ENVIRONMENTAL EQUITY:
SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF INDUSTRIAL SITING IN RICEBORO, GEORGIA

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Abstract

Riceboro is a small, rural, and predominantly African-American community in coastal Liberty County, Georgia. With two resident manufacturing industries producing over 75% over the county's Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) emissions, Riceboro is plagued by public health concerns, and residents have raised questions about environmental and social equity. This master's project explores several components critical to characterizing, documenting and resolving possible environmental injustice.

A key component in environmental justice case studies is the qualification of the socio-political context in which both the impacted community and the environmental risk factor(s) arose. In completing the picture of environmental justice issues, social sciences frame biological and natural scientific inquiry. A community's specific history is critical to the accurate assessment and understanding of environmental justice issues. Not only can such a study help mitigate immediate environmental concerns, but it also enables a community help articulate its own identity and inform the policy process. As environmental management involves the management of people, such sociological perspective is critical to advancing essential elements of environmental justice.

This case-study uses anthropological, historical and sociological methods to characterize Riceboro and Liberty County, Georgia, in socio-historical terms and to trace the evolution of local political and economic systems within the context the of the American South's transition from agrarianism to industrialization in the mid-20th century. The project further analyzes the existing environmental concerns to verify suspected environmental inequity, examines the paradigm in which it arose, and suggests policies for the fostering of environmental justice in the

community. The findings may be used in tandem with other lines of scientific inquiry to develop policies for alleviating adverse conditions and circumventing future environmental injustice. Finally, this project provides a working model for similar socio-historical surveys for application in environmental justice assessments.

Publicly-available TRI emissions, health and census data reveal high risk factors in Liberty County are unequally distributed across ethnic and income levels. Further, as Riceboro has been a demographically and cultural stable community for over 200 years, patterns of economic, social and political behaviors including risk aversion and political passivity are entrenched and need careful consideration in initiating successful environmental justice policies.

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Introduction

Riceboro, near the coast of Liberty County, Georgia, is a small rural community with two resident manufacturing industries, SNF Chemtall[1] and Interstate Paper, and plagued by high asthma rates, elevated emissions of compounds reported in the EPA's Toxic Release Inventory (TRI), and concerns about apparently increasing incidents of cancer. A series of recent accidents at Chemtall aroused concern about the aging industrial facilities among local residents and led to questions about environmental and social equity. With just under 1,600 residents, Riceboro produces over 75% of the TRI chemicals released in the county. Further, the community has both the highest proportion of African-American residents and the lowest per capita income among Liberty County census tracts. All of these indicators invite investigation, and this master's project explores several components critical to characterizing, documenting and solving a possible environmental justice problem in Riceboro.

Environmental justice as an area of scientific inquiry has evolved over the past three decades. Grassroots community activists raised issues of perceived disparities in the distribution of environmental risk among different racial and ethnic neighborhoods and socio-economic classes. Originally termed "environmental racism," the environmental justice movement focused initially on policies, practices, or directives that affected individuals, groups, or communities based on race or color.[2]

Early community studies in environmental justice examined hazardous waste sites and the associated distribution of negative health impacts and exposure to environmental risk across

[1] SNF Holding Company has operated several subsidiaries in Riceboro, Georgia, since 1986 including Bio-Flocryl, Flocyrl, NCF Manufacturing and Chemtall. For simplification in this report, these manifold production facilities will be referred to as either "SNF Chemtall" or "Chemtall."
[2] Robert D. Bullard, "Environmental Justice: It's More Than Waste Facility Siting," *Social Science Quarterly* 77, no. 3 (1996).

income levels and ethnic groups exposed to them.[3] Initial findings seemed to bear out hypotheses of disparate exposure and risk, and, while part of the environmental justice framework, environmental racism is only one form of environmental discrimination. Researchers such as sociologist Robert Bullard expanded the field of environmental justice to include discrimination across other demographic classifications including income and age.[4] The disproportionate distribution of risk and other negative social impacts among demographic classes comprise the “injustice” part of the environmental “justice” equation.

Environmental justice aims to address a wide range of negative and positive issues including the elimination of environmental hazards, the equitable enforcement of environmental regulations, the inclusion of all demographic groups in environmental and economic decision making, and the fostering of clean and livable communities that provide good jobs, safe working and living conditions and access to decent education.[5] Much like a three-legged stool, if any of the primary components of a healthy community—education, environment, and economy—is impaired, the whole will fragment.[6] An interdisciplinary subject by nature, environmental justice uses a holistic approach to identifying, assessing, and, most optimistically, solving environmental problems. Toxicology, history, sociology, law, political science, anthropology and economics all create a context in which communities and their problems may be defined.

A key component in environmental justice case studies is the qualification of the socio-political context in which both the impacted community and environmental risk factors arose. In completing the picture of environmental justice issues, social sciences such as sociology, cultural anthropology, history and political science frame biological and natural scientific inquiry.

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[3] United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice, *Toxic Waste and Race in the United States* (New York: Public Data Access, 1987).
[4] Bullard, "Environmental Justice."
[5] Judith A. Layzer, *The Environmental Case: Translating Values into Policy*, 2nd ed. (Washington: CQ Press, 2006).
[6] Bullard, "Environmental Justice."

Careful attention to the specific history of a community, not just a simple facility regulatory compliance review, is critical to the accurate assessment and understanding of environmental justice issues. Socio-historical context can help tease apart the tangled strands of local history, politics, decision-making and economic need. Not only can such a study help mitigate immediate environmental concerns, but it also enables a community help articulate its own identity and inform the policy process. Through this process, communities can argue that decision makers should perform a pragmatic historical analysis sensitive to the questions of justice and aspiration.[7]

As the ultimate goal of environmental justice is not reactionary in nature, understanding the paradigm that enabled risks to be distributed disproportionately can do far more than assign guilt. From a discourse perspective, casting affected citizens as victims of an environmental crime can undermine their self-image and possibly render them permanent pawns in a system in which they have no control of their future. Environmental justice seeks the empowerment of individuals and groups so that they may actively correct the problems of the present and reshape their potential for the future. To that end, an in-depth socio-historical community case study is essential to understanding the policies and practices that incubated the current risky situation. In turn, that understanding of the past and the evolution of the current paradigm helps the community define itself. The community can fully embrace its independent identity and choose to retain or discard elements deleterious to its future. Such self-determination recasts the community as active participants instead of victims and establishes the foundation for true environmental justice.

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[7] John Callewaert, "The Importance of Local History for Understanding and Addressing Environmental Injustice," *Local Environment* 7, no. 3 (2002).

This master's project examines the sociological, economic and political context in which industrial siting decisions were made in Liberty County in the late 1950s and early 1960s when both current industrial facilities in Riceboro were initially constructed. Given the long and stable history of the Riceboro community, the socio-economic paradigm framing industrialization imparts important insight into the cultural and political dynamics that persist today. As all environmental management involves the management of people, such sociological perspective is critical to advancing and managing for essential elements of environmental justice—the correction and remedying of bad acts and the proactive cultivation of the necessary nexus education, politics, environment, and economic opportunity.[8] In examining the socio-historical context of the Riceboro community, this project provides a working model for similar inquiries in other communities wrestling with issues of self-determination and environmental and social equity.

This master's project blends anthropological, historical and sociological methods to provide a socio-historical case study of Riceboro, Georgia. It is the intention of this study to present the background for understanding why and how decisions affecting people's lives were made and how that context might influence today's community action. The findings may be used in tandem with other lines of scientific inquiry to develop policies for alleviating adverse conditions and circumventing future environmental injustice.

[8] William M. Bowen and Michael V. Wells, "The Politics and Reality of Environmental Justice: A History and Considerations for Public Administrators and Policy Makers," *Public Administration Review* 62, no. November/December (2002); Bullard, "Environmental Justice."

Objectives

This project has four objectives:

1) to summarize the socio-historical framework of Riceboro and Liberty County, Georgia, with special attention given to the evolution of local political and economic systems within the larger context of the American South during its transition from a predominantly agrarian economy to industrialization in the 20th century;
2) to analyze the existing environmental concerns (e.g., TRI emissions, facility history, public health data) within the context of the community's socio-historical framework to verify suspected environmental inequity;
3) if environmental inequity is shown to exist, to examine the paradigm in which it arose and suggest policies for the fostering of environmental justice in the community;
4) to provide, through this case-study, a template for similar socio-historical surveys for use in environmental justice assessments.

Chapter I: Socio-Historical Context

On February 25th, 2008, a malfunctioning smokestack scrubber set the Chemtall chemical plant in Riceboro, Georgia, on fire. A small community centered around two industrial facilities—Chemtall and Interstate Paper—Riceboro could only respond to the newest emergency with a single fire truck from the volunteer fire department. As volunteer companies arrived from other small, semi-rural areas throughout the eastern district of Liberty County, the 40-year-old plant was still facing regulatory fines from a chemical spill two years earlier. In late April 2006, men fishing near Chemtall called the emergency hotline of the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) to report a strange oil-like sheen on the surface of Riceboro and Peacock Creeks, the headwaters of the North Newport River in Liberty County. EPD investigators determined that workers at Chemtall, Inc. had dumped chemical-laden sludge from a retention pond into the salt marsh in direct violation of the company's NPDES permit. This event triggered an outcry from local residents who had suspected illegal and unreported discharges into the air and water for many years. Citizens were also concerned about perceived occupational health risks for workers and documented high asthma rates and cancer morbidity among residents of the Riceboro community. Predominantly African-American, the residents of Riceboro raised the question of environmental justice.

So, as Riceboro citizens gathered on that cool Monday morning, they began to murmur about long-held safety concerns, rumors of unfit working conditions, and the petition Chemtall's French holding company SNF had recently filed with the Georgia Environmental Protection Division to expand and increase its air and water emissions.

Residents questioned how this had happened to their community. People expressed

apprehension about exposure to and the risks of unknown chemicals, startlingly high asthma rates, and the threat of an even larger explosion. But there were other considerations including the fact that these companies were also the lifeblood of the tiny Riceboro community where someone in every family was on the payroll of one of the plants. Also, the companies had been generous with funding for a church-sponsored tutoring program and computers for town children to experience technology with a goal of bettering themselves.

But pestering thoughts about unexplained illnesses, the spill, and the fire still reverberated among the crowd. How did this happen? And what was yet to come? Defining the character of the Riceboro community, its roots and identity, helps answer both questions. While what has happened in the past is past, the sociological, political and economic foundations of the community shaped through history are crucial to understanding and solving the problems of the present.

Black residents of coastal Georgia and South Carolina trace their culture directly back to West Africa, and a belief common to both places is that the present is the product of everything that came before it. In a community known for its attachment to land and land ownership, one way of reaching back is by tracing the history of a patch of ground. Land and place are the anchors of rural Southern culture, and by mining its history we can glean much about the people who lived there. The 15th General Militia District of Georgia where Riceboro lies is a postage stamp of soil of about 25,000 acres. Despite its size, this land provided the backdrop for a complex tapestry of political, sociological and economic interactions that created the Riceboro community of the 21st century.

Figure 1.1 Location Map for Riceboro, Georgia

The Land

SNF Chemtall and Interstate Paper sit on a little over 1,750 acres of land nestled in the 15th General Militia District (GMD) on the banks of the North Newport River and one of its tributaries, Riceboro Creek, in Liberty County, Georgia. Sold to the Riceboro Chemical Company and Interstate Paper beginning in 1966, the property had once been part of a prosperous antebellum rice-growing plantation district. This piece of land sits in the physical heart of the Liberty County Lowcountry and has witnessed over two centuries of human social and economic history centered about its swampy isolation.[9]

Liberty County encompasses 514 square miles in a 20-mile-wide band transecting the Lower Coastal Plain of Georgia from the northwest to it southeast terminus on the Atlantic Ocean. The county lies in the greater Ogeechee River Basin and is not influenced by any river system outside its borders. Riceboro sits on Riceboro Creek and the North Newport River which

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[9] Liberty County (GA) Superior Court, "Liberty County, Georgia, Deed Record Books, Grantor/Grantee Books," ed. Liberty County (GA) Superior Court (Liberty County (GA) Superior Court); Robert Manson Myers, ed., *The Children of Pride: A True Story of Georgia and the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972).

flow together into the South Newport River, finally emptying into Sapelo Sound between St. Catherine's Island to the north and Sapelo Island to the south.[10]

For about fifteen miles upstream from St. Catherine's Island on the Atlantic, the coastal region of the county is characterized with saltwater estuaries that gradually yield to brackish and freshwater marshes interlaced with rivers and ever-smaller tributary creeks. "Hills" of sandy uplands rising six to 30 feet above sea-level punctuate sizeable freshwater swamp. Tides along this stretch of the South Atlantic Bight, varying from six to nine feet in height, influence the rise and fall of water levels nearly twenty miles inland. Large rice plantations thrived along the North Newport River because of the volume of fresh water supplied by numerous small tributary creeks.[11]

To the west of Riceboro, these tributary creeks flow down from the northwest section of the county. Characterized by freshwater swamps in the coastal, or lower, part of the county, the land rises abruptly along an ancient sand dune about 25 miles west of St. Catherine's Island. Formed by receding sea levels, this ridge geologically divides the county in two, the eastern coastal Lowcountry and the western sandhills. The rural community of McIntosh sits on the natural sand ridge that divides the eastern and western halves of the county.[12]

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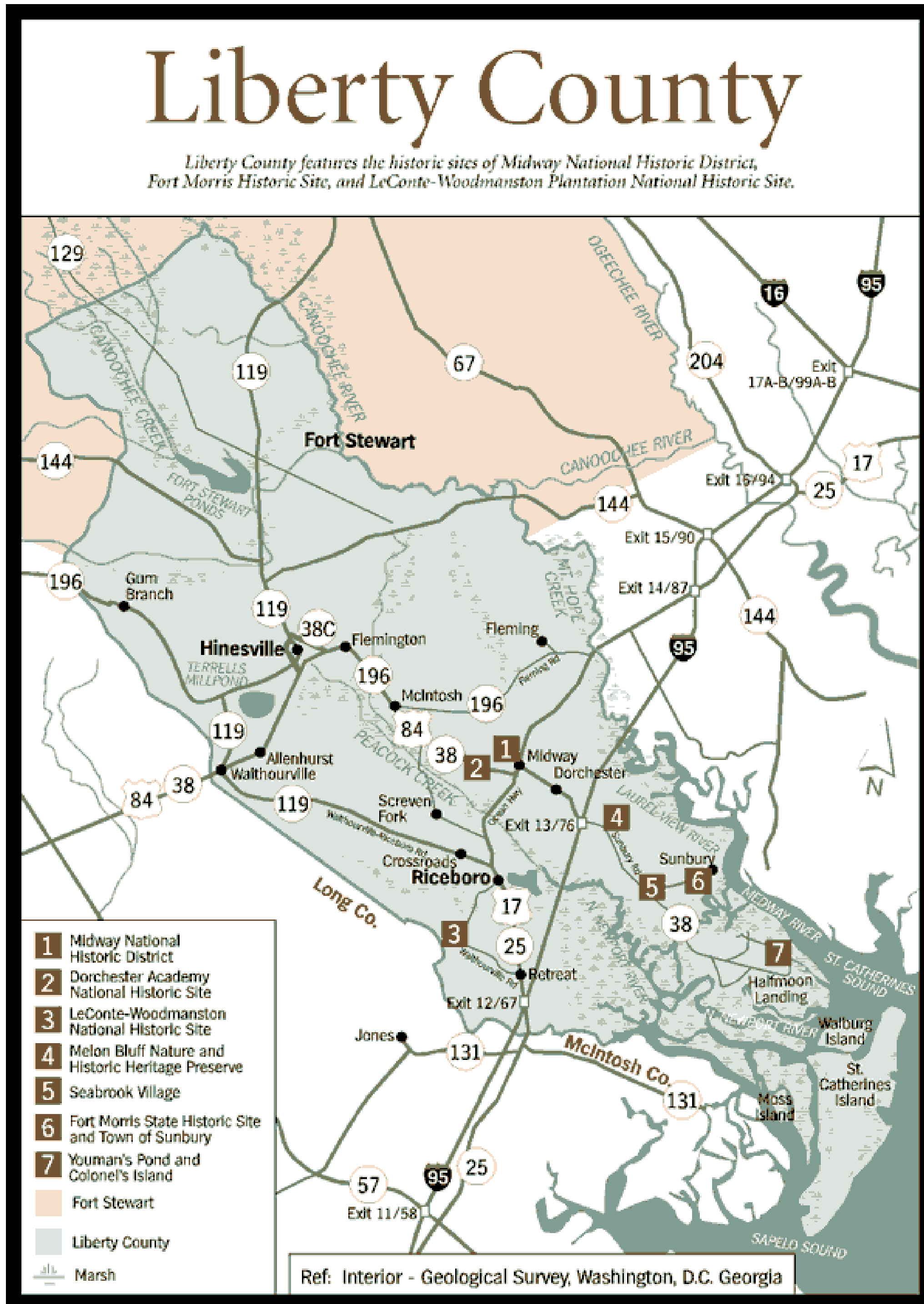
[10] Robert Long Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty: A History of Liberty County, Georgia* (Roswell, GA: W.H. Wolfe Associates, 1987); Lawrence R. Hepburn, ed., *Contemporary Georgia*, 2nd ed. (Athens: Carl Vinson Institute of Government, The University of Georgia,, 1992).
[11] Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; Hepburn, ed., *Contemporary Georgia*.
[12] Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; Hepburn, ed., *Contemporary Georgia*.

Figure 1.2 (Map by John Lenz)



The eastern tidewater further divides in half lengthwise along the North Newport River and its upland tributary Peacock Creek. Therefore, Liberty County evolved into three districts[13]: the inland western half surrounding the city of Hinesville and the two eastern quarters—the northeast district stretching from McIntosh east along the Sunbury Road past the Midway meetinghouse, later the city of Midway, to the erstwhile port of Sunbury at the headwaters of the Medway River, and a southeast section running eastward from Walthourville through the town of Riceboro. Originally comprised of a much larger land mass, Liberty lost about half of its land to other neighboring counties: McIntosh (1789) and Long (1920). For the purpose of this study, only the areas still within the borders of present-day Liberty County were considered.[14]

The topography of the land shaped settlement and land use patterns from prehistory through the end of the agrarian era after World War II. Throughout the period of human settlement, distinct cultural, demographic and economic development patterns emerged in each of these regions because of the restrictions of the landscape and climate. For example, most Guale Indian[15] settlement occurred adjacent to the salt marshes of the eastern district with smaller, unrelated native populations living along the sand ridges of the west.[16]

Census data characterizes county sections according to General Militia Districts (GMDs). Prior to Civil War, two militia districts—the 15th and 17th—divided the county along distinct geographic lines previously described. The 15th GMD comprised the rice-growing coastal areas and included all of the tidewater from St. Catherine's Island on the Atlantic to the Ridge. To the

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[13] Originally comprised of a much larger land mass, Liberty lost about half of its land to other neighboring counties: Long and McIntosh. For the purpose of this study, only the areas still within the borders of present-day Liberty County were considered.

[14] Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; Hepburn, ed., *Contemporary Georgia*.

[15] The term "Indian" is used in place of "Native American" as it is the current parlance in native ethnography. Treaties between the United States and native peoples refer to "Indians," so the term is used today as a reference to political power instead of ethnic identity.

[16] David Hurst Thomas,Grant D. Jones,Roger S. Durham, and Clark Spencer Larsen, *The Anthropology of St. Catherine's Island, 1. Natural and Cultural History*, ed. David Hurst Thomas, The Anthropology of St. Catherine's Island (New York: The American Museum of Natural History, 1978).

northwest of the McIntosh ridge lies the 17th GMD encompassing mostly sandhills and upland pine forest.[17]

The ridge provided a logical place for a railroad that further separated the coast from the upland. Today, a viaduct flies over the railway; locals refer to it as "McIntosh Mountain," and it marks a clear physical and sociological division between the rural 15th GMD and the more urbanized 17th GMD. As population expanded, subdivisions evolved from the original GMDs, but the basic division between the "lower" coastal section and the "upper" inland section persisted. Census data from 1940 onward refers to three divisions—Hinesville, Midway and Riceboro—that correspond to the original GMDs.[18]

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[17] Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; United States Bureau of the Census, "Fourth Census of the United States, 1820: Georgia," ed. United States Bureau of the Census (United States Bureau of the Census, 1820); United States Bureau of the Census, "Fifth Census of the United States, 1830: Georgia," ed. United States Bureau of the Census (United States Bureau of the Census, 1830); United States Bureau of the Census, "Sixth Census of the United States, 1840: Georgia," ed. United States Bureau of the Census (United States Bureau of the Census, 1840); United States Bureau of the Census, "Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Georgia," ed. United States Bureau of the Census (United States Bureau of the Census, 1850); United States Bureau of the Census, "Eighth Census of the United States, 1860: Georgia," ed. United States Bureau of the Census (United States Bureau of the Census, 1860); United States Bureau of the Census, "Ninth Census of the United States, 1870: Georgia," ed. United States Bureau of the Census (United States Bureau of the Census, 1870); United States Bureau of the Census, "Tenth Census of the United States, 1880: Georgia," ed. United States Bureau of the Census (United States Bureau of the Census, 1880); United States Bureau of the Census, "Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900: Georgia," ed. United States Bureau of the Census (United States Bureau of the Census, 1900); United States Bureau of the Census, "Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Georgia," ed. United States Bureau of the Census (United States Bureau of the Census, 1910); United States Bureau of the Census, "Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920: Georgia," ed. United States Bureau of the Census (United States Bureau of the Census, 1920); United States Bureau of the Census, "Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930: Georgia," ed. United States Bureau of the Census (United States Bureau of the Census, 1930); United States Bureau of the Census, "Eighteenth Census of the United States, 1960: Georgia," ed. United States Bureau of the Census (United States Bureau of the Census, 1960); United States Bureau of the Census, "Nineteenth Census of the United States, 1970: Georgia," ed. United States Bureau of the Census (United States Bureau of the Census, 1970).

[18] Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; United States Bureau of the Census, "Fourth Census of the United States, 1820: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Fifth Census of the United States, 1830: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Sixth Census of the United States, 1840: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Eighth Census of the United States, 1860: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Ninth Census of the United States, 1870: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Tenth Census of the United States, 1880: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Eighteenth Census of the United States, 1960: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Nineteenth Census of the United States, 1970: Georgia."

Figure 1.3: Liberty County Militia Districts (Source: Georgia USGenWeb Archives Project, http://www.usgwarchives.org/ga/maps/index.htm)

The People: Colonization to the Civil War

Origins

For the purposes of this study, two cultural groups dominate the story of Riceboro and Liberty County: West Africans and English Puritans. 21st century citizens of Riceboro are mostly long-term residents whose roots go back to the settlement of Georgia by the English beginning in the mid-1700s. The people of coastal Georgia are a "peculiar people" with deep cultural ties to Old World cultures, both European and African, as well as to the world they made together through the equally peculiar cultivation of rice.[19] To begin the sociological story of the people of Riceboro and Liberty County, one needs to trace the community's cultural threads back to their genesis.[20]

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[19] Margaret Washington Creel, *A Peculiar People: Slave Religion and Community-Culture among the Gullahs* (New York: New York University Press, 1988).

[20] Judith A. Carney, *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Creel, *A Peculiar People*; Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; Julia Floyd Smith, *Slavery and Rice Culture in Low Country Georgia, 1750-1860* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985); Mary A.

Two distinct cultural traditions combined to create coastal Liberty County society. The first group was a contingent of English Puritans, primarily from Dorset by way of Massachusetts and South Carolina, who received land grants from England's King George II. The second and equally important group consisted of coastal West Africans, including Yoruba, Ibo, and similar cultures, who were captured and brought to the Americas to work as rice slaves. Dependent upon each other for survival, these two cultures forged a unique social world in Liberty County that incorporated elements of Puritan and West African folkways within the strictures of subtropical ecology.[21]

The first to arrive in the New World were the so-called Dorchester Puritans who emigrated from southern England in 1630 to the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Driven out by Charles I, the Dorchester Puritans represented the heart of the Calvinist movement in southern England. Largely from the servant and small-farming classes, the Dorchester Puritans had infuriated Charles I when they openly protested his marriage to a Catholic woman. The king responded by encouraging them to settle in the New World. In Massachusetts, they established a town called Dorchester, now part of South Boston, and remained there for the next three generations.[22]

Twining and Keith E. Baird, *Sea Island Roots: African Presence in the Carolinas and Georgia* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc., 1991).

[21] Savannah Unit Work Projects Administration Georgia Writers' Project,Guy B. Johnson,Muriel Bell, and Malcolm Bell, Jr., *Drums and Shadows; Survival Studies among the Georgia Coastal Negroes [by the] Savannah Unit, Georgia Writers' Project, Work Projects Administration* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1940); Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; J. William Harris, *Deep Souths: Delta, Piedmont, and Sea Island Society in the Age of Segregation* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); Jacqueline Jones, *Dispossessed: America's Underclasses from the Civil War to the Present* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992); Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (New York: Random House, 1983); Twining and Baird, *Sea Island Roots*; David Underdown, *Fire from Heaven: The Life of an English Town in the Seventeenth Century* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992).

