

Sweetgrass Basket Stands under Siege

Catherine F. Marshall

The sweetgrass basket weavers, we're the ones who are hurting. The tradition came from Africa with the black people and now we are doing the best we can with it ... Ain't nothing going to change, they done decided what they're going to do, how they're going to do it. Hey, that's progress. –Eugene Gaillard¹

Sweetgrass Baskets and Basket Stands

The practice of coiled basket making has faced many challenges and been forced to adapt since the tradition arrived in the Lowcountry with enslaved peoples in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Starting as work baskets on plantations, coiled Lowcountry baskets have been transformed into an art form sold primarily along the sides of Highway 17 North, where dozens of wooden stands dot the landscape, and on the sidewalks of downtown Charleston, South Carolina. Over the past generation, declining supplies of sweetgrass presented a serious challenge for basket sewers, but through partnerships with landowners, collecting grass from far afield, and successful efforts to cultivate the grass, the community of basket makers has averted disaster. Now, the Town of Mount Pleasant, a growing city across the Cooper River from Charleston, is in the midst of widening Highway 17, turning it into a six-lane divided highway, displacing many of the stands. Since 1930, basket stands have played an essential role in the marketing and distribution of sweetgrass baskets, and the current road project will change the infrastructure that has supported the art and potentially endanger the survival of the tradition.

Basket stands first appeared along Highway 17, then called Route 40, after the first Cooper River Bridge was completed in 1929. Starting as an overturned box or chair set on the side of the road, basket stands evolved into built structures on which basket sewers display and sell their baskets. This vernacular architectural

Chrestomathy: Annual Review of Undergraduate Research 12 (2013)

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

School of Languages, Cultures, and World Affairs

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form consists of vertical posts with horizontal strips from which baskets can be hung. The concept of the basket stand quickly took off, and nineteen years later, thirty-one stands were counted along a two-mile stretch of roadway in front of Christ Church.² The innovation of this marketing technique, which allows direct access to consumers without any middlemen or overhead charges, has played a decisive role in preserving the tradition and permitting experimentation with design and form.³

Coiled baskets are a traditional art form that developed in the seventeenth century along the South Atlantic coast where peoples from various regions in Africa, thrust into the crucible of slavery, came together and produced a new, unique culture. Sweetgrass baskets of today are made by descendants of those enslaved Africans. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, baskets were essential for processing rice, Carolina's most lucrative export crop. While there is contention among historians on the degree of African influence in establishing a rice culture in Carolina, it is clear that some Africans from rice-growing regions brought knowledge of rice cultivation and the skills to fabricate the tools necessary for its cultivation.⁴ Plantation owners desired slaves from regions in Africa where rice was grown, lending credence to the idea that Africans played a large role in the success and prevalence of the rice culture in the Lowcountry.⁵ Once on plantations, basket traditions from various African cultures mixed, resulting in a unique yet similar style to basketry still made in West Africa, but adapted to the materials of the new environment. This process of adaptation and evolution has continued in the sweetgrass basket tradition and culture, resulting in the innovative new forms and styles we see today.

On Lowcountry plantations a variety of coiled work baskets were made, including the preeminent form of the time—the fanner basket, a wide, shallow basket used to winnow rice. This is a method of separating the chaff from the edible rice grain. The rice husk is cracked using a mortar and pestle and then the grain is tossed up with the fanner, allowing the wind to carry away the lighter casing. A later method used winnowing houses—raised platforms from which the rice was dropped into baskets or other vessels, amplifying the effects of the wind. Work baskets were predominantly made of bulrush, a sturdy, hollow sedge, allowing for large, light baskets. Other than the fanner, work baskets included forms such as vegetable and head-tote baskets, deeper fanners used to carry loads balanced on the head, as is common in Africa. There were also more delicate baskets designed for household or decorative purposes, such as sewing baskets and double- and

triple-stacked baskets. With emancipation, large-scale rice production declined, due in part to competition from other areas, damages inflicted by the Civil War, and a series of devastating hurricanes. Without the free labor of slaves, rice production in the Lowcountry was no longer profitable. Work baskets, however, persisted on family farms that freedmen often acquired from old plantations. Fanners and vegetable baskets became a common sight in downtown Charleston, carrying produce or other goods to Charleston markets.⁶

Early in the twentieth century a market for selling baskets developed, leading to a departure from the utilitarian baskets of the plantation era. A new class of “show” baskets emerged as sewers turned to more decorative styles and tried to appeal to buyers. These baskets differed in materials and technique. Sewers used palmetto leaf instead of palmetto butt or white oak for the stitching, and bulrush gave way to more flexible sweetgrass and longleaf pine for the coiled rows. Furthermore, the stitches were no longer interlaced as they had been in work baskets. A large number of new shapes emerged, such as ring trays, wall pockets, and thermos bottle baskets.⁷ In recent years, baskets have changed again, with the reintroduction of bulrush, the sedge primarily used in plantation work baskets, in response to the diminishing supply of sweetgrass. Bulrush allows basket makers to fashion larger forms, as it is a lighter, sturdier material, and sewers have begun constructing large, sculptural baskets.

An early example of capitalizing on baskets can be seen at the Penn School, founded by northern abolitionists, on St. Helena Island, a sea island in Beaufort County. Basket-making courses were included in the curriculum starting in the early 1900s and lasted through the 1940s. The school paid the students for baskets they made at home or in class, which were sold through the mail. While this was largely a philanthropic cause, as most sales were to donors, it still provided funds for the school and an income for the students.

Seventy miles north, in Charleston, a merchandizing effort was underway, as entrepreneur Clarence Legerton started selling baskets, circa 1918, through his mail-order operation, Sea Grass Basket Company (later Seagrassco), and at his King Street bookstore, buying and selling baskets wholesale and marking them up as much as ninety-two percent.⁸ Mr. Legerton influenced the basket tradition in that he bought mostly compact, easy-to-ship shapes, limiting the range of forms basket makers could sell. These efforts established a market value for baskets, and sewers quickly found a way to bypass such middlemen by selling directly to the consumer from stands along Highway 17.

