The Corridor is a federal National Heritage Area and it was established by Congress to recognize the unique culture of the Gullah Geechee people who have traditionally resided in the coastal areas and the sea islands of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida — from Pender County, North Carolina, to St. Johns County, Florida.

**: Overview**

- **“Gullah” or “Geechee”?**
  - Scholars are not in agreement as to the origins of the terms “Gullah” and “Geechee.”
  - Gullah people are historically those located in coastal South Carolina and Geechee people are those who live along the Georgia coast and into Florida.
  - Geechee people in Georgia refer to themselves as “Freshwater Geechee” if they live on the mainland and “Saltwater Geechee” if they live on the Sea Islands.
  - In some circumstances, the term “Geechee” has been used as a blanket term to describe people who live in the Low Country, regardless of ethnicity.

- **Overview**
  - West African Origins of Gullah Geechee Ancestors
  - Transatlantic Slave Trade through Charleston and Savannah
  - The Atlantic Rice Coast
  - Incubation of Gullah Geechee Creole Culture in the Sea Islands and Coastal Plantations

**“Gullah” or “Geechee”?**

- Although Gullah and Geechee — terms whose origins have been much debated and may trace to specific African tribes or words — are often used interchangeably these days, Mrs. [Cornelia Walker] Bailey always stressed that she was Geechee. And, specifically, Saltwater Geechee (as opposed to the Freshwater Geechee, who lived 30 miles inland).

  “We thought our speech was a bit more musical than theirs,” she wrote in her book, “because we talked a little faster, with fewer rest stops between our words, so that everything ran together. We’d listen to them and say, ‘Can’t they talk any faster than that? People don’t have all day.’”
What makes the culture unique?

Gullah Geechee people represent the only African-American group with a unique, long-standing name identifying them as a distinct group of people with a common set of ancestors and a defined, traditional home along the Southeast Atlantic Coast — from Pender County NC to St. Johns County FL.

They also created the creole Gullah Geechee language spoken nowhere else in the world.

Finally, the lifeways, folk customs, oral history, literature, crafts, arts, music, and foodways of the Gullah Geechee people — nurtured on isolated sea and barrier islands and plantations — show the strongest continuities with indigenous cultures of Africa (primarily West Africa) and connections to other cultures of the African diaspora — of any African-American community.

First Contact: Native Americans, Africans and Europeans

2500 BC: Native Americans
- Began as migratory tribes and then settled near freshwater sources such as the Savannah (GA) and Waccamaw (NC) rivers.
- Include Chicoras, Catawbas, Santees, Sewees, PeeDees, Cusabos, Yamasees, Yamacraw
- Some still remain.

16th-17th Century: Africans + Europeans
- 1513: Ponce de Leon in Florida (Spain)
- 1524: Giovanni de Verrazzano reaches Cape Fear, NC (France)
- 1663-1665: King Charles II (England) granted to 8 Lords Proprietors all of the land from the southern border of Virginia to the middle of Florida.

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Two thousand miles by sea from South Carolina, Barbados seems an odd candidate to spawn the Holy City. Nestled just a stone’s throw above present-day Venezuela, Barbados is just a few hundred miles out into the Atlantic. The voyage by sea between Carolina and the island took at least a month.

### First Contact: Native American, European and African
- **1664**: Planter and settlers from Barbados migrated and established a settlement named “Charles Towne” near the mouth of Towne Creek, NC.
- **1670**: Another “Charles Towne” was established on the west bank of the Ashley River by settlers from Barbados and England.
- **1732**: Georgia became the last of the original 13 colonies and was formed out of what once was the southernmost part of SC. Between 1735 and 1750 Georgia was unique among Britain’s American colonies, as it was the only one to attempt to prohibit black slavery as a matter of public policy.
- Native American population declines due to warfare and disease. Some sold into slavery in other parts of North America and the Caribbean.

### Charter Generation of Africans in Low Country
- **1669**: Fundamental Constitutions of South Carolinas outlined a plan for the government and social organization that recognized slavery and specified in Article 110 that “every Freeman of Carolina shall have absolute Power and Authority over his Negro Slaves, of what Opinion or Religion whatsoever.”
- Africans arrived in South Carolina at the same time as the English and often on same ships. They had spent time in England, other English and European colonies – especially Barbados.
- Some were born in the New World.

