not a single thing of any kind to eat or drink; six or seven children crying in the house, and two drunken Scotch neighbors, drinking, reeling and smoking.
The main house of the Williams Place, easily the best preserved Scotch-Irish farmhouse in Spartanburg County. The Williams family settled on this location beginning in 1776.

The notch here was used as a gun port against Cherokee raiders, a reminder of how wild Spartanburg County used to be.

This is the cookhouse. It was unwise to attach fireplaces to wooden homes.

Golightly-Dean Home. The Golightly family owned a fairly large number of slaves for Spartanburg County (43 in 1850). See Philip N. Reclue's *Piedmont Farmer* for more information.

Zimmerman home. John C. Zimmerman was the county's largest slaveowner. He owned over 100 slaves to work his 1500 acres.
The lower class in this gorging, biting, kick- ing country are the most object to that. [sic] perhaps ever peopled a Christian land. They live in the woods and deserts [sic.], and many of them cultivate no more land than will raise them corn and cabbage, which, with fish, and occasionally a piece of pickled pork or bacon, are their constant food...Their habitations are more wretched than can be conceived, the huts of the savages on the nearest Indian wigwam displaying more ingenuity and greater industry...The summer scorching sun, and the bleak winds of winter, are equally accessible to this miserable dwelling.6

The American Revolution (1776-83) caught Spartans off guard and not terribly interested. As was presented above, Charles Town largely ignored the Back Country. However, in 1776 the Back Country contained 82,492 people, or half of South Carolina's population, and 79% of the colony's whites. If there were to be a revolution against Britain, the agitants in Charles Town would have to have the Back Country's support.

What caused the Revolutionary War? It is beyond the focus of this work to detail the events leading up to the break with England, but we can grossly oversimplify matters. For the bulk of the thirteen colonies' existence, Britain had allowed them to govern their own affairs in exchange for military protection. After winning the French and Indian War in 1763, the British dominated North America and wanted to make their empire profitable. To do so, they demanded the right to control the affairs of the colonies by passing laws favorable to British interests. Of course, Britain was justified in doing so because the King owned the land and the colonists were still mostly British citizens. However, after years of answering to no one and having developed a sense of independence from Britain, America's leaders were not interested in "foreign control." Laws passed to aid Britain (e.g. new taxes) would cripple American business and cost the wealthy pride, status and money. To escape this fate, the powers that were supported rebellion.

In 1776, all of the power was vested in Charles Town and the "uncivilized settlements" to its north had nothing to gain from breaking from Britain. In fact, British control, it was argued, might result in the creation of more courts and a better infrastructure. For this reason, Spartanburg was decided pro-Britain during the outbreak of the war. Depending on the Back Country support, Charles Town sent two delegates to drum up support for independence. The only stronghold for independence thought was in the area around what became the City of Spartanburg. A rebel militia called the Spartan Regiment was raised. Civil war between loyalists and rebels soon followed, as did renewed Cherokee raids.

The Cherokees were quickly beaten and the Spartan Regiment was divided into a home protection unit and a traveling militia to help against the British in the spring of 1778. In 1779, the British decided to emphasize seizing South Carolina instead of their southern plan. They planned to defeat Charles Town, search the Back Country into North Carolina and then confront General Washington in Virginia. He would then be forced to fight a two front war and his poorly equipped, ill-trained army would fold without much effort.

The plan started well. In May of 1780, Charles Town collapsed before the British onslaught. With its fall, most of the rebel militiamen of the poor land of the Back Country surrendered, sure that the war was over. During the rest of the so-called Dark Summer, the British swept through South Carolina. Reports of atrocities committed by the British circulated, inspiring the outgunned rebels to fight on out of fear of their fate at British hands. On June 12, 1780, the Spartan Regiment reorganized and went back into action. Fighting with the British everyday between the 12th and 16th of June, the Spartan Regiment managed to kill over 100 British soldiers while only losing less than half that number.

On January 17, 1781, after months of fighting in Spartanburg County, the forces of the British Army met the American forces commanded by Col. Daniel Morgan and the members of the Spartan Regiment at the Battle of Cowpens. Despite a communications foul up that sent part of Morgan's forces retreating during the heat of the battle, the American forces won a decisive victory. This battle was the most significant fought in the Back Country and, by stopping the British march to Virginia, may well have saved General Washington and the soon to be new nation from defeat.

The Battle of Cowpens is probably the most significant event of Spartanburg County's history. This is clearly demonstrated by the fact that the city and county received their names from the Spartan Regiment and by the fact that the City of Spartanburg erected a statue in then Colonel Morgan's honor and named its central square after him when the city was incorporated. The role of blacks in the conflict, however, is generally overlooked. In total, some 3000 blacks are estimated to have participated in the American Revolution, despite General Washington's opposition. On average, 35 black soldiers were included in each white regiment. There were also some all-black regiments fielded. At Cowpens there were at least two black heroes. The best known of these was a fourteen-year-old boy named Collin. Collin was the personal slave and bugler of Lt. Col. William Washington. During a gun battle, Collin is credited with killing a British soldier, thus saving the Lien's Court House. A History of Spartanburg County also records that the slave of Samuel Clovey of Fairforest helped his master capture four British soldiers. If there were other black heroes at Cowpens, the author is unaware of a source that records their heroism.

Conclusion:

After 1783, the United States of America was a free nation.
During the immediate aftermath of the Revolution, many blacks, especially those in the northern states where agriculture was not the largest industry and blacks were in small numbers, received their freedom. If the war was fought in the name of liberty as we proclaim, many argued, can we justify keeping the blacks who helped carve the nation out of the frontier and helped to defeat the British in slavery? Thus did many northern states abolish slavery.

In the South it would not be so. After the Revolutionary War, slaves were going to be needed more than ever to produce the large amounts of food and cash crops that the newly independent nation would need to survive. Furthermore, talk of slave liberty terrified Southerners. Freeing slaves would mean lost money (no compensation for money invested in the initial purchase plus the costs incurred in feeding, clothing and housing the slaves as well as reduced crop yields due to there being fewer laborers) as well as the presence of a large population of former slaves who might become violent. This was especially feared in South Carolina given its black majority in Charleston (its name changed after independence) and the large numbers of blacks throughout the state. Perhaps this is why blacks heard shouting "Liberty! Liberty!" after hearing of Patrick Henry's rousing declaration "Give me liberty or give me death" were promptly imprisoned.10 For South Carolina to be prosperous and safe, it was believed, slavery had to be maintained. Like most people would be, South Carolinians were not willing to give up their security and livelihood without a fight. This fight was the Civil War.

Chapter Four: Spartanburg, slavery and the coming of the Civil War

The end of the American Revolution did not result in immediate improvements in the Back Country of South Carolina. For the next several years, Spartans would continue to live under the frontier-like conditions described earlier. However, the establishment of the United States as an independent nation did start what would become Spartanburg County down the road to civilization and prosperity, and with this prosperity came a boom in agriculture and a greater slave population.

In 1785, the old Ninety-Six District was divided into Abbeville, Edgefield, Laurens, Spartan and Union counties by the General Assembly. Spartan County contained an area of 1,050 square miles (a portion of which was taken in 1897 to form Cherokee County, which is why Spartanburg County can claim the Battle of Cowpens as being part of its history). The creation of an organized county began attracting new settlers to the area. These newcomers settled around the jail and courthouse, the only two public buildings of the time, in what is now Morgan Square. As Philip Racine writes in Spartanburg: A Pictorial History, "[t]hus they formed a nucleus which drew business people of various kinds."

With this nucleus established and the area officially recognized by the state, Spartanburg began to grow in the 1800's. The area's mills and more productive agriculture, combined with the energy and vision of some of the earliest citizens, began to generate a fair amount of capital and Spartanburg became something of a trading center. Consider the first bill of sale recorded in the county:

William Nel of Spartan County sold to Daniel Jackson of Union County for 200 pounds sterling (cash) 3 negroes—a woman named Sue, a girl named River (?); a boy named Limas, 1 feather bed and furniture thereto belonging; 1 wagon and gears, 1 white horse, Sept.20, 1785,...2

Notice how the sale of blacks by 1785 could be grouped without distinction with the sale of furniture and work animals.

As mentioned earlier, and as this document confirms, slavery was not big business in Spartanburg. While only three slaves were being sold in Spartanburg on this day, probably over 30 times that many would have been sold in a comparable time period in Charleston. In 1790, the total county population was 8,800. There were 7,907 whites versus 27 "free persons not white" and 866 slaves. In other words, slaves were less than 10% of the population whereas whites were barely ahead (8,089 whites to 7,684 slaves) in the Low Country at this time.3 Of the 1,264 recognized heads of household in the Spartanburg county, 100 households owned 2 to 4
The testimony having closed here, we find Glenn guilty and decide that he be blindfolded and fifty lashes be well laid on the naked hide. The boy John is guilty, and have fifty lashes well laid on the naked hide, having his eyes blindfolded.

That boy Jerry is guilty and have seventy five lashes well laid on the nakedhide, being blindfolded.

That the boys Andy & Steven [property of Mr. Otto] considered the ringleaders are guilty and have each eighty five lashes well laid on the naked hide, both being blindfolded.

That the boy Anderson is guilty and have sixty five lashes well laid on the naked hide, he being blindfolded.

That Sam [the captured slave who revealed the existence of the camp] is guilty and have thirty lashes well laid on the naked hide, he being blindfolded.16

The subject of crime and punishment at this time is a fascinating one. Slaves were not allowed to testify in any case involving a white person. Therefore, since all the cases brought to court involved whites, blacks stood by silently as their crimes real and alleged were put before the court. They were even unable to answer patent urging evidence like footprints. Henderson's dissertation details one case in which a slave was convicted and lashed for stealing a piece of fabric because a woman testified that she had seen him near her clothesline and later saw a footprint from a slave's shoe. In other words, in this world justice did not of necessity depend on eyewitnesses or even reasonably suggestive evidence. Evidence could be anything that the plaintiff and/or the judge wished for it to be.

Most of the punishments meted out for both blacks and whites were whippings. If sentenced to be whipped, the convicted would be stripped to the waist and forced to endure blows "moderately well laid on" and "well laid on" while an official counter stood by to tick off the blows (one hopes he did not lose count too often, though such cruelty surely took place). Most whites received thirty nine lashes, though sentences of two to four lashes were given. Blacks, however, as indicated above, often received in excess of forty. In fact, some slaves were sentenced to over 200 lashes according to other accounts. Usually, though, such a large number of lashes would not be meted out in one session (perhaps a concession to the man with the whip?). Slave records show owners being required to receive, for example, 25 lashes every Wednesday morning. After the beating, the slave, unlike the white felon, would be forced to go back into the fields or be beaten for shrieking his or her duty. This meant that the individual who was not immediately well was able to the degree he needed to heal before he was to be beaten again. These long sentences were veiled death sentences. Openly sentencing a slave to death was considered wrong at this time period because it violated the owner's right to protect his investment. To kill a problem slave sometimes required ingenuity.

While Spartanburg's slave community began to grow, so did rumblings about the institution. The newly established United States should have seen the problems that lay ahead with slavery during the Constitutional Convention in 1793. Right away, the Northern interests clashed with the Southern's interests. Southerners, not wanting to be outvoted by the larger Northern states, wanted their slaves to be included in the population count to be represented in Congress. Northerners bitterly objected, arguing that blacks were not even citizens and should not give the South any greater say in government. The controversy was settled by the infamous Three-Fifths Compromise, which said that one black would be equal to three-fifths of a white for population purposes. Though this problem was solved amicably, it did point to the fact that the interests of the two regions of the fledgling nation were polar opposites in many ways.