[22] David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; Underdown, *Fire from Heaven*; Ola Elizabeth Winslow, *Meetinghouse Hill, 1630-1783* (New York: Macmillan, 1952).

By the 1690s, land in the Massachusetts township had become scarce, so several families moved to a settlement on the Ashley River west of Charleston, South Carolina. It was there that the Dorchester Puritans first became slave-owners. For the next 170 years, the Dorchester Puritans would wrestle with the paradox of keeping their faith while keeping other humans in bondage. The influence of Puritanism would impact the character of race relations and community development in Liberty County through the Civil Rights Movement of the 20th century.[23]

Planters in the colonial South Carolina tidewater had experimented with rice cultivation beginning in the mid-1600s. The subtropical climate and low-lying nature of the coast were so favorable for growing rice that Lowcountry planters soon covered the 30-mile wide tidewater region with levees and fields. As rice growing also demanded skills unfamiliar to Northern European settlers, slaves were culled almost exclusively from coastal West Africa where rice had been grown for millennia. Highly labor-intensive, rice culture demanded thousands of slaves, so South Carolina's slave population grew dramatically in the last half of the 17th century as West Africans were bound into servitude.[24]

By 1680, South Carolina had nearly five African slaves for every white person, and slave rebellion became a pressing English concern. Although Spain had essentially relinquished her claims north of modern-day Florida, she sponsored periodic raids out of St. Augustine on

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[23] Erskine Clarke, *Wrestlin' Jacob: A Portrait of Religion in Antebellum Georgia and the Carolina Low Country* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2000); Georgia Writers' Project,Johnson,Bell, and Bell, *Drums and Shadows*; Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; Myers, ed., *The Children of Pride*; Winslow, *Meetinghouse Hill*.
[24] Carney, *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas*; Ray Crook, "Gullah and the Task System," *Anthropology of Work Review* XXII, no. 2 (2001); Harris, *Deep Souths*; Phillip D. Morgan, "Work and Culture: The Task System and the World of Lowcountry Blacks, 1700 to 1880," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (1982); Smith, *Slavery and Rice Culture in Low Country Georgia, 1750-1860*; Mart A. Stewart, *"What Nature Suffers to Groe": Life, Labor and Landscape on the Georgia Coast, 1680-1920* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996); John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Twining and Baird, *Sea Island Roots*.

Charleston designed to rattle geopolitical rival England's sense of security. Parliament decided to consider a proposal of General James Edward Oglethorpe. Appalled by London's so-called "debtors' prisons" and by the persecution of Christian dissidents, Gen. Oglethorpe wanted to establish an American colony in which Protestant freeholders would be given land grants that would be farmed by white indentured servants working off their debts. Parliament, in turn, thought that the idea of a colony devoid of African slaves could serve as a buffer between Spain's Florida colony and their own lucrative yet volatile colony of South Carolina.[25]

In 1733, Gen. Oglethorpe landed at a high bluff on south side of the Savannah River. Aided by Mary Musgrove, a half-Creek and half-Yemassee woman married to an English trader, Oglethorpe negotiated with the Lower Creeks for title to the lands between the Savannah and Altamaha Rivers. In return, Mrs. Musgrove was promised—and eventually received—the island of St. Catherine's. Thus began the English colony of Georgia.[26]

To flesh out his colonial plans, Oglethorpe recruited Protestant colonists, largely Calvinist dissidents persecuted in Europe. Among the early settlers were Austrian Salzburgers who settled west of Savannah and Highland Presbyterians who settled sixty miles south at Darien on the Altamaha River which formed the colonial border with Florida. A final group, the Dorchester Puritans who had settled two generations earlier in South Carolina, arrived in the 1750s.[27]

Having considered the economic viability of the colony, Oglethorpe wanted to cultivate crops that were both profitable and, given labor restrictions, less intensive than rice, indigo,

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[25] Mills Lane, *The People of Georgia* (Savannah: Beehive Press, 1992); Morgan, "Work and Culture."; Stewart, *"What Nature Suffers to Groe"*; Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800*; John E. Worth, *The Struggle for the Georgia Coast: An Eighteenth-Century Spanish Retrospective on Guale and Mocama*, ed. American Museum of Natural History, American Museum of Natural History, Anthropological Papers (New York: American Museum of Natural History, 1995).

[26] Lane, *The People of Georgia*; Thomas,Jones,Durham, and Larsen, *The Anthropology of St. Catherine's Island, 1. Natural and Cultural History*.

[27] Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; Lane, *The People of Georgia*.

tobacco and cotton, so he implemented a plan to grow wine and silkworms. In the first year, the colony was able to produce only enough silk to make one dress presented to Queen Charlotte, and no palatable wine has yet come out of coastal Georgia. Planters along the Savannah River looked across at the wealthy rice plantations in Carolina and started to experiment.[28]

Oglethorpe returned to England and left his colony in the hands of a board of Trustees. His prohibitions included bans on liquor, Catholics, Jews and African slavery. All but the final were lifted within the first year of the Georgia colony. The Trustees did not overturn the final ban, that on African slavery, for nearly twenty years. Once the planters began digging canals and building levees for rice cultivation, however, the white indentured servants, most of whom were urban tradesmen unaccustomed to manual agricultural labor, ran away in large numbers. To supplement the rice plantation workforce, Savannah River planters hired out South Carolina slaves as “day laborers” until pressure forced the Trustees to reverse the ban on slavery in 1755.[29]

About the same time, the South Carolina colonial government adopted Anglicanism as the state religion. In 1755, faced with forced conversion to the Episcopal Church, an institution seen by English Calvinists as being as corrupt as the Catholic Church, the Dorchester Puritans removed themselves to Georgia. They settled in St. John’s Parish about thirty miles south of Savannah and named their community “Midway” as it lay at the midpoint between the Savannah and Altamaha Rivers. And, as in South Carolina, the Puritan planters held African slaves to do the hard work of rice cultivation.[30]

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[28] Carney, *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas*; Lane, *The People of Georgia*; Smith, *Slavery and Rice Culture in Low Country Georgia, 1750-1860*; Stewart, *"What Nature Suffers to Groe"*.
[29] Carney, *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas*; Lane, *The People of Georgia*; Smith, *Slavery and Rice Culture in Low Country Georgia, 1750-1860*; Stewart, *"What Nature Suffers to Groe"*.
[30] Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; Morgan, "Work and Culture."; Underdown, *Fire from Heaven*; Winslow, *Meetinghouse Hill*.

Puritan freeholders received colonial land grants of up to 500 acres in the coastal region of St. John's Parish. The land was low-lying and swampy, much like the surrounding rice-growing region. Sunbury, which served as the terminus for an eponymous road that connected Louisville nearly 150 miles inland with the sea, became a seaport. According to Puritan custom, a meetinghouse was established in a place equally convenient—or, in this case, equally inconvenient—to all parishioners on a knoll in the swamp about ten miles west of Sunbury at a spot that would eventually become the city of Midway in 1926. Plantations were isolated and residents formed their own small communities on them, but the weekly trip to church provided a full day of instruction and social interaction.[31]

The Midway Meetinghouse, much like its counterparts in New England, became the center of religious and civic community life. Puritan society and self-governance derived all structure and tradition from the meetinghouse-centered culture. The meetinghouse served as church, town hall and social gathering place, and the Selectmen, laymen chosen as community leaders, ordered the lives of the congregation with rigorous adherence to the rules of representative democracy. No selectman held the position of chairman for more than a year, and the mantle of leadership rotated without favoritism. If the board or congregation doubted the capabilities of a particular leader, a peaceful request for a discussion and vote would be made. An interim leader would serve as a facilitator for the ensuing debate. Equity of individual voices demanded that each person be allowed to express his thoughts and opinions, at least once in turn and, if necessary, a second time. Once debate ceased, the meeting would call for a vote and a new permanent leader would replace the facilitator.[32]

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[31] Carney, *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas*; Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; Smith, *Slavery and Rice Culture in Low Country Georgia, 1750-1860*; Stewart, *"What Nature Suffers to Groe"*; Winslow, *Meetinghouse Hill*.
[32] Fischer, *Albion's Seed*; Winslow, *Meetinghouse Hill*.

Such order and exhaustive deliberation could make communal decisions maddeningly slow. For example, the Midway settlers debated the site of their meetinghouse from 1755 until 1765. Such consensus-building, however, appealed to reason over emotion while still recognizing the individual. Communal decisions, even with lingering opposition, were considered fair and equitable, a driving tenet of Puritan culture. In the next two centuries, this form of governance would continue in both white and black civic organizations.[33]

Another important component of Puritan culture that persisted for generations was the concept of liberty. Personal liberties, though respected, were subject and inferior to the concept of “collective liberty.” Exhaustive debate encouraged expression of individual viewpoints, but, ultimately, the freedom of the community as a whole was paramount. Restrictions on personal liberties as dictated by edicts from the Selectmen were considered essential to the continued liberty of the whole society. The people, deeply involved in the deliberative process that selected leaders, invested their representatives with the public trust. The people yielded ultimate decision-making to those they had selected to lead. An excellent example of this in the Midway congregation was during the 1776 Continental Congress. Georgians opposed the patriot movement for independence from Great Britain, so only three delegates from the colony participated in deliberations over the Declaration of Independence. Two of the delegates, Button Gwinnett and Dr. Lyman Hall, were from St. Johns Parish. Dr. Hall, a good Puritan, listened to the debates and convinced his two colleagues to sign the document for Georgia despite public sentiment against independence. When the Revolution ended and the former parishes became

[33] Fischer, *Albion's Seed*; Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; Winslow, *Meetinghouse Hill*.

counties, the community of Midway received the name Liberty in recognition of Dr. Hall's demonstration of the Puritan ideal of collective freedom.[34]

The Puritan church and its descendant Congregationalist, Presbyterian, and Baptist congregations provided governance for the entire 15th GMD. Planters encouraged slaves to attend and join the Midway Church as well as churches founded at Sunbury, Riceboro and Walthourville. Christianity has often been cited as a means of subduing slaves through the promise of an afterlife, but, as already discussed, all communicants within the Puritan sphere of influence were subject to the absolute order of the meetinghouse. Puritanism and its later ideological descendant Congregationalism and was equal parts faith and government.[35]

As early as 1811, the Midway Selectmen recognized the need for assistance and recruited African-American lay preachers to work among the slave population. These ministers conducted plantation prayer meetings, attended funerals and officiated at slave marriages, the open recognition of which was an anomaly in the slave-owning South.[36]

The strictures of religious instruction encouraged the same applied discipline and dedication in secular education. While in Massachusetts, the Dorchester Puritans mandated literacy, established town schools and helped found Harvard, the first American university. Settling in the Midway district, the Puritans maintained their high expectations for education. Most white children in the coastal plantation region of Liberty County had private tutors or attended common schools set up near neighboring plantations and supported by the planters. At

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[34] Fischer, *Albion's Seed*; Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; David G. McCullough, *1776* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005); Winslow, *Meetinghouse Hill*.

[35] American Missionary Association, "Plymouth Rock in Liberty County, the Story of the Dorchester Community Center, Mcintosh, Ga, n.d.," Pamphlet, American Missionary Association, New Orleans; Clarke, *Wrestlin' Jacob*; Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; Donald G. Mathews, "Charles Colcock Jones and the Southern Evangelical Crusade to Form a Biracial Community," *The Journal of Southern History* 41, no. 3 (1975); Myers, ed., *The Children of Pride*; Winslow, *Meetinghouse Hill*.

[36] Clarke, *Wrestlin' Jacob*; Creel, *A Peculiar People*; Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; Mathews, "Charles Colcock Jones and the Southern Evangelical Crusade to Form a Biracial Community."; Myers, ed., *The Children of Pride*.

the outbreak of the Civil War, an estimated 75% of whites over the age of sixteen had attended college. In addition to the University of Georgia, many boys followed their New England roots to Yale, Harvard and Princeton as well as the University of Edinburgh, Oxford and Cambridge. Girls, too, had the opportunity to attend college at Macon's Wesleyan, established in 1836 as the first institution of higher learning for females in the United States.[37]

Near the close of the Civil War, a representative of the American Missionary Association (AMA) visited the Midway Meetinghouse. The missionary was startled to learn of the Puritan roots of the area; the AMA itself had been founded through the Congregational Church, the theological descendant of Puritanism. He also noted the vast number of teachers, ministers, missionaries and civic leaders who had emerged from the Midway congregation, and he concluded that the AMA should work to establish a school in the vicinity to educate the black populace as soon as the war was over. He marveled as well over the low incidence of miscegenation on the coastal plantations, a fact supported by racial distribution in the 1870 and 1880 censuses.[38]

In addition to providing formal education for their own children, white planters, believing that no one should be ignorant of the scriptures, attempted to establish schools for their slaves to teach them to read. Literacy laws prohibiting the instruction of slaves in reading and writing quickly squelched this effort. In the 1820s, local planter Charles Colcock Jones completed his divinity studies at Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, and at Princeton Theological Seminary. Driven by an inward zeal for bringing whites and blacks together in Christ, he decided to return to Liberty County instead of taking a pulpit in the North. The Reverend Jones proposed

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[37] American Missionary Association, "Plymouth Rock in Liberty County; Clarke, *Wrestlin' Jacob*; Fischer, *Albion's Seed*; Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; United States Bureau of the Census, "Ninth Census of the United States, 1870: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Tenth Census of the United States, 1880: Georgia."
[38] United States Bureau of the Census, "Ninth Census of the United States, 1870: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Tenth Census of the United States, 1880: Georgia."

a renewed initiative to educate the slaves. Taking into account the literacy laws, Rev. Jones proposed a network of Sabbath schools that would instruct slaves in the tenets of the Christian faith through a catechism.[39]

In 1831, Rev. Jones organized the Liberty County Association for the Religious Instruction of the Colored Population and divided the 15th GMD into six stations.[40] Twenty-five instructors taught the catechism to 250 scholars at Sabbath schools. The familiar organizational principles found in the meetinghouse governed the African-American communicants. Central to the Sabbath schools was the inquiry meeting in which participants would listen to the preaching of the leader and then ask and answer questions pertaining to the scriptural lessons.[41]

Within fifteen years, there were nine schools with 34 instructors and 647 students. In 1846, 1,133 slaves, nearly 25%, attended branch houses of worship of the Midway Church in the 15th GMD. Although other denominations, including Baptist and Presbyterian sects, established themselves in Liberty County in the first half of the 19th century, the Puritan-Congregationalist ordering ways dominated through religion and religious education. As the model for governance, the communal town meeting set clear patterns for community organization practiced and emulated among slave and free alike. Descriptions of community meetings in the 1940s at Dorchester Cooperative Center reflect the same modes of discourse and peaceful democratic transfer of power described in Puritan meetinghouses from the 17th century onward.[42]

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[39] American Missionary Association, "Plymouth Rock in Liberty County; Clarke, *Wrestlin' Jacob*; Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; Mathews, "Charles Colcock Jones and the Southern Evangelical Crusade to Form a Biracial Community."; Myers, ed., *The Children of Pride*.
[40] Walthourville, Sunbury, Pleasant Grove, North Newport, Midway, the Fraser plantation.
[41] Clarke, *Wrestlin' Jacob*; Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; Mathews, "Charles Colcock Jones and the Southern Evangelical Crusade to Form a Biracial Community."; Myers, ed., *The Children of Pride*.
[42] Clarke, *Wrestlin' Jacob*; Fischer, *Albion's Seed*; Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; Mathews, "Charles Colcock Jones and the Southern Evangelical Crusade to Form a Biracial Community."; Winslow, *Meetinghouse Hill*.

Antebellum Demographics

Census data for Liberty County is available from 1820 through 1860, and census tracts that are still part of the county in 2008 were the 15th GMD in the tidewater and the 17th GMD to the west of the McIntosh ridge. There are striking differences between the two militia districts in racial composition and wealth distribution. The majority of plantations in Liberty County lay in the coastal tidewater region, and the rice-growing planters owned more slaves than their upcountry counterparts. As most wealth was tied to land and slave ownership, the coastal planters in the 15th GMD were also more affluent than those in the 17th. Conversely, as only white adult males could vote and more whites lived in 17th GMD than in the 15th, political power in antebellum Liberty County rested in the upland regions. Prior to 1837, coastal planters had dominated local politics and maintained the county seat at Riceboro in the heart of the rice-growing region. With the shift in voting power, the electorate moved the county seat from Riceboro to Hinesville.[43]

The demographic constitution of Liberty County's 15th and 17th GMDs in 1850 provides insight into the area on the eve of the Civil War. The 1850 Census enumerated only white residents, so there is no breakdown of African Americans by census tract. Regardless, there were a total of 7,942 persons, white and black, in Liberty County in 1850. Of those, only 19% were white, and there were only 16 free people of color, all of whom lived in the 15th GMD. The majority of white males of voting age lived in the 17th GMD (181), and, of the remaining 123 voters living in the 15th GMD, 40 lived in the Walthourville enumeration district close to

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[43] Carney, *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas*; Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; Smith, *Slavery and Rice Culture in Low Country Georgia, 1750-1860*; Stewart, *"What Nature Suffers to Groe"*; United States Bureau of the Census, "Fourth Census of the United States, 1820: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Fifth Census of the United States, 1830: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Sixth Census of the United States, 1840: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Eighth Census of the United States, 1860: Georgia."

Hinesville. Only 27% of Liberty County voters lived in the areas around Riceboro, Sunbury and Midway.[44]

Table 1.1 Liberty County Population, 1850 (Source: U.S. Census, 1850)

	15th GMD	17th GMD	TOTAL
Whites	653	882	1535
African-Americans, Slaves	--	--	6391
White Males, Voting Age	123	181	304
Free People of Color	16	0	16

Wealth in 1850

According to the 1850 census, the smaller white population of the 15th GMD held over 59% of the economic assets in the county. Ironically, the 17th GMD laid claim to the wealthiest individual, County Surveyor William Hughes, was worth a reported $50,000, nearly 10% of the total private assets in the county. In both districts, agriculture was the dominant economic sector, and wealth was measured in terms of land and slaves. Several individuals with large assets reported either no profession or occupations such as clergy, school teacher and student, implying that agricultural investments were part of their wealth profile. In the 15th GMD, there were 100 plantations, of which 6 were larger than 1,000 acres and held more than 100 slaves. Of the six largest landowners in the 15th GMD, five centered their activities around the Riceboro area. Together with Jacob Walburg who owned St. Catherine's Island, these men controlled most of the material wealth in 1850 Liberty County.[45]

The 17th GMD, on the other hand, had only 66 plantations with only 33 holding slaves. Another contrast between the coastal and upland areas was in the disparity in average wealth

[44] United States Bureau of the Census, "Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Eighth Census of the United States, 1860: Georgia."

[45] Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; Thomas,Jones,Durham, and Larsen, *The Anthropology of St. Catherine's Island, 1. Natural and Cultural History*; United States Bureau of the Census, "Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Eighth Census of the United States, 1860: Georgia."

among self-defined planters. Coastal planters were, on average, twice as wealthy as their upland counterparts.[46]

Antebellum Economics: Rice Cultivation & The Task System Economy

Coastal rice planters gleaned their wealth from land and slaves, but rice cultivation developed a unique labor system that shaped complex work habits, race relations and domestic economic patterns. In the Southern plantation economy, two distinct slave labor patterns emerged: gang labor and the "task" system. The first used large numbers of slaves to carry out work in the fields through compulsion, and, for most people, it is the dominant image of slave life. The task system, largely limited to the Georgia and South Carolina coast, was not as widespread as gang labor and centered on individual tasks to be completed by slaves with little supervision.[47]

Although the origins of the task system in the New World are unclear, South Carolina rice planters initiated its use in the early 18th century, and their Georgia counterparts adopted the practice as they established plantations. Whereas planters and their white overseers forced gang laborers to work from sunrise to sundown with intense scrutiny, slaves working under the task system enjoyed an unparalleled degree of autonomy. A "task" referred to a given amount of work—usually described as a certain amount of land—for which a slave was responsible. Once a laborer finished his or her daily task for the master, the remaining time belonged to the slave. The distinction between the master's time and the slave's time was considered absolute, and anything the slave produced off of the planter's time belonged to the slave alone. Most slaves used their time to grow crops, hire themselves out for skilled work, or

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[46] Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; United States Bureau of the Census, "Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Eighth Census of the United States, 1860: Georgia."
[47] Carney, *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas*; Crook, "Gullah and the Task System."; Harris, *Deep Souths*; Morgan, "Work and Culture."; Smith, *Slavery and Rice Culture in Low Country Georgia, 1750-1860*; Stewart, *"What Nature Suffers to Groe"*.

raise livestock that, in turn, they could sell or trade for their own benefit. Participation in the market afforded a seeming paradox for humans treated as "property:" the ability to buy, own, sell and trade personal property.[48]

Rice was better suited to task labor than other staples. Cotton and tobacco both require constant tending for healthy yields, and sugar and indigo necessitated labor-intensive industrialized production. Interestingly, when coastal planters in Georgia and South Carolina began planting Sea Island cotton, they rejected the gang labor system of their Upper South counterparts and implemented the task system in their new venture. So, the task system dominated Lowcountry life and shaped its socioeconomic culture for generations.[49]

For slaves, the task system afforded several benefits that the gang system did not. First, it allowed slaves to decide how to use their time thereby developing time-management skills. Gang laborers, compelled to work by threat of the lash, had no choices. Secondly, the acquisition of money and property introduced task workers to the concepts of property and asset management. Despite legally-enforced illiteracy, slave participation in barter and capital markets taught practical lessons in capitalism, something virtually unknown to gang workers.[50]

Two strong socio-cultural traditions grew out of the task system. First, with the lack of direct controls on movements and association found in gang labor, slaves along the Georgia coast could choose their own workers. Logically, to keep costs down, most slaves restricted labor

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[48] Carney, *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas*; Crook, "Gullah and the Task System."; Harris, *Deep Souths*; Morgan, "Work and Culture."; Phillip D. Morgan, "The Ownership of Property by Slaves in the Mid-Nineteenth-Century Low Country," *The Journal of Southern History* 49, no. 3 (1983); Smith, *Slavery and Rice Culture in Low Country Georgia, 1750-1860*; Stewart, *"What Nature Suffers to Groe"*.
[49] Carney, *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas*; Crook, "Gullah and the Task System."; Harris, *Deep Souths*; Morgan, "Work and Culture."; Smith, *Slavery and Rice Culture in Low Country Georgia, 1750-1860*; Stewart, *"What Nature Suffers to Groe"*.
[50] Crook, "Gullah and the Task System."; Peggy G. Hargis and Patrick M. Horan, "The 'Low-Country Advantage' for African Americans in Georgia, 1880-1930," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 28, no. 1 (1997); Morgan, "Work and Culture."; Morgan, "The Ownership of Property by Slaves in the Mid-Nineteenth-Century Low Country."

recruitment to within the family unit. Secondly, self-sufficiency was paramount as it allowed African Americans separateness from whites. This drive for independence would lead black Liberty County landowners to a pattern of risk aversion and conservative subsistence farming after Reconstruction and well into the 20th century.[51]

Psychologically, the division of working for someone else and working for oneself reinforced the sense of individualism already highlighted in the Puritan culture. Later, this distinction of working for the white "man" and working for one's own objectives would persist. Additionally, white planters usually left their Lowcountry plantations during the malaria season and appointed trusted slaves as drivers in lieu of white overseers. Drivers allocated tasks and accounted for work completed, but other slaves often pitied drivers for their relative lack of "free" time.[52]

Also, while it is true that property "ownership" by slaves hinged on the continued endorsement of white authority, many slaves, expressed the relief that white planters would reinforce their claims. The further acknowledgment of property rights and slaves' free time by white planters established mutual respect. The white planter, with all of his legal, social, economic and political power, still depended upon his labor force, and his deference to his slaves' time and property rights.[53]

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[51] Crook, "Gullah and the Task System."; Peggy G. Hargis, "Beyond the Marginality Thesis: The Acquisition and Loss of Land by African Americans in Georgia, 1880-1930," *Agricultural History* 72, no. 2 (1998); Peggy G. Hargis, "For the Love of Place: Paternalism and Patronage in the Georgia Lowcountry, 1865-1898," *The Journal of Southern History* LXX, no. 4 (2004); Hargis and Horan, "The 'Low-Country Advantage' for African Americans in Georgia, 1880-1930."; Harris, *Deep Souths*; Morgan, "Work and Culture."

[52] Carney, *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas*; Crook, "Gullah and the Task System."; Fischer, *Albion's Seed*; Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; Morgan, "Work and Culture."; Morgan, "The Ownership of Property by Slaves in the Mid-Nineteenth-Century Low Country."; Smith, *Slavery and Rice Culture in Low Country Georgia, 1750-1860*; Stewart, *"What Nature Suffers to Groe"*; Winslow, *Meetinghouse Hill*.

[53] Morgan, "Work and Culture."; Morgan, "The Ownership of Property by Slaves in the Mid-Nineteenth-Century Low Country."