### Charter Generation of Africans in the Low Country
- Only about 4% of Africans trafficked into the New World ended up in what became the United States.
- Diaspora of Gullah Geechee ancestors and descendants.
  - Barbados, Jamaica and Antigua
  - Grenada: “Femme” people
  - Trinidad: “Merikans”
  - Cuba: liberated who left Florida with the Spanish.

### Emergence of Rice Culture
- Rice cultivation became the main economic activity.
- Altered character of the physical landscape and density of the enslaved population.
- First grown as a subsistence crop in damp soil without irrigation.
- Later, planters adopted the reservoir system: impounding of fresh water from streams, springs, and swamps to periodically irrigate the fields.
- By mid-1700’s, tidal flow or tidewater method was employed.
Emergence of Rice Culture

- Rice fields planted adjacent to rivers and streams flowing into the ocean.
- System of canals, dikes, sluices and trunks used to flood fields with freshwater forced upstream by rising tides.
- Africans from the Rice Coast of Africa were familiar with the technology of tidewater rice production and that knowledge was transferred to the New World with their enslavement.
- Had the array of technological and management skills essential to the production of rice.

The Atlantic Rice Coast

- As rice became more and more prominent in the economy, slaves from the rice growing regions of Africa became highly prized for their technical knowledge and skills in rice cultivation and irrigation.
- Some West Africans had experience in clearing swamps, building dikes, and using the tides to irrigate fields.

Transatlantic Slave Trade

- “The unpleasant truth is that there could hardly have been successful rice culture in South Carolina without the strength and skills of enslaved Africans.”—Charles Joyner (1984)
- Possessed wide range of skills: agricultural production, metallurgy, irrigation techniques, herding and the cultivation of crops like beans, peas, okra and yams.
- Resistance to malaria. Plantation owners often deserted the plantations during mosquito season and enslaved Africans managed plantations without supervision.

Transatlantic Slave Trade

The captives were warehoused in forts or large castles or held in open barracoons (outdoor prisons) at “slave ports” such as Goree in Senegal, James Island in the Gambia River, and Bunce Island in the Sierra Leone River.
“The stench of the hold while we were on the coast was so intolerably loathsome, that it was dangerous to remain there for any time, and some of us had been permitted to stay on the deck for the fresh air; but now that the whole ship’s cargo were confined together, it became absolutely pestilential. The closeness of the place, and the heat of the climate, added to the number in the ship, which was so crowded that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us. This produced copious perspirations, so that the air soon became unfit for respiration, from a variety of loathsome smells, and brought on a sickness among the slaves, of which many died, thus falling victims to the improvident avarice, as I may call it, of their purchasers. This wretched situation was again aggravated by the galling of the chains, now become insupportable; and the filth of the necessary tubs, into which the children often fell, and were almost suffocated. The shrieks of the women, and the groans of the dying, rendered the whole a scene of horror almost inconceivable.”

I was soon put down under the decks, and there I received such a salutation in my nostrils as I had never experienced in my life: so that, with the loathsomeness of the stench and crying together, I became so sick and low that I was not able to eat. I now wished for the last friend, death, to relieve me; but soon, to my grief, two of the White men offered me eatables; and on my refusing to eat, one of them held me fast by the hands, and laid me across I think the windlass, and tied my feet, while the other flogged me severely.

I had never experienced any thing of this kind before; and although not being used to the water, I naturally feared that element the first time I saw it, yet nevertheless, could I have got over the nettings, I would have jumped over the side, but I could not; and besides, the crew used to watch us very closely who were not chained down to the decks, lest we should leap into the water: and I have seen some of these poor African prisoners most severely cut for attempting to do so, and hourly whipped for not eating.”
“These fields are surrounded by more than a mile of earthen dikes or ‘banks’ as they were called. Built by slaves, these banks … were taller than a person and up to 15 feet wide. By [1800], rice banks on the 12½ mile stretch of the East Branch of the Cooper River measured more than 55 miles long and contained more than 6.4 million feet of earth … This means that … working in the water and muck with no more than shovels, hoes, and baskets … by 1850 Carolina slaves … on [tidal] plantations like Middleburg throughout the rice growing district had built a system of banks and canals … nearly three times the volume of Cheops, the world’s largest pyramid.”