The next trial for the Union was the admission of Missouri into the Union. Missouri was to be a slave state, which would upset the slave-free state balance. Violent debate followed. The flare-up was finally defused with another compromise. Maine would be admitted as a free state at the same time that Missouri would be admitted as a slave state. In the future, territory within the Louisiana Purchase territory north of 36°30" would be free while territory south of that line would be open to slavery. The Missouri Compromise (1820-21) would keep tensions from expansion fairly low for the few years.

This gave the economic conflicts already present in the Union since its beginning room to become inflamed. As more and more political power shifted north (immigrants generally did not wish to move south due to the climate, slavery and other reasons), the federal government began passing tariffs to protect budding northern manufacturing from cheaper foreign goods. The result of this was higher prices for Southern consumers on desired items as they passed tariffs on their cotton production as European nations raised import taxes on American goods. In short, the South felt that it was being burned twice and resented preferential treatment for the North. With such new tariff, the South grew more irritated. Furthermore, the federal government was also spending large amounts on railroads, canals and other internal improvements, almost all of which were constructed in the North.

Finally, in 1828, John C. Calhoun of South Carolina drafted the South Carolina Exposition and Protest. In it, he argued that a state should have the right to nullify a bad federal law. In Calhoun's mind, one's allegiance to his state was more important than allegiance to the nation as a whole. In 1832, Calhoun supported a South Carolina move to declare all tariff laws nullified, launching the Nullification Crisis of 1832. Calhoun's stance did not have any sympathetic listeners. Nullification was largely ignored by other southerners, putting South Carolina in a precarious situation, especially after Congress passed President Andrew Jackson's Force Bill allowing for a federal invasion of
South Carolina if necessary. Hoping to appease South Carolina, Congress passed a revised tariff bill that reduced the duty rate by 20% and promised further reductions. South Carolina agreed but, to show its dedication to the principle of Nullification, nullified the Force Bill.

As the South was reeling with the issues raised by the Nullification crisis, fears of slaves were also rising. 1821 had seen the Denmark rebellion in Charleston. Vesey had been brought Charleston in the 1780’s but had managed to buy his freedom after winning a lottery in 1800. Vesey apparently spent much of the next several years planning a large-scale revolt against Charleston. According to John Hope Franklin, he and his handpicked associates had amassed 250 pike heads and bayonets and 300 daggers by 1821. The revolt was planned to take place on the second Sunday in July (1822), but word leaked out and the revolt was pushed up to June. This prevented Vesey from getting word to all of his scattered associates. Meanwhile, alerted white officials launched a retaliatory strike against the rebellion, arresting Vesey and several associates. Thirty-five were hanged, 34 banished and 61 acquitted. Of course this crushed the rebellion, which may have had as many as 9,000 blacks involved. News of the plot spread through South Carolina like wildfire and the result was widespread terror. The massive slave revolts in Haiti and subsequent black overthrow of the French army in 1803 were not that far removed and the stories of Haitian violence probably gave many slave owners anxious nights.

If the Vesey plot got South Carolinians anxious, the next major insurrectionist plot scared them witless: the Nat Turner Rebellion of 1831. The period between 1821 and 1831 had seen an increase in slave insurrections, but none had ever gotten completely out of hand. In 1831, however, Nat Turner, viewing himself as a divinely chosen Messiah for the enslaved blacks of America after seeing mysterious signs in the heavens, launched a reign of terror on Southampton County, Virginia, that left over 60 whites and numerous slaves dead. At 2:00 a.m. on the morning of August 21, Turner and his accomplices murdered another black family. They then set off down the road, murdering their way through the countryside in the dead of night and liberating the slaves of the deceased. By noon, the band was up to sixty armed and mounted runaway slaves wanted for mass murder (they had even killed an entire classroom of children). About 2:00 p.m., the revolt began to crumble. Thirty men deserted. At daybreak on the 23rd, a planned assault on Dr. Blunt’s plantation was beaten back by Blunt’s slaves, whom he had armed. At 7:00 a.m., a band of armed landowners met the roving band of slaves. By 9:25 a.m., all of Nat Turner’s revolutionaries were dead or scattered. Turner fled and managed to avoid capture for over two months. He was hanged on November 11, 1831, 12 days after his arrest on October 30.

The last great antibalaverty rebellion would be led by a white man named John Brown. In 1859, after fighting against slavery in Kansas and elsewhere, Brown decided to raid a federal armory and distribute the weapons to slaves for use in an uprising. He chose Harpers Ferry in Virginia. He and his army of whites and blacks took control of the facility. Though the revolt failed miserably; most of the army was killed at Harpers Ferry, it was another example of the violence that was accompanying antislavery sentiment among both blacks and whites.

The 1830's also saw the development of the first of the many abolitionist societies in the North. These abolitionists were inspired by strongly held convictions about the immorality of slavery, moral and/or political reform were areas of focus depending on the individual in question. Regardless of motivation, though, these radical reformers lambasted the South with curses, insults, and stringent denunciations that inflamed passions on both sides of the issue. With every attack, Northern antislavery sentiment increased while, conversely, Southern resistance to Northern proclamations on slavery intensified. Simply stated, Southerners revered being demonized by outsiders. Many persons in the Union, especially in the Midwest, had reservations about slavery often were swept up in passionate defenses of the Southern way of life and soon began to identify slavery as its central representation.

The land issue came back in 1845. Texas declared its independence from Mexico in 1836 and allied itself with the United States. When it made claims to independence, it was still Mexican property and its annexation by the United States would cause war. Mexico declared war and was quickly and decisively beaten. As a result, the United States could annex Texas and was now the southwestern United States. This brought back the question of whether slavery would be allowed to expand into the new territories. With all of the anger in the South towards the attitudes expressed by Northerners and the slave riots that had threatened the security of the South, the Missouri Compromise, which was already less popular, was once again on the table. Some in the South had been calling for the acceptance of slavery, the situation soon broke into open civil war, prompting the nickname "Bleeding Kansas."
an enormous electoral majority (180 votes when he only needed 152). To Southerners opposed to Republicans in general and Lincoln in particular, this was proof of a Northern conspiracy to place a sectionally elected candidate into office to destroy the South with an abolitionist platform. Lincoln was the final straw. Less than a month after his election, South Carolina voted to secede from the Union, in essence nullifying Lincoln’s election and its decision to join the Union. This occurred on December 20, 1860. On April 12, 1861, Confederate soldiers fired on Union soldiers inside Fort Sumter. The Civil War had begun.

Conclusion

The causes of the Civil War have only been briefly sketched here. States Rights, if defined as a state’s ability to do what is in its best interests without regard for other states, was at the heart of the Southern decision to leave the Union. However, the belief that the South’s secession was forced by Northern aggression alone is romantic revisionism. Racial fear was an important facet of the problem. Another important concern was money. Tariffs unfairly aided the North, but the real issue seems to have been the fact that 60% of the Old South’s wealth was tied up in agriculture in 1860 and slaves were the backbone of the cotton kingdom. The abolition of slavery would have bankrupted the South as well as placed it, Southerners feared, in mortal danger. These factors combined to make Lincoln and the Republican Party unacceptable to most Southerners, including the white citizens of Spartanburg. It was better to fight for a cause fervently believed in than to accept defeat by surrender.

Chapter Five: Spartanburg and Reconstruction

The Civil War ended on April 9, 1865, at Appomattox Courthouse, Virginia. It was a war in which blacks served with some distinction. In 1862, South Carolina free blacks and runaways had been organized into the first all-black Union company, the First Regiment, South Carolina Volunteers, by an overzealous Union commander. This was, however, in violation of Lincoln’s orders and the group was disbanded. Later, though, reverses on the field in 1862-63 forced the President to make an aboutface and accept blacks into the Army. In total, 161 black army regiments comprising 178,975 soldiers saw action for the Union in the Civil War, the most famous of which has to be the 54th Regiment of the Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry celebrated in the film Glory. Ironically, this unit made up of northern free blacks, southern runaways (many of whom were enlisted in Charleston), and other blacks from Cuba and the Caribbean was decimated at Battery Wagner here in South Carolina. Despite the valiant efforts of these close to 200,000 men, most of the white soldiers and commanders seem to have had no respect for them. Historian Peter Burchard records this Civil War marching song in One Gallant Rush: Robert Gould Shaw and His Brave Black Regiment:

In the battle’s wild commotion,  
I won’t at all object,  
If a nigger should stop a bullet  
Coming for me direct.

Though Spartanburg County had seen no military action during the war itself—on April 20, 1865, however, a cadre of Union soldiers seeking to arrest the President of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis, spent 36 hours in town—it had furnished 484 soldiers to the Confederacy. 608 of these died in service and another 500 or so were disabled. As for Spartanburg itself, it had served as a sort of vacation spot for soldiers off the line and as an off the line hospital. Several prominent men in the community who had been big backers of the Confederacy were ruined, but, by and large, Spartanburg escaped the war without any damage. The same, however, could not be said of the South in general:

Throughout the South, property values had collapsed. Confederate bonds and money were worthless; railroads and rolling stock were damaged or destroyed. Stores of cotton that had escaped destruction were seized as Confederate property or in forfeit of federal taxes. Emancipation at one stroke wiped out perhaps $4 billion invested in human flesh and left the labor system in disarray. The great age of expansion in the cotton market was over.

It was upon this utterly devastated society that the victorious Union forces proposed to impose Reconstruction (1866-1876). Reconstruction refers to various federal plans to bring
about the social, economic and political refashioning of the South to be more in line with the ideologies of the industrial North. A form of affirmative action, Reconstruction also proposed, in theory, to better the lives of the newly freed blacks by forcing Southern society to open long closed doors to them. Needless to say, social change was fought bitterly by the South. This struggle gave rise to civil disobedience, racial animosity and, ultimately, racial violence as organizations like the Ku Klux Klan sprung up in the South. Surprisingly, Spartacus ended itself in the middle of all this turmoil, and in 1871, became a focus of national and international attention as racial violence spun out of control and the Union seemed ready to rupture again.

Plans to readmit the Southern states started with Abraham Lincoln. His plan required that a number of citizens equal to 10% of a state's population in 1860 take an oath of allegiance, that the state agree to accept emancipation and that Confederate leaders be precluded from government before it could be readmitted. Before this plan could become federal policy, however, Lincoln was assassinated and the task of rebuilding the Union fell to a man completely unsuited to the task, Andrew Johnson. Johnson was a backwoods politician from Tennessee. His one redeeming characteristic was that he was a Unionist. He had been added to the Republican ticket in 1860 to appease Southerners. It did not work. Once he became President, though, Johnson showed that his ideology was more Southern than Republican. He was an abolitionist, but neither was Lincoln. The Emancipation Proclamation was more a political stunt. Rather than freeing slaves in the border states, which were under federal jurisdiction, Lincoln aimed the decree at Confederate states. The purpose of this subterfuge was to paint the picture that the South had left the Union solely to preserve slavery. The British and the French had originally supported the South, which gave the South a decided advantage, because of their distance on the one hand (although, their people's reliance on their protection and their desire to protect their interests did not necessarily mean that they would not support the South...just as had been planned). Johnson's Reconstruction plan did not call for many improvements for the freedmen. Voting rights were to be extended solely to the educated, severely limited black political power. Rather, all the states had to do to be readmitted was invalidate their ordinances of secession and accept the Thirteenth Amendment and its ban on slavery.