Furthering his role in the task system, a planter often purchased goods from his slaves such as hogs, fowl, or corn. Such purchases provided a ready market for slave products and allowed the planter to make a display of public benevolence. Slaves could trade freely among themselves, other plantations or in special urban markets dedicated to selling slave-owned items from baskets to poultry. Yet, the ready assistance of the white master offered a familiar and trustworthy fallback, a situation that planters understood and maintained for political reasons.[54]

The nature of antebellum property ownership among Liberty County slaves is well-documented. The Southern Claims Commission (SCC), a unit of the Federal government established by the Freedmen's Bureau and the military directorate, received and held hearings about African-American claims that troops had illegally seized personal property. When Gen. Kilpatrick's men occupied Liberty County in late 1864, they followed the established procedure and confiscated all tangible property in the name of the federal government. Having assumed that all property belonged to Confederates, the military leaders and the Freedmen's Bureau were startled when complaints began to filter in from freedmen claiming illegal seizure of personal property by federal troops.[55]

Along the Georgia and South Carolina coast, former task workers filed the majority of African-American claims with the SCC. Liberty County, with 89 claimants, had the most cases of any county in the South. Claimed losses averaged $357.43 and included hogs, corn, rice, fowls, horses, cows, buggies, wagons, beehives, peanuts, fodder, syrup, butter, sugar and tea. Disbelieving the variety and quantity of these goods, federal agents listened to years of testimony

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[54] Crook, "Gullah and the Task System."; Hargis, "For the Love of Place."; Morgan, "Work and Culture."; Morgan, "The Ownership of Property by Slaves in the Mid-Nineteenth-Century Low Country."

[55] Paul A. Cimballa, "The Freedmen's Bureau, the Freedmen, and Sherman's Grant in Reconstruction Georgia, 1865-1867," *The Journal of Southern History* 55, no. 4 (1989); Crook, "Gullah and the Task System."; Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; Hargis, "For the Love of Place."; Morgan, "Work and Culture."; Morgan, "The Ownership of Property by Slaves in the Mid-Nineteenth-Century Low Country."

from affected parties. Most influential in convincing the SCC was the testimony provided by former white masters who swore to the validity of their former bondsmen's claims. While one could argue that such appearances were partially motivated by a sense of retaliation against the North, the public statements of white men in support of black claimants were powerful. Such performances certainly helped freedmen's cases, but, perhaps most importantly, they reinforced the culture of benevolence that softened interracial relationships both before and after the Civil War.[56]

While 1865 was a momentous year, it was not in and of itself a watershed moment when one way of life ceased and another sprang forth fully formed. For Georgia's slaves, the year finally called them "free" under the same laws that stripped their white former masters of their legal ownership of human property. As momentous as those shifts were, generations of socioeconomic activities had shaped Southern plantation culture. Entrenched traditions varied from one community to another, but each set of social, economic and cultural practices persisted where antebellum residents remained in place.

Reconstruction, 1865-1877

Following the Civil War, Reconstruction effected radical changes in the political leadership of Georgia and her counties. In Liberty County, Federal occupation began when Brigadier General James Kilpatrick's soldiers invaded from the west in November 1864. Personal property not consumed or destroyed by scavenging soldiers was confiscated, and Union troops established military rule, restricting the movements of the few remaining white residents who had not evacuated. Finally free, former slaves were allowed completely unfettered

[56] Cimballa, "The Freedmen's Bureau, the Freedmen, and Sherman's Grant in Reconstruction Georgia, 1865-1867."; Crook, "Gullah and the Task System."; Hargis, "For the Love of Place."; Morgan, "Work and Culture."; Morgan, "The Ownership of Property by Slaves in the Mid-Nineteenth-Century Low Country."

movement. For the next few years, the political and social life of Liberty County would diverge briefly from entrenched patterns.[57]

Not knowing the fortification of Savannah, General Sherman laid brief siege to Savannah before city leaders arrived to surrender. Setting up headquarters on one of the old mansions, Sherman stalled his campaign to assess military, social and political issues. Having effectively split the Confederacy in two and enforced the two-year-old Emancipation Proclamation, Sherman sensed the war was reaching its conclusion and recognized the need to implement reconstruction policies. Among the long-debated concerns was the settlement of thousands of freedmen. An early suggestion emerging from the 1862 "Port Royal Experiment" at Beaufort, South Carolina, was the distribution of land to African-American freedmen.[58]

At the suggestion of Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, General Sherman arranged a meeting with twenty local African-American leaders, mostly ministers, on January 12, 1865. Among those present were representatives from Liberty County: 40-year-old Charles Bradwell, born a slave but emancipated by his former master J.L. Bradwell and 44-year-old Arthur Wardell, a licensed Baptist minister for six years but only recently emancipated by the Union Army. Sherman conversed with these men about many issues centered on one crucial and heretofore unasked question: "What do you want for your own people?"[59]

When asked how they believed African Americans would best be able to take care of themselves, Reverend Garrison Frazier replied, "The way we can best take care of ourselves is to have land, and turn in and till it by our labor…and we can soon maintain ourselves and have

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[57] Shelby Foote, *The Civil War: A Narrative: Red River to Appomattox* (New York: Vintage Books, 1986); Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*.
[58] Foote, *The Civil War: A Narrative: Red River to Appomattox*; Willie Lee Nichols Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).
[59] Cimballa, "The Freedmen's Bureau, the Freedmen, and Sherman's Grant in Reconstruction Georgia, 1865-1867."; Garrison Frazier, "Colloquy with Colored Ministers," *The Journal of Negro History* 16, no. 1 (1931); Josef C. James, "Sherman at Savannah," *Journal of Negro History* (1954).

something to spare….we want to be placed on land until we are able to buy it and make it our own."[60] General Sherman obliged by issuing Field Order 15 that called for the seizure of all abandoned lands within the rice-growing areas of Georgia and South Carolina and the issuance of land grants from those properties to African-American freedmen.[61]

While Sherman stopped short of granting fee simple title to the lands, freedmen were able to purchase farmsteads over the next two generations. In Liberty County, land grants and purchased tracts derived mainly from rice plantations abandoned or sold by their former white owners, so the majority of lands owned by African Americans lay in the 15th GMD. In many cases, newly freed people settled on lands carved from plantations they once worked as bondsmen. As a result, most long-established black communities remained in the same localities well into the 20th century.[62]

Post-War Demographics: Riceboro

1870 census data for Riceboro provides a good benchmark for postwar community conditions. There were 372 households, of which 368—or 98%—were headed by people of color. A distinction was made between "black" and "mulatto," and only 3 mulatto heads of household were recorded in the Riceboro vicinity. Those listed as "farmers" owned their own land, and all households owned their own houses. Despite evidence from personal letters, there is no census accounting for tenants at Montevideo Plantation which was still owned by Mary Jones,

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[60] Frazier, "Colloquy with Colored Ministers."
[61] Cimballa, "The Freedmen's Bureau, the Freedmen, and Sherman's Grant in Reconstruction Georgia, 1865-1867."; Foote, *The Civil War: A Narrative: Red River to Appomattox*; Frazier, "Colloquy with Colored Ministers."; James, "Sherman at Savannah."
[62] Cimballa, "The Freedmen's Bureau, the Freedmen, and Sherman's Grant in Reconstruction Georgia, 1865-1867."; Hargis, "Beyond the Marginality Thesis."; Hargis, "For the Love of Place."; Hargis and Horan, "The 'Low-Country Advantage' for African Americans in Georgia, 1880-1930."; Harris, *Deep Souths*; Morgan, "Work and Culture."

widow of the Reverend C.C. Jones. There is also no correlation between African-American tenants named by the Joneses and households enumerated in the census.[63]

Table 1.2: Riceboro Households, Head of Household Detail in 1870 (Source: U.S. Census, 1870)

	Black Male	Black Female	White Male	White Female	Total
Farmer	147	4	3	0	**153**
Farm Labor	86	102	0	0	**188**
No Profession	7	11	0	0	**18**
Railroad Worker	6	0	0	0	**6**
Domestic Servant	0	2	0	0	**2**
Wheelwright	1	0	0	0	**1**
Keeps Country Store	0	0	0	1	**1**
House Painter	1	0	0	0	**1**
House Carpenter	1	0	0	0	**1**
TOTAL	**249**	**119**	**3**	**1**	**372**

Throughout the next century, the racial composition of the Riceboro district changed very little. In 1870, the 4 white households incorporated only 29 individuals. Influxes of whites paralleled the development of the railroad and several sawmills in the area.

Table 1.3: Riceboro Population, 1870-1970 (Source: U.S. Census, 1870-1970)

	Black	White	Total	% Black	% White
1870	1811	29	1840	98.4%	1.6%
1880	1843	124	1967	93.7%	6.3%
1900	1863	135	1998	93.2%	6.8%
1910	1967	129	2096	93.8%	6.2%
1920	1630	96	1726	94.4%	5.6%
1930	1819	126	1945	93.5%	6.5%
1960	1922	125	2047	93.9%	6.1%
1970	1754	118	1868	93.9%	6.1%

Riceboro's racial balance was not the only element to remain largely unchanged in the century following the Civil War. Relative to the overall population, few families moved into the area, so familial and social bonds persisted until the final decline of subsistence farming in the

[63] Hargis, "For the Love of Place."; Myers, ed., *The Children of Pride*; United States Bureau of the Census, "Ninth Census of the United States, 1870: Georgia."

1960s and 1970s. Also, despite their tiny representation in the rural village's population, whites would establish a dominant economic role as the main land and business owners in the 15th GMD.[64]

Reconstruction Economics

The postwar economy of Georgia remained centered on staple-crop agriculture and extractive industries such as naval stores and lumber. In absence of industrial development, the Southern labor market was isolated from other regions. Thanks in part to General Sherman's Field Order and subsequent land purchases, African Americans in Liberty County owned small farms and enjoyed the relatively autonomy afforded by subsistence tracts. A few white families retained their plantations through the Civil War, but most found their large tracts nearly impossible to manage in the absence of slavery.

In Riceboro, Mary Jones, widow of Rev. C.C. Jones, and her son Joseph tried to recruit sharecroppers, but, by 1880, there was no one willing to work "on shares" in the county. To keep Montevideo afloat, the Joneses hired a succession of white overseers who attempted to enforce gang labor practices among black workers. Such a break from the relatively liberal drivers under the task system caused freedmen to reject the new system, and African-American laborers negotiated two- and three-day contracts modeled on the task system to preserve "their" time. By

[64] Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; United States Bureau of the Census, "Ninth Census of the United States, 1870: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Tenth Census of the United States, 1880: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Eighteenth Census of the United States, 1960: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Nineteenth Census of the United States, 1970: Georgia."

the 1890s, the C.C. Joneses had abandoned any hope of resuscitating Montevideo and their other plantations Arcadia and Maybank and moved to sell.[65]

Lacking funds and, in many cases, the willingness to purchase additional property they would be unable to work efficiently within the family, African Americans did not step up to buy Montevideo and large tracts like it. Instead, whites with the wherewithal—Northern industrialists and locals with available cash—purchased larger tracts of land as they came available. Equipped with the rare combination of large landholdings and ready money, land barons of the New South revived centralized units of agricultural production. These white landowners were often the only individuals with enough capital to build processing facilities and to facilitate marketing to regional, national and global customers. Their farm factories and processing facilities further restricted economic activities to local scales. In the absence or scarcity of banks, these men of means also were able to extend credit to smaller farmers, usually through country stores that they owned. Political power followed economic power, and, within a generation of the end of Reconstruction, rural white men controlled the overarching nexus of agrarian politics and economics.[66]

Politics, Old and New: 1865-1946

During Reconstruction, white males who had served in Confederate armed forces found themselves stripped of their right to vote, and their former slaves became citizens under the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (1866) and were granted the franchise by the 15th Amendment in 1870. While some whites in Liberty County retained public office under military

[65] Carney, *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas*; Hargis, "For the Love of Place."; Harris, *Deep Souths*; Morgan, "Work and Culture."; Myers, ed., *The Children of Pride*; Smith, *Slavery and Rice Culture in Low Country Georgia, 1750-1860*.

[66] Harris, *Deep Souths*; Hepburn, ed., *Contemporary Georgia*; Jones, *Dispossessed*; Morgan, "Work and Culture."; Loren Schweninger, "A Vanishing Breed: Black Farm Owners in the South, 1651-1982," *Agricultural History* 63, no. 3 (1989); Stewart, *"What Nature Suffers to Groe"*.

rule and Reconstruction, the Republican Party controlled the Georgia Assembly and elected 33 African-American legislators during 1868-69, the first full term after the war's conclusion. By 1870, the year Georgia reentered the Union and Reconstruction ended in the state, blacks had been displaced by white politicians. An act of Congress restored black Republicans to their seats in the Georgia Assembly, but, by 1872, whites again regained power.[67]

Race and political party played important roles in the postwar wrangling for power, but the more subtle discord between the Old South of rural plantations with landed political bosses and the New South of industrial boosters and city-builders such as Henry W. Grady served as a critical undercurrent. The first faction, represented by so-called "Bourbon" Democrats, opposed strong government, while the second faction supported good government as a vehicle for human progress. This latter progressive attitude found a home in the "People's Party" or Populist movement. At odds with the Democrats, who were led by old-style paternalistic leaders, Populists appealed to the common man, white and black alike, who struggled in the economic disaster of the post-war South.[68]

After effectively removing African Americans from the Georgia Assembly, the Bourbon Democrats wrote a new state constitution that would perpetuate the power of rural political bosses for the next 85 years. In 1877, Georgia's new Constitution established a kind of electoral college called the county unit system to govern primary elections. With a single-party political system, Georgia's Democratic primaries served as the only political contest of note for

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[67] Cimballa, "The Freedmen's Bureau, the Freedmen, and Sherman's Grant in Reconstruction Georgia, 1865-1867."; Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Perennial/HarperCollins, 1989); Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; Hepburn, ed., *Contemporary Georgia*.

[68] John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1937); Steven Hahn, *The Roots of Southern Populism: Yeoman Farmers and the Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1850-1890* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983); Hepburn, ed., *Contemporary Georgia*; Jones, *Dispossessed*; "Liberty County Industrial Authority--Members, Etc.," in *Georgia Laws 1964 Session*, Georgia General Assembly (1964).
Leon F. Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998); Schweninger, "A Vanishing Breed."

decades.[69] Promoted by rural factions against growing cities, the six most populous counties received six votes each, the next 30 most populous would get four each, and the remaining 121 tiny counties, regardless of population, would get two votes. Despite being couched as a populist initiative, the county unit system allowed any three small counties to nullify any one large county. Therefore, each county, regardless of size had a similar amount of political power, and county officials in rural areas could rise in state political circles without much popular support. Places like Liberty County with a small electorate—one that continued to shrink with the gradual disenfranchisement of African Americans—were ready for takeover by local politicians adept at influencing small groups of people.[70]

Bourbon politics were as limited as their concept of government. They believed that control of politics and government should be retained by wealthy white men who already stood at the top of the Southern social order. These leaders treated everyone beneath them with the same paternalistic attitude as the antebellum planters upon whom they modeled themselves. Furthermore, in the tradition of hereditary paternalistic practices, more than property could be passed from father to son; power became a possession that leaders bequeathed to create dynasties. The rural oligarchic order flourished in Georgia's rural-agrarian culture, protracted economic depression, and biracial, or segregated, society.[71]

Georgia's persistent biracial society eroded slightly in the two decades following the Civil War. The rising tide of Populism and its calls for economic, political and social equity

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[69] In Liberty County today, most offices are still settled in the July Democratic primary. Only a handful of Republicans have run for public office in the county since Reconstruction, and the county has never carried a Republican candidate for state or national office.

[70] Melissa Fay Greene, *Praying for Sheetrock: A Work of Nonfiction* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1991); Hahn, *The Roots of Southern Populism*; Harold Paulk Henderson, *Ernest Vandiver: Governor of Georgia* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 2000); Hepburn, ed., *Contemporary Georgia*; Jones, *Dispossessed*.

[71] Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*; Greene, *Praying for Sheetrock*; Hahn, *The Roots of Southern Populism*; Hargis, "For the Love of Place."; Harris, *Deep Souths*; Henderson, *Ernest Vandiver*; Hepburn, ed., *Contemporary Georgia*; Jones, *Dispossessed*; Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow*.

swept up Georgia's poor of both races and implied unprecedented racial equality. The Bourbon Democrats, having easily suppressed Republican incursion in Georgia's politics, responded to this new threat by seeking to divide Populist adherents along racial lines. By playing on racial tensions, the Bourbons obfuscated the economic and political issues that had drawn blacks and whites together under Populism. The Democrats formalized their racial hegemony through a series of "Jim Crow" laws that legalized segregation and asserted the interests of white supremacy. Policies suppressing industrial development and the diversification of local economies took on the distracting trappings of racial politics. Progressive initiatives such as compulsory school attendance, public health programs, welfare, subsidized housing, and publicly supported social services that threatened to undermine the dependence of African Americans on the private paternalism of whites were rejected until the 1960s.[72]

As the 19th century came to a close, white politicians worked to erode the African-American vote. "Jim Crow" segregation became law, and lynching and Ku Klux Klan activities spiked as the new century dawned. From 1906, when prohibitive poll taxes were initiated, African Americans were systematically removed from the electorate. Democratic "white-only" primaries, usually held in July, served as general elections with no political challengers until the 1940s. Informal political and economic cliques known as courthouse "rings" or "gangs" sprang up throughout rural Georgia and became effective machines, giving and taking power as needed to maintain their positions. To maintain power in rural areas, courthouse sought to control access to money, jobs, education and voting. And, given the county unit system, county oligarchs were

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[72] Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*; Hahn, *The Roots of Southern Populism*; Henderson, *Ernest Vandiver*; Hepburn, ed., *Contemporary Georgia*; Steven Hoelscher, "Making Place, Making Race: Performances of Whiteness in the Jim Crow South," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 93, no. 3 (2003); Jones, *Dispossessed*; Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow*.

able to align themselves with other rural strongmen to control Georgia. The perpetuation of social and economic norms advantageous to rural leaders depended on it.[73]

Rural Democratic leaders, culled as they usually were from leading planters and landowners, worked their way into all sectors of economic growth. In so doing, they could encourage or inhibit economic activities. As Jacqueline Jones asserts, industrialization and urbanization were strongly discouraged to maintain local economic and political dominance by agrarian Democratic leaders. These local leaders, in turn, were able to limit outside government interference by controlling the Georgia Assembly through the county unit system. Even Georgia's governors, aware that the popular vote counted little against the home rule of the counties, actively courted the favor the small-town leaders. Until the abolition of the county unit system by federal decree in 1962, these select white men completely controlled all policy-making in Georgia.[74]

The greatest proponent of this brand of Democratic rule was Eugene Talmadge who espoused a populist agrarianism blended with white supremacy. At his political peak from 1926 to 1946, Talmadge employed a political style that reflected the fears of autonomous rural communities that were breaking down in a new, urbanizing, modern America. "Talmadgism," as opponents termed this political ideology, held white supremacy and denial of African-American voting rights at its core and attracted adherents who called themselves "Dixiecrats," replacing the old "Bourbon" Democrat moniker. White voters elected Eugene Talmadge as their governor four

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[73] Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-1963* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988); Greene, *Praying for Sheetrock*; Henderson, *Ernest Vandiver*; Hepburn, ed., *Contemporary Georgia*; Hoelscher, "Making Place, Making Race."; Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow*.

[74] James E. Brittain and Robert C. McMath Jr., "Engineers and the New South Creed: The Formation and Early Development of Georgia Tech," *Technology and Culture* 18, no. 2 (1977); Hepburn, ed., *Contemporary Georgia*; Jones, *Dispossessed*.

times before he died in 1946. True to the Dixiecrat dynastic form, his son Herman was elected governor two years later after state law prohibited his automatic appointment to the post.[75]

Local Democratic Politics in Liberty County

Despite the demographic dominance of African Americans in the 15th GMD, politics were controlled completely by white men until the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. In Liberty County, the government body was known as the County Commission, a three-man entity that developed and executed all policy. With the legal exclusion of African Americans from the voting process, Liberty County's governance and policies were dictated by a small group of white men. The dominant white leader for the first half of the 20th century and the years preceding industrial development was C.B. Jones who served as Chairman of the County Commission for 34 years.[76]

In 1918, C.B. Jones was appointed to replace his father-in-law on the three-man Liberty County Board of Commissioners, the governing body for the county. Two years later, Jones was elected Chairman of the Board of Commissioners and remained in that position for the next 34 years. Under the county unit system, the role of Chairman was not necessarily limited to Liberty County. For examples, in 1920, he served as a delegate to the National Democratic Convention in San Francisco. He also became an "originator" of the Coastal Highway Commission in 1922.[77] The first paved highway that transected the state was the Dixie Highway, later known as the Coastal Highway and U.S. Highway 17, connecting South Carolina and Florida .[78] Though following an old route, the paved road passed through Jones's extensive holdings in Riceboro,

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[75] Henderson, *Ernest Vandiver*; Hepburn, ed., *Contemporary Georgia*; Hoelscher, "Making Place, Making Race."
[76] Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; Mary W. Owen, "C.B. Jones of Riceboro: Never Very Far from Home," *Savannah Morning News*, 14 December 1958.
[77] Owen, "C.B. Jones of Riceboro: Never Very Far from Home."
[78] H.B. Folsom, ""Opening of Coastal Highway Recalls Methods of Former Days"," *Savannah Morning News*, 12 October 1927.

and he became an early proponent of widening the road in the 1930s.[79] In 1949, Jones organized and became the first president of the Route 17 Businessmen's Association the goals of which included "a mighty four-lane superhighway replacing the present moth-eaten coastal artery between Savannah and the Florida line."[80]

For much of the first half of the 20th century, a small group of white men including Jones dominated local politics. In other parts of the rural South, informal political affiliations sometimes referred to as "courthouse rings" arced out from elected officials and included lawyers, businessmen and others who exercised influence in the local economic, social and political arenas. While normally an area of conjecture, the identities, roles and power of Liberty's courthouse ring were described in detail by African-American economist and sociologist Claudius Turner in letters to the American Missionary Association based on his observations throughout the 1940s:

> The dominating personality is the sheriff[81]. He is the head of a political ring which is composed of C.J. Smiley, [State] Representative, C.B. Jones and O.J. Olmstead, Road Commissioners of Liberty County, Mel Price, Judge of Atlantic Judicial Circuit, Paul Caswell, Judge of Hinesville City Court, and now Bruce Dubberly, Solicitor General of Atlantic Judicial Circuit….It so happens that the members of this ring along with a few other persons who are themselves not in politics in the formal sense control the major sources of employment in the county….So that we have combined in one ring the power of employment, the power of arrest, the power of prosecution, and the power of prison sentence and fine. Such power spreads throughout the whole of Liberty County and has great effect on the Negroes of the County. In many cases, therefore, the Negro is compelled to knuckle under. Whites also find it necessary to knuckle under.[82]

Turner considered the overarching power that these men exerted in every facet of local

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[79] "Super-Highway Plans Revealed, Coastal Highway Commission Has Meeting," *Savannah Morning News*, 16 April 1938.

[80] "To Promote Highway New Route 17 Association Formers; C.B. Jones Heads It," *Savannah Morning News*, 24 June 1949; "Us 17 Issues 'Strip Map' to Promote Travel," *Savannah Morning News*, 9 April 1950.