- University of South Carolina archaeologist Leland Ferguson

“…”We has a right to the land where we are located. For why? I tell you. Our wives, our children, our husbands has been sold over and over again to purchase the lands we now locates upon; that the reason we have a divine right to the land … And then didn't we clear the land, and raise the crops of corn, of cotton, of tobacco, of rice, of sugar, of everything?”

- Bayley Wyat, 1866

**Resistance**

- Mortality rate of enslaved Africans from disease and hazardous conditions often exceeded the number of births on a plantation.
- Also endured extreme punishments and inhumane work conditions.
- Many sought every opportunity to resist and escape: arson, sabotage and complete insurrection.
- Revolutionary War: some earned their freedom by actively supporting the British. Possibly as many as 10,000 found freedom and some found their way back to Sierra Leone and West Africa.

**The Atlantic Rice Coast**

- Rice plantations were large operations with independent internal economies – not unlike the manor system of the Old World. Agriculture was not, therefore, the only skill required to keep the plantation operational. Many enslaved men and women had been skilled artisans in Africa – blackssmiths, potters, cooperers, carpenters, fishermen, miners – and brought valuable skills to their new homeland.
- Many enslaved women had knowledge of herbal cures, nursing the sick, and midwifery. Some enslaved were trained to perform specialized trades after they arrived in the colonies. All of these skills contributed to the financial success of the plantation and the wealth of the planter.

**The Atlantic Rice Coast**

- When New World slaves planted rice in the spring by pressing a hole with the heel and covering the seeds with the foot, the motion used was demonstrably similar to that employed in West Africa. In summer, when enslaved moved through the rice fields in a row, hoeing in unison to work songs, the pattern of cultivation was not one imposed by European owners but rather one retained from West African forebears.
- And in October when the threshed grain was “fanned” in the wind, the wide, flat winnowing baskets were made by black hands after an African design. Rice planting on the Windward Coast of Africa had been a time of celebration, a time of renewal and promise.

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Emergence of Gullah Geechee Culture

- Arrived with diverse range of cultural, linguistic and spiritual practices.
- Once on the plantation, the numbers of new arrivals often overwhelmed the proto-Creole culture of earlier arrivals.
- Because many of the transplanted African peoples did not share the same cultural practices, eventually common institutions and a synthesized new Creole culture – now known as Gullah Geechee – emerged.

Language

- Prominent among the distinguishing characteristics of Gullah Geechee identity is a unique form of speech that has traditionally been referred to as "Gullah" or "Geechee," a distinctive Creole language. While the Gullah Geechee language has been developed, adapted, and spoken over the past, roughly 250 years, from an outsider’s perspective it has historically been derided as substandard, or "broken" English.
- Beginning with Lorenzo Dow Turner’s groundbreaking work, Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect (Turner 1949), the language has increasingly come to be appreciated, even by outsiders, as a legitimate and remarkable language in its own right. Unfortunately, it is also an endangered language.

Emergence of Gullah Geechee Culture

- Foundations of Gullah Geechee culture rested on the ability of enslaved Africans to adjust to reproduce themselves while creating and sustaining family, community, linguistic and spiritual institutions.
- Their isolated existence on remote plantations, density in the general population and proximity to port cities and major commercial centers also facilitated the development of Gullah Geechee culture.
- But it is not a monolithic and its manifestation varied from region to region, from rural to urban areas.

Rice and Identity

- Rice was not only the favored staple food of these enslaved, it also was a part of their cultural identity. Rice came with them in the slave vessels and was processed during the voyage by captive women aboard the ships.
- Gullah Geechee traditional foodways feature, among other West African produce, transplanted rice, greens, peanuts, benne, sweet potatoes, and okra.
- Fish dishes and spices, also imported by enslaved Africans, manifested in new recipes using locally available foods and seasonings.

Next Webinar | June 20

The quest for freedom, equality, education and recognition.

Part II: Quest for Freedom, Equality and Recognition

- Civil War
- Reconstruction
- "Jim Crow"
- Race and Civil Rights
Domestic Trade

- On March 2, 1807, President Thomas Jefferson signed a bill outlawing the foreign slave trade effective January 1, 1808.
- However, the opening of new lands for the cultivation of sugar and cotton increased the demand for enslaved and the illegal traffic in human beings continued until demand was eliminated by the Civil War.
- Charleston played a key role in the intra-state slave market operating slave auctions until 1863.