The original stand is alternately credited to Lottie “Winee” Moultrie Swinton and Ida Jefferson Wilson. One account is that Wilson got into an argument with an overseer and quit her job at Boone Hall Plantation. The story is that she spread a sheet over a chair along the highway and sold a basket the very first day.⁹ Edna Mae Rouse and her mother Betsy Johnson expanded the idea by hanging baskets on “arms” that extended from a shed on their property.¹⁰ These early stands quickly multiplied and evolved into more complex hand-built structures. In 1940, Mary Scott and others built a portable three-legged A-frame stand which they were able



Photo by Catherine Marshall

to pick up and move around, mimicking the mobility of a street vendor.¹¹ Today’s stands have at least four upright posts supporting a roof, and are fairly permanent in their location. Some have “arms” extending out from the main structure, expanding the surface area, allowing more baskets to be displayed. Many sewers have added walls to make a sheltered room that may house heaters and chairs to make the sewers more comfortable.¹² Instead of creating a sheltered area within the stand, some sewers sit and sew in their vans beside or behind their stand. Some

stands also contain modern amenities, such as portable televisions, radios, and credit card machines. While the early stands were anonymous, people today personalize their stands by adding plantings or decorations to the outside and branding them with names, slogans, and contact information, including web addresses. It is very common to find flyers and business cards with information, occasionally housed in sweetgrass holders.

Basket stands provide basket sewers with direct access to their market, bringing economic proceeds and autonomy for the sewer that have enabled the tradition



Photo by Blair Goodman

to flourish. Without the liberty that the free marketing of the stand provides, basket making might not be what it is today. The basket stand is arguably what allowed the basket making tradition to survive in the current wage-labor economy. It provided an outlet for sales with little or no overhead cost to a community that probably could not have afforded it otherwise. Selling baskets is not a steady source of income, and the sewers readily admit that it is very difficult, if not impossible, to make a living on it alone. Many people sell baskets as a supplement to another

income or retirement funds. There are no rules and regulations to use of the basket stands, as there are in other venues, allowing sewers freedom to choose when and what they want to do. The independence of the stand allows for such fluidity, providing basket makers with an alternative source of revenue when they want or need it. Furthermore, basket making and stand tending provide a source of income uniquely compatible with child rearing, as mothers are able to earn money while still being able to care for their children. It is not uncommon to see children at the basket stands, and many sewers today remember accompanying kin to the stand



Photo by Blair Goodman

from a young age and helping the adults by sewing basket bases upon which the adults built. This practice also helps in passing on the craft to the younger generations; many describe their learning process as beginning with playing with scraps of grass that their elders dropped while sewing.

Stands are also credited for allowing the tradition to grow and expand as an art form. No longer constrained only to commissioned pieces or bulk, uniform orders, sewers were able to create and design new types of baskets. This “Sweetgrass

Revolution,” as it has been called, encouraged artists to experiment with different materials and forms. Sewers began to appeal to tourists, inventing forms such as the thermos bottle basket or ring tray. They also found inspiration in everyday life, such as Florence Mazyck’s openwork hamper, modified from a clothes hamper she saw in K-Mart.¹³ Traditional forms and variations on them, however, are still very popular.

The economic benefits provided by selling baskets have caused the number of stands along Highway 17 to increase over time, with seventy-five counted in 1978.¹⁴ Some sewers also found alternate venues for selling baskets, such as the corners of Meeting and Broad, a previous locale of the flower ladies, and the Charleston Market. Stands have steadily migrated north along Highway 17, as development near Charleston displaced them. In the 1990s, the basket stands continued to spread, reaching as far north as McClellanville. In 2009, sixty-three stands were counted along Highway 17 and the downtown locations are more popular than ever before.¹⁵ There has been no formal system for deciding who gets what stand or location, except those whose stands are on their own property or that of kin. In general, basket makers negotiate their own arrangements with businesses and property owners in the area.¹⁶

The number of stands is not necessarily indicative of the number of people who make and sell baskets, as individual stands may cycle through use and disuse with changes in an occupant’s life. Most stands display the work of multiple members of the family, and some sewers buy baskets from others who are unable or uninterested in having a stand of their own. Basket making and selling is a collective enterprise, requiring intact extended families participating at all stages, from collecting grass to selling the finished product. This is jeopardized today as younger generations move away or become uninterested in participating in the art.

Some have likened the basket stand to a stage where basket makers act out their traditions, culture, art, and individual talents. Amelia Muller made this analogy in her 2011 senior thesis, noting that the basket stand came about during the Charleston Renaissance of the 1920s and 30s, which capitalized on nostalgia, characterizing Charleston as a quaint, Southern town, not quite recovered from the Civil War. The basket stand, selling relics of a different time and place, very much fit in with this idea, and baskets can be seen featured in postcards, paintings, and prints of the time. Furthermore, with the extensive kin networks built around basket making, stands demonstrated solidarity and power to the larger community. Muller states, “As a performer of exchange, heritage, and individuality, the contemporary

basketmaker is aware of the audience for whom he or she is performing. Within the theater of the market, the basket stands becomes a stage where basketmakers display their work and assign it both monetary and cultural value.”¹⁷

Challenges and Endeavors to Preserve and Promote Basketry and Basket Stands

At the end of the 20th century and into 21st, efforts to preserve sweetgrass baskets and promote the traditions and culture of the Gullah Geechee people greatly expanded. Researchers started focusing projects on the community and baskets began appearing in museum and art collections. Over these years, however, development made its way into the once rural town of Mount Pleasant, resulting in the displacement of people and basket stands and the destruction of natural resources, most notably, sweetgrass. Ironically, much of the development capitalized on the sweetgrass industry, incorporating “sweetgrass”, “Gullah” or “baskets” into the names of the projects. However, with efforts of local government, many of the more recent development projects have incorporated basket makers into their plans, beyond just in name, allowing space for basket stands and customer parking. .

The popularity of the Charleston area as a tourist destination has been both a blessing and a curse to the basket makers. It has allowed a market to flourish and enabled the tradition to expand. This attention, however, also brought rapid population growth. From 1950 to 1980 the population of Mount Pleasant grew from 1,857 to 13,383. This more than doubled again by 2004 when 34,500 residents were counted.¹⁸ Population growth was accompanied by a decrease in the ratio of black to white individuals; in 1850 the ratio was three to one, black to white, and just one hundred years later fell to one-half to one.¹⁹ The influx of new residents and the businesses that follow has resulted in extensive development, displacement of stands, decreased access to sweetgrass, and a rise in property values, forcing some sewers to sell their family land and move out of the area. Except for Penn School’s persistent conservation efforts on St. Helena Island and the Work Progress Administration’s field work on the Sea Islands in Georgia, which identified bulrush work baskets as unique “survivals” from Africa, not much attention was paid to the decline of the basket tradition associated with the fall of the rice industry in the first half of the twentieth century.²⁰ More recently, however, public interest has been piqued and community organization and activism on behalf of the basket making culture has grown significantly. Even before Mount Pleasant’s political leaders

recognized the cultural importance and uniqueness of the basket tradition, outside individuals, scholars, and museums did. Local newspapers also seem to have been aware of the issues, featuring stories on baskets, basket makers, and the challenges they face as early as the 1930s, but truly burgeoning in the 1970s.