[81] Paul H. Sikes

[82] Claudius Turner to Ruth Morton, 5 March 1950, American Missionary Association Collection, AMA Addendum, 72:29, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA.

life. Through intimidation, vote suppression and control of the few cash-paying jobs in the county, a small group of white men maintained the status quo that favored their continued dominance. Progressivism of any sort—economic, political or social—threatened Southern Democratic white hegemony:

> I come now to the controlling Southern social climate….All law and law enforcement agencies and extra-legal policies are arrayed against those persons who aspire for progress and for improvement of the conditions of the little man. Now the exact repetition of that instance may not happen in Liberty County. But there are hard cores here against progress which are definitely Southern. The place of the Negro here is that of docile, unorganized worker. He is to accept gratefully whatever limited Southern liberalism is disposed to grant. This applies to public school finance, public health finance, public road construction, as well as to what positions of income Negroes may aspire. When Negroes try to go beyond those limits, they run into harsh facts of law enforcement agencies and extra-legal policies….All the successful Negro employers have their connections outside Liberty County. They are backed by firms in either Savannah or Brunswick. Local whites have only recently and grudgingly conceded the right of a few Negroes to incomes above the subsistence level. They are alert to see that no others get into such an income bracket.[83]

Disenfranchised and threatened with violence or economic repercussions, black voters held no place in Liberty County policy-making. Reaching back to risk-averse behavioral patterns learned through the task system and subsistence farming, African Americans sought to maintain the status quo. To that end, they created opportunities such as schools and civic groups that were separate from whites at the same time that they preserved relationships with powerful whites who could extend credit, purchase their wares or place them in or keep them out of jail.[84]

Post-Civil War African-American Social, Economic and Cultural Independence

After the Civil War, the goals of black freedom in the South were characterized by a quest for independence from power brokers of any kind. Land ownership was central to this aspiration, and African Americans on the Georgia coast had a distinct advantage over their

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[83] Claudius Turner to Ruth Morton, 5 March 1950, American Missionary Association Collection, AMA Addendum, 72:29, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA.
[84] American Missionary Association, "Plymouth Rock in Liberty County; Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*.

upcountry counterparts, both white and black. Land reclamation by antebellum white owners was particularly low in Liberty County, possibly because of the low-lying nature of the land. The retention of land and economic autonomy was difficult for several reasons. “Land-poor,” farmers had little cash to pay taxes and for family needs and relied on the promise of returns on standing crops. The economic cycle of annual crops required families to live on credit, usually extended by a white planter or store-owner.[85]

The power of land ownership in an agrarian economy ensured at least marginal autonomy for African Americans in Liberty County. It is interesting to note, however, that, despite success as farmers and the maintenance of their holdings, African Americans in eastern Liberty County did not actively seek to leverage land ownership—the symbol of Southern power—into political authority. This is especially interesting in light of the fact that there was only one documented act of racial violence perpetrated by whites against blacks recorded in Liberty County after Reconstruction. The socio-political climate of Liberty County race relations could probably best be described as a sort of détente. Claudius Turner, who conducted community-building at Dorchester Center during the 1940s and 1950s, commented in letters to AMA headquarters about the reluctance of African-American residents to convert their economic power as landowners into political capital which would disturb the equilibrium. Although segregated, the African-American community members in eastern Liberty County owned land and made extra money by working in oyster-shucking houses, and as laborers, domestic servants, and skilled craftsmen. Despite some local activism and national attention during the late 1950s and leading up to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965, the black community

[85] Hahn, *The Roots of Southern Populism*; Hargis, "Beyond the Marginality Thesis."; Hargis, "For the Love of Place."; Hargis and Horan, "The ‘Low-Country Advantage’ for African Americans in Georgia, 1880-1930."; Harris, *Deep Souths*; Jones, *Dispossessed*; Morgan, "Work and Culture."; Schweninger, "A Vanishing Breed."; Stewart, *"What Nature Suffers to Groe"*.

largely chose passivity. One persistent question is "why?"[86]

Finally free from the constant control of white owners, freedmen expressed little interest in a fully integrated society. "Separate but equal" was not completely antithetical to African-American concepts of freedom. Of fundamental importance to African Americans were equity of access to education and economic opportunity and the preservation of their right to vote. Claudius Turner reported one black woman's monologue to a local white leader in Liberty County referred to as the "Ice Man" seeking her voting affiliation during the contentious 1946 political race:

> "We don't want to sit in your parlor or eat at your table. We don't want to live with you or ride beside you. All we want is that everybody gets a fair deal. If a Negro and white man get into trouble and the Negro is in the right, don't take his right and give it to the white man. If the sheriff comes to the Negro's house, don't break in and start beating up his wife and children, but read the warrant to them and say what you are there for. If the Negro is wrong, arrest him like you arrest anybody else. If he is right, give him a chance to make bond. If the Negro and white man are doing the same kind of work, don't give the white man $10 a day and give the Negro $2 a day. Give 'em both the same. All Negroes want is to be treated like other people. We are tired of being stepped on."[87]

Jim Crow laws enforced superficial social separation through segregated public facilities, yet they existed in tandem with two ironic socioeconomic realities. First, while not allowed to "mix" in public, blacks and whites were economically interdependent for labor, employment, and goods and services. Secondly, equal access only stretched so far, as white leaders resisted providing public education, undermined economic self-sufficiency and gradually reduced and then eliminated access to the polls.[88]

African-American Autonomy: Education

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[86] Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-1963*; Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; Hargis, "Beyond the Marginality Thesis."; Hargis and Horan, "The 'Low-Country Advantage' for African Americans in Georgia, 1880-1930."; Jones, *Dispossessed*; Schweninger, "A Vanishing Breed."

[87] Claudius A. Turner and American Missionary Association, *Overcoming Obstacles to Voting in Liberty County* (Dorchester, GA: AMA/Dorchester Center, 1946).

[88] Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*; Hepburn, ed., *Contemporary Georgia*; Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow*.

In addition to the dearth of other social services, Liberty County provided no publicly-funded education for black students until the 1890s, so the African-American community acted to fill its own needs. Local freedmen, long exposed to the educational advantages of the white Puritans in Liberty County, desired education nearly as much as land. In 1872, Thomas Golden, a black landowner, donated property about two miles to the southwest of the Midway Meetinghouse and about 5 miles northeast of Riceboro along the Sunbury Road. He invited the American Missionary Association (AMA) to establish a boarding school on the property, and for 65 years the missionary group supplied funding and supervision. Eventually, educational initiatives by African Americans would dovetail into community development activities.[89]

Prior to the Civil War, a few private academies had served the white plantation families, and Dorchester Academy followed in that mould. Beginning after Reconstruction, however, interest in universal public education grew. For whites, small one- and two-room community schoolhouses cropped up by the 1880s, and Bradwell Institute served white high school students. Until 1900, Liberty County provided no support for black schools, and interested communities built their own elementary schools for African-American children. While most farm children of both races left school before the seventh grade, some students were able to finish several more years at either Bradwell or Dorchester.[90]

Through the 1930s, Liberty County resisted spending tax money for black education, and allotted African-American country school only meager teachers' salaries—an average of $15 per month—and second-hand books from white schools. During the 1930s, Liberty County began buying modern school buses and consolidating white one- and two-room schools into centralized

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[89] American Missionary Association, "Plymouth Rock in Liberty County; Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-1963*; Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*.
[90] Meredith R. Devendorf, ""out of the Dark and into the Light:" The One-Room Schoolhouse in African-American Culture, 1865-1930" (Honors, Amherst College, 1992); Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*.

brick buildings. African Americans who hoped of similar support had a champion in the Director of Negro Education for the State of Georgia. Robert L. Cousins had long petitioned Liberty County to provide a public high school for African-American children. In 1936, Cousins invited Ruth A. Morton from the AMA to meet with him, and she was impressed with his diligent work to bring "fine educational facilities to every Negro child in the State of Georgia…he has not fully succeeded, but standards throughout the state have been raised even in the face of a very bad political situation…and I think he has done a remarkable piece of work."[91]

In 1939, the county board of education finally established Liberty High School, also known as Liberty County Training School, in Riceboro's Cross Roads community. The decision to place the high school at Riceboro instead of near the Dorchester campus was, in Morton's absentee opinion, because the natural population center fell along Highway 17 built in the 1920s. The Dorchester site, however, lay closer to the center of the 15th and 1359th GMDs, the heart of the African-American population at the time. The 1930 Census shows the bulk of the African American population distributed across the 15th, 1359th, and 1478th GMDs. From a geographic standpoint, the Dorchester Academy site was central to the whole black population whereas the Cross Roads site was convenient to children in the 15th GMD. In the early 1950s, a new black high school was built near Dorchester Academy to replace the school at Cross Roads to be more geographically convenient to all African-American students. The move also reflected the continuing importance of the Dorchester Center's role in the community including its health

[91] Robert L. Cousins to Ruth A. Morton, 4 December 1940, American Missionary Association Collection, AMA Addendum, 72:3, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA. Devendorf, ""Out of the Dark and into the Light""; Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*.; Ruth A. Morton to Mrs. Robert P. Trask, 2 November 1940, American Missionary Association Collection, AMA Addendum, 72:4, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA.

clinic, credit union, and grist mill.[92]

Having worked closely with Ruth A. Morton at AMA headquarters in New York since 1936, Cousins recognized the considerable contributions Dorchester Academy had made in Liberty County. He expressed his interest in Dorchester continuing as a private boarding school after the new free school opened. In keeping with AMA policy not to compete with the state "in any area in which it was ready to assume it full share of responsibility for the education of its Negro citizens,"[93] however, the Dorchester Academy officially closed in 1940 after 68 years of service. The AMA prepared to raze the complex, but after protests from area residents, the organization agreed to leave the Boy's Dormitory intact and continue mission work in Liberty County. Dorchester Academy transformed into the Dorchester Cooperative Center, a new facility dedicated to teaching cooperation and community-building.[94]

African-American Community Development at Dorchester Center (1940-1950)

The Congregationalist AMA strove to foster self-sufficiency and empowerment in Liberty County through collective actions. For example, farmers purchased a communal tractor to work their fields. Recognizing the economic dominance of whites in Liberty County, Dorchester established black-controlled organizations for economic independence. The community, driven to obtain short-term credit from whites, established a member-owned credit union to avoid usury. Excluded from public health services, Dorchester hired an African-American doctor and set up dental clinics and a venereal disease eradication program.[95]

Morton hired Claudius A. Turner in 1940 as the director of the new community center at

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[92] Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; United States Bureau of the Census, "Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930: Georgia." Claudius Turner to Ruth Morton, 10 July 1950, American Missionary Association Collection, AMA Addendum, 72:31, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA.
[93] Ruth Morton to Mrs. Robert P. Trask, 2 November 1940, American Missionary Association Collection, AMA Addendum, 72:4, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA.
[94] American Missionary Association, "Plymouth Rock in Liberty County; Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*.
[95] Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; Claudius A. Turner and American Missionary Association, *A Program of Community Development in Liberty County, Georgia* (McIntosh, GA: Dorchester Center, 1947).

Dorchester. A graduate of Atlanta University with a degree in economics, Turner had also earned a masters degree in sociology from Fisk University under the tutelage of eminent black sociologist Charles S. Johnson. Turner's unique qualifications as a sociologist made him a keen observer of the remarkable world of African Americans in Liberty County. Over the next decade he wrote voluminous letters to AMA headquarters in New York documenting the Liberty County social, economic and political climate in academic detail. Turner's reports provide rare insight as few primary sources exist describing the social, economic and political realities of the pre-Civil Rights rural South as seen from the African-American perspective. Commenting on the culture he discovered upon moving to Liberty County, Turner recognized the peculiar nature of the local African-American community. He noted that, as a very old and demographically stable community, social habits were deeply ingrained and resistant to change and progress.[96]

Sociological studies of coastal Georgia and South Carolina began with the arrival of students of Franz Boas and Melville Hersokovits in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Researchers, intrigued by the retention of West African cultural traditions in the Sea Islands and coastal rice communities, focused heavily on the Gullah and Geechee peoples, as they were called, through the late 1930s. Sociological research interest subsided after the publication of seminal works such as John Dollard's *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (1937) and the Savannah Works Progress Administration Writers' Project *Drums and Shadows* (1941) documenting African-American culture in Liberty County and the Sea Islands. The fifteen-year period between the end of the Great Depression and the beginnings of the Civil Rights movement after the *Brown v. The Board of Education* decision is largely devoid of first-hand

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[96] Phillip J. Johnson, "The Limits of Interracial Compromise: Louisiana, 1941," *The Journal of Southern History* LXIX, no. 2 (2003); Turner and Association, *A Program of Community Development in Liberty County, Georgia.*

accounts. Turner's letters give rare insight into the Liberty County socio-political landscape.[97]

When Turner arrived in Liberty County, he described the black community as little changed from the end of the 19th century. Despite being disenfranchised by Dixiecrat politics and segregated by Jim Crow laws, African Americans in Liberty County still owned land and retained an independent spirit. Charged with developing collective farming and banking, Turner assessed the entrenched nature of his neighbors in a 1947 tract entitled "A Program for Community Development in Liberty County, Ga.":

> …[T]hese persons have stood on the land which they own and asserted their independence. This independence (and its accompanying individualism) is one of the central facts of the local culture. It finds its expression in "I ain't never had to beg for nothing yet," "I makes mine," "I don't have to ask nobody for nothing." With this feeling of security the neighbors charge each other the highest possible price for whatever they have for sale. The attitude, apparently, is "if you don't like it, I don't care. I got my own land and property and you can't hurt me if you get mad." This independent spirit gives us a cue to the type of strategy and tactics that may succeed in a people's program for this county. Compulsion will not work. Even mild compulsion is dangerous. In fact there are no means of compelling conformity.[98]

Once again, as in the case of Mary and Joseph Jones,[99] any hint of overtly forced conformity was never going to work among Liberty County's black populace. The subtle persuasions of negotiation epitomized by the Puritan meeting and the bartering of task-produced goods were still the only method to reach consensus.

Economics: Land Ownership & The Preservation of Independence

This relative independence was fostered by land ownership, but African Americans in Liberty County remained small holders capable of self-sufficiency on a subsistence level. By the late 1930s, 834 African-American households worked a total of 33,000 acres of farmland in

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[97] Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-1963*; Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*; Georgia Writers' Project,Johnson,Bell, and Bell, *Drums and Shadows*; Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*; Twining and Baird, *Sea Island Roots*.

[98] Turner and Association, *A Program of Community Development in Liberty County, Georgia*.

[99] Hargis, "For the Love of Place."

Liberty County. 560 African-American farmers owned 23,000 acres, a little over 40 acres per household, on which they planted some cotton and small subsistence plots of rice, corn, sugarcane and vegetables. In keeping with the local subsistence tradition, many African-American farmers and their families "worked out" in sawmills, naval stores, fishing, oyster houses, and domestic work.[100]

Commenting on the culture he discovered upon moving to Liberty County, Turner recognized the peculiar nature of the local African-American community. He noted that, as a very old and demographically stable community, social habits were deeply ingrained and resistant to change and progress.[101]

> They are centered around land and home ownership. Subsistence farming on their own land gives the people a strong feeling of security and independence. They are careful not to engage in any economic activity which may endanger that feeling of security and independence….They want progress but it must fit within their cultural pattern. As a matter of fact progress is bound to break some of those patterns.[102]

Small landowners, those with 50 or fewer acres, faced different tradeoffs than their sharecropping counterparts. Farming on any scale required sheer physical labor, and most small farmers had to rely on their own families to plant, tend and harvest their crops. Such labor arrangements developed naturally out of the antebellum task system in Liberty County. Short on cash, most of these small-scale farmers tried to limit the amount of money expended during the annual season. Such curtailment meant that they only planted what the family itself could manage, foregoing more lucrative but more labor-intensive crops such as cotton. Such risk-averse strategies kept such farmers on the margins of economic growth and dependent upon

[100] Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; United States Bureau of the Census, "Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930: Georgia."
[101] Claudius Turner to Ruth Morton, 10 July 1950, American Missionary Association Collection, AMA Addendum, 72:31, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA.
[102] Claudius Turner to Ruth Morton, 10 July 1950, American Missionary Association Collection, AMA Addendum, 72:31, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA.

creditors and outside wage work.[103]

An example of this risk aversion played out in a collective pea farming enterprise undertaken by Liberty County black farmers in the 1930s. After two years of success, poor weather and a slight downturn in the markets caused the cooperative to lose money. The participating farmers immediately abandoned the scheme and returned to subsistence cropping and outside work to sustain their families.[104]

Economics: The Devil's Bargain of "Holding Paper"

While property afforded subsistence for small landowners in the agrarian economy of the postwar South, farmers still required cash to purchase goods they could not produce and to pay their taxes. The term "land poor" applied to many landowners, large and small, white and black. In an agrarian economy, wealth was tied to the land and what could be raised on it. Cash came in seasonally at harvest, but expenses arrived throughout the year. Even the most careful planning and budgeting could not avoid running short of cash prior to harvest, and, when a crop failed, capital relief would not arrive at all. In the absence of formal banking institutions, individuals in need of financing turned to those who had available cash or credit, often local community merchants or landowners.[105]

To build their cash reserves, lenders invested capital in small-scale, localized production factories such as sawmills, cotton gins, and turpentine and sugar refineries. Without local refining, most raw agricultural products were too bulky to transport and had little commodity market value. Producers were, therefore, dependent upon these refiners to sell their crops. In Riceboro, C.B Jones operated at least one large sawmill and had easy access to rail and road

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[103] Jones, *Dispossessed*.
[104] Turner and Association, *A Program of Community Development in Liberty County, Georgia*.
[105] Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*; Hargis, "Beyond the Marginality Thesis."; Hargis and Horan, "The 'Low-Country Advantage' for African Americans in Georgia, 1880-1930."; Harris, *Deep Souths*; Jones, *Dispossessed*; Schweninger, "A Vanishing Breed."

transportation. Over 50 years, he accumulated over 20,000 acres in the 15th GMD, approximately 80% of its total 25,000 acres. He established three corporate entities—Riceboro Farms, Richland Land and Lumber Company, and the Riceboro Cattle Company—to receive titles to land. Additionally, he was a founder and President for several years of the Savannah Production Credit Association (SPCA), a farmer-owned cooperative that extended short-term credit throughout coastal Georgia. As an SPCA member, Jones obtained substantial short-term loans; from deeds to secure debt recorded in the Liberty County Superior Court, he obtained well over $50,000 in SPCA loans in the 1950s. Of 83 SPCA loans recorded in Liberty County between 1940 and 1954, only 8 were made in the 15th GMD. All 8 loans were made to three white men: J.B. Fraser, J.F. Browning and C.B. Jones.[106]

Lenders also often established stores selling dry goods and extended credit to customers. In small farming communities, travel was limited to distances that could be covered easily by wagon or foot. Centrally located to a community, local commissaries served a relatively small clientele and usually had no competition. Similar to the "company store" experiences of sharecroppers and early factory workers in the rural South, small freeholders would often seek credit for merchandise against the promise of seasonal earnings. With no competition, store owners could set prices and interest at whatever rates they desired. With nowhere else to shop, customers had little choice but to accept the terms of trade. Also, as store owners often owned the refining factories and purchased vegetable crops from area farmers, balking at unfair practices could jeopardize future earnings.[107]

To secure debt, farmers usually offered the value of their anticipated harvest. Ideally, the

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[106] Harris, *Deep Souths*; Jones, *Dispossessed*; Lewis Historical Publishing Company, *Georgia's Coastal Plain: Family and Personal History*, III vols., vol. III (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1964); Liberty County (GA) Superior Court, "Liberty County, Georgia, Deed Record Books, Grantor/Grantee Books."

[107] Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*; Harris, *Deep Souths*; Hepburn, ed., *Contemporary Georgia*; Jones, *Dispossessed*.

harvest would come in, and the debt would be paid. If the crop failed or the return was insufficient to pay the debt—as might happen if the lender reduced prices paid to the farmer—then the debt would accrete over the next year. The lender would often inflate the price of the item on credit, demand additional collateral to secure the note and charge usurious rates of interest.[108] Turner describes an arrangement made by a Credit Union member with the sheriff to purchase a wagon:

> The sheriff has a general store near McIntosh. He runs a charge account. Many of his prices are twice the market prices. Many Negroes trade there. For instance, I was told that a Negro purchased a wagon on a charge account. The market price was $70.00. The person was charged $140.00. The person made adown payment of $35.00 and was required by the sheriff to give a mortgage on her home as well as on her wagon. Others have made similar arrangements with the sheriff. So that now the sheriff has a stack of such mortgages. Of course, should a depression come, these persons will be wiped out. Several of the persons who trade with him are members of the credit union. They have had instructions constantly on the wiles of the loan shark and the very high prices of the country general store. Yet I was told that at least two such members have mortgaged their property in the same manner. Of course the sheriff will not foreclose on these persons until after the election. But they will fee obligated to vote for him lest they lose their property.[109]

Another common lending practice in rural Southern communities involved encouraging borrowers to take a loan to purchase a piece of equipment to better their farm or forest operations. The lender would buy the borrower's produce to feed his mill or factory and then suddenly reduce the price paid to the borrower to stifle his cash flow causing default and foreclosure on the collateral.[110] An example of the employment of this practice in Liberty County was related by the Mayor of Hinesville to Turner in 1949:

> [The lender] will find some Negro who is working for him who has maybe 150 acres of land. He will say: "You ought to be making more money than just wages from day labor. Why don't you buy yourself a truck and haul logs to my mill?"

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[108] Harris, *Deep Souths*; Jones, *Dispossessed*.
[109] Claudius Turner to Fred Brownlee, 28 July 1950, American Missionary Association Collection, AMA Addendum, 72:31, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA.
[110] Jones, *Dispossessed*.

> The usual reply is that the person hasn't money to buy a truck. He then says: "I will loan you the money to get a truck." He does so and takes a mortgage on his land and on the truck. For two weeks or a month the logger gets plenty to do. Then suddenly business gets slack and he cuts the logger off. About two weeks later he will give the logger just enough work to keep him in a big strain. The logger gives up and the supposedly [sic] benefactor acquires both the truck and the land. The mayor insists that this person has done this many times with variations of the methods, of course. All this is done with a smile, I am told, and with surface assurances of wanting to help. He leaves the unsuspecting Negro with a good taste in his mouth and with a feeling that "[the lender] tried to help me."[111]

In a search of the Liberty County deeds from 1900 until 1963, the year C.B. Jones died, he acquired over 20,000 acres of land in the 15th GMD. He purchased a total of 108 distinct parcels through 234 individual deed transfers.[112] Of these transactions, over 50% were parcels totaling fewer than 50 acres. From 1900 to 1930, nearly one-third of the deeds were executed by illiterate sellers as indicated by a "mark" in place of a signature. There are only a few cancelled deeds to secure debt (DSD), and, given Jones' practice of securing loans with property as collateral, it seems odd to find so few. It was a standard practice of the SPCA, the credit union of which Jones had been President, to record DSDs in Superior Court when the money was advanced and to cancel the DSD in the same manner. The most likely explanation is that borrowers signed warranty deeds to their property as their "note," and, once a debtor defaulted, Jones recorded the deed without a DSD. This premise also would explain large gaps in time between a date that a deed was executed and when it was actually recorded.[113]

Racial Interactions

The paternalistic attitudes of Liberty County planters towards their slaves metamorphosed into a postwar patronage system. Under slavery, slave-owning whites had titular

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[111] Claudius Turner to Ruth Morton, 10 July 1950, American Missionary Association Collection, AMA Addendum, 72:31, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA.

[112] The total acreage only accounts for purchases and not sale. Many parcels belonged to several heirs with no division of interest, so one parcel may have had several deeds to convey the entire parcel.

[113] Liberty County (GA) Superior Court, "Liberty County, Georgia, Deed Record Books, Grantor/Grantee Books."

ownership of and control over their workers. The task system afforded rice slaves much more economic freedom than possible in other parts of the South. Slave society in Liberty County, though heavily influenced by white churches, also enjoyed a fair degree of autonomy. The recognition of slave marriages, the low rate of slave sales and miscegenation, and the removal of white authority from the plantation during malaria season all contributed to community stability and cultural solidarity. Politically, African Americans, through the Sabbath school system, task system and use of black drivers in place of white overseers, learned and reinforced patterns of leadership and individual and communal self-governance. While planters exercised ultimate control over their slaves, white and black citizens of Liberty County engaged in complex social, political and economic relationships.

Liberty County, while limiting and then eliminating the black vote, had only one reported case of lynching of a prisoner by deputies. Racial violence sometimes threatened, but the populace largely remained cautious. Several factors may have contributed to the calm. First, the very intransigence of the population, both white and black, meant that people knew each other personally. Most documented lynching took place in communities where the victim was a stranger or newcomer. These interrelationships played an important role in quelling local violence in the mid-20th century when African Americans attempted to assert their voting and civil rights.[114]

A second factor was the stability of landownership. The long histories of families and communities that contributed to mutual awareness—if not necessarily understanding—were grounded in the land. Attachment to place was a central theme for agrarians that ran counter to New South industrial promoters. This concept resonated with black and white landowners alike

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[114] Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-1963*; Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*; Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow*.

and reinforced a deep sense of community. After all, the Savannah colloquy of ministers had assured Gen. Sherman that all the freedmen wanted was a piece of ground to make their way.

