

# The Strange Career of a Florida State Park: Uncovering a Jim Crow Past<sup>1</sup>

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“The American dream is innocence and clean slates and the future.”  
—Toni Morrison<sup>2</sup>

## Introduction

In September 1966, Jacksonville's *Florida Times-Union* announced the newly opened camping facilities at nearby Little Talbot Island State Park stating, “It's official now; the state park with the wide beach and the inviting wooded nooks is open to campers.”<sup>3</sup> The brief article continued, “The island-park has two beach areas...The north beach is nearer the campground, but south beach offers a wooden pier which stretches its long arm into the Atlantic, pointing the way for fishermen.”<sup>4</sup> A few years later, in 1969, another *Florida Times-Union* article described a similar scene, “The park includes two ocean beach swimming areas protected by lifeguards, an ocean fishing pier, surfing area, 60-unit camping area and a picnic grounds on the Ft. George River.”<sup>5</sup> Both depictions ignored what at the time was a very recent historical fact about the park's separate beach areas and recreational facilities.

Fast-forward to 1998, to the release of the Florida Park Service's Unit Management Plan for Little Talbot Island State Park, which opened in 1951 and was situated among the barrier islands northeast of Jacksonville.<sup>6</sup> The management plan described a primary goal as a balance between the preservation of natural conditions and public recreation, consistent with the long-time mission of Florida's state parks. It described the park's natural resources that included sandy soils, beach dunes, plant associations, hydrology and topography, and the presence of protected species including Loggerhead sea turtles, least terns, piping plovers, and gopher tortoises. Additionally, its inventory of archaeological cultural sites emphasized a distant past dating from pre-European contact, before 1516-1530, noting the presence of the indigenous Timucuan and subsequent arrivals of the French, Spanish, English, and then Americans.<sup>7</sup> A review of other recent promotional materials about Lit-

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tle Talbot Island State Park, including brochures and its website, reveals similar, albeit abbreviated, depictions of its natural landscape, cultural history, and beachfront amenities.<sup>8</sup>

What is missing from accounts of Little Talbot Island State Park, from the mid-1960s to the present, has been seemingly any public discussion of what is arguably one of the most compelling aspects of this site's history, an aspect that relates to the development of the park facilities themselves. The untold story is that the two beaches and two sets of recreational facilities, one at the north and one at the south end of the island park, are a legacy of Florida's past official racial segregation. Little Talbot Island State Park emerged as an answer to concerns about creating "separate but equal" state park facilities in Florida, a situation faced by state park systems throughout the Southeastern United States in the waning years of Jim Crow.

Since the end of *de jure* segregation in the South, this foundational feature of Southern state park systems has not been adequately addressed and remains largely a hidden history. While a few state park agencies, such as those in South Carolina and Georgia, at least acknowledge segregation in their official historical accounts, most, including Florida, do not, and references to racially segregated state parks remain largely scattered in library special collections and archives across the region.<sup>9</sup> The few general works on state parks history also neglect the issue. For example, former Florida Park Service Director Ney Landrum's recent history of the state park movement in the United States attempts to "trace the course of the state park movement over the past hundred years or so..."<sup>10</sup> His thorough assessment of relationships between state and federal agencies in state park construction and management through time, however, does not mention the segregated character of the movement's expression in the South in the Jim Crow era. The earlier historical work of Freeman Tilden, produced at the height of the Civil Rights movement in the early 1960s, likewise made no such acknowledgement. Even though he provided descriptions of several Southern parks that contained separate facilities for African Americans, Tilden made no mention of such facts. Additionally, even the South-specific *Histories of Southeastern State Park Systems*, published in 1977, did not systematically address the stark fact of segregation during these state park systems' earlier histories. Of the thirteen state histories included, only South Carolina's and Georgia's entries included brief reference to their agencies' segregated pasts.<sup>11</sup>

I attempt in this paper to facilitate at least some recollection of this untold history. It begins in the context of an early 20th century state park movement that, despite an explicit attempt to make parks accessible, largely excluded consideration of the recreation needs of African Americans in the segregated South. I then trace Florida's attempt, common in the region in the latter years of Jim Crow, to address growing questions about "separate but

equal” in state parks by creating limited facilities for African Americans. The story of Little Talbot Island State Park is offered to illustrate the attempt, but ultimate failure, to sustain state park segregation in the face of integration pressures from federal courts and popular protest. While currently a hidden history, I suggest that it is important to bring this Jim Crow past out of the shadows, such as by incorporating this history more fully into interpretive programs at places like Little Talbot Island State Park.