In 1971, two young researchers, Greg Day and Kate Young, lived in and researched the community, documenting baskets as well as other African-inspired crafts. Young wrote a dissertation for Rutgers University, "Kin Networks and Social Power in a Black Sea Island Community," analyzing the complex relationships between individuals and families in the area. Day acquired baskets and other items such as fishing nets, quilts, and rice mortars for the Smithsonian Institution and other museums. A photographer by trade, Day also lent his expertise to creating a pamphlet with information about the craft and images of baskets to help basket makers advertise their wares and inform their customers.²¹

As early as the 1980s, baskets were featured in tourist pamphlets, along with other local crafts such as iron working, but, arguably, it was not until Mary Jackson's one-woman show at the Gibbes Museum of Art in downtown Charleston in 1984 that basket making was widely recognized as an art. This exhibit differed from previous shows in that it was not a compilation of various examples of African influence, or the work of a variety of makers. Mary Jackson presented her baskets as art, and herself as an artist. From this point on, advances in recognition and preservation of the practice increased. In 1986, the McKissick Museum at the University of South Carolina mounted *Row Upon Row*, an exhibition and in-depth study of Lowcountry baskets. This project involved extensive fieldwork and research into the history of the craft and a survey of its current status, including individual techniques and changes that have occurred in people's lifetimes. It also featured a basket stand, displaying baskets as they are along Highway 17. The exhibit traveled to several museums and then, for twenty years, to lower security venues.

In the 1980s, Mount Pleasant basket makers were already facing problems brought about by development. In 1988, McKissick Museum and College of Charleston's Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture held the first Sweetgrass Basket Conference, which brought together basket makers, public and private land managers, conservationists, and politicians to discuss and remedy the already looming threats to the craft. The conference resulted in formal agreements to propagate sweetgrass and expand marketing opportunities.²² Many of these partnerships have been successful in allowing basket makers to

access grass previously restricted by development, as well as in spurring research on cultivating sweetgrass. Perhaps the most stunning example is Robert Dufault's work propagating *Muhlenbergia sericea*, the scientific name for the plant. A long-time Clemson horticulturalist, Dufault has recently published *Stalking the Wild Sweetgrass*, which details his work over the past twenty-five years and describes precisely how to cultivate the grass. For many years, propagation efforts had failed as domesticated grass proved to lack the strength needed for basketry. Dufault focused on transplanting seedlings to the plants' native environment—the area behind the first line of coastal dunes. In 2005, with help of the Army Corps of Engineers, 3,600 plants were placed behind the dune line at Folly Beach and have since reached maturity and proven suitable for basketry. As this project was successful, it was expanded in 2008 with the planting of 10,000 sweetgrass seedlings over a 25 mile stretch of the beach from Garden City to North Myrtle Beach.²³ Replanting sea grasses serves a two-fold need, both increasing a scarce resource and restoring dune health through stabilizing newly renourished beaches that have been destroyed by natural and man-made forces.

In 1989, the basket stands faced a setback when Hurricane Hugo devastated the Lowcountry, destroying nearly all the structures. Typically stands are built out of scrap lumber. they are not built to withstand time or nature, but rather as a temporary structure. It is not the individual stand that is important, but instead the practice of selling baskets and the economic benefits that are important to the tradition. In the months following Hugo, Mary Jackson, President of the Mount Pleasant Sweetgrass Basket Association, successfully sought funds from the National Endowment for the Arts Folk Arts Program to help rebuild the basket stands. Frequent press reports of efforts to alleviate the building pressures on the basket makers indicate increasing awareness on the part of the community, and basket makers themselves began disseminating information about their culture and the need to find remedies for the challenges they face. An article, written in 1994, by basket makers Mary Jackson and Marguerite S. Middleton appeared in the journal *Preservation Progress* and explains the history and significance of the tradition. It talks about the increasingly scarce sweetgrass supply, which for many years was the primary challenge basket weavers faced.²⁴

The Town of Mount Pleasant first publically recognized the significance of the basket industry and culture in 1997 with the placement of a historical marker next to Highway 17.²⁵ The text reads:

Coil baskets of native sweetgrass and pine needles sewn with strips of

palmetto leaf have been displayed for sale on stands along Highway 17 near Mount Pleasant since the 1930s. This craft, handed down in certain families since the 1700s, originally was used on plantations in rice production. Unique to the Lowcountry[,] it represents one of the oldest West African art forms in America.

The placement of this sign seems tardy compared to the increase of outside recognition of the art. However, I believe this reflects the lateness of the Civil Rights Movement in penetrating the relatively closed community. Ironically, this marker has experienced a fate similar to the basket stands. First knocked over by a speeding vehicle and then displaced by construction it now stands, moored between a sidewalk and a looming office building.²⁶

In 1998, the basket makers received an unexpected boon—the election of Thomasena Stokes-Marshall to the Mount Pleasant Town Council. Originally from the area, Stokes-Marshall worked as a police detective in New York City before returning to the Lowcountry in 1993. She served on the Facilities Committee for the Town and after a failed first attempt, became the first African American and first woman to serve on the Town Council. Since winning a seat, she has been a voice for the basket makers in the political and public spheres. In 2004, she helped found the Sweetgrass Cultural Arts Festival Association (SCAFA) and she now serves as executive director. She has been instrumental in forming partnerships with developers and planners to ensure that the basket makers and the larger community are considered when designing various projects. She negotiated with the developers of Town Center to provide basket stands, making up for those displaced by the construction, as well as with Tex Smalls, developer of The Market at Oakland Plantation, inspiring him to commission a large sculpture, *Winnowing Hands*, for the Sweetgrass Plaza in the Wal-Mart shopping mall. The inclusion of a Sweetgrass Pavilion in Mount Pleasant's waterfront park was also due to Stokes-Marshall's efforts. She proposed the idea, and with help from Congressional Representative James Clyburn, she solicited over \$300,000 in grant money to pay for the construction costs.²⁷ She is also responsible for organizing partnerships to permit harvesting of sweetgrass on private property. A prime example is the agreement between Kiawah Island and the basket makers. In July 2007, Kiawah Island agreed to allow the basket makers to come into the community and harvest as much grass as they could carry on an arranged day. Since then, Mount Pleasant Waterworks, Seewee Birds of Prey Center, Town of Mount Pleasant, The Market at Oakland Plantation, and Charlestowne Landing all have joined this program. While the gathering ex-

peditions worked for several years, recently basket-maker participation has fallen. Stokes-Marshall believes the basket makers do not want to pay the twenty-five dollar fee or donate a basket to SCAFA, which are required to participate in the program.²⁸ However, decreased participation could alternatively indicate that the sweetgrass shortage has been alleviated and basket makers are able to obtain their own grass.