A final factor was the demographic make-up of Liberty County. African Americans had always been concentrated in the eastern half of the county in the 15th GMD. Prior to the Civil War, whites comprised only 25% of the population in the 15th GMD. The first race-dependent political action in the county took place in 1837. Most of the wealth in Liberty County was tied up in the coastal plantations where whites were in the minority. In the upper portions of the county, the majority of residents were white. With more whites settled around Hinesville than in the plantation district, the majority of voters had the county seat relocated from Riceboro. From that point forward, Hinesville served as the nominal seat of political power, but, as the 20th century began, economic and political leaders of Liberty County maintained their own localized dominance.[115]

While there was interaction between whites and blacks in Liberty County, community institutions including schools, civic groups and churches remained segregated in the 1940s. White social life centered around the county seat of Hinesville, and the diverse African-American hamlets scattered throughout the 15th and 1359th GMDs gathered at local churches and schools. The Dorchester Cooperative Center, located approximately at the geographical center of the county, became the African-American cultural center of the county. Race relations were

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[115] Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; United States Bureau of the Census, "Fourth Census of the United States, 1820: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Fifth Census of the United States, 1830: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Sixth Census of the United States, 1840: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Eighth Census of the United States, 1860: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Ninth Census of the United States, 1870: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Tenth Census of the United States, 1880: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Eighteenth Census of the United States, 1960: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Nineteenth Census of the United States, 1970: Georgia."

cordial, but, as Turner observed, "a very important fact is the thin shield of formality which covers white hostility toward Negroes…the slightest divergence from their conception of conformity punctures this formality and exposes the hostility."[116]

A fascinating paradox existed in the mindset of black citizens of Liberty County. While staunchly independent and, in Turner's opinion, intractable, African Americans in Liberty County were keenly aware of their lack of political power and fell fairly easily under the influence of perceived power brokers. Figures like the Commission Chairman and the sheriff were treated with deference. Also, given the small and stable population of Liberty County, white and black families knew each other well. White politicos often reminded each other and their black neighbors of lifelong and intergenerational personal bonds to establish alliances. The veneer of Southern politeness covered up coercive practices, and acts of blatant paternalism reinforced the white benefactor role invented in the antebellum period.[117]

Testing Civil Rights, 1946-1950

Eugene Talmadge's influence waned slightly in the early 1940s, and the Governor found himself thrown out of office by the people of Georgia in 1942, the only election he ever lost. In his place, Georgia elected Ellis Arnall, a "New Deal" liberal Democrat who ran against Talmadge. Among his reforms was the extension of the franchise to 18-year-olds, the creation of a new state constitution, and the abolition of chain gangs and poll taxes. The last reform reverberated throughout Georgia and catalyzed a tidal wave of voter registration among African Americans. Further encouraged by President Truman's Commission on Civil Rights, African-American voters, denied the right to vote for the past four decades, rallied to the promise of

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[116] Turner and Association, *Overcoming Obstacles to Voting in Liberty County*.
[117] Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*; Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow*.

change.[118]

In the spring of 1946, the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed the right of African Americans to vote in the Georgia Democratic primaries by its refusal to review a case of the Circuit Court of Appeals of New Orleans which ruled that Primus E. King of Columbus, Georgia, was illegally barred from voting in the Georgia "white" primary. Later, the Solicitor General of the U.S. Justice Department announced his intent to prosecute any person who attempted to keep African Americans from voting.[119]

Over the first few years of its existence, Dorchester Cooperative Center had become the logical heart of political activism for the black community. In the wake of the Primus King decisions, the Dorchester Federal Credit Union immediately reached out to black leaders throughout Liberty County and set up the Liberty County Citizens Council to lead the voter registration drive. As African Americans outnumbered whites in the county, the promise of a black majority vote not only excited those long disenfranchised but it also stirred action among whites. Sheriff's deputies with guns arrived at the homes of registered black voters to deliver summons for written examinations at the courthouse. This was not legal but, as Turner pointed out, "the question of legality would never be allowed to stand in the way of persons who are determined to keep themselves in power"[120] The Liberty County Citizens Council encouraged compliance and hired a Savannah-based attorney to represent them, and nearly 100% of those served with summons appeared for and "passed" their examinations.[121]

As a result of strong grassroots participation, Liberty County made history in July 1946 by being the first county in Georgia to register more black than white voters. Approximately

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[118] Henderson, *Ernest Vandiver*; Hepburn, ed., *Contemporary Georgia*.
[119] Hepburn, ed., *Contemporary Georgia*.
[120] Turner and Association, *Overcoming Obstacles to Voting in Liberty County*.
[121] Turner and Association, *Overcoming Obstacles to Voting in Liberty County*.

forty counties in Georgia had larger numbers of African-Americans than whites, but organization was critical. In Burke County, for example, out of a potential 10,000 black voters, only 160 registered whereas 2,300 out of a total 2,500 white voters registered. In Liberty County, there were 1,800 African Americans who registered to vote out of a potential 2,200. Only 1,500 whites registered in the county, 350 of whom left the county with the post-World War II downsizing of the Camp Stewart Army base near Hinesville. Although Talmadge won the governorship, he did not carry Liberty County, and every candidate endorsed by the Liberty County Citizens Council won within the county. "No other county in Georgia has such a record of absolute Negro voting strength," Turner wrote, "[and] the local whites are not unaware of this fact"[122].

Turner reflected on the election with the hope that the white-dominated county political environment would soon lose its hold. "The social atmosphere had noticeably changed for the better in Liberty County," Turner wrote in August 1946. "I have been told that it had changed in almost every county in Georgia where the Negro vote was important….All candidates…knew that no candidate could carry this county without the support of the Negro vote [and] we had a fleeting feeling that we might eventually be brought into the main stream of life here"[123] Optimism was short-lived, however, as Eugene Talmadge's son Herman displaced Ellis Arnall as Governor in the 1948 election. By 1950, Turner's mood had turned despondent, and his intense involvement in politics drove the ever-conservative AMA to ask for his resignation. Sensing the end of his tenure in Liberty County, Turner's letters to the home missionary office in New York

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[122] Turner and Association, *Overcoming Obstacles to Voting in Liberty County.*
Claudius A. Turner to Fred L. Brownlee, 1 August 1946, American Missionary Association Collection, AMA Addendum, 72:11, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA.

[123] Claudius A. Turner to Fred L. Brownlee, 1 August 1946, American Missionary Association Collection, AMA Addendum, 72:11, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA.

became increasingly unguarded and unvarnished.[124]

Turner wrote detailed descriptions of the 1950 political campaign, highlighting tactics used by the local political ring. As an example, he described the story of an African-American man who began to work for a candidate the sheriff opposed. Four days later, the man was arrested for parking his car too close to the highway and kept in jail overnight. The sheriff spoke to him before releasing him, and the man immediately went to work for the sheriff's candidates. According to the Mayor of Hinesville, the sheriff, in the privacy of his office, orders his deputies to do certain things and then "appears on the scene as a benefactor in getting the people out of trouble."[125] The same tactics were documented in Melissa Fay Greene's *Praying for Sheetrock* which portrayed Sheriff Poppell of neighboring McIntosh County. "The credulous Negro," wrote Turner, "is unaware of his duplicity."[126]

The Beginning of the End: 1950-1962

After Turner's termination by the AMA, the Dorchester Center and its related activities languished throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s. The Dixiecrat backlash to the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas,* swept a series of Talmadge-style candidates into state offices. Herman Talmadge, Eugene's son, won Georgia's junior senator seat alongside staunch segregationist Richard B. Russell, who served as senator from 1933 until 1971.[127]

In the 1950s, Liberty County leadership began to devolve to a new generation of white

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[124] Hepburn, ed., *Contemporary Georgia*. Claudius A. Turner to Fred L. Brownlee, 1 August 1946, American Missionary Association Collection, AMA Addendum, 72:11, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA.
[125] Claudius Turner to Ruth Morton, 10 July 1950, American Missionary Association Collection, AMA Addendum, 72:31, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA.
[126] Claudius Turner to Ruth Morton, 10 July 1950, American Missionary Association Collection, AMA Addendum, 72:31, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA.

[127] Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-1963*; Henderson, *Ernest Vandiver*; Hepburn, ed., *Contemporary Georgia*.

men. Chairman Jones lost the seat he had held for a third of century in 1954 to a rival supported by Sheriff Paul Sikes. The sheriff died in office in 1958, and his son R.V. "Bobby" Sikes replaced him in that office. Another business associate of Paul Sikes, Roscoe Denmark, served as State Representative for Liberty County and was succeeded by C.B. Jones's nephew Charles Maury Jones in 1960.[128]

This new generation of leaders, perhaps inspired by the pro-industrial stance of post World War II America, embraced new ideas about economic growth while maintaining the social and political status quo. In Georgia, Ernest Vandiver was the last of the Talmadge-style politicians to be elected as Governor in 1958. As if sensing the end of the Bourbon-Dixiecrat era of economic suppression, Vandiver was the first Georgia Governor to preach industrial recruitment, and local county bosses began exploring ways to capitalize in the new economy. In 1958, Rep. Denmark, the primary oil and gas distributor in Liberty County, introduced a bill to create the Liberty County Industrial Authority (LCIA). Under the county unit system, the Georgia Assembly essentially would pass any legislation deemed "local" and of no consequence to other spheres of influence. The enabling legislation for the LCIA passed with no opposition. Charles M. Jones became the Authority's attorney. When Jones was elected to succeed Roscoe Denmark in 1960, he was the last Liberty County representative elected under the county unit system. As a result, Jones assumed a seat on the Authority, a position he would retain until 1994. In 1964, Rep. Jones passed further local legislation expanding the powers of the LCIA, empowering it to collect up to two mills in tax money, and allowing it to operate as a private entity with no public oversight.[129]

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[128] Lewis Historical Publishing Company, *Georgia's Coastal Plain: Family and Personal History*.

[129] Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; Henderson, *Ernest Vandiver*; Hepburn, ed., *Contemporary Georgia*; Lewis Historical Publishing Company, *Georgia's Coastal Plain: Family and Personal History*; "Liberty County Industrial Authority--Members, Etc.."; "Liberty County Industrial Authority, Proposed Amendment to the Constitution, No. 91

Chaired by Rep. Jones beginning in 1960, the LCIA's first initiative was to recruit a major industry complementary to existing goods and services. Until the 1950s, outside investment in the economic development of Liberty County had never been encouraged, but the new climate of industrial growth demanded different alternatives. As early as July 1932, boosters such as Dr. Charles Herty had considered Liberty County a prime candidate for the development of a paper mill. In the 1930s and '40s, Savannah, Brunswick and St. Mary's, Georgia, had all recruited paper mills. The area's subtropical climate, soils and extensive growing season made it perfect for growing pulpwood, and tens of thousands of acres surrounding Riceboro had long been in timber.[130]

In 1963, the LCIA, led by Rep. Jones, approached the Interstate Paper Container Company in Delaware and proposed building a plant in Riceboro. At the heart of thousands of acres of pine trees, the area also possessed rail and road transportation, a ready supply of water, and an underemployed labor pool. Rep. Jones engaged in negotiations for the purchase of the former Montevideo Plantation from its current owners.[131] 1968, C.B. Jones's heirs sold the remaining 200 acres to the Riceboro Chemical Company built on the remains of the Browning lumber mill complex which was sold eighteen years later to SNF Manufacturing as Chemtall, Inc.[132]

The formal dismantling of the rural courthouse rings began in 1962 when federal courts upheld a decision that declared the county unit system to be unconstitutional. In 1960, three counties—Echols, Quitman and Glascock—with a combined population of 6,980 had the same

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(House Resolution No. 274-687g)," in *Georgia Laws 1958 Session: General Acts and Resolutions*, Georgia General Assembly (1958).

[130] James M. Fallows and The Center for the Study of Responsive Law, *The Water Lords* (New York: Bantam Books, 1971); Groover, *Sweet Land of Liberty*.

[131] Personal communication between the author, C.M. Jones, and Robbie Harrison, 1996.

[132] Liberty County (GA) Superior Court, "Liberty County, Georgia, Deed Record Books, Grantor/Grantee Books."

political weight of Atlanta's Fulton County which had a population of 556,326. The county unit system accorded equal political power to one vote in these three rural counties as one hundred votes in Atlanta. With the end of the county unit system, the hub of population and industrial growth in Georgia, Atlanta finally gained prominence in the political life of the state. Long dominant economically, the business leadership of Atlanta captured the political leadership, while the reapportionment of power among the people undercut the power of the counties and leaders like C.B. Jones and his successors. In 1963, Carl Sanders, a moderate Democrat, was elected Governor, and he began promoting a new brand of consensus politics. The abolition of the county unit system upended the way things had been done permanently, but, as with all socioeconomic change, the legacy of the courthouse ring would persist in Liberty County for decades to come.[133]

Changes were coming, but the socioeconomic paradigm of Liberty County would not shift easily. Grassroots voter registration drives, initiated by Claudius Turner in the 1940s, had been reinvigorated by renewed activity at Dorchester Center. Septima Clark, the daughter of slaves, arrived at Dorchester in 1960 to conduct literacy, voter registration and citizenship training for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). In 1962, Andrew Young, later Mayor of Atlanta, joined her, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., promoted the Dorchester citizenship training program throughout the South. By year's end, nearly 1,000 individuals had come to Liberty County and returned to their own communities to found almost 100 duplicate training programs. Dr. King would return in 1963 to plan his civil rights campaign for Alabama. King, well-aware of the peculiar legacy of Liberty County, enjoyed the irony of devising his plans for facing Alabama's segregationist Episcopal bishop, the great-grandson of the Rev. C.C.

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[133] Greene, *Praying for Sheetrock*; Henderson, *Ernest Vandiver*; Hepburn, ed., *Contemporary Georgia*.

Jones.[134]

While Dorchester fostered and inspired heady civil rights activities of national importance, the local African-American community approached the possibility of change with skepticism. Traditional laissez-faire social attitudes blended with recent disappointment in Liberty County. With land ownership and a racial, political, and economic détente, many African Americans in the county failed to see the need to create dissension. Despite containing nearly half of the land mass of the county, the sparsely populated eastern divisions were represented throughout the 20th Century by a single commissioner (District 1). Also, whereas there was—and still is—an African-American majority within District 1, in the early 1960s a black representative had not been elected to any county office since Reconstruction. Effectively removed from the policy-making process, African Americans in Liberty County relied heavily on the good will of white leaders. In turn, these men monopolized all economic activity in the county.[135]

In 1958, Ralph Quarterman, an African-American storekeeper from Walthourville, became the first black person to run for public office in Liberty County since the end of Reconstruction. He failed in his bid, but, in 1962, Earl Baggs, an African-American insurance agent from Riceboro ran for the 1st Road District seat on the County Commission. He also lost his first bid for election after one of two white candidates dropped out of the race to avoid splitting the white vote. The ironies of not having an elected black representative in county government were illuminated in a full-page advertisement Baggs took out in the *Hinesville Sentinel*:

> At present, sixty percent of the population of our great county is not represented at the policy-making levels of county government. In my humble opinion, much is being lost in human understanding, in identifying areas of need and in finding

[134] Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-1963*.
[135] United States Bureau of the Census, "Eighteenth Census of the United States, 1960: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Nineteenth Census of the United States, 1970: Georgia."

> solutions to serious civic problems vital to every Liberty Countian. Only through representation of every segment of our population, in government can solutions to these problems be found. I believe I represent the sentiment of the masses of my people when I say it is not our desire to RUN THE GOVERNMENT, but simply to be genuinely represented in it. Our problems should be presented by one who knows them because of being a part of them. This is why I offer my services as commissioner from the FIRST ROAD DISTRICT. This district includes the bulk of our Negro population. May I venture to say that by including all segments of our population at the policy-making levels of county government litigations and court decrees will not be necessary to solve our problems in human relations. If our energies and the boundless energies of our children are to be controlled and channeled into desirable, productive patterns identification is necessary. Our representation at the policy-making level will spare us the many unhappy experiences of other places.[136]

Those "unhappy experiences of other places" were related to the clash of white supremacists and segregations with civil rights activists. The *Hinesville Sentinel* printed news stories along with unexpurgated racist diatribes from other Southern cities and towns where violence had erupted. Mr. Baggs no doubt felt the need to purchase space in the paper to present his views. Sen. Talmadge often presented long diatribes against "liberal Democrats" such as New York Senator Jacob Javits and President John F. Kennedy, and, when the latter was assassinated, the *Sentinel* never mentioned it.[137]

Control of industrial recruitment remained in the hands of the Industrial Authority and, by extension, in the hands of Charlie Jones until his ousting in the 1990s. African-American representation on Riceboro's city council and in county government continued after Baggs's election in 1966, but no person of color was appointed to the Industrial Authority until the 1990s.

Early modern industries in Liberty County initiated under old political, social and economic paradigms. All of the preliminary policy-making and development plans for Interstate Paper and Riceboro Chemical Company grew out of an oligarchic political system. The decision to place a factory in Riceboro, a community that had a 1960 population that was over 90%

[136] "Earl Baggs' Open Letter," *Hinesville Sentinel*, 17 May 1962.
[137] *Hinesville Sentinel*, 1962-63.

African-American, was made with no input from the populace. Old paternalistic patterns of white male rule by the few governed all siting decisions. The case gives an illuminating insight into the social, political and economic workings of a rural Southern community.

As African Americans had no place in policy decisions, there was no chance for collective resistance to the industrialization of Riceboro. In light of prolonged economic hardships since the end of the Civil War and the naïveté regarding the dangers of industrial pollution, the arrival of the paper mill and, later, the chemical plant were probably, and ironically, seen as benevolent acts towards the community.

With the emergence of problems at both Chemtall and Interstate, a community response would be expected. Yet, as has been shown in this study, the people of Riceboro are firmly rooted in risk aversion—in this case, the risk of losing one's job may be far greater for many than the risk posed by some unseen chemical compound. For centuries, African-American residents of the Riceboro area have kept their own counsel, assumed a conservative *laissez faire* approach to change, and engaged in a détente with whites and those perceived to be in power to maintain their own independence. No matter how limited that independence may seem to be, the status quo is known and comfortable, so resistance to change is understandable.

In his 1962 open letter, Earl Baggs perhaps summarized the phenomenon of intractability best:

> Man has had a long struggle to free himself from the forces of oppression. There has never been a single crisis where even moderate efforts were put forth by those who control the government to genuinely include and accept representation from every segment of the population. The following excerpt from the Declaration of Independence lends itself to this thesis: "…all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer while evils are sufferable than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed."[138]

In the fifty years since the Industrial Authority's founding, Chemtall and Interstate Paper

[138] "Earl Baggs' Open Letter."

remain as the only large industries in the county. With aging physical plants under increasing strain, these two facilities have suffered critical failures and been cited repeatedly by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (see Appendix 2A). The next section of this report addresses current problems in Riceboro. Through understanding the community and its history of independence tempered by tractability, grassroots community change could be enacted.

Chapter II: Current Conditions & Environmental Justice Analysis

What has evolved over the four decades since Interstate built its mill, however, is growing concern not only within the Riceboro community but also downstream and downwind. Interstate was joined by chemical companies operated by SNF Holding Company making the former farming community a rural industrial district. Asthma rates for the Riceboro area hover near the top of state rankings. Increased incidents of cancer and respiratory illnesses among both workers and area residents have stirred questions of causation. The spill at Chemtall in April 2006 brought half-whispered fears to the surface and has sparked a dialogue that has, in turn, inspired research into environmental equity issues.[139]

Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) and Public Health Data

TRI Data

The scope of this project does not include formal medical, toxicological or epidemiological inquiry. To give a sense of the state of the community of Riceboro and its two industrial neighbors in 2008, I have accessed publicly-available data. Inferences and potential hypotheses drawn from these data are for future inquiry. For now, however, they provide a snapshot of life in the small community of Riceboro.

First, we turn to emissions data as available through the Toxic Release Inventory (TRI). Industries releasing any regulated toxins must report annual data on emissions of those chemicals; the program is self-policing, so veracity of numbers is questionable. In Liberty County, 12 of 15 TRI chemicals reported for 2006 were found only in Riceboro. The other

[139] Georgia Department of Human Resources and Inc. The American Lung Association of Georgia, "Asthma in Georgia 2000," (2000); Division of Public Health Georgia Department of Human Resources, "The Burden of Asthma in Georgia 2003," ed. Division of Public Health Georgia Department of Human Resources (2003); Division of Public Health Georgia Department of Human Resources, "Vital Statistics Report 1997-2004," ed. Division of Public Health Georgia Department of Human Resources (2004); Georgia Department of Human Resources Division of Public Health, "Online Analytical Statistical Information System (Oasis)," (
Georgia Department of Human Resources Division of Public Health, 2008).

three—copper, lead and styrene—were found at the Fort Stewart Firing Ranges and a boat manufacturer in nearby Midway. In all, 635,552 pounds of TRI chemicals were reported released in Liberty County in 2006; two-thirds were emitted in Riceboro. 187,064 pounds of copper and lead were released on Fort Stewart and buffered from human habitation by nearly 400,000 acres.[140]

Table 2.1: TRI Releases in Liberty County, Georgia (2006) [141]

Rank	Facility Name	Location	Releases (lbs/yr)
1	Chemtall, Inc.	Riceboro	46.438
2	Flocryl, Inc.—Acrylates	Riceboro	186,900
3	Flocryl, Inc—Acrylamide Plant	Riceboro	1,591
4	Interstate Paper	Riceboro	185,577
5	Mainship Corporation	Midway	28,040
6	U.S. Army Ft. Stewart	Ft. Stewart	187,064

In 2000, the population of Liberty County was 40,046. Census tracts were Hinesville with 31,571 persons in the former 17th GMD, Midway with 6,898 persons in the 1359th GMD (the northern division of the former 15th GMD), and Riceboro with 1,577 persons in the southern division of the old 15th GMD. As Hinesville residents have no direct exposure to TRI chemicals, the vast majority of TRI releases impact the communities of Riceboro and Midway representing only 21% of the total 2000 population of Liberty County. In 2000, Riceboro comprised only 4% of the total county population.

The racial composition of Riceboro, however, should be noted. In line with long-term demographic patterns in Liberty County, the majority of whites (87%) live in Hinesville. African Americans have also moved to Hinesville in large numbers over the past four decades; 72% of black residents live in the western census tract. Despite its size, though, Riceboro's population

[140] U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "Enviromapper," (2008); U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "Integrated Risk Information System (Iris)," (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2008); U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "Toxic Release Inventory (Tri)," (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2008).
[141] US EPA, TRI Data 2006, www.epa.gov.

has remained stable, and 87% of its citizens in 2000 were people of color. The population of Riceboro declined from 2,047 in 1960 to 1,577 in 2000 with a drop of 28% in African Americans and a 58% increase in white residents. The racial balance dropped from 94% African-American in 1960 to 87% in 2000 with most remaining being older homeowners, a reflection of property ownership in the district.[142]

Table 2.2: TRI Releases in Riceboro, 2005-2006[143]

	Total Releases (lbs/yr)	
TRI Chemical	**2005**	**2006**
Acrylamide	5,446	5,645
Acrylic Acid	33,942	35,946
Acrylonitrile	1,410	1,410
Ammonia	1,663	n/a
Chlorine*	888	897
Chloromethane	3,350	3,390
Methanol**	191,232	214,173
Methyl Acrylate	33,800	52,400
Methyl Methacrylate	28,100	13,500
N-Hexane	86,800	91,800
Sulfuric Acid	16,672	9,662

*Produced only at Interstate Paper
**Aggregate SNF & Interstate

For complete available TRI data and emissions trends, please see Appendix 2B. Since purchasing the Riceboro Chemical Company in 1986, SNF Holding Company has operated several subsidiary manufacturing operations in Riceboro including Chemtall, NCF Manufacturing, Flocryl, Bio-Flocryl, Flocryl Acrylates, and BAC Manufacturing. For TRI reporting, SNF Holding has partitioned emissions data over its various subsidiaries, and, from year to year, individual TRI chemicals have shifted nominally in source from one subsidiary to

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[142] United States Bureau of the Census, "Eighteenth Census of the United States, 1960: Georgia."; United States Bureau of the Census, "Twenty-Second Census of the United States, 2000: Georgia," ed. United States Bureau of the Census (United States Bureau of the Census, 2000).
[143]US EPA, TRI Data 2006, www.epa.gov.

another. In the latest reporting cycle[144], for example, NCF Manufacturing "disappears" from TRI lists, but, when considering emissions from all SNF Holding subsidiaries, there is little change in aggregate emission levels.

Additionally, the emissions data for acrylamide do not reflect the chemical's actual presence in Riceboro. At a Georgia Department of Natural Resources Environmental Protection Division public hearing on SNF Chemtall's application for expansion of its air permits, a company official confirmed that his firm produces over 1 million pounds of acrylamide each year in Riceboro. The official further confirmed that SNF has no formal emergency response plan and stated that he assumed the police "would go door-to-door" to inform residents to "shelter in place" in case of an incident. This final comment elicited derision from citizens who noted that Riceboro has no police force and that education about emergency response had long been promised but never delivered by SNF. When pressed, the official noted that no one in management at the Riceboro facilities lived within 50 miles of the plants.[145]

Despite the presence of industries, per capita income in Riceboro still lags behind other areas of Liberty County at just under $15,000, 75% of the per capita income of Hinesville. With strong ties to in-town manufacturers, Riceboro residents, traditionally economically risk-averse, probably do not wish to gamble relatively low but real income against the possibility of an industry eliminating jobs. Sometimes referred to as "payroll blackmail,"[146] the threat of job loss is tacitly used by industries to quell local criticism of company practices.[147] At the March 18th EPD hearing, SNF Chemtall representatives stated directly that they had explored relocation to

[144] Release Year 2006 PDR data set frozen on October 12, 2007 and released to the public February 21, 2008. This reporting year includes the date of the April 2006 spill on Riceboro Creek.
[145] "Georgia Dnr Epd Air Division Hearing," (Midway, GA: Georgia Environmental Protection Division, 2008).
[146] Robert D. Bullard, *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality*, 3rd ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000).
[147] Ibid.

an unnamed Gulf Coast community with the implication that, should the company be forced to reduce emissions or be given too much opposition from locals, the operation could move to a more hospitable and enthusiastic place. In addition, company representatives reminded the attendees that Chemtall "had been good to Riceboro" and that "there has never been any [philanthropic] request made that Chemtall didn't fulfill," echoing claims of "benevolence" made by white leaders over the past century. Perhaps not wishing to "rock the boat," few Chemtall employees attended the hearing.[148]

Health Concerns

According to the Georgia Department of Human Resources Division of Public Health, Liberty County has placed in the top-tier of counties for asthma-related hospitalizations since 1998 when assessments began. In 1999-2000, Liberty County had an asthma hospitalization rate of 160, making it one of 39 of 159 Georgia counties with rates significantly higher than the state average. Census tract data indicates that asthma rates are higher in Riceboro and Midway than in Hinesville. In Georgia, African Americans are 2.1 times more likely to hospitalized and three times more likely to die from asthma than whites. The elderly are also at higher risk for complications and death from asthma, and, given the age and racial demographics of Riceboro, the community should be considered a high risk population.[149]

In response to anecdotal evidence about increased rates of cancer, searches for information about morbidity in Liberty County revealed rates highest in the Midway census tract and slightly lower in Riceboro. Death rates were proportionately higher in Midway and Riceboro than in Hinesville across all types of cancer and across age groups. Within the limitations of this

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[148] "Georgia Dnr Epd Air Division Hearing." United States Bureau of the Census, "Eighteenth Census of the United States, 1960: Georgia.," ed. United States Bureau of the Census (United States Bureau of the Census, 1960); United States Bureau of the Census, "Twenty-Second Census of the United States, 2000: Georgia."