Civil War

- It should not be a surprise that South Carolina is the first state to secede in December 1860.
- "If the Republican party with its platform of principles, the main feature of which is the abolition of slavery and, therefore, the destruction of the South, carries the country at the next Presidential election, shall we remain in the Union, or form a separate Confederacy? This is the great, grave issue. It is not who shall be President, it is not which party shall rule — it is a question of political and social existence." - Alfred Aldrich

"Among Charleston’s biggest slaveholders was the Middleton family, which from 1738 to 1865 owned some 3,000 slaves on its numerous plantations. These days, led by a family descendant, Charles Duell, the 65-acre Middleton Place Plantation, a designated National Historic Landmark, creates exhibits around the genealogy and contributions of its enslaved workers. "Whether it was knitting or weaving or corn grinding, or tending the rice fields — all these activities were performed by African-Americans," said Mr. Duell, who has hosted three reunions that bring together the property’s European American and African-American descendants. “They created the wealth that made all this possible.”

By 1860, 45.8 percent of white families in South Carolina owned slaves, giving the state one of the highest percentages of slaveholders in the country."
Civil War

- The famous Cornerstone Speech was delivered extemporaneously on March 21, 1861, by Alexander Hamilton Stephens, Vice President of the Confederacy, to the largest crowd ever to assemble at the Athenaeum in Savannah, Georgia.
- His remarks were interrupted by frequent bursts of applause from the audience. Although no official printed version of the speech exists, the text was later printed in the Savannah Republican.

Civil War Begins in South Carolina

First military engagement of the Civil War was at Fort Sumter in Charleston SC on April 21, 1861. At the beginning of the Civil War in April 1861, the enslaved population of America was estimated to be about 4,000,000.

Civil War

- Early in the war, there was no plan to use Africans as soldiers in either army. U.S. Army General David Hunter, however, recruited freedmen from Hilton Head and Port Royal Islands in South Carolina, to form the 1st South Carolina Volunteer Infantry Regiment.
- Both the federal government and Secretary of War Edwin Stanton opposed the radical idea and forced Hunter to disband the regiment. Viewpoints changed later that year, and the War Department authorized General Rufus Saxon, Hunter’s successor, to raise 5,000 troops of African descent.

Emancipation Proclamation

- President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, as the nation approached its third year of bloody civil war. The proclamation declared “that all persons held as slaves” within the rebellious states “are, and henceforward shall be free.”
- Despite this expansive wording, the Emancipation Proclamation was limited in many ways.
  - It applied only to states that had seceded from the United States, leaving slavery untouched in the loyal border states.
  - It also expressly exempted parts of the Confederacy (the Southern secessionist states) that had already come under Northern control.
  - Most important, the freedom it promised depended upon Union (United States) military victory.

Emancipation Proclamation

- The Emancipation Proclamation took effect on January 1, 1863. Five months later, the War Department issued General Order No. 143 establishing the United States Colored Troops. Over 185,000 African-Americans would serve in the Union forces by the end of the war.
- The Watch Night and Emancipation Day tradition that began on December 31, 1862 is still observed across the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor as communities gather together on “Freedom’s Eve” to commemorate the date that the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect on January 1, 1863.
Many of the original soldiers recruited by Hunter were mustered into the 51st Massachusetts Regiment under Captain Thomas Wentworth Higginson. In January 1863 the troops came together at the John Joyner Smith plantation, now the site of the U.S. Naval Hospital in Beaufort, South Carolina, to hear the Emancipation Proclamation read for the first time.

In 1864, the regiment was redesignated as the 33rd Regiment of the United States Colored Infantry. They saw considerable action along the coasts of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida and participated in the occupations of Charleston and Savannah.

In addition, they saw action at the Battle of Honey Hill in Jasper County, South Carolina and at the capture of Confederate fortifications on James Island in Charleston County, South Carolina.

After the Emancipation, some newly freed slaves left the plantations and joined the Union Army, but many adopted a "wait and see" stance. Some stayed behind and farmed the land where they once had been enslaved.

Freedmen who opted for service in the Union Army faced additional difficulties created by racial prejudice, which was rampant even in the North. Segregated units were formed, usually consisting of black enlisted men commanded by white officers.

Although many blacks served in the artillery and infantry, discriminatory practices within the military resulted in the assignment of large numbers of freedmen to the performance of non-combat, support duties as cooks, laborers, and teamsters.

African-American soldiers were paid $10 per month, from which $3 was deducted for clothing. White soldiers were paid $13 per month, from which no clothing allowance was deducted.