The South loved this plan and responded to it by passing a series of restrictive laws reestablishing the Black Codes. Despite the literal meaning of federal law, these laws ignored their intent. There were white laws and black laws and the two were definitely not equal. For example, black children could be apprenticed. A white could legally kidnap a child and compel him or her to work for him by saying that he was teaching the child a trade. Curfews were still in force. Any black deemed idle could be arrested and forced into servitude. In short, slavery was reestablished and the South promptly rejected its Civil War past. The Radicals in Congress refused to accept the "new" Southern congressmen elected under such a system. Angered that the South seemed to take the four years of bloodletting that resulted in 620,000 dead lightly, Congress stepped up the pressure. In 1865, Rep. George Julian of Indiana and Rep. Charles Sumner of Massachusetts proposed that Congress seize land in the South from former rebels and parcel it out to the freedmen 40 acres per man since the President supported the South. The plan was never accepted—and gave rise to the myth that the federal government promised blacks 40 acres and a mule and that black intent was to take land and from whites and give it to blacks! Could black rule be far behind?

Meanwhile, black and Northern passions were stirred by the horror stories leaking out of the South. Rather naively, the North believed that plantation owners would simply allow their slaves to walk off the farms and into freedom on April 10, 1865. Instead, when slaves were allowed in many areas, they rioted. Herbert Shapiro quotes a report written by Republican leader Carl Schurz to President Johnson:

Some planters held back their former slaves on their plantations by brute force...Armed bands of white men patrolled the country roads to drive back the Negroes wondering about. Dead bodies of murdered Negroes were found on and near highways and by-paths. Gruesome reports came from hospitals—reports of colored men and women whose ears had been cut off, whose skulls had been broken by blows, whose bodies had been slashed by knives or lacerated by scourges."

In 1866, large scale race riots occurred in New Orleans, where black and white Republicans were mobbed and beaten inside a convention hall by Confederate veterans, and in Memphis, where discharged black servicemen were attacked by police officers the day before the election ended. These attacks indicated that the terrorizing blacks out of voting and exercising their full political potential. Partly as a result of this, Congress proposed the Fourteenth Amendment, which granted and protected the citizenship rights and privileges of the freedman. The South rejected it almost unanimously. With such flagrant acts of disrespect for federal authority and the dead, even moderate Republicans were outraged. It was now clear: Congress had to take control of Reconstruction if there were to be a South. To do so meant that they also had to be rid of President Johnson, who had vetoed all of their previous attempts at legislation due to divisions within the Republican party. With this surge of feeling, Congress began knocking down presidential vetoes (they even were able to almost impeach Johnson later). By 1867, Congress ran the nation and an unpopular Johnson was powerless to stop it. This marked the end and final stage of Radical Reconstruction. Among the legislation passed by these Radicals was a bill expanding the powers of the Freedmen's Bureau (the local office was in Greenville) and the Civil Rights Bill of 1866, which
enforced the rights offered by the Fourteenth Amendment. The Radical Reconstruction's biggest accomplishments, and ultimately the source of its downfall, were the Reconstruction Acts of 1867. The acts divided the South into five military districts. Each of these districts had a Union officer and detachment assigned to crush insurrection and widen the voting population to include blacks. The acts also required that all the states submit new written constitutions respecting black suffrage which would have to be approved by Congress and that the states ratify the Fourteenth Amendment.

It goes without saying that the South did not react positively to Radical Reconstruction. In Spartanburg, as it was all over South, public sentiment was decidedly negative. Forced to change against its will, the South once again stubbornly resisted. If blacks were accepted as citizens, then they would easily become the majority representatives in the General Assembly and in Washington. To many Southerners, despite the pleas for calm and acceptance of the political realities of the defeat, the Fourteenth Amendment was simply too much to take. A History of Spartanburg County quotes provisional Governor Benjamin F. Perry as saying this of the Fourteenth Amendment in 1867:

I will never degrade myself, or my state, or surrender my constitutional rights of Republican principles to gain the favor of the Union. I will live under the government, no matter what the absolute or despotic it may be, and bequeath it to my children, sooner than vote a Negro government for South Carolina... As an outgrowth of this type of sentiment, the Ku Klux Klan began to ride in Pulaski, Tennessee, in 1868. It quickly made its way to South Carolina.

Spartanburg rapidly began reflecting the general atmosphere of the state after the Civil War with a virulence that belied its large white majority (Spartanburg had a white majority of nearly 1,100 and could rest assured it would elect white representatives). So strongly held were Spartanburg's political/racial views that the city of Spartanburg was home to one of the first lynchings in the state, if not the nation. It occurred on October 9, 1865, six months to the day after the end of the Civil War. The victim of the assault was named Bob and was the former slave of David Holcombe. The body was so stiff when it was cut down by "one of [Holcombe's] neighbors" that it stood up by itself. According to the deceased's wife, four white men had come to their home on the night of October 9th and told Bob to come with them to settle a dispute that he had with a detachment. Once off with them and a short while later, his wife Delse heard a scream. Terrified, she waited until morning to go after him, apparently fearing that she would share his fate.

It might strike the reader as odd that Holcombe still had "his negro" living with him after the war. It is hard for the modern reader to comprehend, but slavery was all that those people knew. Travel had been highly restricted, so they knew little of the land around Spartanburg County. Furthermore, they were needed, with the exception of those slaves trained as artisans, could only work as manual laborers in agriculture. Since they were forced by circumstance to remain in agriculture and since their former masters needed laborers (especially after the introduction of fertilizers just before the Civil War made cotton more plentiful), it seemed logical for blacks to stay on and work in familiar surroundings. This was the beginning of sharecropping and tenant farming. The landowner would provide land to persons interested in working on his land. In exchange, they agreed to give him a fixed percentage of their revenue. Supplies for the renters came from local merchants, who gave necessary supplies and credit lines to sharecroppers against a lien on their crops. Since it was very possible that the crop might fail or be very small, creditors demanded interest rates ranging from 20% to 70%. The end result was perpetual debt for the sharecroppers and this perpetual debt in South Carolina for both blacks and whites in agriculture lasted well into the twentieth century.

However, not all former slaves were quick to return to field work. Many freedmen set off to find family members scattered all over the country by slavery. Others, longing for a change of scenery and adventure, chose to go west. The history of the American West is filled with black cowboys as well as black soldiers sent to the frontier to face Indians. It was from the Indians in the West that the black soldiers received the nickname by which we know them today: the Buffalo Soldiers. The name came either from the heavy buffalo skin coats they wore or from their wooly hair. The blacks were also called waginum aapa, or black white man, by the Sioux. Other freedmen took freedom from slavery to mean freedom from work and promptly settled into a rigorous routine of doing nothing and accepting federal assistance. As could be expected, Southerners keyed in on these persons and cursed Reconstruction for taking blacks out of the field and putting them under shade trees where they wiled away their time with liquor and song.

This new freedom translated into several exciting new options for blacks in Spartanburg. First, emancipation and Reconstruction brought new blacks to Spartanburg. The railroad had arrived in Spartanburg in 1859, greatly facilitating access to the city and contributing to its economic development. Freed blacks often hopped trains and got off at hub stations, which Spartanburg was on its way to becoming. In 1865, federal troops began relocating blacks from rural areas to more urbanized ones. Many freedmen and freedwomen moved to the city, most of them toSPI, Old City and the Catholic Church, where they and another family were taken in by the minister until they could find their own lodging. Since no source is known to the author that records how many blacks arrived in Spartanburg in this way, it is impossible to know where these blacks came from or how many there were.
The blacks who had been artisans during the slavery era were able to strike out on their own, opening the first black businesses. Regardless of his race, a good blacksmith was a good blacksmith and his services were needed. In fact, according to the earliest available city directory, Spartanburg County's first black business of record was a blacksmith shop at the corner of Main and Dean Streets owned by Lewis Young in 1880. It is likely that there were more small black enterprises immediately after the Civil War, but it is impossible to prove their existence now.

Freedom also allowed blacks greater movement and independence from whites. As blacks migrated to cities in pursuit of new opportunities, they set up their own segregated communities due to social custom and a desire for safety in numbers. Land was also sometimes purchased for black homes by whites. The land around Cummings Street was purchased by a Northerner, the Rev. A. W. Cumming, and then donated to blacks at no charge to them. These Negro quarters often consisted of one room homes ignored by the city authorities. Since capital was mostly nonexistent in these early black communities and since public sanitation was in its infancy, these early homes were squalid and insanitary. Spartanburg's first black communities grew up around churches. The neighborhoods currently collectively known as the Northside were the "Methodist side," which one can easily understand by simply riding through the area. The Methodists were the first to seek black members, which is why Spartanburg's first black churches were Methodist. The first two black Methodist churches were Bethel Hill United Methodist. Bethel AME and Silver Hill United Methodist. Bethel AME no longer exists—at least by that name—but an educated guess would be that it preceded Silver Hill. The AME movement started before the United Methodist Church started admitting black members as a black Methodist alternative. It was active in South Carolina among free blacks in the 1820's, so it probably reached Spartanburg's free black community prior to the Civil War. Silver Hill was organized in 1869 and is the oldest continually operating black church in the city. The Southside neighborhoods were "Baptist side" and were served by Mount Moriah Baptist Church. Organized in 1870, the church was originally located at the corner of Young and South Liberty Streets. According to the church's history, the original Mount Moriah structure was the first brick church for blacks in the state's history. As blacks established their communities within the city, they also bought their own land and established independent communities like Little Africa, which was organized in 1880 when emancipated slave Simpson Foster and Cherokee Indian Emanuel Waddell merged their lands.

While Reconstruction was helping blacks in Spartanburg and elsewhere start establishing their own independent communities, it also resulted in the appointment of several black justices by the governor. The first black justice, Anthony Johnson, was appointed in 1870 (as we shall soon see). Although, his career was very short. By 1880, three blacks had been justices in Spartanburg County: Johnson, Martin M. Glover and J. Tench Blackwell. However, the most important contribution to the improvement of life for blacks in Spartanburg and throughout the South was access to education. As long as slavery endured, blacks were legally kept in ignorance. As long as this was the case, emancipation, black leaders were convinced that education was the key to betterment. In November of 1865, the first convention ever to be held by blacks in South Carolina was convened in Charleston. Its purpose was "for...the deliberating upon the plans best calculated to advance the interests of our people, to devise means for our mutual protection, and to encourage the industrial interest of the State." The central pillar upon which the plan rested was education:

**Resolved, That we will insist upon the establishment of good schools for the thorough education of our children throughout the State and that all will contribute freely and liberally of our means, and will earnestly and persistently urge forward every measure calculated to elevate us to the rank of a wise, enlightened and Christian people.**

**Resolved, That we solemnly urge the parents and guardians of the young black children, by the sad recollection of our forced ignorance and degradation in the past, and by the bright and inspiring hopes of the future, to see that schools are at once established in every neighborhood; and when so established, to see to it that every child of proper age, [sic] is kept in regular attendance upon the same.**

In keeping with this thought, small, informal schools were organized across the county. The first school of record, though, is "a first class colored school, taught by Prof. W[alter] J. Lewis, colored." While Reconstruction was helping blacks in Spartanburg and elsewhere start establishing their own independent communities, it continued to infuriate white South Carolinians. Forced to help educate blacks, the state's first black college, Claflin College, was founded in 1869 and, three years later, USC was forced to accept its first black student. The state was also forced to accept blacks as state and city officials making political decisions. While these were gratifying, the presence of the black militias (a Northern slap at Southern sensibilities since whites were disarmed) was like a cancer in the soul of the Southerner. Resistance was even worse when men just recently the human work animals of the landed began arresting whites and even went so far as the abuse them verbally and physically. Reports of black militia violence spread just as had stories of slave insurrections and had the same social impact:
terror and anger.