In 2000, the Lowcountry Gullah Culture Special Resource Study began looking at options to preserve and maintain the Gullah Geechee culture, with which many basket makers identify. The Gullah Geechee historically lived in the coastal regions and Sea Islands of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida and trace their ancestry to enslaved peoples brought to North America from West and Central Africa. Due to the relative isolation of the region, the culture, language, crafts, beliefs, and lifestyle have stayed largely intact over time.²⁹ The Special Resource Study was performed over three years and was designed to document characteristics of the Gullah Geechee culture, such as food, language, story traditions, as well as the emblematic sweetgrass basket. The Special Resource Study did extensive research on the history and current status of the culture, including numerous community meetings and hearings across the four states, where people were invited to come learn about the project and express their opinions. The study resulted in a recommendation to form the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor, an area stretching from Wilmington, North Carolina to St. Augustine, Florida, including coastal lands and seventy-nine offshore islands, that will preserve, maintain and educate people about the role and importance of the Gullah Geechee culture. Three years later this area was designated the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor, the thirty-seventh National Heritage Area in the United States.³⁰

It was hoped that this designation would protect and promote the sweetgrass basket industry. However, since the designation of the corridor, little action has been taken, due in part to funding problems.³¹ In January 2013, however, the corridor came under the national spotlight when committee members rode on a float celebrating the Gullah Geechee Culture and the Gullah Geechee Corridor in President Obama's second inaugural parade. While this served to garner attention for the Gullah Geechee people and the Heritage Corridor, these efforts seem largely symbolic as development and "progress" have fundamentally changed the region and impacted the lifestyles of the Gullah Geechee people who live there, already resulting in exodus out of the area.

In May 2005, the Sweetgrass Cultural Arts Festival Association held its first

Sweetgrass Festival in Mount Pleasant. Now a yearly event, it is designed to highlight and bring awareness to Gullah Geechee culture and arts. The festival sponsors exhibitions and performances, including traditional dance, music, folklore, food, and baskets. Its stated goals are to preserve the heritage and traditions of the Gullah Geechee culture and the sweetgrass basket-making art and to establish collaborative partnerships with local, state, and national organizations.³²

In 2006, recognition of the importance of sweetgrass basking making escalated, both within the area and outside. This high level of attention began when a third grade class from Belle Hall Elementary School in Mount Pleasant asked that basket making be named the state handcraft.³³ The bill was passed by the state legislature in February of 2006. Three months later, a seven-mile section of Highway 17 from Venning Road to Seewee Road was named the Sweetgrass Basket Makers Highway and signs were placed at either end of the area.³⁴ While the signs are present, marking the zone as an area with a high density of baskets, however, this act seems meaningless, as it had no discernable impact on the community or legislation.

Very recently the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Commission put up signs marking the Heritage Corridor along Highway 17 in Mount Pleasant. These signs are placed within the area of highway construction, creating an interesting juxtaposition. The sign on the southbound side stands on a newly bulldozed, desolate hill beside the six-lane roadway, a reminder of the huge construction project that swept through. While the signs are nice, all aspects of the culture they commemorate have been erased, save the basket stands, which have been destroyed and displaced for the sake of modernizing Mount Pleasant.

An event that inspired hope in basket makers and those concerned with the tradition occurred in December of 2006, when the Town of Mount Pleasant and Charleston County approved the Sweetgrass Basket Overlay District. A joint committee with representatives from Mount Pleasant, Charleston County, and the Highway 17 taskforce unanimously recommended the creation of a district stretching one-and-a-half miles from Long Point Road to Porcher's Bluff Road. This provides different development rules for properties in the district with the intent of preserving and protecting the sweetgrass basket makers. Within this zone, basket makers are legally allowed to set up stands within buffers and rights of way if "the entity having jurisdiction over encroachments to the rights of way extends permission."³⁵ The Overlay District was enacted to help protect basket makers from clashes with the State Department of Revenue and the Department of Trans-

portation over rights of ways and fees. A part of this ordinance limits the stand to five hundred square feet of covered area and requires that there be safe entrance and exit. Ironically, this protected district is exactly where extensive construction would displace the stands several years later, dashing much of the hope this initiative inspired.

From 2006 and 2008, two major real estate development projects impacted several stands. These differed from many of the other construction projects in that they were huge in scale but also that planners made significant efforts to support basket makers. One was the construction of Town Center, which displaced several stands but incorporated an area for four stands within the parking lot that are consistently occupied today. The other was the construction of The Market at Oakland Plantation. In an attempt to mitigate damage caused by construction, developer Tex Small commissioned a sculpture depicting two hands holding up a traditional fanner basket. The work of public art was well received and garnered a lot of attention for the basket making community.

In 2008, *Grass Roots* opened at the Gibbes Museum of Art in Charleston, South Carolina. The exhibit explored the African roots of the sweetgrass basket tradition, and the parallels between the evolution of the art in the Lowcountry and in Africa. The exhibition featured both African and Lowcountry baskets from a multitude of sewers, and even included an idealized stand to represent the traditional venue where baskets are sold. *Grass Roots* is intended to be housed at the Museum for African Art in New York City upon the museum's completion.

National and international acclaim for sweetgrass baskets came at a time of crisis that has cut short many hopes for its achievement. Over the past fifty years Mount Pleasant has grown exponentially, starting as a rural town and expanding into an area crowded with shopping centers, subdivisions, and gated communities. Census data from 2010 indicated that Mount Pleasant's population has increased 42.5% since the previous count.³⁶ The population boom has proven a challenge for the basket making community as high-priced housing complexes are being built at an alarming rate and property values are skyrocketing, tempting people to sell their family land. Furthermore, the 2008 economic collapse caused a steep decrease in basket sales, as Americans no longer had expendable income and tourism dropped significantly. Then, in the depths of the recession, construction of Highway 17 began further disrupting basket stands and sales.