Black soldiers faced much greater peril and suffering than did their white counterparts if they were captured by the Confederate Army.

In spite of their many hardships, African-American soldiers comprised about 10 per cent of the Union Army.

They served the Army well and distinguished themselves in many battles even though it is estimated that one third of all African-American enlistees lost their lives, most to disease.
Robert Smalls (1839-1915)

- One of the best-known Gullah participants in the Union war effort. Smalls taught himself to read and write, mastered the difficult currents and channels of Charleston Harbor, and waited for his chance to escape.

- During the Civil War, Smalls became the pilot of a transport steamer, the Planter, which was under contract to the Confederates. On the evening of May 12, while the Planter was docked in Charleston Harbor, the Confederate officers went ashore to attend a party and left the black crew alone. Before dawn on May 13, 1862, while the ship’s officers slept, 23-year-old Smalls smuggled his wife and three children aboard the Planter and took command of the vessel.

- As Smalls had been the wheelman, he was familiar with Charleston Harbor as well as Confederate gun and troop positions. He and his crew of 12 sailed the Planter past the other Confederate ships in the harbor, gave the correct whistle signal as he passed the Confederate forts in the harbor, and sailed out to sea.

- When he had sailed beyond the range of Confederate guns, Smalls hoisted a white flag and delivered the Planter to the commanding officer of the Union blockade. Smalls and his crew were welcomed as heroes. President Lincoln later received Smalls and his crew in Washington where he thanked them for their bravery and valor. Congress passed a bill, which was signed by Lincoln, which awarded prize money to Smalls and his associates for their gallantry.

Susie King Taylor (1848-1912)

- Born in Liberty County, Georgia, young Susie learned to read and write at secret schools taught by Black women in Savannah. During the War, when Union officers learned she was literate, she became the first Black teacher for newly freedmen on St. Simons Island.

- At 17, she married Edward King, an officer in the First South Carolina Volunteers (a regiment made up of freedmen) and she traveled with them as a nurse. She was an eyewitness to war and left vivid, clear-eyed accounts of what she saw including the destruction of Charleston.
On February 28, 1865, the remainder of the regiment were ordered to Charleston, as there were signs of the rebels evacuating that city. Leaving Cole Island, we arrived in Charleston between nine and ten o'clock in the morning, and found the “rebels” had set fire to the city and fled, leaving women and children behind to suffer and perish in the flames. The fire had been burning fiercely for a day and night. When we landed, under a flag of truce, our regiment went to work assisting the citizens in subduing the flames. It was a terrible scene.

For three or four days the men fought the fire, saving the property and effects of the people, yet these white men and women could not tolerate our black Union soldiers, for many of them had formerly been their slaves; and although these brave men risked life and limb to assist them in their distress, men and even women would sneer and molest them whenever they met them.

Slavery in the United States was finally outlawed on January 31, 1865, by the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution, which states: “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

Thousands of liberated had attached themselves to Sherman’s army.

On January 12, 1865, Major-General William Tecumseh Sherman, who was in the midst of his infamous “march to the sea,” met with Secretary of War Edwin Stanton and 20 black clergy and community leaders from Savannah, Georgia, to discuss the future of former slaves after their emancipation. In his memoirs, Sherman states that he asked the black leaders if they preferred to live among the white people or in separate communities.

Garrison Frasier, spokesman for the group, replied, “I would prefer to live by ourselves, for there is a prejudice against us in the South that will take years to get over.” Nineteen of the twenty black men agreed. Sherman and Stanton considered this information, and four days later on January 16, 1865, Sherman issued Special Field Orders Number 15, in which he set aside:

The islands from Charleston south, the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea, and the country bordering the St. John’s River, Florida, are reserved and set apart for the settlement of the negroes now made free by the acts of war and the proclamation of the President of the United States.
Field Order No. 15

Whenever three respectable negroes, heads of families, shall desire to settle on land... The three parties named will subdivide the land, under the supervision of the inspector, among themselves, and such others as may choose to settle near them, so that each family shall have a plot of not more than forty acres of tillable ground... (Sherman 1875).

Field Order No. 15

Thus, each family was to receive 40 acres of land and, when available, an army surplus mule to work the land.

The Bureau of Freedmen, Refugees, and Abandoned Lands was formed to assist with land acquisition and to provide schools for the newly freed people throughout the South. Eventually over 40,000 families were settled on 40-acre tracts.