As Southern tempers flared, belief grew on a statewide level that the corrupt government was恢恢Reconstruction, former Confederate officers were banned from governmental jobs. Instead of the South's traditional—and preferred—leaders, the leaders of this New South were career Southern politicians who moved south with carpetbag suitcases, generally in pursuit of fast money, scalawags (Southerners who aided federal efforts against "the Cause") and freedmen. It would be unfair to say it would be unfair to say the Klan was making inroads into Republican sectors. Amazingly enough, though terror was widespread, some of the more radical members of the Klan were, in actuality, acting as vigilantes. The Ku Klux Klan did not always play the role of vigilante. Its activities included the killing of suspected Klansmen. This set the stage for open racial warfare, which fanned into flame in 1870.

The Ku Klux Klan was a force in Spartanburg beginning in 1868, but its prime years were 1870-71. The Klan was led by Henry Liles. It was made up of 300 men. The men, who always attacked on horseback, wore frightful looking horned masks and white robes and carried Hickory whips. The Klan rarely attacked in large numbers, usually raiding in parties of 15 to 25. The Klan was an ambush set against federal officers transporting an arrested Klansman. 100 to 150 riders set against them and the prisoner was set free. Klan activity was strongest in the northeastern portion of Spartanburg County in the Limehouse district. Contemporary estimates of the number of people injured by the Klan ranged from 15 to 227. Although violence escalated alarmingly in 1870, prompted by the corruption of greedy officials and the arming of the blacks. On September 4, 1870, ten boxes of rifles and seven boxes of shells arrived in Spartanburg to be distributed to the county's three companies of the state's black militia (white companies were not allowed). On November 24, 1870, between 20 and 50 Klansmen attacked the jail, where the guns were being kept. Though they made incredible noise, the siege failed. Tensions became higher still and so-called Rifle Clubs sprang up in the county. These were illegal white companies that met in order to be ready to fight off the forces of the Republicans. In December, Anthony Johnson, the county's first black justice, was murdered by the Klan, though many blamed his death on "injured husbands and wronged property owners" and a Republican attempt to blame the Klan for yet another ugly incident. Two weeks later, a white man named Matt Stevens died at the hands of the militia in Union County. A wave of insurrectionary fervor swept the Upstate.

In early 1871, federal troops were sent into the Upstate to investigate. The violence of the day soon made it necessary for the shipment of federal troops to be assigned to the Upstate (March 16, 1871). On March 20th, the home of Dr. C. Wimsmith, a Unionist and Brigadier General, was attacked by the Klan, which believed that Wimsmith had received a shipment of guns and ammunition to give to the militia (Wimsmith vehemently denied this later). When the riders reached Wimsmith's home, they came out on his balcony carrying two pistols and ordered them to leave. When they
refused, he fired on them. They returned fire. In all, Winslow was hit several times. He was 68 years old. However, he was as stubborn about surviving as he was about them getting off his property and about his property. The Klan fled his property and local law enforcement around him.

As South Carolina exploded again and seemed ready for secession, races had not been idle. Just as the South’s out of hand refusal to accept the Fourteenth Amendment caused the Congress and president to pass the Reconstruction Acts of 1867, racial violence that resulted in the passage of three Enforcement Acts (1870-71). These laws established penalties for interfering with the rights of others to vote, placed federal supervisors and marshals at polling places during congressional elections and, in the third act (the Ku Klux Klan Act of 1871), banned conspiratorial organizations, the wearing of disguises, etc. and gave the President the authority to suspend habeas corpus (the requirement that there be evidence to justify someone’s imprisonment) to suppress insurrection.

On July 9, 1871, a subcommittee dealing with the former member states of the Confederacy arrived in Spartanburg to investigate Klan activity. National attention was riveted on Spartanburg County as a week of testimony from blacks and whites painted a grim picture of violence. The minutes of the Spartanburg hearings are recorded in The Condition of Affair in the late Insurrectionary States of South Carolina (1872). The testimony is a fascinating glimpse into the terror under which many blacks, resistant to resist armed insurrection.

One former slave, Hampton Parker, testified that the Klan visited his home and demanded that he turn over his gun. In what has to be one of the most unbelievable turns of events to a modern mind, Hampton Parker retrieved his loaded gun from inside the house and handed it over without trying to defend himself. The disabled man was then "Mrs. Lunn," close to 200 yards, blindfolded, stripped and whipped with peach tree branches. "I never have had a whipping since I have been a man grown," he testified. "I might have got it when I was a little boy, for little children have to have whippings; but I have always tried to behave myself, and act like a negro ought to act, and I didn't think there would ever be such a time as this." Parker also testified that he, as did other blacks, began sleeping in the woods, sometimes for months at a time.

Another especially intriguing aspect of this case came in the testimony of Republican McMillan, whose home was burned down because she attempted to help a black man named John Hunter. Hunter, the former slave of a con man killed in a fight, denounced McMillan to the riders and then came along behind the woods, point out her head. She had not been hit previously. Hunter apparently bore a grudge against McMillan and was willing to see her whipped to have it settled. The record does not reveal if Hunter denounced any others.

But perhaps the most telling testimony occurred on the 15th, two days before the hearings concluded. Samuel Gaffney, now who had testified on the 10th, returned to the stand to retract that the Klan had visited him the night before and to testify that the panel of their second visit, he told them that he was simply too afraid to stay in Spartanburg any longer and was hiring himself out on the railroad. Despite a federal presence, Gaffney did not feel safe. He was not alone in this assessment. Droves of blacks left the Upstate in search of a better world. Some went north to major cities or west to the frontier. Others called a Promised Land 160 miles north of Spartanburg and still others may have boarded the ship Azor and sailed to Liberia.

Conclusion:

The Spartanburg Klan hearings closed with no immediate results. In October, Grant was forced to suspend habeas corpus and that the latter was placed under martial law. The Klan was crushed by federal agents, only to have the charges against the Klan members dismissed and/or commuted. The hearings were denounced as partisan politics and both blacks and whites agreed that the state government was corrupt. Public opinion turned decidedly against Reconstruction in South Carolina and throughout the nation. The Civil War had not been a war quite a while and most Americans wanted to simply get things back to the way they were. In the election of 1874, corruption was widespread. Southern states stole ballots, sent in two sets of conflicting returns and used terrorism to silence Republicans. The election was a farce. So, the front running Republican candidate, Rutherford B. Hayes, met with Southern Democrats and agreed to withdraw federal troops and end Reconstruction if he were declared the winner. This so-called Compromise of 1877 ended the Reconstruction in South Carolina, where there were 2 men claiming to be governor (federal troops had to seize the State House to get the Republican candidate inaugurated). The federal government ordered that the installed Governor withdraw and that his Democratic rival, Wade Hampton, be named Governor. Hampton, the Democratic leader, then rapidly set about dismantling the Reconstruction system. Blacks were swept out of office. The old leader's revolution. Blacks were swept out of office. The old leaders returned. The hated constitution of 1868 was attacked and subsequently dismantled and replaced with a racially motivated document that reinstitutionalized the Black Codes and tightened their severity. These were the first days of Jim Crow South Carolina, an era that lasted into the 1950s. "Home rule" was restored. And the blacks were in "their place."
Chapter Six: The Rise of Spartanburg to the Depression

The inauguration of Wade Hampton marked the beginning of the Bourbon Era of South Carolina. Just as the French Bourbons had been overthrown and then invited back to power, so were the former leaders of the Confederacy. The return of "home rule" under the "conservatives" meant the end of the political power of blacks at the state and municipal levels, with rare exceptions, except in the blackest portions of the state. Beginning in 1877, politics in South Carolina became race driven, with each subsequent administration seemingly trying to find yet new ways to increase restrictions on blacks to prevent another Reconstruction from ever again occurring. Surprisingly, Spartanburg, which came into its own in the period from 1880 to 1920, was quite liberal by the standards of the day. With the exception of a nasty incident in 1917 related to Camp Wadsworth, the huge Army training center established in the Westgate Mall area, Spartanburg's majority community accepted blacks—as long as they stayed on their side of town—and allowed the black community to grow both professionally and educationally. Unfortunately, the Great Depression of the 1930s wiped out much of the black community's progress and, just as it had done after the Civil War, the community had to start all over again.

The Hampton government and subsequent Bourbon administrations linked themselves with the old aristocracy of the antebellum era. They were widely known for their impressive dignity, stylish appearance and eloquent speech. Just as these qualities are serve to impress, they can also serve to anger. The Bourbons were greatly resented by the so-called "wool hat boys," an early term for what we might more readily call "rednecks." These uneducated men were farmers and did not appreciate the upper crust's emphasis on industrializing the state at the expense of farmers. Incapable of grasping the fact that the nature of the world had changed to such an extent that large scale farming was no longer profitable, they associated Bourbon industrial reforms with haughtiness and self-interest. They also resented what they felt was Hampton's "softness" of the "Negro question." Hampton had won the general election of 1876 and he contributed his win to the 17,000 black votes that he received. In return for their support, Hampton had wanted to incorporate them into the Democratic Party, a move opposed vehemently by the Upcountry because it meant Low Country political dominance. Instead, Gov. Hampton granted minor governmental appointments to blacks and supported justice and education for the black community.

This should not imply, however, that Hampton was a liberal. All Southerners more or less agreed with the editor of the Richmond (Va.) Times when he editorialized: "It is necessary that this principle be applied in every relation of Southern life. God Almighty drew the color line and it cannot be obliterated." The Hampton government was the first to help the Almighty redefine his indelible line. Their first legal tool was the implementation of literacy tests. Since 78.5% of blacks in the state were illiterate,
a literacy evaluation was a perfect way to be rid of them without violating the letter of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. However, 21.9% of whites were also unable to read and denying these men their right to vote was deemed unconstitutional and unfair. So, South Carolina and other states which established similar laws, started allowing the Registration Board to select the text to be read and set the standards by which literacy would be determined. It then became apparent that most white illiterates were suddenly literate whereas illiterate blacks were still illiterate. As a result, educated blacks—were prohibited from voting. Other, far less sophisticated tricks used to prevent black voting were moving polling places, ballot box stuffing, poll taxes (voters had to pay poll taxes six months in advance and keep receipts), poverty stricken blacks often could not afford to take the money from their meager budgets as sharecroppers and were generally cut off from loans for such purposes) and simple racial violence.¹

The Reconstruction era civil rights laws had expressly forbidden segregation and these laws were the next targets of the white community's wrath. In 1883, the Supreme Court held that the protections of the Fourteenth Amendment did not prevent individuals from discriminating against blacks. Federal law only could be extended to state governments. This was the South's cue to begin building up "separate but equal" facilities. Beginning in 1881 in Tennessee and continuing throughout the 1890's, states attacked the most visible and hated aspect of Jim Crow. Soon, every Southern state had a law establishing "one drop of blood". In 1896, the Supreme Court again gave its blessing to this order in its Plessy v. Ferguson case. In Plessy, the court ruled that an octogenarian who was arrested and ejected from a train after refusing to give the white car (this was the South of the famous One Drop Rule. Any black ancestry meant that you were black and subject to the restrictions placed on the black community) was not being discriminated against since he did have a place on the train elsewhere. Shortly thereafter, other "Jim Crow" legislation appeared, legally segregating streetcars, hotels, restaurants, theaters, city parks, hospitals, recreational activities, etc, until the 1960's. Only municipal functions like police departments and, later, public schools were maintained by the city for both communities. Moreover, these institutions were segregated, with the blacks serving solely in the black communities.