For some, revisiting such historical issues that appear to be settled can elicit discomfort and even a preference for continued silence. Toni Morrison acknowledged the difficulty of remembrance regarding slavery: “It’s a perfect dilemma. Forgetting is unacceptable. Remembering is unacceptable.”<sup>12</sup> Confronted with this dilemma in his work on “sundown towns” in the U.S., James Loewen argued that in part such troubling facts are worth knowing simply because they happened, but also because remembrance helps to inspire efforts aimed at ending continuing discrimination in other realms.<sup>13</sup> Recalling the Jim Crow foundations of Southern state park systems also acknowledges that the land preservation practices we rightly celebrate today are historically complex and even problematic in certain ways.

### **The State Park Movement and the Florida Park Service**

The formation of state parks in the United States is grounded in the incipient preservationism of the late nineteenth century that also influenced the creation of national parks and the National Park Service (NPS). What eventually emerged as a state park movement grew from scattered efforts at saving scenic and historic places.<sup>14</sup> From the piecemeal protection of unique landscapes, battlefields and other noteworthy sites, the movement began taking shape after the formation of the NPS in 1916 as a more systematic means of preserving those worthy sites that did not meet the high standards set by the NPS for national park status.

National Park Service Director, Stephen Mather, famously organized the first National Conference on Parks, convened in Des Moines, Iowa, in January 1921, which set the stage for a more fully sustained development of state park systems throughout the country.<sup>15</sup> Prior to this event, most initial action toward state parks development was in the North, Midwest, and in California.<sup>16</sup> Their emergence lagged in the South, however, which Thomas Cox attributes to “poverty, traditions of limited government, the weakness of transcendentalism (thanks in part to its ties to abolition), and the pastoral-plantation ideal that extolled the country estate rather than unsullied nature.”<sup>17</sup> By the 1930s, however, most states were enthusiastically developing park systems. The biggest boost to the development of these state parks systems came with

the Great Depression of the 1930s and President Franklin Roosevelt's federal employment program, particularly the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), which led to a rapid expansion of state parks systems that would have otherwise been largely inconceivable.<sup>18</sup>

Since the emergence of the state park movement in the U.S., "access" has been a significant watchword. Expanded state park offerings were suggested as a means of preserving natural lands that would provide facilities "within easy access of all the citizens of every state and territory."<sup>19</sup> As stated in the *Proceedings of the Second National Conference on State Parks*, "It is becoming increasingly difficult for men and women in great cities to go back to the great outdoors and there renew the springs which nourish and sweeten their lives. The real wilderness lies too distant from them."<sup>20</sup> Near-to-home state parks would help such urban dwellers express "a reaction of the inner instincts of humanity against a wholly new and artificial environment which threatens not only the impairment of its life but the mutilation of its soul."<sup>21</sup> The slogan, "A state park every hundred miles," however, which emerged after the 1921 conference, appears to have largely ignored that residents of African ancestry in the South were not to share in that vision. Most Southern states had no state parks available to African Americans in the early days of their systems, and those that established them later provided access at only a handful of scattered sites.