[149] Georgia Department of Human Resources Division of Public Health, *The Burden of Asthma in Georgia 2003*. http://health.state.ga.us/pdfs/epi/cdiee/burdenofasthma.03.pdf; OASIS www.oasis.state.ga.us.

project, more detailed medical information is impossible to obtain, and there is no way to correlate absolutely presence of known carcinogens with cancer cases. What can be ascertained, however, are the presence, amount and known and suspected health effects of TRI chemicals in the Riceboro community. Table 2.3 details these effects for TRI chemicals released in zip code 31323 which corresponds to the Riceboro census tract[150]

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[150] Georgia Department of Human Resources Division of Public Health, "Online Analytical Statistical Information System (Oasis)."

Table 2.3: Recognized (R) & Suspected (S) Health Effects of TRI Chemicals Released in Riceboro

	Health Effects of TRI Chemicals Released in Riceboro, Georgia (31323) Recognized (R) & Suspected (S)													
	Neurological		**Carcinogenic**		**Respiratory**		**Immuno**		**Reproductive**		**Developmental**		**Other**	
TRI Chemical	**R**	**S**	**R**	**S**	**R**	**S**	**R**	**S**	**R**	**S**	**R**	**S**	**R**	**S**
Acrylamide		X	X					X		X				X
Acrylic Acid								X		X		X		X
Acrylonitrile		X	X			X		X		X				X
Ammonia		X				X				X				X
Chlorine*		X				X								X
Chloromethane		X		X		X				X	X			X
Methanol**		X				X						X		X
Methyl Acrylate		X				X		X						X
Methyl Methacrylate		X				X		X		X		X		X
N-Hexane		X				X				X		X		
Sulfuric Acid						X								X

Source: www.scorecard.org.

Of these chemicals, scorecard.org ranks acrylamide, acrylic acid, acrylonitrile, and ammonia as among the worst 10% of chemicals in terms of their negative impact on ecosystems and human health. Further, Riceboro is ranked nationally for the emission levels of seven TRI chemicals. They are listed and ranked below.

Table 2.4: Scorecard.org National Rankings for TRI Chemicals (31323)[151]

TRI Chemical	Riceboro Rank	Total U.S. Communities Ranked
Methyl acrylate	1	45
Acrylic acid	5	100
Acrylamide	6	40
Acrylonitrile	31	87
Chloromethane	43	70
Methyl methacrylate	54	100
N-Hexane	99	100

Also note that the ranking for acrylamide only takes into account reported TRI releases and not the million pounds produced at the SNF Chemtall facility in Riceboro. Scorecard.org also ranks Riceboro in the bottom 10% for cancer risk scoring among U.S. communities, in the bottom 20% for total environmental releases, the bottom 30% for non-cancer risk, and in the bottom 40% for recognized carcinogens and developmental toxicants. From the evidence, Riceboro seems to have a disproportionate amount of risk.

Environmental Justice Issues

In determining the existence or degree of environment inequity, there are several considerations to take into account. The concepts of environmental justice and the more-charged term “environmental racism” are essentially concerned with the level of equity of the distribution of both negative and positive environmental impacts among all groups, individuals and communities within society.[152]

[151] Source: www.scorecard.org.
[152] Bowen and Wells, "The Politics and Reality of Environmental Justice."

Downey (2005) suggests five definitions as a framework for environmental justice inquiry. I will examine each for the Riceboro case.

1) Racially Discriminatory Intent or Intentional Racism

The charge of "environmental racism" as advanced by the United Church of Christ (UCC) and other activists focuses on disproportionate exposure of people of color and those with low income levels to environmental harms and benefits. "Racism," as defined by Bullard (Quoted in Bowen and Wells, 2002) is "any policy, practice or directive that intentionally or unintentionally differentially impacts or disadvantages individuals, groups or communities based on race or color; as well as the exclusionary and restrictive practices that limit participation by people of color in decision-making boards, commissions and staffs."

The often covert or private nature of such biases makes a charge of racism difficult to prove. From a quantitative standpoint, most data cannot test this hypothesis as datasets contain little or no information on why firms sited in certain locations. Researchers are forced to infer the *possibility* from current distribution of hazards or from the characteristics of neighborhoods at the time of siting.[153] As detailed earlier in this work, there is ample evidence that the construction of SNF Chemtall's predecessor the Riceboro Chemical Company and the 1966 siting of Interstate Paper in Riceboro occurred in a racist local climate. African Americans in Liberty County's 1st District had no representative voice in county politics; collective action would probably have failed. The community desire for jobs coupled with a lack of awareness of potential health risks at the time would have quelled resistance. In the early 1960s, the Promethean desire for

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[153] Liam Downey, "Assessing Environmental Inequality: How the Conclusions We Draw Vary According to the Definitions We Employ," *Sociological Spectrum* 25 (2005).

economic growth drove most development decisions. Industrialization was heralded as a way to employ workers displaced by the decline in farming, and few saw any dangers associated with facility siting. Paper mills did choose the southeast for the availability of fiber from plentiful pine trees, cheap labor, transportation and access to water—the same factors influencing paper companies to relocate to tropical climes today. To have a paper mill was considered a boon to the economy, and determined efforts on the part of white politicians, local business leaders and land owners convinced Interstate to build its mill at Riceboro, a locality that had all the components for success. Still, in 1960 there was a clear disparity between the racial composition of Hinesville and the eastern divisions where industrial facilities have largely been sited.[154]

2) *Disparate Exposure*

This results when members of a specific social group are more highly exposed to some set of environmental pollutants than we would expect if group members were randomly distributed across residential space.[155] Proximity data may be used judiciously with the understanding that the *nearness* of a person or community to a particular polluter or pollutant does not necessarily mean that there is a correlation to *exposure*. Workers at the polluting facilities are probably the most likely to have high rates of exposure to harmful chemicals and particulate matter. Another question about exposure surfaces when considering what releases are and are not reported. A facility may not have to report on all releases that could be harmful. A good example is particulate matter in the knitwear factory; it is not quantified, reported or publicized, yet it can cause lung cancer

[154] United States Bureau of the Census, "Eighteenth Census of the United States, 1960: Georgia."
[155] According to Downey (2005), many activists argue that, in the absence of proven links between exposure and health issues, *disparate exposure* should be considered a distinct form of environmental inequality.

and other respiratory ailments. Also, as seen with the illegal dumping discovered at Chemtall, a facility may have releases that go unreported through negligence or intent. With poor monitoring, enforcement and accountability by EPD, such releases add to the threat of exposure and any potential harm that stem from such.

Analysis of TRI data from the top industrial polluters in Liberty County does show an alarmingly large percentage (74%) of all TRI chemical releases countywide emitting from Riceboro-based facilities. This points towards disparate exposure rates for area residents, but better individual and community data would further support or disprove this assumption.

3) *Disparate Health Impacts*

Just as environmental harms can be inequitably distributed, the negative physical and mental health effects of residential proximity can be distributed unequally across social groups. Proximity and exposure data are *insufficient* for establishing the existence or absence of disparate health impacts. As with the disparate exposure test, the only way to ascertain the existence of disparate health impacts is by merging proximity or exposure data with individual-level health data and individual and neighborhood-level demographic data. Although anecdotal statements and cursory review of health statistics imply unequal health impacts in Liberty County, unless individual subject research is conducted, the true effects cannot be adequately quantified.

4) Disparate social impacts

Downey (2005) explores the belief that environmentally hazardous neighborhoods are socially and economically undesirable places to live. He further posits that environmental inequality exists when members of a specific group are more likely to live

in environmentally hazardous neighborhoods than we would be expected if group members were randomly distributed across residential space. In quantifying disparate social impacts, one can employ proximity data judiciously. In the Riceboro case, assessing the turnover patterns and changes in home and land values from 1960 through the current day would be useful. Preliminary research indicates that home values in Riceboro are considerably lower than in other parts of Liberty County and have been since at least 1960. Home values in Riceboro have risen in proportion to increases in home values in other parts of the county, so the inference seems to be that Riceboro is no more or less desirable than it ever was.[156]

5) Relative distribution of burdens versus benefits

A final consideration is the concept that those who receive greater benefits than others from the capitalist production and distribution process should bear a greater share of the burdens of this process. In other words, the question that should be asked is: are those who profit from the polluter sacrificing in proportion to their gain? And, are those who suffer negative effects on account of the polluter reaping commensurate benefits? Without strict "cost-benefit" analysis with comparable variables, analysis could be quite subjective. Naturally, residential proximity plays a role in assessment, but, again, proximity does not necessarily equate with exposure or susceptibility to risk. Without meaningful risk assessment produced by quantitative analysis of one or more of the last three items, relative distribution of benefits and burdens cannot be determined. Therefore, it is critical to replicable methodology to design a metric that scrutinizes on individual, community and neighborhood levels.

An overall caveat should govern all inferences about the relationship between

[156] United States Bureau of the Census, "Twenty-Second Census of the United States, 2000: Georgia."

exposure, proximity and health outcomes. Distribution of health outcomes across social groups is a function of at least three factors: exposure to health risks; biological susceptibility; and access to health care. As none are distributed equally across social groups, generalizations about effects on whole segments of the population are particularly dangerous.[157]

Measuring Inequity

Activists for environmental justice have, unfortunately, leapt to unsubstantiated conclusions out of unconscious biases borne of genuine concern about a perceived hazard or societal ill or ulterior socio-political motivations. Such observer influence—referred to as "humanness" by Bowen and Wells—can lead to poorly conceived analysis models. Great care must be paid to the issue of causation, the proverbial "Chicken-and-Egg" quandary. Did the polluter locate near a particular low-income or minority community with the design of exploiting it or expecting no political resistance? Or did the demographic composition of the community change as the polluter depressed land values? Or is there another unrelated reason for siting a facility in a particular place?

To determine which came first and why in the Riceboro community, this study has explored the sweep of history that led to industrial siting decisions in the 1960s. social and political context outlined above. The Riceboro Chemical Company and Interstate Paper were not viewed as detrimental when they were established in Riceboro. The fact that siting decisions were shaped by white men in a segregated Southern community does not necessitate premeditated harm was intentionally brought to the people of Riceboro. White leaders in Liberty County in the first 60 years of the 20th century had the economic and political ability to encourage or to suppress economic

[157] Downey, "Assessing Environmental Inequality."

diversification. The absence of industrial development in Liberty County despite favorable conditions from the 1930s onward suggests that suppression, whether active or passive in nature, took place in the creation and implementation of local economic policies. The decision to recruit industry to Liberty County in the mid-1960s was fostered by changing attitudes towards industrialization after World War II and the decline in agrarian dominance of local politics.

What has transpired in the half-century since modern industry arrived in Liberty County, however, is more in line with charges of social and environmental inequity than the original siting decisions. Currently, the intersection of corporate resistance and citizen reluctance, long-practiced in Liberty County allows Riceboro's environmental problem to fester. Fear of removal and job losses fuel government complacency to censure these industries. Only by unlearning practiced patterns of behavior can Riceboro and Liberty County hope to have renewed progress towards economic, social and environmental equity.

Chapter III: Suggested Responses

Research

Revised toxicological models: during the EPD permit hearing for SNF Chemtall on 18 March 2008, state officials admitted that air pollution and toxicology models only considered single TRI chemicals. To account for possible negative interactions, models should be updated to include chemical compounding and the effects of the high ambient humidity in communities like Riceboro.

Medical Investigation: To be accurate in typifying the demographic trends in Riceboro and to settle issues of proximity and exposure, it would be ideal to conduct a thorough deed search for the community to refine the general census data available. Such a study would be extremely time-consuming, and, given the high percentage of non-white residents in the Riceboro census division in 1960 allows some confidence in generalization about demographic composition. Also, the century of black land ownership prior to industrial siting suggests a high level of community stability. Again, the only sure method to prove firmly established community is to review each tract in each neighborhood.

Safety & Prevention

Community Emergency Plan

Both SNF Holding Company and Interstate Paper should work proactively with the citizens of Riceboro and Liberty County. As of April 2008, neither company has communicated evacuation or "shelter-in-place" procedures to area residents in the event of an industrial emergency. Emergency plans should be drawn up immediately and

reviewed with county and community emergency responders and officials including the Liberty County Emergency Management Agency and the Georgia Emergency Management Agency. Despite repeated promises by SNF Chemtall, no coordination has ever taken place, and, contrary to company statements, it is not the sole responsibility of local leaders to initiate the emergency preparedness.

Community Involvement

To facilitate the creation and implementation of the emergency plan, community leaders should involve area residents. The local heritage of disenfranchisement, being pawns of larger economic and political entities, and a traditional risk-aversion discourages participation in social justice activities. An appeal should be made to the traditions of public involvement as once embodied by congregationalism through the church and community centers such as Dorchester. The presence of the United Church of Christ in Midway, currently pastored by a descendant of the LeCounte family of Riceboro, could be used to foster a grassroots environmental and social justice entity in eastern Liberty County. While outside technical assistance should be encouraged, leadership will have to come from the local community. Models such as the Bucket Brigade could be started under such a local program.

Chapter IV. Suggestions for Conducting Socio-Historical Studies in Communities Considering Environmental Justice Issues

There is an old belief common to traditional cultures that the present is the product of all that came before it. While there is no possible reversal of past actions, understanding events and the socio-historical currents that shaped them can lend great insight into the present of any community. It is impossible to divine group behavior from individual psychology, so sociology weaves the strands of economics, politics and culture together through time to create a profile of group dynamics and action—or, in the case of environmental justice, inaction. To use sociology to aid in the solution of human problems, we must divorce ourselves from what Dr. Robert Bullard calls the "dead man" tradition of studying the past as if it is somehow separate and distinct from the present. [158] As seen in this project, the threads of culture and association can reach back centuries and are not prone to rapid alteration. Patterns of social behavior learned over generations can often perpetuate disadvantageous circumstances as seen in Riceboro, and so the "unlearning" process for positive change requires analysis of how those patterns developed in the first place.

Also, in the spirit of social justice, change cannot be imposed from outside a community but must evolve from within for the best chance at success. Community studies such as this project enable both "insiders" as well as well-intentioned "outsiders" to learn about an affected population with respect and absent of missionary-style condescension. To be successful, social and environmental justice programs must respect individuals and their capacity to effect positive change.

[158] Dr. Robert Bullard, personal communication, September 2007.

Methods

1) Contextual reading: sociology, history, cultural anthropology all contribute to the investigator's comprehension of time, place and circumstance into which more specific localized information can be placed.
2) Local reading:
    a. Institutions: churches, schools and civic organizations serve as institutional gathering places for communities and often have written histories or other documents.
    b. Newspapers
    c. Deeds: Rural communities often center around land, so a trip to the county deed office is useful in tracing ownership and land use patterns.
    d. Genealogy: A very useful tool for understanding relationships for sociological and health purposes. In the case of small towns, often power is vested in a small group of interrelated families. Names will reappear in politics and civic circles.
    e. Public Documents: government documents including censuses, tax digests, deeds, meeting minutes, public health reports,
    f. Industrial Documents

Oral history interviews: The "real" story of ordinary people is most easily found in interviews. There are several caveats attending oral history work including the propensity of people to withhold, fabricate, alter, embellish, "improve upon," or simply forget what really happened. Also, interviewers should be careful not to inject their own preconceptions into conversation by using leading questions. Trust is critical to getting

good information, so careful and thorough preparatory reading—as outlined above—is paramount.

Appendix 2A:
Facilities Releasing TRI Chemicals to the Environment in Liberty County, Georgia*

Rank	Facility Name	Location	Releases (lbs/yr)
1*	Chemtall, Inc.	Riceboro	46.438
2	Flocryl, Inc.—Acrylates	Riceboro	186,900
3	Flocryl, Inc—Acrylamide Plant	Riceboro	1,591
4*	Interstate Paper	Riceboro	185,577
5	Mainship Corporation	Midway	28,040
6	U.S. Army Ft. Stewart	Ft. Stewart	187,064

1) Chemtall, Inc. (Riceboro 31323)

Facility Name: Chemtall, Inc.
DUNS Number: 045569160
Physical Address: Chemical Plant Road
Riceboro, GA 31323
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 250
Riceboro, GA 31323
Phone: (912) 884-3366
Parent Company (Country): SNF Holding Company (France)
http://www.snfinc.com
Parent DUNS Number: 878030965
Recruitment: Liberty County Industrial Authority
Date Opened: 1986
Employment: 250
Sales (2004): $250 million
TRI ID: 31323CHMTLCHEMI
TRI Latitude: 31.741667
TRI Longitude: 81.431111
SIC Code: 2821: Industrial organic chemicals
Plastics materials, synthetic resins & non-vulcanized elastomers
TRI Reported Chemicals: Acrylamide
Acrylic Acid
Ammonia
Chloromethane

* Source: US EPA TRI Explorer, http://www.epa.gov/cgi-bin/broker?view=COFA&trilib=TRIQ0&sort=_VIEW_&sort_fmt=1&state=13&county=13179&chemical=_ALL_&industry=ALL&year=2006&tab_rpt=1&fld=RELLBY&ONDISPD=Y&OTHDISPD=Y&_service=oiaa&_program=xp_tri.sasmacr.tristart.macro, Accessed 10 April 2008.

	Methanol

2) & 3) Flocryl, Inc. (Riceboro 31323)

Facility Name:	Bio-Flocryl, Inc. (Also known as NCF Manufacturing in 2007)
DUNS Number:	045469160/957204894
Physical Address:	3 Chemical Plant Road Riceboro, GA 31323
Mailing Address:	3 Chemical Plant Road Riceboro, GA 31323
Phone:	(912) 884-8794
Parent Company (Country):	SNF Holding Company (France) http://www.snfinc.com
Parent DUNS Number:	878030965
Recruitment:	Liberty County Industrial Authority
Date Opened:	
TRI ID:	
TRI Latitude:	31.74015
TRI Longitude:	-81.43289
SIC Code:	28: Chemicals and allied products
TRI Reported Chemicals (ID):	Acrylonitrile Acrylic Acid Acrylamide Methanol Methyl Acrylate Methyl Methacrylate N-Hexane

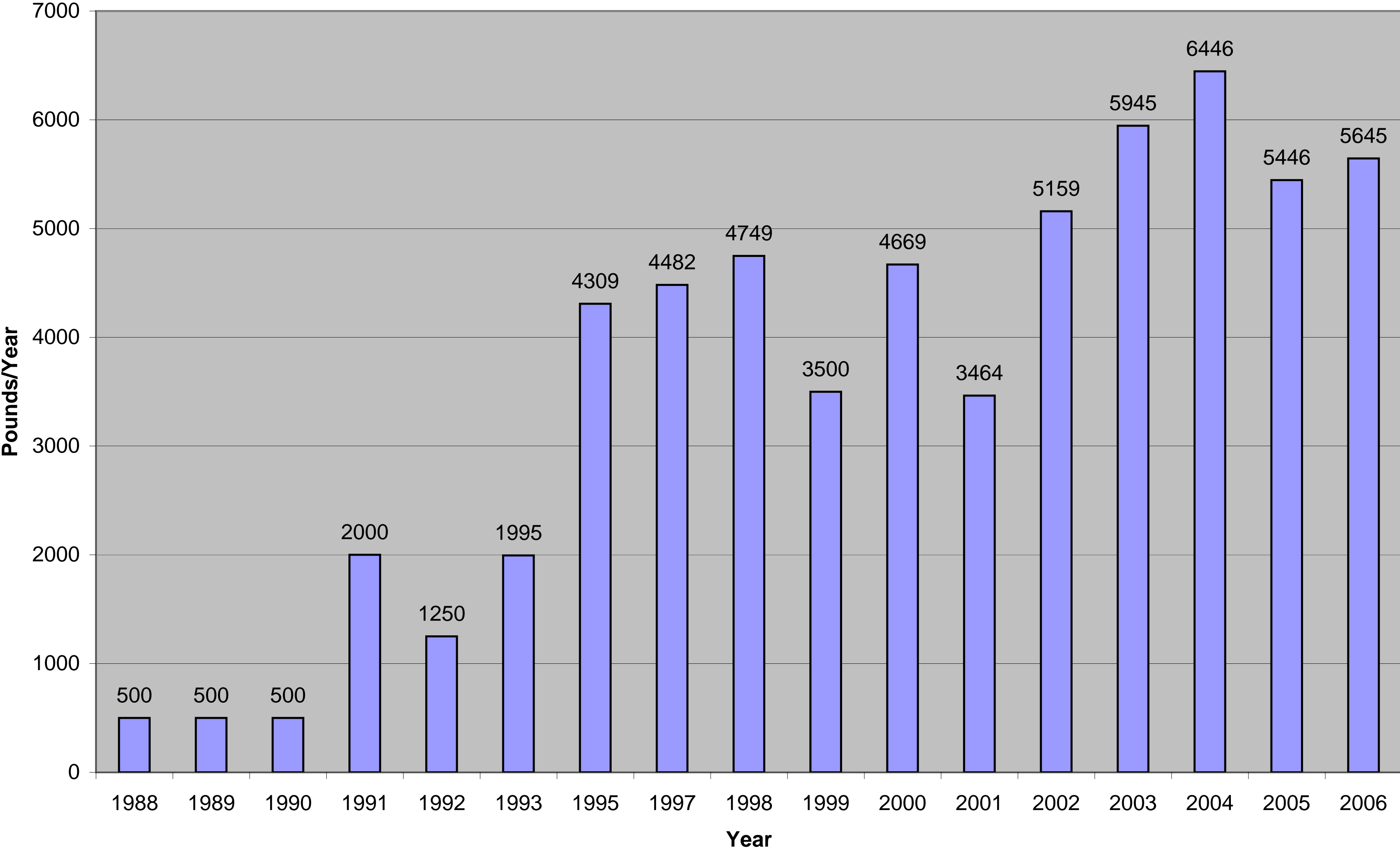
4) Interstate Paper, LLC (Riceboro 31323)

Facility Name:	Interstate Paper, LLC
DUNS Number:	026613617
Physical Address:	2366 Interstate Paper Road Riceboro, GA 31323
Mailing Address:	2366 Interstate Paper Road Riceboro, GA 31323
Phone:	(912) 884-3371
Parent Company (Country):	Indevco (Lebanon)
Parent DUNS Number:	
Recruitment:	Liberty County Industrial Authority
Date Opened:	1966
Employment:	312
Sales (2004):	n/a