Though this new state of affairs forced blacks to create their own business communities and provide for themselves as much as possible, it also led to racial violence. Righteous and self-righteous blacks refused to accept such an obvious defeat of everything for which they had fought so long. This quickly inflamed passions and culminated in lynching. Between 1882 and 1901, there were fewer than 107 lynchings in the United States in a 20-year period. The highest number of lynchings was 255.³ Between 1890 and 1899, there was an average of 188 lynchings each year, 24% of which occurred in the South. From 1900 to 1909, the average number of lynchings dropped to 93 per year, but an incredible 92% of those were in the South.²

If the Bourbon government was not truly a friend to blacks, the next major governmental movement in the state was the blacks' sworn enemy. Resentment of the Bourbons and the modernization of the state continued to rise into the mid-1880's. In 1885, angry wool workers in Piedmont began a strike. One of the most colorful, and controversial, figures in the history of the state: Benjamin Ryan Tillman, also known as "Pitchfork Ben," given to blustering, Tillman was a firebrand, without mercy. With his tongue, he was political dynamite, and, to continue the metaphor, blasted the Bourbon administration apart. The Upstate, long a center for race baiting, was especially fond of Tillman. Ultimately, 56% of the leaders in the Tillmanite movement came from the Upstate.³ In 1890, Tillman won the governorship of South Carolina, a position which he held from 1890 until 1894, when he left the office to become a U.S. Senator. His impact would be felt, though, even after he left office. Missouri than any single other person, Tillman was responsible for the constitution of 1895, which codified many of the blatantly racist doctrines of the White Reconstructionists. From his first speech as governor, Tillman had made it clear that he supported completely disenfranchising blacks and even was so bold as to say during his second term that he would lead a lynching mob against a black man who had assaulted a white woman.⁴

The Constitution of 1895 continued to require literacy tests. However, the early literacy test would have disenfranchised 13,241 whites and given the vote to 74,851 blacks.⁵ Therefore, whites deemed illiterate were given up to three years to convince the Registration Board of their literacy. This accomplished, they would receive lifetime registration. Later, a property consideration was made. To be eligible to vote, a man had to have property valued at $300 or more and whites made the value determinations on properties. Another curiousity of the 1895 Constitution was that persons convicted of certain crimes were banned from the polls for life. Among these crimes were wife beating and receiving stolen goods, crimes which blacks committed much more frequently than whites. Not enough, the courts sought to strip a man of his voting rights. The Constitution further incorporated the poll taxes and the other illegallities like ballot box stuffing and the like also continued. In short, blacks were emasculated politically.

Tillman was followed by more Jim Crow segregationists. Perhaps most notorious of these was Gov. Coleman L. Blease (1911-1915). Blease had learned at the feet of his master, and took the racial rhetoric to a new height, so much so that even Pitchfork Ben thought his excessive(!). He had effectively played on the class tensions in the rich and lynchng. Between 1882 and 1901, the racial trump card was well on the road to the Governor's Mansion. Perhaps the best indicator of Blease's attitudes is a statement that he made about lynching and the Constitution: "I say, 'To Hell with the Constitution,' the protection of the white women of South Carolina."⁶ Here was a man radical enough in his thought to call for the suspension of the
The highest law of the land in order to hunt, murder and torture blacks.

The above summary shows the social and political development of the state from the end of Reconstruction until the beginning of the 20th century. This inflexible thinking defined the way that racial issues were covered in this book, which is one of the reasons that the Civil Rights Movement was so difficult for it. However, not all of South Carolina showed the same degree of racial intolerance as the state. Spartanburg showed a remarkable coolness of passions in this tumultuous time, which is why the early black community was fairly stable and why violence was not the order of the day.

Spartanburg came into its own in 1880. Until that time, Spartanburg was still a village and had only around 3000 people. Despite the lack of size, the population had tripled during the 1870’s and the city fathers called upon the state legislature to incorporate the area as a city. The legislature’s approval of the city charter meant an impressive social change in the city. Gas lamps began to light city streets in 1882. As mentioned early, the city had established a fire department in 1873, but the real department was not in place until the city purchased its first fire engine in 1882. The city opened its first public schools in October of 1884. In 1888, the first fire hydrants, drinking fountains and indoor water supplies became available. The next year, the Spartan College, a female college to provide the same renown education that men had been getting at Wofford since 1854, opened. Also opened that year was Spartan Mill, the city’s first cotton mill. 1890 brought the first paved street in the city. Two years later, street cars (pulled first by mules) appeared. By 1900, railroad tracks made Spartanburg on the way to anywhere in the nation. In short, within 20 years, Spartanburg was one of the fastest modernizing and most important cities in the state and in the Southeast.

Though the black community did not grow as quickly as the city, 1890-1900 saw an incredible growth in the service sector for such a small black community. Spartanburg’s black community was blessed with a surprisingly large medical community. The best known of this early community is Phyllis Goins, for whom the housing complex is named. Goins, the daughter of a slave from Ivory Coast, was the baby nurse of over 400 infants, according to local tradition. However, there were also licensed doctors practicing in the Spartanburg area as early as 1895. The first physician of record seems to be Dr. W.C. Rhodes. Born in North Carolina in March of 1865 according to the 1900 Census, Rhodes graduated from a medical school in Raleigh in 1892. In 1899, Rhodes and Dr. G.W. Adams, another Spartanburg area doctor, organized the first statewide black physicians association. Its first meeting was held in Spartanburg in 1900. In 1903, Dr. George K. Adams (Adams in Census records) of Laurens County, a graduate of Meharry Medical College, moved to Spartanburg and set up shop as the city’s first dentist. According to Dr. Allan Charles’ History of Dentistry in South Carolina, Dr. Adams was not only the first black dentist in Spartanburg; he was also the first black dentist in the state. 3 His practice was located on North Church Street. After the end of Reconstruction, the state recognized the need for more black dentists. The state provided a loan of $2,000 and only licensed black hospitals. It was located on Dean Street at the time of the construction of Callahan’s Funeral Home. The hospital opened in 1913 and remained in operation until it was consolidated with Spartanburg General Hospital as the Negro Annex in 1932. The hospital grew out of Nina Littlejohn’s determination to help her community (she was also head of the Spartanburg Department and Vice President with the Piedmont District of the Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs, which aided young girls in trouble) and her husband’s connections (he was a barber in a shop on Magnolia Street that catered exclusively to white gentlemen which explains how they arranged to get the license). The hospital was built next door to the Littlejohn home and provided comfortable surroundings for up to 36 patients. The patients were fed from a vegetable garden behind the hospital structure. There were, but the hospitals were not insured with the mainstream hospitals for blacks. The Peeples Hospital (1915) and the Providence Hospital, established in 1923 by Carrie E. Perry on the site of what is now J.W. Woodward Funeral Home (another business of the era as it was founded in 1916) are the only hospitals listed in the census of Spartanburg’s black citizens. The building was used for public functions and also for the hospital. The presence of these hospitals on the Depressed era and also that of Woodford, another business of the era as it was founded in 1916 is visible in the city’s eastern neighborhoods.

Spartanburg’s black business community also began to thrive in this era. By 1900 a discernible black business district was developing on Short Wofford Street, though the area was largely residential (one wonders if this is why the county jail was built on Wofford Street). These early businesses were mostly restaurants and small establishments like barber shops and butcher shops. 1911 would bring Henry Hudson’s Hotel Hudson, the city’s first black hotel, and in 1913 Eli Chapman opened the first black real estate office. Not all black businesses were located on Wofford Street, of course. By 1880, blacks owned shops on Church Street. Charles Bomar, who later became one of Spartanburg’s wealthiest black citizens, ran a grocery store. In 1890, Edward McKissick, a traveling reporter from the Charleston News and Courier, reported that Charles Bomar had one of the best stores in Spartanburg, black or white. He later became an undertaking operator, making his establishment the first funeral parlor of record. In the 1930’s, Bomar also was a black business mentioned specifically by McKissick as being on Church Street. The two stores in Spartanburg’s preeminence in the community. As we shall see shortly, there were also two men in the city deemed representatives of the black community, related to Bomar’s community. As we shall see shortly, there were also two men in the city deemed representatives of the black community, related to Bomar’s community. As we shall see shortly, there were also two men in the city deemed representatives of the black community, related to Bomar’s community.
Draper Mills baseball team, 1954. Black baseball began in Spartanburg at the turn of the century.

Burial marker of Thomas Bomar, Spartanburg's first black city official. This marker is in the Cemetery Street Cemetery.

Callaham's Funeral Home. The funeral home stands on the site of the John-Nina Hospital (1913-1922).

Tobe Hartwell Apartments.

own stock in the mill. 1896 was also the year that Ptolesy C. White opened the first black pharmacy at 10 Kennedy Place.

Spartanburg also had a small journalism community. In 1896, Luther Gilliard began publishing the Spartanburg Advance, the city's first black newspaper. In 1899, there was also the Piedmont Indicator, which was managed by Laban Morgan. Unfortunately, no copies of these newspapers are known to still exist anywhere in the state.

The city of Spartanburg also had blacks with municipal responsibilities. In 1890, according to the McKissick article, the city employed two blacks as nightwatchmen, making them official members of the police department. Unfortunately, McKissick does not record their names and efforts at locating City Council minutes that might reveal their identities failed. However, again citing local tradition, one of these officers is believed to have been Tobe Hartwell, for whom the housing complex was named in 1942. As we shall shortly see, it is very likely that this is true, for Hartwell was very highly held by the black community as well as the white community. Another black with municipal responsibilities was Frank Thompson of 34 Bell Street. In 1896, he became the city's first black mail carrier. However, the most impressive of all was Thomas Bomar. Outside of his responsibilities with his company, he also found time to sit on the City Council in 1890 as the city's first black alderman.

Finally, the city of Spartanburg also had its own black baseball teams by the early 1900's. Baseball had become a national obsession since its introduction in the 1880's. In order to provide their mill workers with diversions, mill owners paid to field teams. In the Jim Crow South, though, blacks, who only held menial tasks in the mills anyway, could not play with white squads. Therefore, mill owners fielded black teams as well. Spartanburg also had its own semi-pro black team, the Spartanburg Sluggers. Though it triumphed over its Greenville rivals in the 1909 season, the Spartanburg team would always take a back seat to Greenville, which a team that could rival many professional Negro League teams of the day. So impressive was the Greenville team that they had been invited to Cuba to play the Cuban X Giants, the Negro League champions of the United States and Cuba, in 1961. No one knows if the game was ever played. By 1942, black baseball was popular enough to have resulted in the creation of the Carolina Colored League and the Spartanburg County Colored League in this area.

The biggest push in the black community, though, was still in the field of education. In 1883, the first Board of Education for Spartanburg was convened to organize Spartanburg's first public schools. On August 8, 1884, the Board invited Charles Bomar and Tobe Hartwell to discuss the creation of the first black public school. On August 27, the Board selected the teachers and principals for the school. The principal of the new school was to be R.M. Alexander (he never took this position. His first principalship was at the Dean Street School in 1895). The first
teachers were Phillip B. Bomar, Mary Hartwell and Clara Farrow. The principal was to make $30 a year while the teachers each earned $26.14

This new school, called the Lincoln School, opened in the basement of the original Mount Moriah Baptist Church on October 13, 1884. Its opening was scheduled to coincide with that of the opening of the Carlisle School, its white counterpart, but the church’s basement need extra work done. In October of this first school year, there were 186 white students and 144 blacks. In February, there were 336 blacks attending to only 214 whites. This growth in the number of black students could be attributed to the generous support of the northern Presbyterian churches, which paid for the creation of the city’s second black school, the Randall Academy. This school was absorbed into the city’s school system on February 9, 1885, only to be replaced by another school organized by Mrs. W.P. Young that sprang up in the basement of Silver Hill Methodist Church. In 1886, the Grant School on Short Wofford Street was added. In 1891, the Dean Street School was erected.