The growth of Mount Pleasant exceeded the capacity that Highway 17 could efficiently handle. Vehicular traffic clogged the highway, creating gridlock during

peak commuter hours, so in 2009, Mount Pleasant hired Collins Engineering, Gulf Stream Construction, and Tidewater Environmental Services to research and draw up plans to widen the highway. Because the construction used federal funding, the planners had to comply with the National Historic Preservation Act, and therefore consider the effects on historic properties. Through these efforts, the sweetgrass basket corridor was deemed a Traditional Cultural Property (TCP) that is included in the National Register of Historic Places. The basket corridor is the first non-Native American TCP in the state. A serious effort was made by the Town of Mount Pleasant and the contractors to research the background and history of the basket stand prior to the start of construction. Community meetings were held early in the process to inform people of the project and get feedback on how to mitigate adverse effects. Tidewater Environmental compiled an environmental assessment detailing probable changes in the area due to the project and addressing potential problems that could arise.

This document addresses sound pollution, water quality, plants, and animals that may be impacted. As the basket stands are the most affected entities in the area, the assessment largely focuses on them and their occupants. In a further effort to take the basket stands and the basket making community into consideration, a section of the study area was designated as a Special Consideration Area for Sweetgrass Baskets.³⁷ Researchers identified benefits and harms of the project and undertook interviews with sewers and stand owners to further explore the situation. Negative effects included displacement of the stands, changes in accessibility of stands, and changes in the character of the highway, as more lanes will accommodate more vehicles moving at higher speeds.

Prior to construction, the highway was a four-lane road divided by a wide grassy median. There were no curbs and people were able to pull onto the shoulder at almost any point. The widening project involved putting in sidewalks and a vertical curb along the entire construction area that would fundamentally change access to stands, as now cars are limited to curb cuts and short driveways that they can pull into. The plan included a flow chart used to determine if a stand needed to be moved, given a curb cut, or remain unchanged. The planning committee outlined six alternatives for the basket stands within the project corridor:

- Option 1: If the stand is abandoned, remove during the construction after significant efforts have been made to determine abandonment
- Option 2: If stand is on basket maker's property, move back onto property if space is available

- Option 3: If stand is on a willing landowner's property, obtain written approval from landowner
- Option 4: If stand can remain in place and still have access and parking area, document and leave the stand in place
- Option 5: If access and parking can be provided at existing location, then provide a curb cut if access will be eliminated with construction of the vertical curb
- Option 6: Stand will be relocated to other SCDOT or Town of Mount Pleasant public rights of way.³⁸

Researchers and planners deemed that thirty-four stands needed option five, nineteen needed option four, six needed option two, and two needed either option five or six.³⁹

Tidewater Employees completed a field survey of the basket stands, documenting stand location and the name of the occupant. They held formal interviews with all of the sewers who were present during the two weeks of research in April and May 2009. Of the sixty stands in the project corridor, eighteen were unoccupied throughout the entire study time. However, one month prior to the start of construction, the primary researcher, Blair Goodman, posted notices on all of these stands, that provided information and a contact number. All but two of these unoccupied stands were claimed.

Blair Goodman and the other field investigator, Kally McCormick, surveyed approximately 80% of the owners of occupied stands. They asked the same questions of all stand occupants and jotted down the answers on survey sheets.⁴⁰ The questions solicited information on the history of the basket maker and the stand, how the occupant and customers access the stand, basket makers' thoughts on the widening project, how each feels about the potential for being moved, as well as the sewer's opinions of the Town's proposed option for their stand. Twenty-one of the people interviewed supported the proposed approach, and five requested a modified plan, usually requesting additional curb cuts to maintain ease of access. Eight basket makers did not support the plan at all, but almost all said it was extremely important to remain along Highway 17 rather than move to an alternate location, such as the Charleston Market or the Sweetgrass Pavilion at Waterfront Park.

Prior to the fieldwork, engineers had not included curb cuts in the highway design—a certain disaster for the basket makers. The survey helped focus attention on the need to ensure access to the stands for both the sewers and potential custom-

ers.⁴¹ When parking was available at nearby businesses or at an intersecting road, the engineers would try to make an agreement with the landowner to house a stand in the area. Where this is not possible, however, highway engineers added two curb



Photo by Catherine Marshall

cuts or a sufficiently large space to allow cars to make a three-point turn before getting back on the highway. In a further effort to preserve the basket stands, the planners widened the highway from the inside, lessening the median, instead of solely widening from the outside shoulder.

As construction progressed, it became clear that more stands had to be moved than originally proposed and that to ensure structural integrity, the displaced stands had to be rebuilt, not simply relocated. To date, the construction company has replaced thirty-three stands. While attempting to mimic the architecture in use since 1930, the new stands are well constructed and designed to be moved with a forklift in case they need to be transferred from a temporary site to a permanent one, which has happened frequently over the course of the construction as various areas come in and out of use. These stands are made from new materials and have hurricane

clamps, hopefully avoiding widespread damage such as Hurricane Hugo caused in 1989. They are all the same design, removing some of the variety and individual personalization of the old stands. The Town has said that basket makers can decorate and embellish their stands, but some have complained about having to re-do their old amenities. Maizie Brown, when asked about her new stand said, "I like it; it's nice, but so was my old stand. And I had to go into my own pockets to put up walls and a door so I can be out here when it's cold out."⁴²

Only stands impacted by the construction were rebuilt, but a number of basket makers contacted project coordinators about getting a new stand. These sewers were forwarded to the Mount Pleasant Planning Committee, where they were put on a list to wait for businesses to take advantage of the impact fee credit program.⁴³ This is an ordinance that Mount Pleasant recently passed aimed at providing more basket stands for sewers.⁴⁴ Businesses in the Sweetgrass Basket Overlay District receive a fifteen thousand dollar impact fee credit per stand built on the property, up to two stands. So far, Walgreens, Health First Clinic, and Gregorie Ferry Landing apartment complex have taken advantage of this program, providing space for new stands, as well as use of their parking areas and driveways.