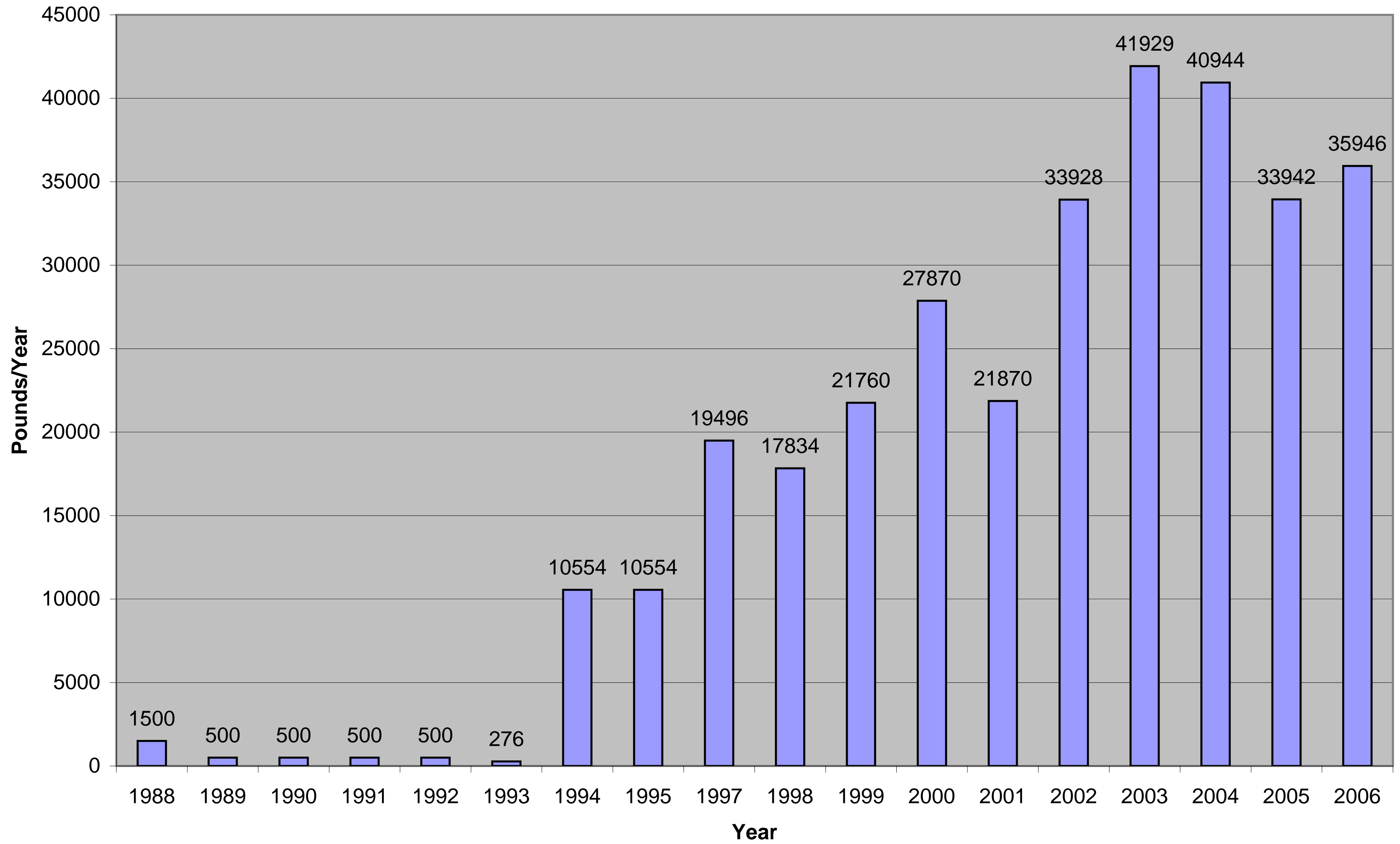
TRI ID:	
TRI Latitude:	31.74056
TRI Longitude:	-81.40972
SIC Code:	2631: Paper and Allied Products
TRI Reported Chemicals (ID):	Chlorine Methanol Sulfuric Acid

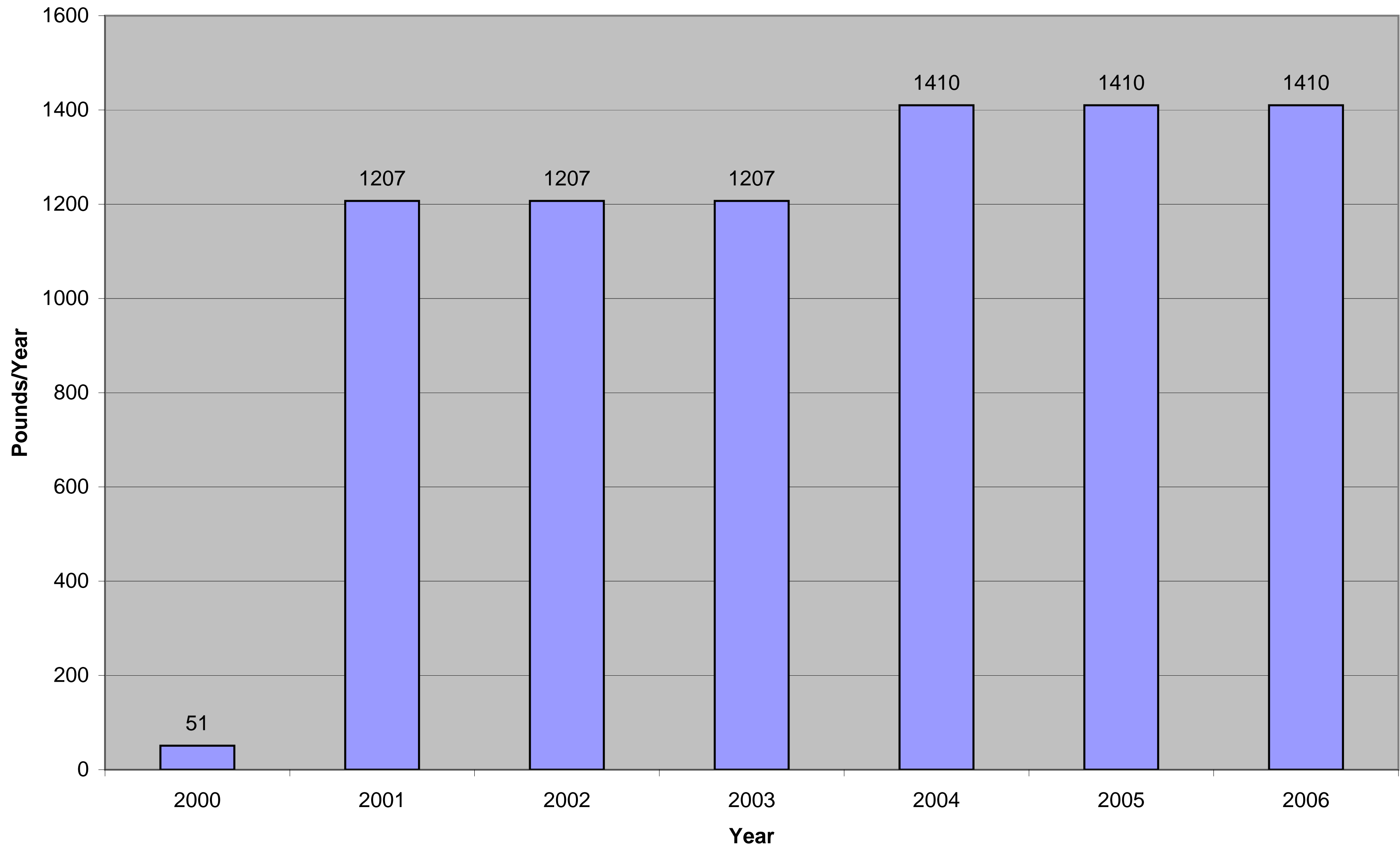
5) Mainship Corporation (Midway 31320)

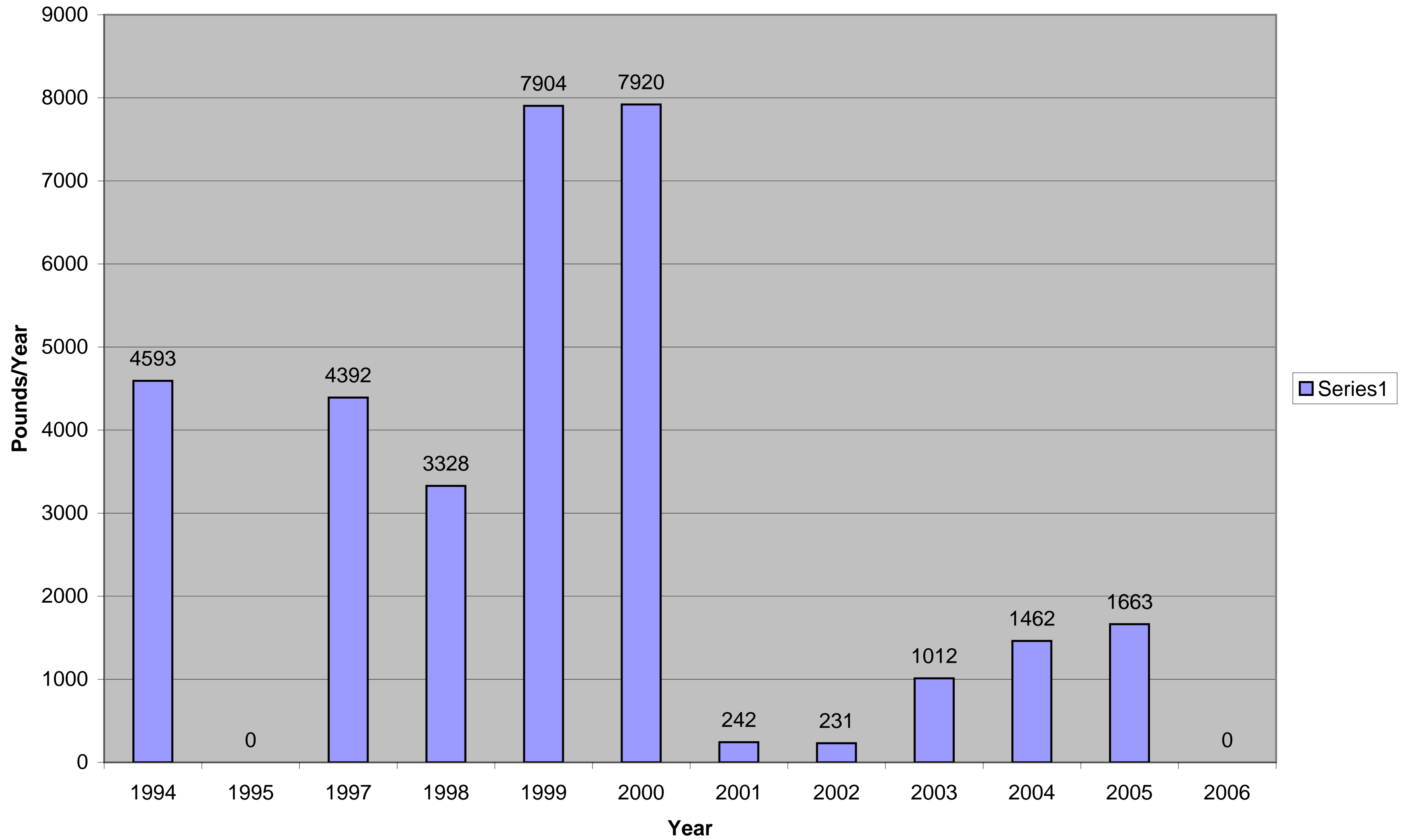
Facility Name:	Mainship Corporation
DUNS Number:	045469160/957204894
Physical Address:	548 Industrial Blvd.. Midway, GA 31320
Mailing Address:	548 Industrial Blvd.. Midway, GA 31320
Phone:	(912) 884-9595
Parent Company (Country):	Luhrs Corporation (USA)
Parent DUNS Number:	
Recruitment:	Liberty County Industrial Authority
Date Opened:	
Employment:	70
Sales (2004):	n/a
TRI ID:	
TRI Latitude:	31.81535
TRI Longitude:	-81.37623
SIC Code:	37 Transportation Equipment
TRI Reported Chemicals (ID):	Styrene Toluene

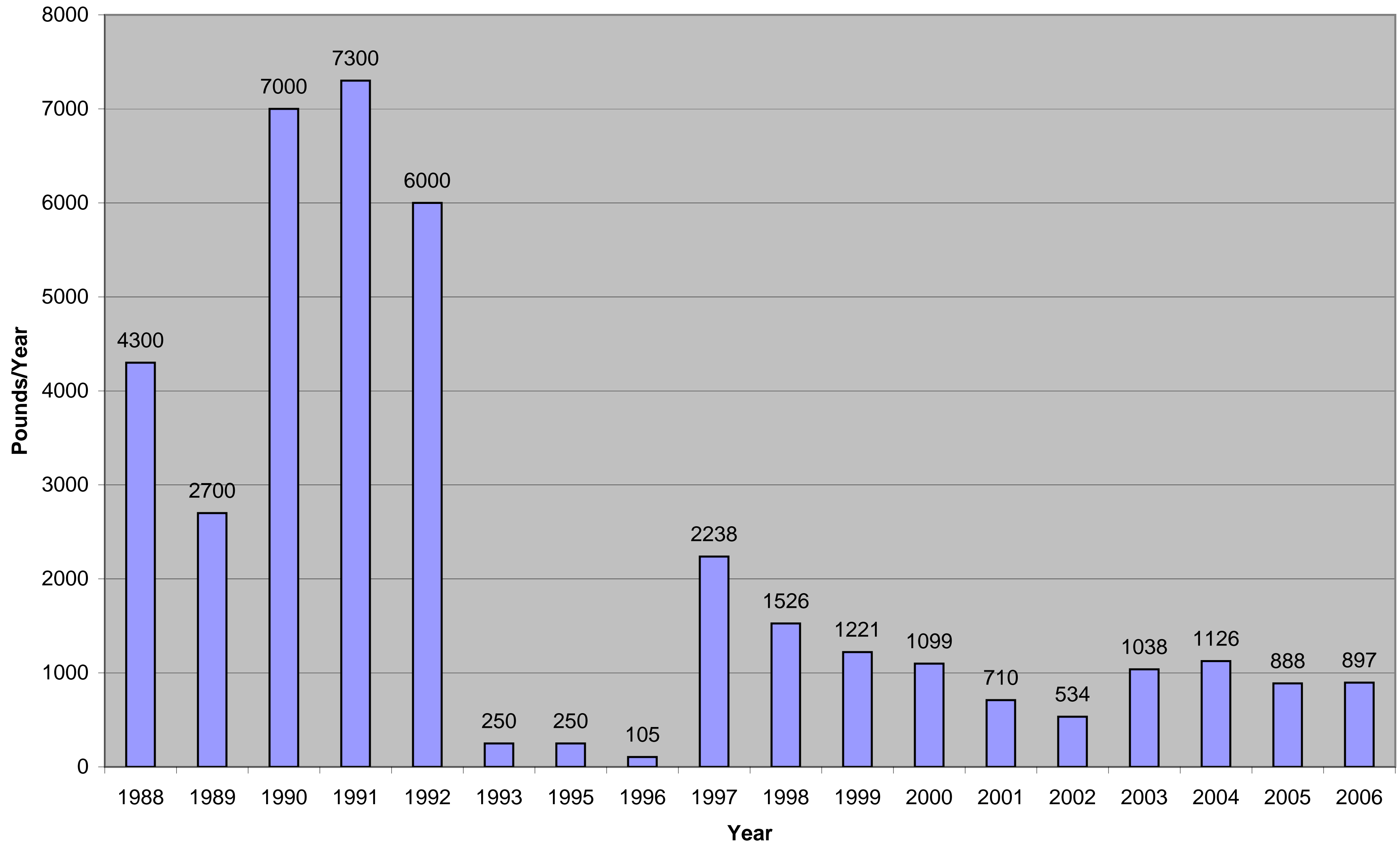


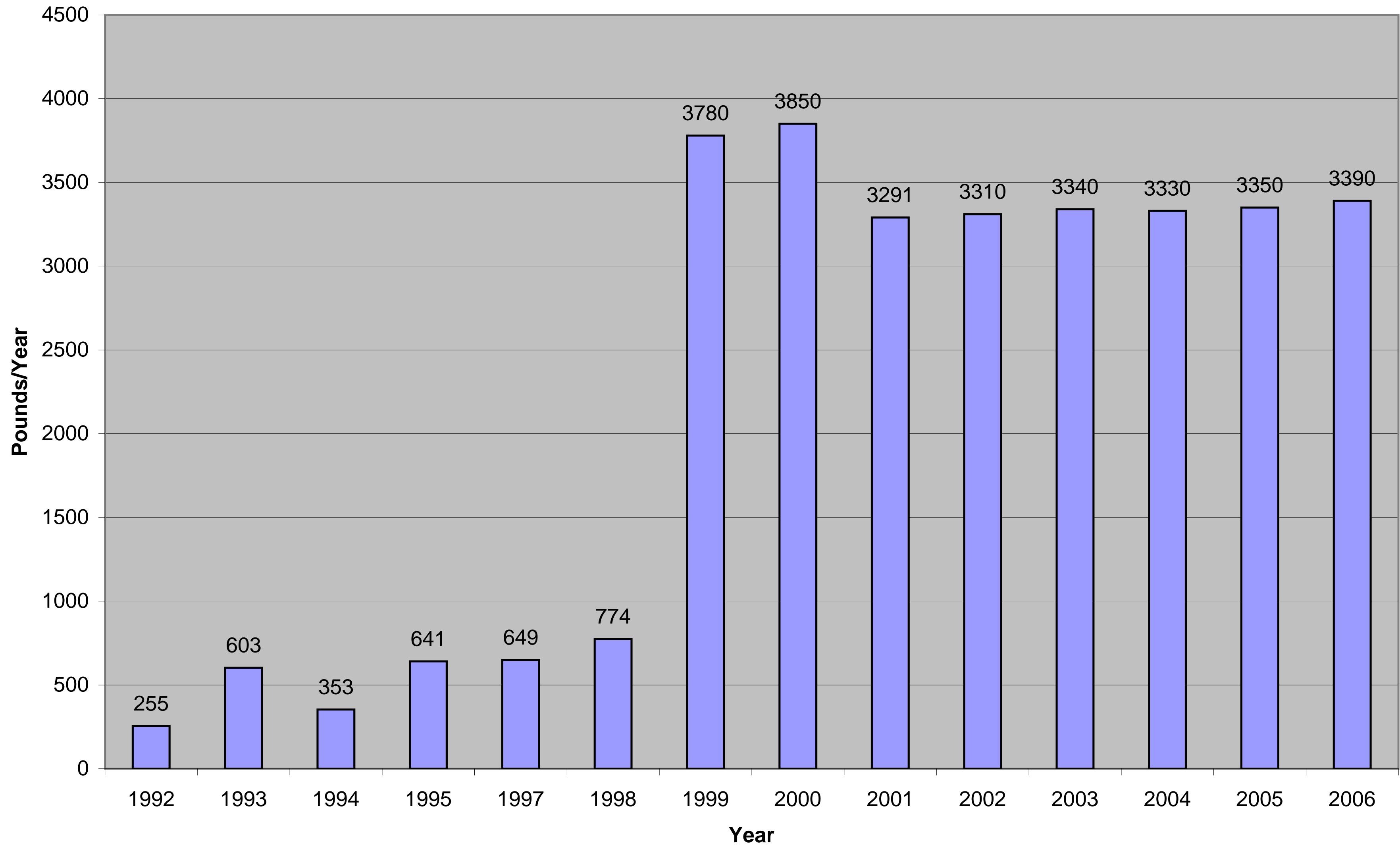
Toxic Release Inventory: Acrylamide (SNF Holding)
7000
6000
5000
4000
3000
2000
1000
0
Pounds/Year
500
500
500
2000
1250
1995
4309
4482
4749
3500
4669
3464
5159
5945
6446
5446
5645
1988
1989
1990
1991
1992
1993
1995
1997
1998
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
Year

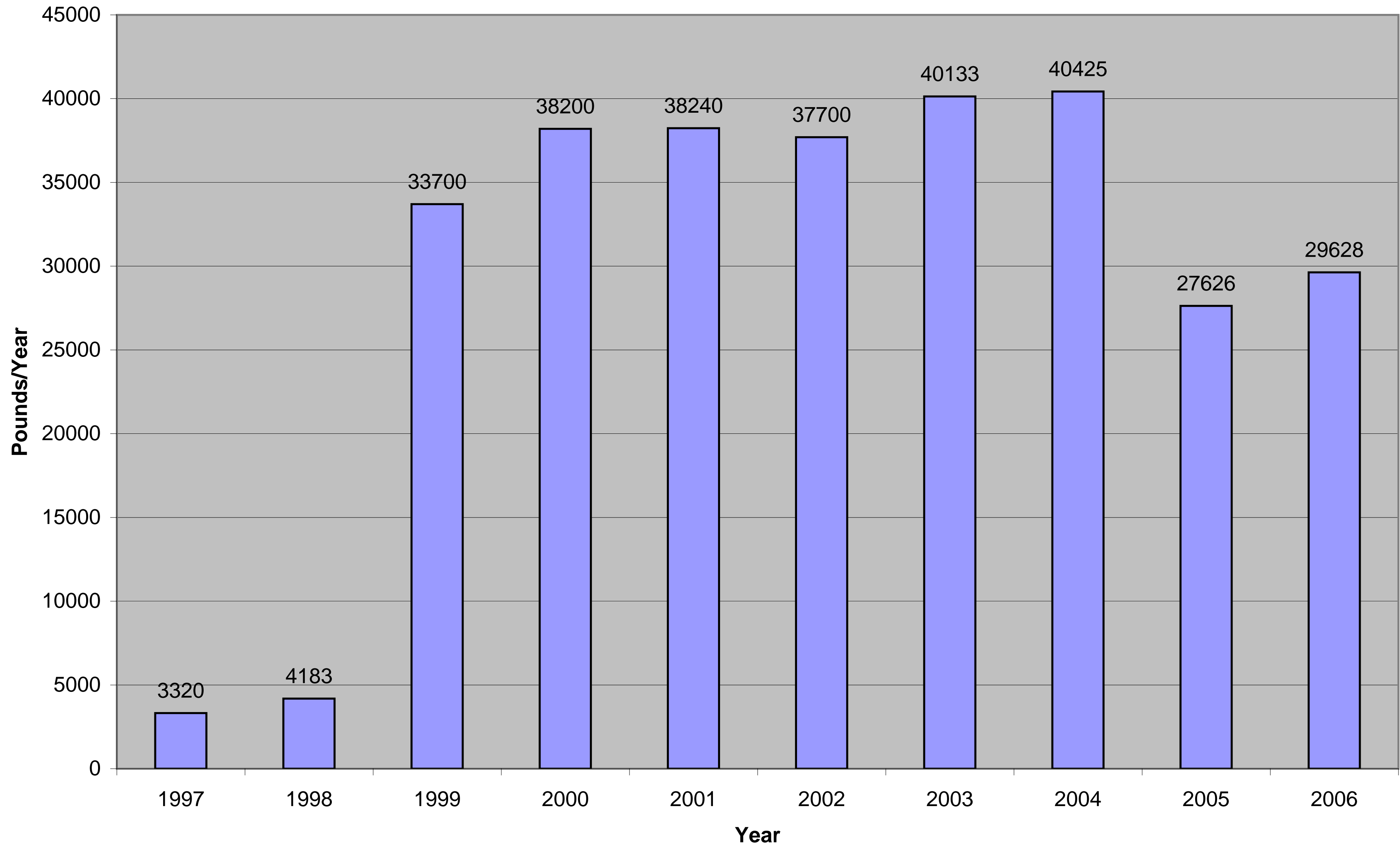

Toxic Release Inventory: Acrylic Acid (SNF Holding)
Pounds/Year
45000
40000
35000
30000
25000
20000
15000
10000
5000
0
1500
500
500
500
500
276
10554
10554
19496
17834
21760
27870
21870
33928
41929
40944
33942
35946
1988
1989
1990
1991
1992
1993
1994
1995
1997
1998
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
Year

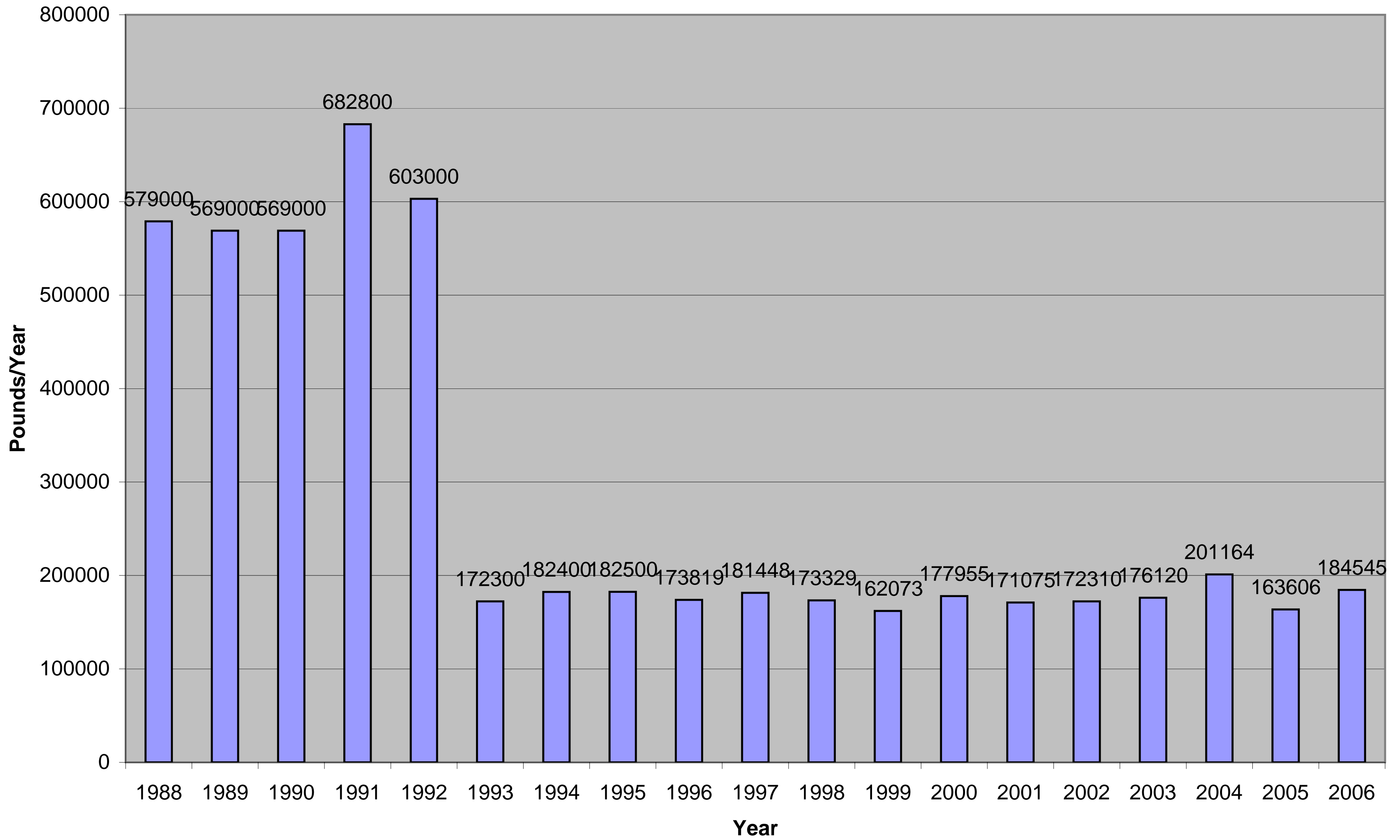

Toxic Release Inventory: Acrylonitrile (SNF Holding)
Pounds/Year
Year
1600
1400
1200
1000
800
600
400
200
0
51
1207
1207
1207
1410
1410
1410
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006