1891 marked the highwater mark for black schools. As was discussed earlier, South Carolina had gone Tillmanite in 1890 and racial politics were more en vogue than ever. This increase in white resentment of blacks and the perpetual dislike of paying taxes to send other people’s kids to school (a familiar complaint to the modern reader?) combined to make both state and local governments cut funding to schools. In 1891, all of the black schools closed except for the Dean Street School, referred to on maps from 1891 as the Colored Graded School. This was largely due to the fact that the schools started having to demand tuition charges and poor blacks could not afford the “luxury” of educating their children if they were to survive. As black schools were closing, West End School was built (1892), joining with 1890’s Magnolia Street School in providing education for white children. In 1892-93, the teachers at the two white schools received an average of $39.00 a month while the blacks received $26.00, as much the result of less education as racial politics.17

In 1898, the first class of blacks graduated from Dean Street. They were: Mamie Jeter, Lila Woodruff, Ella Montague, Catherine McNeil, Drayton H. Nance, Gussie L. Gaither, Samuel Wiggins, Joseph Bomar and Thomas Edwards.18 They were two years behind their white counterparts and limited in their choices. Most students could not afford to go to college. Those who could could really only decide between Claflin and State College for Negroes, both in Orangeburg. Though Spartanburg had two fine colleges that attracted new families to the city, blacks were denied access to them. Though the state’s black colleges were good schools, they were at that time dedicated to being A&M schools (agriculture and mechanics). This was due largely to the fact that the best respected black leader of the era, Booker T. Washington, urged blacks to forego contentions with whites over education at white schools or political rights and get practical, technical educations. This accommodationism was fine with whites and most blacks, so that was the order of the day. In
fact, it explains the construction in 1891 of the Colored Industrial Training School by Professor T.A.J. Clemons. It appears to have been on the site of the present day Carver Junior High School because the structure standing there in the early part of the 20th century was called the Clemens Street School Building. Like Washington’s Tuskegee, the CITS was a technical college. The students paid no tuition. It was only by virtue of public support that the college functioned. Unfortunately, the school did not last long.

In 1898, a new white school was added with no corresponding black school being built. It was clear that the construction of the next black school would have to be done by others than the city. The other to establish the next school for blacks in Spartanburg was Mary Honor Farrow Wright, who established the Carrier Street School in 1904 in her home. Establishing schools was not new to Wright. Born on August 11, 1862, Wright was always encouraged by her parents to pursue education. In May of 1879, the former slave accepted her first position as a teacher and established the Ben Bomar School in Inman. She continued to move throughout the Upstate, often working for no salary to insure that the children received quality educations. In 1904, seeing Spartanburg’s need for a school on the southside, she started teaching out of her home. It transferred over to the Clemens Street School Building when there were several students. Carrier Street School did not close until 1951, when five years after Mary H. Wright’s death in 1946, a new school building was built on the site of the original wooden building. In 1952, the new school was named in her honor: Mary H. Wright Elementary School. It was a fitting tribute to a woman who taught from 1879 until 1943 and served the Spartanburg community by establishing a home for aged women, a charity Christmas tree program that lasted three decades and several other organizations.

In 1915, Highland Avenue School opened to serve the needs of school aged children. In the 1920’s, another technical school, the Spartanburg County Training School, opened in Fairforest. It was one of the many schools sponsored by Julius Rosenwald, a philanthropist dedicated $63 million to helping blacks. By the 1950’s, the SCTS had become a true high school, Lincoln High. The school burned down in 1952 and the students transferred to a new location. The site of the second school is the former site of R.P. Dawkins Middle School, which is named after the former principal of Lincoln. Dawkins and Mary H. Wright are the only schools in the area named for black people. The last black school established prior to the Depression was Cumming Street School (1926). It was located next to the city incinerator.

As this brief overview shows, Spartanburg’s black community had developed a lot of institutions by the Depression. It can be imagined that blacks felt fairly secure about their status in the community. Even when Birth of a Nation, D.W. Griffith’s controversial film on Reconstruction which features a salute to the Klan, shot in Piedmont, SC, made its South Carolina debut in 1915
in Spartanburg and was received as brilliant (it was so beloved that trains and trucks hauled people from all over the Upstate to sit through all four hours of it for over 15 years). Blacks still were able to be reasonably comfortable. However, 1917 proved that blacks still were second class citizens. In 1914, World War I began. America, in an isolationist stage, decided to stay out of the conflict. When dubious threats were made to American citizens (the Germans, a cruise ship, the Lusitania, with American citizens on it. Of course, the ship was carrying weapons, but that was not widely known or cared about at the time), Americans began classifying for war. In 1917, the Americans entered the conflict. However, America had no trained men or guns for them to use prepared. So, the federal government set about scouting the nation for possible training sites. The city fathers of Spartanburg desperately wanted the camp and the notoriety that it would bring the growing city of 30,000. The federal government gladly accepted such enthusiasm. When the city learned that it would get the camp, it was overjoyed. Construction of the 915 outbuildings, ten storehouses, three field hospitals, four military hospital facilities, and many infantry companies, 40,000 men, to be sent began almost immediately. It required some 3,000 locals. However, questions soon turned to a potentially troublesome issue: Who are we going to get?

The answer came quickly. Members of the New York National Guard would be sent south and the camp was to be named after General John J. Pershing. The Yankees accepted this new Yankee invasion with much better humor than it had the first and warmly welcomed the soldiers who would be going "over there." These new Yankee soldiers enjoyed Spartanburg, though it did leave something to be desired from the standpoint of an off-duty soldier looking for immoral distractions. As the first summer of Camp Wadsworth's existence wore on, racial violence once again became headline news across the South as black units ran into racism in St. Louis, Philadelphia and other cities. Spartanburg was soon worried. Would black units be coming to Wadsworth? The Army promised them no. That should have tipped them off.

On August 29, 1917, five days after reports of another major conflict in Houston reached Spartanburg, a reporter informed the city that the Fifteenth New York Infantry (colored), a volunteer unit from the Harlem area, was reporting to Wadsworth. Mayor J.F. Floyd spoke for the entire community when he said that trouble was inevitable because "with their northern ideas about race equality they will probably expect to be treated like white men." Shopkeepers vowed not to serve them and threatened to lock down any black who even dared to come into their stores. Meanwhile, the blacks in Harlem were equally tickled to hear the news. It had been a volunteer unit of blacks and had, therefore, been ignored by the state. No one even bothered to issue weapons or uniforms to the unit. The uniforms were later bought with community donations. After such a troubled start, the last news they needed was that they would be going south. Upon arriving in Spartanburg, the unit was ordered not to respond to violence or provoke any response. Instead, they were to frequent black establishments. Though the black businesses were the best the city's blacks could make them, they were poorly stocked and disappointing for someone from Harlem.

One evening, a black was thrown into the gutter in front of the Franklin Hotel by two white men he was passing. The private got to his feet and kept walking, but two more whites saw the incident and responded by throwing the Spartans in the gutter. Black soldiers also were ordered about by storekeepers and denied access to newsstands to buy newspapers. During the second week of the unit's stay, a white man drove out to the camp and reported that two soldiers had been lynched in town at the police station. It was a lie, but, coincidentally, two soldiers had missed roll call. A company of the soldiers, armed and angry, set off to town. When their commander discovered that they had gone, he rushed to town and found most of the unit outside in formation. However, two men were already inside the police station with drawn rifles. The situation deflated when the police chief, sure that he was going to die, allowed the station to be searched top to bottom and the troops were satisfied that their comrades had not been harmed. The unit then marched back to camp in formation. Three weeks or so later, on October 25, the unit was withdrawn and sent back to New York.

This unit later was shipped to France where, once it was apparent that the government intended to use them to unload ships for the duration of their stay abroad, was absorbed into the French Army and its French supplies and fought under the French flag. The Fifteenth, known as the Harlem Hellfighters, is rumored to have never lost an inch of ground and was credited by the French as having saved their forces from collapsing in the Argonne Forest, thus saving France from a German invasion that would have radically changed the face of the First World War. The entire story of the unit is detailed in the 1986 documentary Men of Bronze.

Conclusion

Camp Wadsworth infused a great deal of money into the local economy during its almost two years of existence. Without it, though, the city returned to its mostly agricultural roots. Farmers continued to farm as they had always done, to the detriment of the soil. While Spartans doggedly insisted on tradition, the nation's economy fell apart in 1929-30. Banks closed and ruins and even the wealthy became desperately poor. With federal help through the New Deal and the coming of World War II, the nation pulled out of its ruins. However, the always financially weak black community was crushed. Since the knapsack lost during the 1930's as a rule did not return in the 1940's. However, what did return in the 1940's was a desire for greater civil rights. Moreto than anything else, the Second World War launched the Civil Rights Movement and, as the Supreme Court and federal government acknowledged new responsibilities towards black Americans, the future looked a great deal brighter.
Chapter Seven: Spartanburg from World War II to desegregation

The last chapter treated the rise of Spartanburg's black community as it paralleled the rise of the city and then commented on its collapse during the Depression. After briefly introducing some influential developments locally in the 1930's, this final chapter will focus on post-war Spartanburg and the move towards racial equality and the integration of the public schools.

A few important new leaders appeared on the scene in the 1930's. The first of these leaders was Dr. Theodore K. Gregg. Gregg was born in Lester, SC, as the fifth of twelve children. He graduated from Claflin in 1925 after having spent much of his childhood moving about with his minister father. Gregg graduated from Meharry Medical College in Nashville in 1930 and relocated to Spartanburg. By this time, most of, if not all of, the early black doctors mentioned last chapter had either moved, retired, or died. Dr. T.K. Gregg soon became a symbol of black professional attainment in the community. He was attached to the Negro Annex of Spartanburg General Hospital and is said to have never refused a call any time of day or night. A champion of the rights of the underprivileged, Gregg was active in pursuing help for the mentally ill. His greatest passion, though, seems to have been children. Concerned by the lack of recreational facilities for children on the northside, Gregg used his local and state contacts to raise enough money to construct a wooden center on the land that is now the Carolina Panthers training field. The center then transferred to its present location when Wofford College purchased the land to create a soccer field. As a sign of thanks, the community named the center in his honor. Dr. Gregg's career was cut tragically short by an accident. He died on March 26, 1939, after only eight years of professional practice.

Upon Dr. Gregg’s death, members of his family and black community leaders began searching for a black doctor to take over his practice. They selected Dr. John Capers Bull, a 1938 graduate of Meharry. On August 1, 1939, Dr. Bull opened his first office in Spartanburg on Short Wofford Street. Bull would practice medicine in Spartanburg for 51 years. He often accepted alternative forms of payments from his poorer patients and, according to his wife, died in December of 1990 with stacks of uncashed checks in his personal belongings. In 1967, Bull became the first black appointed to a major board in South Carolina since Reconstruction when Gov. McRae named him to the State Mental Health Commission. Dr. Bull’s lifetime of service to the community was recognized in 1981 when the J.C. Bull Apartments were named in his honor.

In 1933, Mrs Carrie Hamilton, one of Mary H. Wright’s daughters, opened the city’s first black business school. It was officially licensed by the state in 1935. Her sister, Mrs. Adia B. McWhirter, became the first black music and art teacher in the city as well as the first black female instructor at the South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind. Mrs. McWhirter died on August 26,
1976, after 73 years of service to Spartanburg.

Perhaps the most important development in the black community in the 1930's was the founding of Carver High School, the city's first true black high school. From 1939 until the end of Jim Crow segregation, Carver's principal was C.C. Woodson, Jr.. A native of Spartanburg, Woodson, Jr.'s first educational responsibility in Spartanburg came when he assumed the principalship of Carrier Street School from his father, C.C. Woodson, Sr., in 1931. In 1939, Carrier Street transferred to the site of Carver High School and Woodson stayed on as principal. Woodson is remembered as a stern disciplinarian with great concern for the future of his charges. Without proper training and vision, he often reminded, failure was guaranteed:

One writer has said, "It's all right to stand like a rock but don't let yourself get covered with moss." Work hard to accomplish a place in your community, and you will win a place in the hearts of men.