Reconstruction and Land Ownership

The paramount desire of the Gullah Geechee was to own land. This was a universal sentiment among freedmen throughout the Corridor because they saw land ownership as the foundation of their freedom.

Freedmen in the Sea Islands were more successful in acquiring land than those in other regions of the Corridor, and in 1870, it was alleged that they owned more land than blacks anywhere in the South.
Reconstruction

- Freedmen had longed for an opportunity to worship their God in their own way and to choose their own religious leaders. Well before the end of the Civil War, and as soon as Union forces occupied an area, new religious institutions were established and old ones were revived.

- Christianity was the dominant religion of most enslaved Africans during the ante-bellum period. In fact, some Africans were Christians when they arrived in North America, and many freedmen later claimed that their religion was a major factor that helped them survive their bondage.

- African Americans withdrew from white churches, formed new congregations, or joined new denominations, especially the African American Episcopal Church and the African American Episcopal Zion.

The 150-year-old First African Baptist Church at 601 New Street in Beaufort, SC began as a small prayer house and on Emancipation Day – January 1, 1863 – the newly formed congregation started building the church.

Reconstruction

- There was a wave of church building throughout the corridor as blacks repaired war-damaged churches or constructed new ones. These churches include stately edifices in major urban areas and small white, wood-framed structures that still dot U.S. Highway 17 from one end of the Corridor to the other.

- In addition to serving the religious needs of their adherents, churches also provided social services and served as community centers and schools. These wooden churches testify to the fact that a historically constituted, Gullah Geechee community existed in the immediate vicinity.

Reconstruction

- There was no system of public education anywhere in the ante-bellum South, and during Reconstruction, African-Americans were prominent among those who agitated for public schools.

- Though most northern missionaries, preachers, and teachers—both black and white—were motivated by altruism and were sympathetic to the needs of freedmen, their efforts often had the effect of weakening the traditional culture of Gullah Geechee people. This was especially true of the language and speech patterns of Gullah Geechee people and their religious practices.

Reconstruction

- Gullah Geechee also established a host of fraternal organizations, militias, fire companies, veterans, and political organizations in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War. Gullah Geechee people provided much of the leadership for these organizations.

- However, much of the potential for advancement in property ownership, entrepreneurship, political leadership, and business and professional success among African Americans in the late 19th century was stifled by the effects of legal segregation, disfranchisement, and racial and political violence. They lacked access to land and employment opportunities with fair wages.

Within Union-occupied areas, military personnel and northern teachers also commenced efforts to provide blacks with a formal education. Reflecting their desires for education, Gullah Geechee of all ages flocked to these schools because they understood that education was an opportunity for self-improvement. In some areas, they contributed money and their own labor to hire teachers and erect school houses.
Jim Crow

- Strategies to disenfranchise and further undo the empowerment gained by African-Americans drove both the South's economic and social policies immediately following the Civil War.
- The implications of these policies for African Americans were the significant push factor that drove the out-migration of Gullah-Geechee people.

Civil Rights Era

- Beginning with the Brown v. Board of Education ruling (U.S. Supreme Court 1954), the modern Civil Rights Movement brought more structural changes to the Corridor than any other time since the Civil War.
- The legal foundations of disfranchisement and Jim Crow laws for racial segregation were dismantled and Gullah Geechee people participated in a wide range of activities that helped desegregate public schools, public transportation, public facilities, and other places of public accommodation, and helped restore voting rights.

Civil Rights Era

- The Civil Rights Movement unfolded at different times in different places, and people within the present-day boundary of the Corridor made some original tactical or strategic contributions.
- Esau Jenkins, a community leader, and Septima Clark, a public school teacher, both from Johns Island, South Carolina, conceptualized and developed the concept of "Freedom Schools," which were widely used to prepare potential black voters to pass literacy tests. The Civil Rights Movement, like the first Reconstruction, brought fundamental changes to the social and political structure, and provided Gullah Geechee people with increased opportunities for success.
Charleston Apologizes for Slavery

"We hereby denounce and apologize for the wrongs committed against African-Americans by the institution of slavery and Jim Crow, with sincerest sympathies and regrets for the deprivation of life, human dignity and constitutional protections occasioned as a result thereof." -- June 19, 2018.

Up Next: Gullah Geechee Language