As with many states, the effective creation of the Florida Park Service came in the 1930s with the intensified interest in park creation after the 1921 National Conference on Parks, the rise in automobility, and especially the availability of federal funds and labor through the CCC in coordination with the NPS.<sup>22</sup> In fact, the Florida Legislature nominally created a Florida state park system in 1925, although it took no further action largely due to a lack of funding.<sup>23</sup> In 1935, the Legislature enacted a number of conservation-related laws, including the creation of an active state park agency under the Florida Board of Forestry.<sup>24</sup> This Florida Park Service worked with the NPS to acquire, develop, and administer state parks. Nine park sites in Florida were obtained through land donation or purchase by the end of the 1930s, and seven of these were developed with the help of the NPS.<sup>25</sup>

Park development came to a virtual standstill throughout the country during World War II and with the dissolution of the CCC in 1942. In 1944, however, Florida Park Service Director, Lewis Scoggin, developed a plan to revitalize the state's park system that emphasized the theme of "access" and that anticipated increases in post-war demand for recreation into the 1950s.<sup>26</sup> To fulfill this potential he proposed a 10 year, \$10 million state park program designed to dramatically expand offerings, to complete development of the current parks and adding an additional nine parks, as well as "two more group camps, 75 secondary recreational areas and 60 wayside parks—enough parks

and wayside areas to put one within reach of every citizen of Florida and make a series of them accessible to every tourist who visits the State, either by land, sea or air."<sup>27</sup> He continued, "Our records show that our present State Parks are within 50 miles of only 35% of the population of the State...The proposed plan will put a State Park within 50 miles of approximately 75% of the population of the State and easily put a park adjacent to the principle streams of traffic flow."<sup>28</sup> In this proposed expansion, however, only one facility—Little Talbot Island State Park—would initially be planned to meet the needs of Florida's many and widely distributed African American residents.

Though Scoggin was fired from his Director post in 1952, purportedly due to a lack of progress in creating new parks,<sup>29</sup> it was apparent by the end of 1954 that his predictions of expansion in park system attendance had come true. From a total Florida state parks attendance of 125,000 visitors in the mid-1940s, he predicted at least 920,000 paid admissions per year by 1954. By 1953-1954, parks and memorials visitors totaled 1,463,136, and brought in \$133,510.68 in receipts, up from \$53,013.34 in 1947-48.<sup>30</sup> Of the state parks available in 1953-54, by far the most frequently visited were Hugh Taylor Birch State Park (570,080) in Ft. Lauderdale and Little Talbot Island State Park (168,041) in Jacksonville.<sup>31</sup>

### **Jim Crow and the Creation of "State Parks for Negroes"**

The increased popularity of Florida's state parks was also reflected in other states as park attendance nationwide rose significantly in the post-war years.<sup>32</sup> Yet from the start of the state park movement, the number of parks available to African Americans in the South lagged far behind those open to white patrons. The social invisibility of African Americans to whites in the Jim Crow South was so pervasive that such recreational needs could be ignored with relative ease by whites in officialdom, at least for a while, during what Loewen and others call the Nadir of racism in the U.S. from 1890 to around 1940.<sup>33</sup>

Following the Civil War, the emergence of segregation in the post-bellum Southern states ensured the continuation of white supremacy and African American subordination. The Black Codes, introduced during Reconstruction, severely limited African American opportunities and access to various institutions. They segregated public spaces in education, transportation, entertainment, and were a less formal precursor to the gradual emergence of segregation laws. As Packard notes, "Long before the writing of actual laws, the customs that would harden into legal Jim Crow would have begun to permeate nearly every corner of Southern life."<sup>34</sup>

The end of Federal Reconstruction protections for African Ameri-

cans in 1877 and a reversion to the rule of Southern whites led to what Packard describes as “a catastrophe of incalculable magnitude.”<sup>35</sup> The Black Codes thereafter transformed in many cases into laws that maintained a veneer of “equality” as demanded by the fourteenth amendment to the U.S. Constitution—a “separate but equal” strategy that was legitimized in 1896 in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* U.S. Supreme Court decision. In the context of Jim Crow, as is well-known today, the “equal” provisions of such laws were never as stringently applied as were the “separate” provisions, and the exclusion of African Americans from opportunities and activities available to whites was the norm. It is true that African Americans faced discrimination in the North, too. In fact, many large Northern cities were actually more highly segregated than Southern cities through much of the twentieth century.<sup>36</sup> However, as Packard states, “only in the South did white supremacy, and the Jim Crow that reflected and upheld it, overwhelmingly dominate the political and social fabric of an entire region. It became and remained *vital* for an entire century to the Southern white view of life.”<sup>37</sup> Subsequent to the *Plessy* decision, legal segregation measures spread rapidly throughout the South.<sup>38</sup>