To each and every pupil of Carver, accept a challenge for a useful future and say that I will be "somebody." Our community, state, nation and the world are all in need of men and woman who can make each better by having lived a useful life. In order to live a useful life, you must plan now, enter into it and you will surely make some worthwhile contribution to all mankind. Do not forget, "What you are to be, you are now becoming."

Carver became the jewel in the black educational community's crown. It ultimately produced two generations of black doctors, lawyers, teachers and professionals. For this reason, along with his other services rendered to the city, the C.C. Woodson Recreational Center was named in his honor.

Not only did some of Carver's students go on to become local legends, so did some of the teachers. It is hard, perhaps, for the modern reader to fully appreciate the importance of black teachers in the 1930's. More so than doctors or other professionals, teachers were symbols of the possibility of higher attainment because children saw teachers everyday. Because of this impression, early black teachers were called upon to do a great deal more than teach. They were called to be community activists, mentors and representatives before the white community. In that way, all of the black teachers before integration were heroes, especially since they received less pay than did white principals until the mid-40's when leaders like Mr. Woodson helped to reverse that longstanding policy.

While all educators were significant, two of Carver's teachers really stand out in the community's memory. The first is Dr. Ellen C. Watson. Watson, a native of Spartanburg born in 1916, began her
career as the first black home economics teacher in the city of Spartanburg. When placement services were placed into schools, Watson became the first black guidance counselor. Acting as a mentor, Watson encouraged talented students to complete high school educations and even paid tuition out of her own pocket for some who would otherwise be unable to go. When Spartanburg's schools consolidated in 1970, Watson became the first black guidance counselor at Spartanburg High School and later headed the Guidance Department. A complete listing of Dr. Watson's community activities would be lengthy and surely incomplete. A brief listing includes: membership in the Palmetto Education for Military and into industry. When racism stood in the way of fair hiring practices, FDR issued Executive Order 8802 expressly forbidding discrimination in defense hiring. By 1944, three years after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor brought America into the war, there were over 1 million blacks in the armed forces.

In the spring of 1940, blacks organized the Committee on the Participation of Negroes in the National Defense Program to get more blacks into the military and into industry. When racism stood in the way of fair hiring practices, FDR issued Executive Order 8802 expressly forbidding discrimination in defense hiring. By 1944, three years after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor brought America into the war, there were over 1 million blacks in the armed forces.

The other frequently praised educator who taught at Carver is Miss Louvenia D. Barksdale, who also died in 1990. A native of Sumter, she graduated from Sumter High School, Barksdale received her BA from Allen University and her Masters degree from Columbia University in New York (at this time, there were no graduate programs available to blacks in South Carolina). In 1938, Barksdale launched her teaching career and taught for English at Carver and, later, Spartanburg High School, for 37 years. Perhaps her greatest legacy is the Louvenia D. Barksdale Sickle Cell Anemia Foundation. Established in 1974, the Foundation now sees between 7,000 and 8,000 patients each year. The opening of the Foundation is just the pinnacle of Miss Barksdale's accomplishments. Among her affiliations are the Council on Aging, the Girls' Home, the National Council of Negro Women and the Woman's Community Club. One of Spartanburg's most recognized citizens, Barksdale received awards from groups ranging from the Progressive Men's Club to Wofford College to the state of South Carolina for her work with sickle cell anemia.

When World War II broke out in 1939, most Americans wanted no part in the conflict. The country had just barely survived the Depression. Only with the massive amounts of federal dollars pouring into community's to create jobs had many people been able to stay a couple steps ahead of starvation and rushing off to join into another European war was something that most Americans would not tolerate. The president was Democrat Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who had enjoyed enormous black support during his first two campaigns. Tired of Republican failed promises and tempted by overtures from the Democratic Party, large numbers of blacks had defected to the Republican fold. As a sign of their support, FDR made the first serious presidential attempt to help blacks. His New Deal programs were aimed at aiding impoverished blacks as well as whites, though state obstruction often prevented what that from happening. Southern blacks, however, held to the Labor Standards Act (national minimum wage) or the Wagner Act (set up conditions under which unions could negotiate and encouraged unions to admit blacks). In 1935, the CIO, one of the nation's largest unions, admitted its first black members. FDR also established what is known as the Black Cabinet. This "cabinet" was a gathering of influential blacks, including South Carolina's own Mary McLeod Bethune, to provide council to the president. Though they had no policy making power, their presence was enough to, for example, cause the Secretary of the Interior to desegregate federal cafeterias.

After the war ended in 1945, blacks came home after fighting for liberty in Europe to find no liberty in America. For more than ever before, that was the last straw. Rising black discontent was one of the reasons that President Truman, himself no great liberal when it came to blacks, ordered an investigation of civil rights in America. In December of 1946, the Presidential Commission on Civil Rights was established. In February of 1948, it sent its famous "To Secure These Rights" report to Congress. While Congress delayed action, President Truman issued Executive Order 9981 in July of 1948, integrating the armed forces.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court began to attack the constitutionality of Jim Crow as the NAACP, founded in 1909 by a group of blacks and whites, pushed for legal reform over political violence. Beginning in 1915, when, in Gunn v. United States, it struck down the Grandfather Clause, which required that a potential voter's grandfather have voted despite the fact that the grandparents of the blacks of this era had been forbidden to vote, the Court slowly struck at the underpinnings of Southern political society. Most surprisingly, this 1915 decision led the Klan back into action in the South. As the Court made more decisions supporting the rights guaranteed by the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments at the NAACP's goading as well as the legal interpretation of the times, the Klan's agitation escalated. In 1947, Judge Waits Waring declared the all-white South Carolina Democratic Primary illegal because it disenfranchised blacks. In 1948, Strom Thurmond ran for the presidency as a segregationist Dixiecrat on the States Rights ticket. It illustrated that cultural refusal to accept the marching toward of time on racial matters.

But the big court case of the post-war era was, of course, Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka in 1954. This case, presented before the Supreme Court by Thurgood Marshall, was a combination of cases from Virginia, Delaware and South Carolina (a 1950 case from Clarendon County). In the case, the NAACP argued, and the Court agreed, that the Jim Crow schools were not equal and that the
blacks were not receiving equal education despite having to pay taxes to support the schools. "Separate but Equal" was declared unconstitutional and the Court ordered, in 1955, that Southern states desegregate their schools "with all deliberate speed." This was the biggest challenge to the South since 1865 and many states refused to accept it. South Carolinians were especially perturbed.

Gov. James F. Byrnes had just ordered $75,000,000 to be spent on upgrading the black schools to avoid just such a decision in 1951 and had even gone so far as to establish the first statewide sales tax to pay for it. He vowed to close South Carolina's schools by executive order before he would allow integration. Equally disturbed, Strom Thurmond ran as a segregationist write-in candidate for the Senate in November of 1954 and won. So vehement was Thurmond's opposition to crossing the color line that he still holds the Senate filibuster record. A filibuster is when a Senator stands up and, since the Senate has no rule that restricts the amount of time that one may speak, talks about anything he or she wishes to prevent a vote. Thurmond filibustered the Civil Rights Act of 1965 for over 24 hours. To his credit, however, Senator Thurmond is a good example of how time and increased social contacts across racial lines can mellow prejudices.

Any desire to close schools in South Carolina was probably crushed by President Eisenhower's use of the National Guard and federal paratroopers to force the integration of Little Rock High School in 1957. Integration, though hotly opposed, seemed inevitable. The 1955 Montgomery bus boycott had shown that the black community could organize and that, despite later white violence, little could be done to provoke the kind of violence from the blacks that would sway white public opinion nationwide. In fact, the more vehemently Southerners called for segregation and attacked unarmed blacks with hoses and dogs, the worse they looked in the eyes of the nation and the world.

As the United States entered the 1960's, racial tension intensified as desperate Southerners fought all the harder to keep their traditional way of life. In February of 1960, four North Carolina A&T students began the sit-in movement by invading a dime store lunch counter in Greensboro. The event passed without incident. This tactic caught with students across the South, resulting in the creation of SNCC, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. In May of 1960, SNCC sponsored a biracial sit-in involving over 1000 students in Raleigh. And, in July of 1960, nine unidentified students staged a sit-in at Woolworth's as a protest to a city ordinance banning such actions. The students emerged unscathed after the 75 minute standoff in which local police officers stood behind them, waiting on a provocation. The Rev. U.D. Vernon, concerned that the situation could escalate, went over to a public phone to call other black leaders with the NAACP to help defuse a potential volatile situation. He was spotted by an elderly white gentleman, who, apparently thinking that he was calling police, struck him in the phone booth. Both men were arrested for disorderly contact; however, Vernon had to spend 24 hours in jail and appear before a city judge while the
white man was released in thirty minutes.

This was the only civil rights disturbance of the 1960's in Spartanburg. Unlike in the 1860's, the 1960's saw cooler heads prevailing. Spartanburg's NAACP, established in 1944 with the Rev. W.L. Wilson as its first president, addressed certain inequities in Spartanburg like teacher pay, lack of facilities for blacks and the absence of blacks in law enforcement in the community. The NAACP was in large part responsible for the hiring of the city's first official black police officer, Thomas "Fox" Abrams, in 1950. Abrams, who had served in the military and had saved the life of Amelia Earhart after a plane accident at Pearl Harbor, patrolled in black neighborhoods (in the Jim Crow South, blacks could not arrest whites even if they were flagrantly breaking the law). He was shot to death in the Swing Club on East Valley Street in 1961. The city's second black officer, Francis L. Dogan, was hired in 1953. He, too, was murdered, shot during a domestic dispute. The NAACP also protested against unfair educational conditions like inequitable pay and disrespect from whites, both of which it was able to help correct. In fact, thanks to their calm, rational approach to civil rights needs, members of Spartanburg's NAACP and black community often went to other cities to help smooth over tensions.

In 1950, Joseph G. McCracken became the Superintendent of Spartanburg School District Seven (the schools had been annexed and redistricted in 1950). He surveyed the schools in the area and admitted to being appalled by their condition and began working with the black community to improve the quality of educational life in the community. He abruptly stopped the practice of automatically sending old books and desks to black schools and ordered new supplies for black students. In 1964, Mrs. J. Marion Douglas met with the Superintendent to voice her concerns over the condition of Cumming Street School. Though the District was able to convince the city to move the incinerator next to the building, Mrs. Douglas was determined that her daughter, Wynona, go to Spartanburg High School, where she would have access to better facilities. When she mentioned this to Dr. McCracken he informed her that no application to Spartanburg High School would be rejected on the basis of race. In August of 1964, therefore, Wynona Douglas became the first black student at Spartanburg High School and the first black student to attend a previously all-white school. Though police officers were out in force on the first day, the day was without incident. That same year, Wofford College was integrated by Albert Gray. Just as done District Seven, Wofford simply processed his application in accordance with the law. Though some of the churches in the Methodist Conference withdrew their support from the college and some nasty letters appeared in the local papers (some locals blamed evil Communist plots), Gray's admission into Wofford was also without violence (though he was forced to be a day student). Gray was not, however, the first black to graduate from Wofford. His career was interrupted by a bout with cancer and then duty in Vietnam. The first black graduate of Wofford was Douglas Jones in 1969. Gray returned to graduate in 1971. In 1991, Gray was
named the Minority Businessman of the Year. Converse College was integrated in 1968 by Margaret Jones, also without incident.