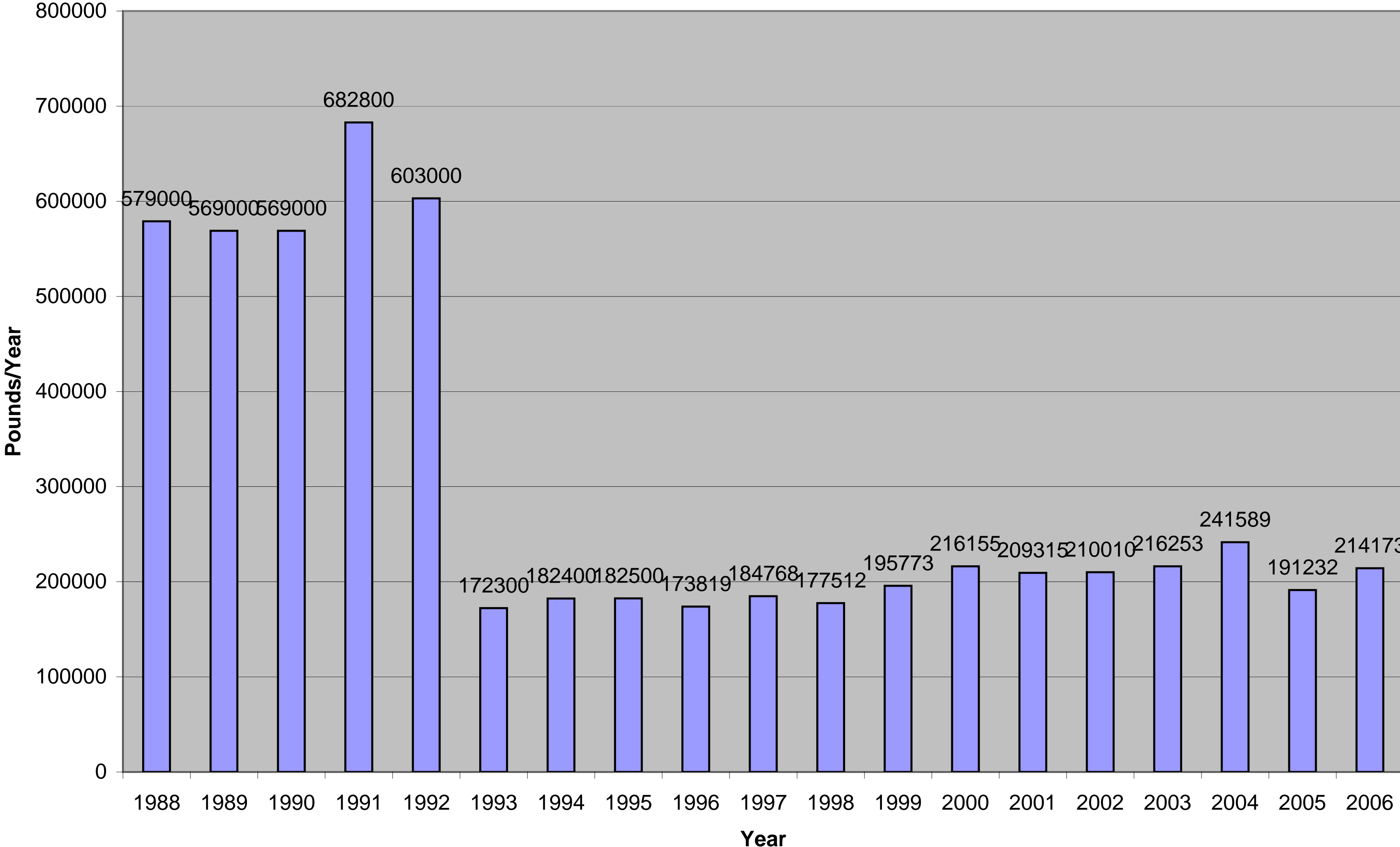

Toxic Release Inventory: Ammonia (SNF Holding)
Pounds/Year
9000
8000
7000
6000
5000
4000
3000
2000
1000
0
4593
0
4392
3328
7904
7920
242
231
1012
1462
1663
0
1994
1995
1997
1998
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
Year
Series1


Toxic Release Inventory: Chlorine (Interstate Paper)
Pounds/Year
Year
0
1000
2000
3000
4000
5000
6000
7000
8000
4300
2700
7000
7300
6000
250
250
105
2238
1526
1221
1099
710
534
1038
1126
888
897
1988
1989
1990
1991
1992
1993
1995
1996
1997
1998
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006

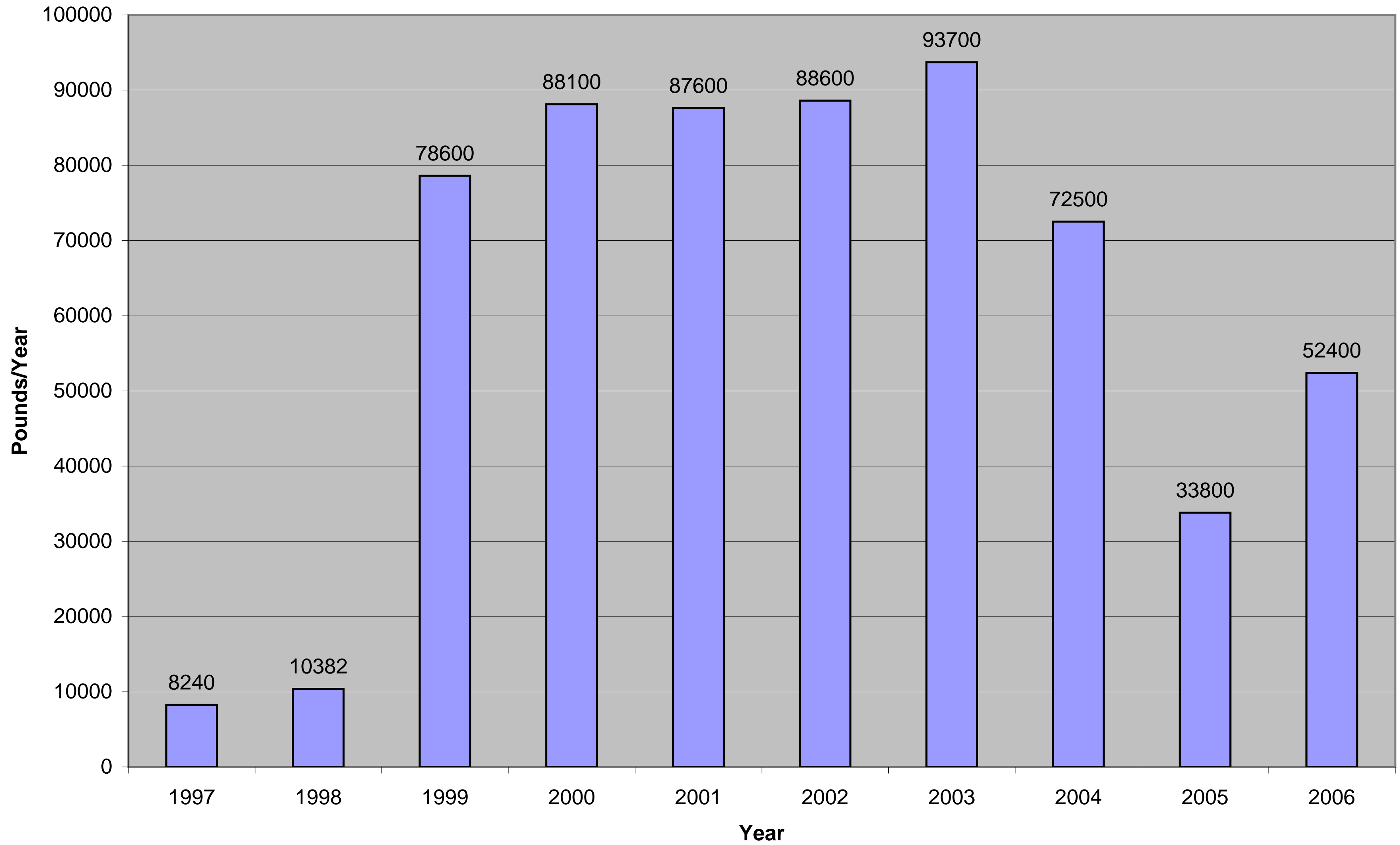

Toxic Release Inventory: Chloromethane (SNF Holding)
Pounds/Year
Year
4500
4000
3500
3000
2500
2000
1500
1000
500
0
255
603
353
641
649
774
3780
3850
3291
3310
3340
3330
3350
3390
1992
1993
1994
1995
1997
1998
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006

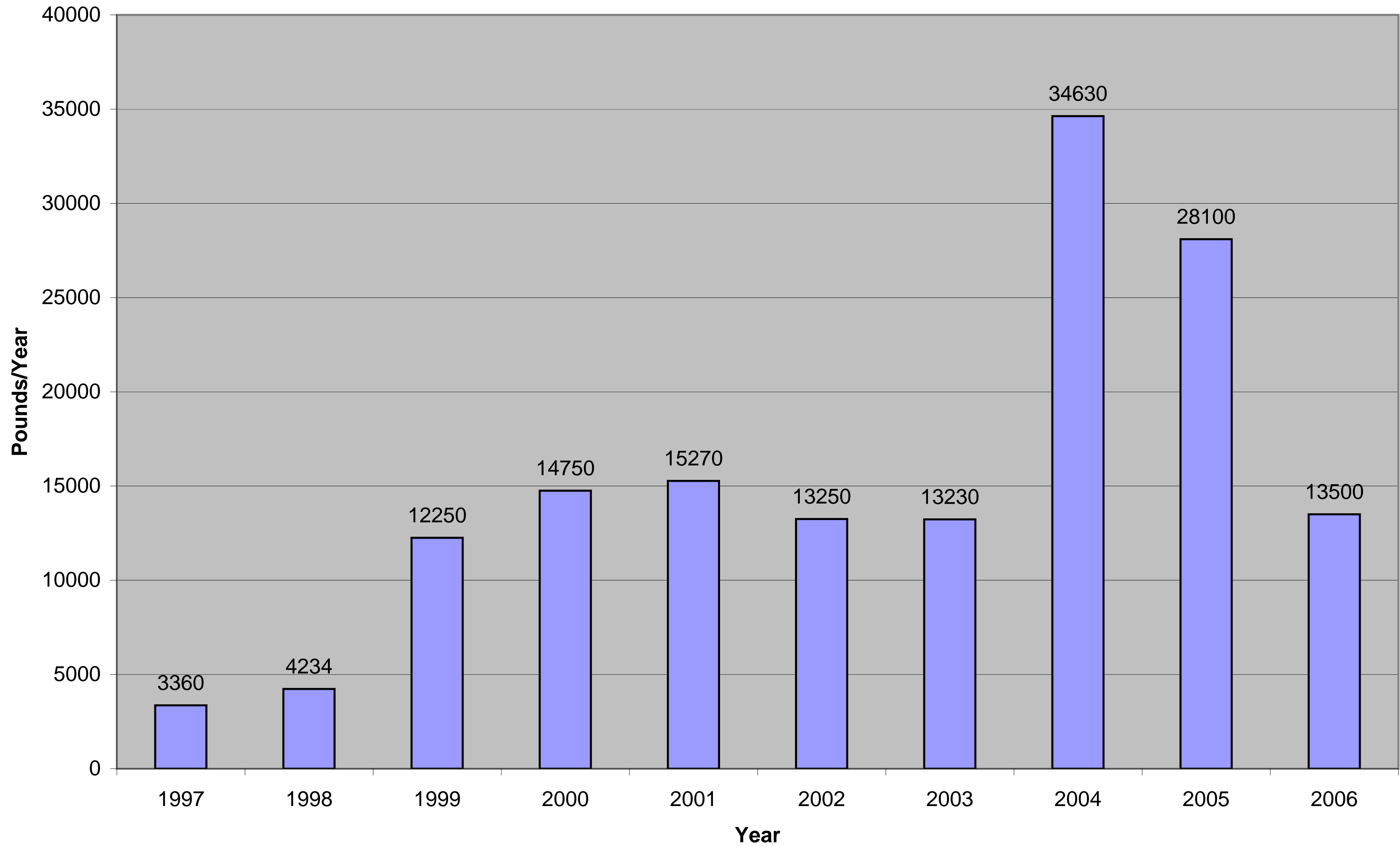

Toxic Release Inventory: Methanol (SNF Holding)
Pounds/Year
45000
40000
35000
30000
25000
20000
15000
10000
5000
0
3320
4183
33700
38200
38240
37700
40133
40425
27626
29628
1997
1998
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
Year

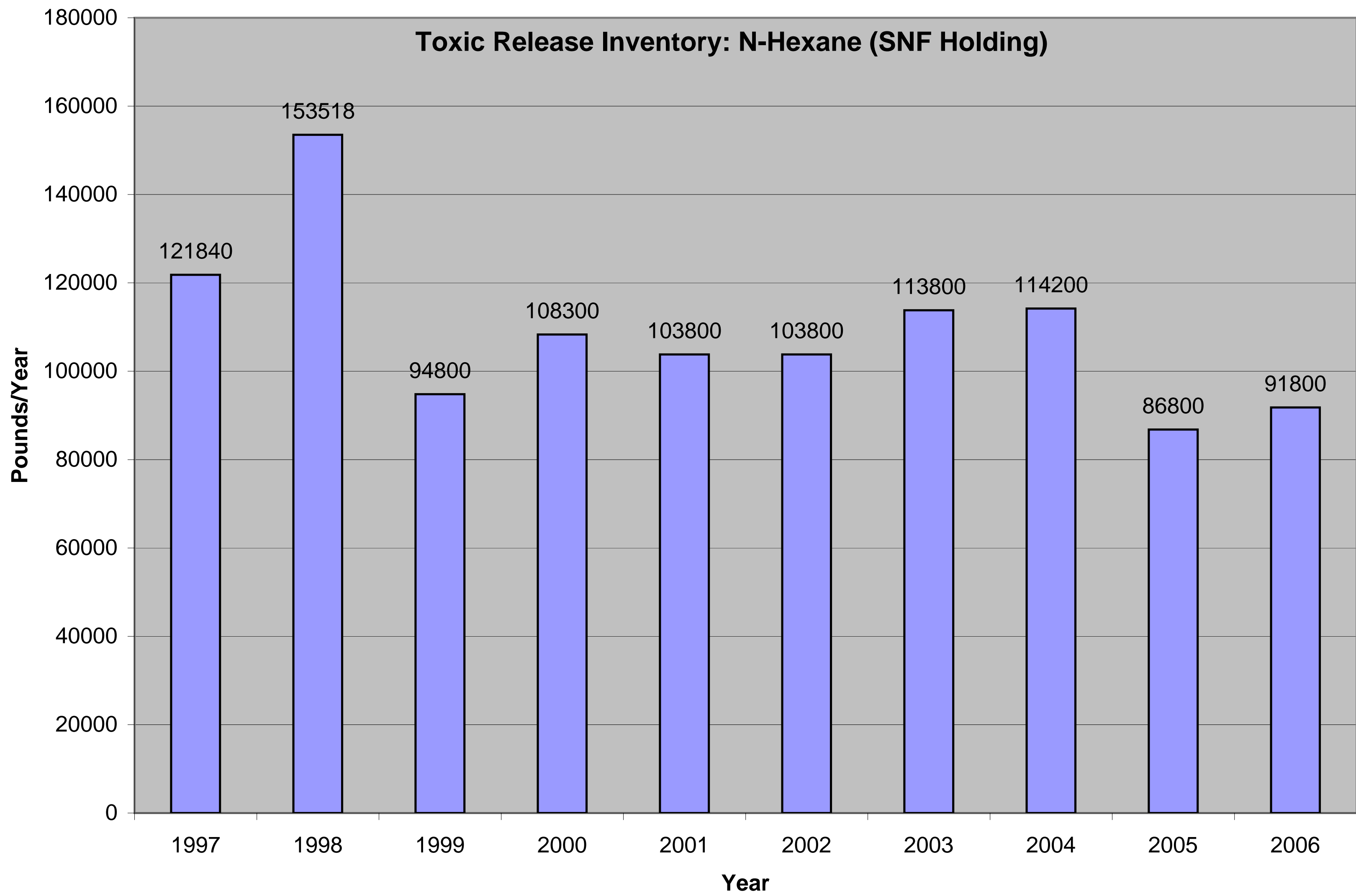

Toxic Release Inventory: Methanol (Interstate Paper)
800000
700000
600000
500000
400000
300000
200000
100000
0
Pounds/Year
579000
569000
569000
682800
603000
172300
182400
182500
173819
181448
173329
162073
177955
171075
172310
176120
201164
163606
184545
1988
1989
1990
1991
1992
1993
1994
1995
1996
1997
1998
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
Year

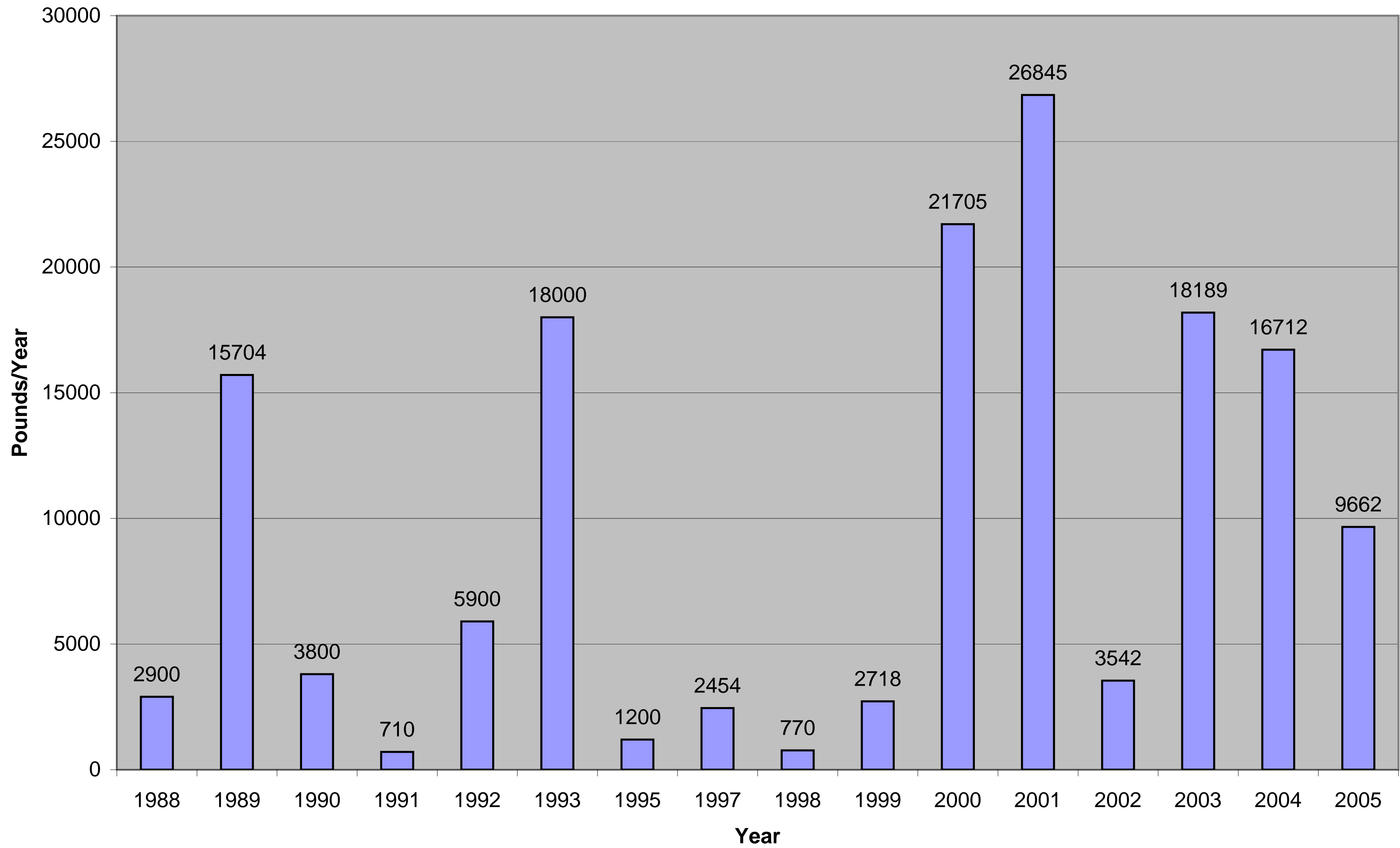


Toxic Release Inventory: Methanol (Riceboro Aggregate)
Pounds/Year
800000
700000
600000
500000
400000
300000
200000
100000
0
579000
569000
569000
682800
603000
172300
182400
182500
173819
184768
177512
195773
216155
209315
210010
216253
241589
191232
214173
1988
1989
1990
1991
1992
1993
1994
1995
1996
1997
1998
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
Year


Toxic Release Inventory: Methyl Acrylate (SNF Holding)
Pounds/Year
100000
90000
80000
70000
60000
50000
40000
30000
20000
10000
0
8240
10382
78600
88100
87600
88600
93700
72500
33800
52400
1997
1998
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
Year


Toxic Release Inventory: Methyl Methacrylate (SNF Holding)
Pounds/Year
40000
35000
30000
25000
20000
15000
10000
5000
0
3360
4234
12250
14750
15270
13250
13230
34630
28100
13500
1997
1998
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
Year


Toxic Release Inventory: N-Hexane (SNF Holding)
Pounds/Year
180000
160000
140000
120000
100000
80000
60000
40000
20000
0
121840
153518
94800
108300
103800
103800
113800
114200
86800
91800
1997
1998
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
Year


Toxic Release Inventory: Sulfuric Acid (Interstate Paper)
Pounds/Year
Year
30000
25000
20000
15000
10000
5000
0
2900
15704
3800
710
5900
18000
1200
2454
770
2718
21705
26845
3542
18189
16712
9662
1988
1989
1990
1991
1992
1993
1995
1997
1998
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005

Appendix 2C
Georgia Environmental Protection Division
Executed Orders
Riceboro, Liberty County, Georgia 31323
Search Conducted 10 April 2008

SNF/Chemtall—Bio-Flocryl

Date	Division	Order#	Cause	Settlement
9/17/2007	Water	EPD-WQ-4791	Acrylamide spill/fish kill to waters of the state; failure to report	$35,000
6/1/2007	Water	EPD-WQ-4721	Violations of NPDES Permits/exceed Permit limitations, failure to monitor	$5,000
4/2/2007	Air	EPD-AQC-5564	Violations of Air Operating Permit/exceeded particulate matter emissions	$31,200
7/29/2006	Water	EPD-WQ-4629	Violations of Rules for Water Quality Control and Solid Waste Management. Discharge and release of oily waste sludge to surrounding wetlands, Riceboro Creek and North Newport River.	$50,000
5/13/2005	Air	EPD-AQC-4701	Violations of Operating Permit/failure to monitor, improper use of air pollution control equipment, excessive emissions	$12,000
7/23/2002	Air	EPD-AQC-3205	Violations of Rules for Air Quality Control and Air Quality Permit	$7,000
				$140,200

Interstate Paper Corporation

Date	Division	Order#	Cause	Settlement
11/13/2006	Water	EPD-WQ-4627	Violations of NPDES Permit/exceeded biochemical oxygen demand and total suspended solids discharge limit	$50,000
6/19/2006	Water	EPD-WQ-CDO-06-002	Violations of NPDES Permit/exceeded biochemical oxygen demand discharge limitation	$14,040
6/9/2005	Water	EPD-WQ-4439	Violations of NPDES Permit/exceeded Permit limits	$12,500
6/29/1998	Air	EPD-AQC-1226	Air permit violation in October 1997	$2,000
6/29/1998	Solid Waste	EPD-ACQ-1226	Air permit violation in October 1997	$2,000
				$80,540

Source: http://www.gaepd.org

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