Michael Allen, an employee of the National Park Service and the Coordinator of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor, points to the open dialogue among the Town of Mount Pleasant, the planning and construction companies, and the basket makers as the reason for success in mitigating many of the potential harms that could have arisen from this project.⁴⁵ In fact, the Federal Highway Commission presented the Exemplary Human Environment Initiative Award to the Town of Mount Pleasant; Collins Engineers, Inc.; Tidewater Environmental Services; SCDOT; Gulf Stream Construction; Sweetgrass Cultural Arts Festival Association; Charles Pinckney Historic Site; the National Park Service; and the State Historic Preservation Offices for their efforts to ensure the future of the basket stands while addressing the transportation needs of the area.⁴⁶

Observations and Interviews

In January 2013, all of the signers of the Memorandum of Agreement drafted as a part of the environmental assessment drove through the project corridor, a field trip my advisor, Dale Rosengarten, and I were invited to attend. Representatives from the Town Council, the National Parks Service, the State Historic Preservation Office, SCAFA, the Federal Highway Administration, South Carolina Department of Transportation, and the construction, engineering, and planning companies were

present. We all rode in a van up and down the project corridor, stopping at various locations to see the different strategies used to ensure access to the basket stands. Overall, the various representatives seemed to consider the project and its mitigation efforts a success. Yet there are still some open questions. In order to determine the true state of the highway, according to those who live and work there, I interviewed project planners, town representatives, and basket makers on their opinions of the construction, the basket stands, and the state of the industry. In late winter and spring of 2013, I again drove the length of the project corridor on my own and interviewed basket makers whose stands are within the construction zone. I went out on five occasions and stopped at any stand that was occupied and was not busy with customers. I performed twenty-two semi-structured interviews, asking open-ended questions covering topics such as basket makers' opinions of the road work, access to the stand, how the stand was impacted, and how they were treated during the research, planning, and construction phases of the process.

In driving the project corridor and pulling off to visit stands for interviews, I found that most do have sufficient space to turn around or pull through to an "exit" driveway. However, actually pulling off the highway was difficult. I frequently did not see the curb cut in time, despite the fact that I was looking for it. In these instances, I was usually able to pull into a nearby business or side road and walk to the stand, but I imagine a customer would not go through this effort and simply continue on to another stand. Clearly visible stands, or stands that share a driveway with another business, have an advantage. When exiting stands with turn-around areas provided by the Town, I always had sufficient space to make a three-point turn and pull onto the highway. However, I drive a small, compact car and in some areas I was nearly going over the edge to have enough maneuvering room. Any type of sports utility vehicle or larger automobile would have a significantly harder time. Unless a basket sewer is lucky enough to have a business with a parking lot right behind the stand, it seems that the days of large tour buses stopping to unload customers are over.

Another issue is parking for the basket makers' vehicles. In at least one instance, the sewer parks his van behind his stand but in doing so, he blocks the drive-through to the exit. While I did have enough space to do a three-point turn in this area, with help from the basket maker, space was still very limited. Not having room for the basket makers' vehicles is a problem, as every day they have to unload and load their baskets and many use their vehicle as a type of shelter.

At Peggy Small's stand, located on Highway 17 North, I actually had to back

out onto the highway in order to exit the basket stand—a rather harrowing experience. The stand was un-impacted by the construction and is on her own property, which is why I believe there was no turn around area provided by the construction company. The stand is accessible by the driveway to her house, but there was no discernable way for me to turn around without driving on her yard, which I did not feel comfortable doing. Although I waited several minutes for a clear space to back out, a truck entered the highway from a side street just as I was pulling out. Luckily, the truck had space to get into another lane but this could have been a dangerous situation. If not for this project, I would never have stopped at such an inaccessible stand.

During my interviews, the safety of the new curb-cut system was a frequently cited concern. The new highway allows for higher speeds, and the curb cuts minimize entrance and exit points. Many sewers seem to be afraid for the safety of their customers pulling off and onto the highway, which is not a good sign for business. The possibility for accidents does seem plausible. It is easy to imagine a car slowing down to pull into a not-so-visible curb cut and someone coming up quickly behind being unable to hit the brakes in time.

I found the basket makers very willing to talk about the road widening and its impact on their business. When I first approached, some sewers seemed irritated by another College of Charleston research project, but when I explained that I wanted to talk about the road construction they usually brightened up. One basket maker, Eugene Gaillard, encapsulated this perfectly, “Oh yeah, I’ll tell you about that – they’d done messed it all up!”⁴⁷ This opinion represents one of two dominant themes I found among the stand owners and basket makers I interviewed: first, that the road project and development has fundamentally changed the infrastructure and negatively impacted the basket-selling business, and second, that while the widening was needed and traffic flows much better, the curb is problematic in that it restricts access. A couple of sewers like the sidewalk, notably those who live on the highway and can therefore benefit from its existence. However, there is a general sentiment that progress, good or bad, is coming, and may engulf them, but there is nothing they can do.

As far as the actual construction process goes, basket makers were content. Many mentioned Blair Goodman and her efforts to ease the relationship between the road workers, planners, and basket makers, amend any issues that arose, as well as dispense information and obtain feedback from the sewers. Maizie Brown, a sewer who came out nearly every day throughout the whole construction process

said, “That girl, Blair, she knows my number now! She’ll pick up and be like ‘Hi Maizie!’ At one point, the construction workers put my stand in the middle (of the pull-off area) and there was no room for my van or customers. But she helped me get that all sorted out.”⁴⁸ Several other sewers mentioned the friendliness of the construction workers and their efforts to inform the basket makers about when they would be working near their stands so the sewers would not bother coming out. There were multiple complaints, however, about construction barrels and equipment blocking the view of the stands, but as construction is almost completed this is no longer a problem.

Those who have new stands generally like them. Some, like Maizie Brown, complained about having to rebuild the sheltered area of the stand so as to stay warm in the cold months. Rosalee Simmons and Alma Turner, who share a stand, had to enlarge theirs, as the stand provided by the Town was not large enough to hold all of their baskets. At least one sewer, Harold Smalls, completely abandoned his new stand and rebuilt a different one. However, this was due to access problems in the location provided by the Town, and he had the capability to put a stand on the corner of his family’s property nearby, a more secure and stable location.