**Conclusion**

Though the South exploded with racial violence in the 1950's and 1960's, Spartanburg was for the most part able to avoid conflict. The KKK was resurgent, but its fiery rhetoric no longer had the power that it once had and its terror was greatly diminished. The nation as a whole was moving away from a period of racial antagonism to a new era of more equal opportunity. Though there were trials still to face, the dream of the slaves—equal access to education—had come true.
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Epilogue: The Problem and the Promise

After the birthing pains of the national civil rights movement, the United States found itself at a crossroads. The nation could either proceed down the road to continued racial violence symbolized by the Watts riot in 1965 and the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., or it could choose for itself a new, as yet untried path. Fortunately for the nation, leaders at all levels of society looked to a future of increased interracial cooperation. By so doing, they were attempting to fulfill a promise deferred for over 100 years: the real integration of blacks into American life as full and equal citizens.

Programs aimed at improving life for minorities came relatively quickly after 1965. The Nixon administration supported the creation of the first affirmative action programs to level an unequal playing field, giving legal teeth to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. This second Reconstruction, forced by continued Southern refusals to acknowledge the constitutionally guaranteed rights of blacks as citizens of the United States, served to provide exciting new opportunities for blacks, especially in education.

Beginning with the Johnson administration, Washington began making federal funds available for the renovation of the blighted inner cities of America. Since these funds were primarily aimed at the inner cities, they were, in effect, earmarked for the black community. Between 1975 and 1981, Spartanburg used this federal money to tear down ramshackle houses and buildings and constructed new modern facilities, including a major downtown renovation and the second water tower on North Liberty Street. Even though the urban renewal program did positively change the appearance of downtown, it was not without its negative impacts in the black community. As mentioned earlier, the black business district in Spartanburg flourished primarily around Short Wofford Street, the Southside neighborhood (particularly around North and South Liberty and South Church Street), St. John Street and the Northside neighborhoods. Due to a general lack of funds for reinvestment in these areas, many of the businesses were left in disrepair by the 1970’s. Rather than undergoing costly renovations to the structures and preserving the area, the city opted to level most of the dilapidated buildings and revitalize downtown. As a result, Short Wofford Street, a center for blacks since the turn of the century, was leveled in 1975, as were traditionally black schools and homes throughout the city. Though it would be grossly unfair to label these changes as racially motivated, it is true that the black heritage of Spartanburg suffered a heavy blow during urban renewal. While the buildings truly had no historical architectural significance, they did symbolize the struggle for independence that has defined black history since 1865.

The social and educational integration initiated by 1954’s landmark Brown v. Board of Education also had mixed results in black Spartanburg. Though the white schools were usually in much better condition and granted better facilities to students, the segregated schools had instilled a sense of community solidarity and stern love in generations of blacks. With integration, children began to be bused all over the city, sending students to, for example, one of two rival high schools rather than one common one as is the case today. Furthermore, attempts at social integration also wounded small black businesses. Once formerly all-white department stores able to buy in bulk were opened to all, the once-a-month blocks stopped frequenting their neighborhood stores as often. Within a few years, many businesses failed. It is now quite rare to see black-owned businesses in Spartanburg outside of the eternally segregated enterprises like funeral homes and beauty/barber shops.

Though the above may seem a grim portrait of the state of black Spartanburg since 1970, all has not been setbacks. In fact, Spartanburg has seen many significant firsts in its black community that are quite positive, especially given the city’s history on matters of race. In 1974, after the State House of Representatives reapportioned its districts and adopted a single member district plan, House District 31 elected Hudson L. Barksdale, Sr. as the first modern black state representative from Spartanburg. He served in that capacity from 1975 to 1982. During his service, Barksdale was chair of several committees and is credited with helping to craft the Educational Improvement Act. He was well qualified to speak on matters of education, having taught for over 30 years in both Pacolet and Spartanburg. Among his accomplishments as an educator was serving as the last president of the American Teachers Association, the black national teachers’ organization, before it merged with the National Educational Association, the all-white teachers association. For that reason, Hudson L. Barksdale, Sr. is recognized as having been a president of the NEA. Dedicated to racial justice, Barksdale also served as both a member and president of the Spartanburg chapter of the NAACP, helping to get Fox clothing company to stop shipping to plants not willing to hire blacks. He also served as president of Operation E. Mays, then the state Executive Director. In honor of his service to the city and the state, the City of Spartanburg named Hudson L. Barksdale Boulevard in his honor.

The late Dr. Barksdale was unseated in 1982 by "Tee" Ferguson. Ferguson later became the first black Seventh Circuit Court Judge, though his tenure was cut short in 1991 when he was arrested in connection with Operation: Lost Trust.

In 1976, Cheryl Harleston became the Director of Community Relations for the City of Spartanburg. The Philadelphia native had lived and worked in Washington, D.C. and Charleston. While in Charleston, she became the first black in the history of the state to have a regularly scheduled news program. Once employed with the city,
Harleston, among other projects, served on the city's sesquicentennial committee, helped to establish the acclaimed International Festival and was responsible for the erection of a marker in honor of Mary H. Wright at one of the entrances to the Mary H. Wright Greenway.

In 1984, Spartanburg's own Lee Haney, a former Broome High School football player, won the prestigious Mr. Olympia weightlifting title, beating out 60 of the world's best bodybuilders. Then 24, he was the youngest person ever to win the title. Haney had only been a serious weightlifter since the age of 17 after being sidelined by a football injury. In 1980, only three years into his career, he won Mr. Teenage America. In 1982, he won both Mr. America and Mr. Universe. He would retain the Mr. Olympia title in 1985 and 1986. His incredible achievements in the sport allowed him to launch a series of gyms as well as to have his own fitness show on cable's ESPN, making him arguably Spartanburg's most famous black celebrity.

The 1990's have seen several important black firsts as well. 1993 was an especially good year. That year, C. Tyrone Gilmore, himself a product of Spartanburg's segregated schools, became the acting superintendent of School District Seven, the city's largest school district. This appointment, a first in Spartanburg's educational community, was the culmination of over thirty years of service in education. After graduating from Livingston College, Gilmore returned to Spartanburg as a teacher and coach. In 1972, he became the assistant principal at Evans Junior High and later became the principal at Carver Junior High School, where he served until his appointment. Active in numerous organizations, Gilmore became the head of Omega Psi Phi, the nation's largest black fraternal organization, and served as its president for two years. During this time, he was listed in Ebony magazine as one of the top 100 most influential black men in America.

In February of 1993, Lt. Randy Hardy was promoted to the position of Deputy Director of Public Safety. This made him second-in-command and the highest ranking officer in the history of the city, a distinction that he would hold until Anthony Fisher was named the new Director of Public Safety upon the retirement of longtime chief W. C. Bain in 1996. Both officers bring quality service to the Public Safety Department. Hardy joined the force in 1982 and served in several capacities, being named Officer of the Year in 1986. Director Fisher, a Greenwood native, was selected from a field of over 160 applicants and has over 25 years of law enforcement experience. He is known nationwide for his work in community-oriented policing. In fact, he was selected by the U.S. Department of Justice to train Haitian police officers to serve in a democratic society. 1993 also saw Ruby Cahnoun named as the city's first black female magistrate.

But perhaps the most significant development in the history of blacks in Spartanburg occurred on Monday, January 3, 1994. On that day, James Talley became Spartanburg's first black mayor. The youngest of eight children, Talley grew up in the Phyllis Goins housing complex. Talley, too, graduated from Livingston College and returned home to teach and coach. Talley was elected to City Council in 1981 and gradually rose in position until he became Mayor Pro Tem. When Mayor Robert Rowell left office to pursue another career opportunity, Talley became interim mayor. In the next election, the popular Talley won the office of mayor in his own right, the payoff for years of dedicated service. Of his election, Talley said, "I hope history doesn't stop with, 'We elected a black mayor.' It's a mayor that's black, not a mayor just for blacks--it's citywide."

With these and many other significant achievements on behalf of the entire Spartanburg community, these new leaders symbolize what promises to be a new era of black success in Spartanburg. Gone are the days of slavery, the Ku Klux Klan and Jim Crow. As the 21st century looms before it, Spartanburg, despite the ever-present tensions between its black and white citizens, stands ready to embrace all of its sons and daughters in the name of community.
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As this official census reports shows, blacks in turn of the century Spartanburg were extremely limited in their employment options.

The Ku Klux Klan held as its mission the return of "uppity" blacks to their proper, God-ordained societal position. Below is the oath that Spartanburg area Klansmen are believed to have taken, according to the Klan hearings in 1871.

You solemnly swear in the presence of Almighty God that you will never reveal the name of the person who initiated you; and that you will never reveal what is now about to come to your knowledge; and that you are not now a member of the Red String Order, Union League, Heroes of America, Grand Army of the Republic, or any other organization whose aim and intention is to destroy the rights of the South, or of the States, or of the people, or to elevate the negro to a political equality with yourself; and that you are opposed to all such principles: So help you God.

You further swear before Almighty God that you will be true to the principles of this brotherhood and the members thereof; and that you will never reveal any of the secrets, orders, acts, or edicts, and that you will never make known to any person not a known member of this brotherhood, that you are a member yourself, or who are members; and that you will never assist in initiating, or allowed to be initiated, if you can prevent it, any one belonging to the Red String Order, Union League, Heroes of America, Grand Army of the Republic, or any one holding radical views or opinions; and should any member of this brotherhood, or their families be in danger, you will inform them of their danger, and, if necessary, you will go to their assistance; and that you will oppose all radicals and negroes in their political designs; and that should any radical or negro impose on, abuse, or injure any member of this brotherhood, you will assist in punishing him in any manner the camp may direct.

You further swear that you will obey all calls and summ ons of the chief of your camp or brotherhood, should it be in your power so to do.

Given upon this your obligation, that you will never give word of distress unless you are in great need of assistance; and should you hear it given by any brother, you will go to his or their assistance; and should any member reveal any of the secrets, acts, orders, or edicts of the brotherhood, you will assist in punishing him in any way the camp may direct or approve of: So help you God.
While slavery had its horror stories, not all slaves suffered equally. Spartanburg's slave heritage contains the story of Millie and Christine, the so-called Carolina Twins, who, at the height of their popularity, entertained heads of state throughout Europe.

The Siamese twins were born into slavery in 1857. Their first owner, Joseph P. Smith, moved to Spartanburg from North Carolina so that his sons might attend Wofford. In 1860, the twins were inherited by Pearson Smith, who, before the Civil War, exhibited them in various arenas, including P. T. Barnum's infamous sideshow (so valuable were the twins as a sideshow attraction that they were twice kidnapped) and the royal audience chamber of Queen Victoria.

Millie and Christine were fluent in seven languages and were gifted duet singers. After years of travel, they retired to North Carolina, where they both died in October of 1912 within 17 hours of one another.

For more information, see "The Carolina Twins" by Eugene Warner in the November 1969 issue of Sandlapper, pages 18-21.
This cartoon was sent to Wofford College after the admission of Albert Gray was announced.

Demolition of homes on Highland Ave. In the background is the Highland Avenue Elementary School, which was also razed. The area is now Snyder's on Reidville Road.

Beginning of the Spartan Centre project which resulted in the demolition of the Wofford Street business district.
In 1849, H.H. Thompson granted a parcel of land for a black cemetery. By the turn of the century, the parcel was full. The Charleston and Western Carolina Railway Company purchased 11 acres on Cemetery Street and the bodies were moved there. After paying the initial expenses, the railroad company turned the land over to the city in 1908-1910. In 1925, the city turned over its responsibility to the Spartanburg Colored Cemetery Company. This company's history is unclear, but it was no longer functioning in the 1970s, when a group of citizens launched a campaign to have it cleaned after years of neglect. The city cleaned the property in 1979-1980. It has not been cleaned since.

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