A complaint echoed by nearly every sewer, other than access problems, is that sales are down. Elijah Ford said, “I used to get six or seven stops a day, and now sometimes I get no stops. I’ve been making baskets for sixty years, and I’ve never seen it this slow.”⁴⁹ He says he has spoken to customers who told him they did not know where to pull off, and so just passed by. Those sewers who were moved to a new location were very concerned about their customers being able to find them. There is an overarching hope that as construction finishes, people will become used to the new situation, find their usual basket sewers, and start buying again. Several have said that if it were not for regular customers, they do not think they would have made it through the construction. Elizabeth Mazyck, who moved multiple times during the construction, just recently was able to move back to her original location near All Saints Lutheran Church where she will be able to remain. On her first Saturday back out, she said she had one of the best days she has had all year. Several regular customers whom she had not seen in months stopped by and bought some baskets. While the sewers seem hesitant about the possibility, many admitted that if things do not pick up they are going to have to try something else—either start selling online or at an alternate location. One minor recommendation many basket makers propose is to install road signs, both indicating where stand pull-offs are and cautioning that vehicles in the right lane may slow or stop

to turn into access points for stands. Another idea is to paint the edges of the curb cuts, making it easier to see where the curb stops and the driveway begins.

Conclusion

Currently, it seems that through mitigation efforts and community partnerships, this development project was fairly successful in preserving the existence of basket stands, though it is yet to be seen if sales will pick up in the coming months. In looking to the future, however, the situation seems dire. Mount Pleasant is projected to continue growing, and by 2020, to house 100,000 residents. There are already four multi-family housing complexes underway, ground has been broken on Oyster Point, a five hundred and ninety-eight home subdivision, and multiple commercial and mixed-use buildings are in the planning stages.⁵⁰ As the population expands, it is inevitable that development will continue, and we can only assume that the basket stands and basket-making industry will continue to be impacted, as has happened throughout history. Part of Mount Pleasant's development plan is to convert Coleman Boulevard to the main thoroughfare through the Town. It seems that political leaders and planners are sufficiently aware of the basket makers that they would incorporate areas for stands in this conversion from a local service area to a "Main Street," downtown setting. However, this will interrupt the tradition of being on Highway 17, and it remains to be seen if basket makers will even want to switch to another location. In all of the surveys and my interviews basket makers expressed a strong desire to remain on Highway 17—many still occupy the location where their mother's or grandmother's stands were, making the site a family heritage of sorts. The Sweetgrass Pavilion, imagined as an alternative to selling along Highway 17, so far is an unpopular location, and many of the sewers who do set out baskets there do so out of personal commitment to Thomasena Stokes Marshall, indicating that alternative locations may not serve the sewers.⁵¹ The Sweetgrass Pavilion, however, is poorly advertised and has received little attention, and therefore few visitors or potential basket customers pass by. Furthermore, alternative locations lose the authenticity of the craft and the practice of selling along the highway, creating more of a tourist-oriented environment, such as can be seen (and is often complained about) in the Charleston market.

Stands have steadily migrated north as roadside development near Charleston displaced them. Beyond the project corridor, the highway is as it was—there is no shoulder and only two lanes. Already a new stand is being constructed in this area. It seems likely that if people are unhappy with the environment created by

the highway construction they will simply abandon their stands and continue the northward migration. The basket industry has proven to be very adaptable, but this will be increasingly tested in the coming decades.

Notes

Catherine Marshall graduated in May 2013 with a degree in Anthropology. Originally from Greensboro, North Carolina, she became interested in indigenous cultures during a study abroad program in Guatemala. Upon returning to Charleston, she knew that she wanted to do her Honors College Bachelor's Essay on a similar subject and chose the sweetgrass basket art of the Gullah Geechee people, which is very visible, yet frequently ignored in Charleston. Working under Dale Rosengarten, a leading expert on sweetgrass baskets, she explored the history of the baskets, how the innovative marketing technique of stands along the highway changed the industry, and how the stands are being impacted today as development pushes them out.

1. Eugene Gaillard, interview with the author, Mount Pleasant, SC, March 20, 2013.
2. Dale Rosengarten, "Missions and Markets: Sea Island Basketry and the Sweetgrass Revolution," in *Grass Roots: African Origins of an American Art*, eds. Dale Rosengarten, Theodore Rosengarten and Enid Schildkrout [New York: Museum for African Art, 2008], 137.
3. Ibid.
4. While there is no doubt that Africans were responsible for the intensive labor necessary for rice cultivation, there is debate among scholars as to their role in creating the rice industry that made Carolina known for its "Carolina Gold" rice. There are two main schools of thought on the subject. One, developed by Peter Wood, Daniel Littlefield, and Judith Carney, argues that European colonists had no knowledge of the crop, while Africans from rice growing regions were very familiar with the environment and the tools needed for its cultivation. Because of this, enslaved Africans were essential players in establishing such a thriving and productive industry. This was the accepted view from the 1970s until 2005, when David Eltis, David Richardson, and Philip Morgan published a paper contending that previous research greatly exaggerated the role of Africans in establishing the rice culture. They postulate that the rice industry would have emerged in much of the same way, even if many slaves in Carolina had not been

- from rice-growing regions of Africa. However, seemingly in contradiction to their thesis, these authors acknowledge African influence in the sowing, threshing, and winnowing methods, as well as the technology used throughout the growing and harvesting stages. See: Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Norton, 1974); Daniel C. Littlefield, *Black Rice: Ethnicity and the Slave Trade in Colonial South Carolina* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991); Judith A. Carney, *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); David Eltis, Philip Morgan, and David Richardson, "Agency and Diaspora in Atlantic History: Reassessing the African Contribution to Rice Cultivation in the Americas," *The American Historical Review* 112.5 (2007): 1329–1358; and Stanley Alpern, "Did Enslaved Africans Spark South Carolina's Eighteenth Century Rice Boom?" in *African Ethnobotany in the Americas*, eds. John Rashford and Robert Voeks (New York: Springer, 2013): 35-66.
5. Stanley Alpern, "Did Enslaved Africans Spark South Carolina's Eighteenth Century Rice Boom?" in *African Ethnobotany in the Americas*, eds. John Rashford and Robert Voeks [New York: Springer, 2013], 47.
 6. Dale Rosengarten, "By the Rivers of Babylon: The Lowcountry Basket in Slavery and Freedom," in Rosengarten, Rosengarten, and Schildkrout, *Grass Roots*, 117.
 7. Dale Rosengarten, *Row Upon Row: Sea Grass Baskets of the South Carolina Lowcountry* [Columbia: McKissick Museum, University of South Carolina, 1986], 33.
 8. The year for this rate is 1925. Rosengarten, *Row Upon Row*, 34.
 9. J. V. Coakley, "History," Sweetgrass Cultural Arts Festival. November 15. 2012. <<http://www.sweetgrassfestival.org/history.html>.>
 10. Rosengarten, *Row Upon Row*, 37.
 11. *Ibid.*
 12. *Ibid.*, 36.
 13. *Ibid.*, 18.
 14. Brian Grabbatin, *Sweetgrass Basketry: The Political Ecology of an African American Art in the South Carolina Lowcountry* (master's thesis in Environmental Studies, College of Charleston. 2008), 73.

15. Emily Manigault, interview with the author, Mount Pleasant, SC, March 30, 2013.
16. Grabbatin, *Sweetgrass Basketry*, 69.
17. Amelia, Muller, *From Slavery to the Smithsonian: Coiled Baskets of Coastal South Carolina and their Makers* (undergraduate thesis, Harvard University, 2008), 61.
18. Grabbatin, *Sweetgrass Basketry*, 21.
19. National Parks Service, Southeast Regional Office, *Lowcountry Gullah Cultural Resource Study*, 2005, 43. [hereafter NPS 2005]
20. Dale Rosengarten, "Babylon is Falling: The State of the Art of Sweetgrass Basketry." (forthcoming from University of South Carolina Press), 5.
21. Fath Davis Ruffins, "The Paradox of Preservation: Gullah Language, Culture and Imagery," in Rosengarten, Rosengarten, and Schildkrout, *Grass Roots*, 229.
22. Grabbatin, *Sweetgrass Basketry*, 22.
23. Robert Dufault, *Stalking the Wild Sweetgrass: Domestication and Horticulture of the Grass Used in African-American Coiled Basketry* [New York: Springer, 2013], 76.
24. Mary Jackson and Marguerite Middleton, "The Sweetgrass Basket Tradition." *Preservation Progress* 37 (1994): 8-9.
25. For an image of the highway marker see: http://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WMW0G_10_28_Sweetgrass_Baskets
26. Rosengarten, "Babylon is Falling," 23.
27. Thomasena Stokes-Marshall, interview with the author, Mount Pleasant, SC, October 24,. 2012.
28. Stokes-Marshall, 24 Oct. 2012.
29. While the widely held view is that isolation hindered the Euro-American pressures on the people descended from enslaved populations, and so helped preserve the African influence on the culture, J. Lorand Matory proposes an alternative in his essay, "Islands Are Not Isolated: Reconsidering the Roots of Gullah Distinctiveness," featured in *Grass Roots*. He argues that the idea that Gullah culture survived due to its separation from a larger culture embod-

- ies prejudicial thinking of a more powerful European society that subsumes everything in its wake. He points to many indigenous groups banding together and thriving in the face of pressures from a dominant culture. Furthermore, he makes the case that the Sea Islands were not actually isolated. The creeks and rivers that are usually thought of as barriers actually served as pathways for people and ideas that were constantly entering or exiting the region, including the movement of enslaved people from one plantation to another as they were bought and sold. See: J. Lorand Matory, "Islands are not Isolated" in Rosengarten, Rosengarten, and Schildkrout, *Grass Roots*, 233-242.
30. Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission, *Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Management Plan* [Denver: National Park Service, 2012], 7. [hereafter NPS 2012]
 31. Bo Peterson, "Funding Woes Block Heritage Corridors: Gullah Geechee Trail One of Dozens on Hold," *The Post and Courier*, November 29, 2007.
 32. J. V. Coakley. Sweetgrass Festival. Sweetgrass Cultural Arts Festival website. December 12, 2012. <<http://www.sweetgrassfestival.org/index.html>>.
 33. Bo Peterson, "Sweetgrass Basket May Become Official 'State Handcraft,'" *The Post and Courier*, February 4, 2005.
 34. South Carolina General Assembly, Bill S.197, 12 May 2006. http://www.sc-statehouse.gov/sess116_2005-2006/bills/197.htm.
 35. Prentiss Findlay, "Weaving History into a Growing Area: Sweetgrass Basket Overlay District OK'd along U.S. 17," *The Post and Courier*, December 13, 2006.
 36. David Slade, "Census: Charleston Still 2nd Largest City in SC, Mount Pleasant moves up to 4th," *The Post and Courier*, March 23, 2012: <<http://www.postand-courier.com/article/20110323/PC06/303239952>>.
 37. US Route 17 Road Improvements from the Isle of Palms Connector (SC 517) to Darrell Creek Trail in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, Environmental Assessment, July 2009. 30. [Hereafter Environmental Assessment, 2009]
 38. Environmental Assessment, 2009, Appendix K, 8.
 39. *Ibid.*, 8.
 40. *Ibid.*, 28.
 41. Blair Goodman, interview with the author, Charleston, SC, November 15,

2012

42. Maizie Brown, interview with the author, Mount Pleasant, SC, April 8, 2013.
43. Memorandum of Agreement: Field Trip, Jan.uary 14, 2013.
44. Jessica Miller, "Taking a Stand for Heritage: Town Eyes Incentive for Businesses to Build Places for Basket Makers," The Post and Courier, March 24, 2011.
45. Thomasena Stokes-Marshall, Lynette Youson, and Michael Allen, "Preserving the Roadside Stands of Sweetgrass Basket-Makers," radio interview on Walter Edgar's Journal, SC-ETV, February 17, 2012: <http://www.sctv.org/index.php/walter_edgars_journal/show/preserving_the_roadside_stands_of_sweetgrass_basket_makers/>
46. Highway 17 Widening Project Wins FHWA Environmental Award," SCAFA Connections vol. 4 (Summer 2011), n.p. [5]
47. Gaillard.
48. Maizie Brown, interview with the author, Mount Pleasant, SC, April 8, 2013.
49. Elijah Ford, interview with the author, Mount Pleasant, SC, February 23, 2013.
50. Dan Henderson, Jr., "Mt. Pleasant Commercial Real Estate Development Breathing New Life But Not Without Controversy: Local Businesses Oppose the Town Of Mount Pleasant Council Voting In Favor Of "Big Box" Stores," Charleston Mercury, May 16, 2012. <<http://www.charlestonmercury.com/articles/2012/05/16/news/doc4fb3efd412038234957917.txt>>
51. Stokes-Marshall, October 24, 2012.