Southern state park systems, including Florida’s, however, were more typically segregated by custom than by law as few states had segregation laws specifically aimed at state parks.<sup>39</sup> For instance, North Carolina’s Board of Conservation and Development in 1957 implored its African American population to respect and uphold the “tradition” of separate facilities in its parks stating, “The committee does not take the position that there is any law or administrative rule or policy which excludes Negroes from the use of certain of our State Parks.” Rather, they continued, “During the years, some of our parks have been traditionally used by white citizens and others have been traditionally used by Negro citizens.”<sup>40</sup> Likewise, in 1954 Florida’s Park Service Director stated on the segregation subject, “Florida has no definite policy regarding parks.”<sup>41</sup>

While state parks were segregated throughout the South, the NPS and U.S. Forest Service purportedly operated their federal lands on a non-discriminatory basis from early in their histories.<sup>42</sup> *Ebony* magazine’s annual vacation guide in 1957 focused on National Parks as excellent destinations for African American travelers. Pointing out that segregation was not permitted in any of the parks, the magazine reassured readers, “Negroes should feel free, therefore, to use public accommodation of all types within park boundaries. They are welcome in all hotels, lodges, restaurants, and recreational areas which come under the supervision of the Federal Government.”<sup>43</sup> Yet while the NPS may have restricted discrimination in their own parks, they yielded to state wishes in the construction of state parks resulting in their acquiescence to segregation custom and law in the South.<sup>44</sup>

Most Southern state parks would remain off limits to African Amer-

icans into the 1960s. However, in the latter years of Jim Crow, from the 1940s, it became increasingly evident that African American recreational needs could no longer be so easily ignored. A few park systems in the South, including South Carolina, Tennessee, and North Carolina, had created or planned prior to World War II at least one state park that accommodated African Americans. Most efforts at providing such facilities, however, occurred after the war, and were sustained through the 1950s and into the 1960s.

Through correspondence and at annual meetings of the Association of Southeastern State Park Directors (ASSPD), formed in 1942, agencies kept aware of regional policy and legal trends regarding segregated park facilities. At the 1950 ASSPD meeting, for instance, directors discussed these issues under the heading "State Parks and the Race Problem" in which "the consensus opinion among all State Park Directors and leaders present was that facilities should be provided for the negroes at the earliest possible date."<sup>45</sup> Just a year later, Florida's Little Talbot Island State Park would be the first in that state to provide separate facilities for African Americans (Figure 1).

The emergence of separate state parks, or separate areas for African Americans within parks, was first systematically chronicled in a 1954 article in *New South*, the magazine of the Southern Regional Council (SRC), an Atlanta-based civil rights organization. The article, titled "State Parks for Negroes—New Tests of Equality," was based on a 1952 survey of Southern state park agencies. It described the creation of state park facilities for African Americans in the South as part of the resurgence in park planning and construction activity that followed the war.<sup>46</sup> It argued that this trend was connected to both increased demand for park facilities generally and to the growing movement for civil rights in the post-war years. The article cast doubt that this strategy would successfully preserve park segregation and expressed prophetic skepticism that such attempts would survive legal challenge; Federal courts by that time were already striking down Jim Crow in higher education, interstate commerce, and residential segregation.<sup>47</sup>

While the response to the 1952 survey was incomplete and the number of state park facilities for African Americans had increased somewhat by the article's 1954 publication, the article is significant in that it remains to this day one of the very few published sources dedicated to the topic.<sup>48</sup> The SRC reported only twelve parks existing or under development in nine states in 1952 that were either partially or exclusively set aside for African American use compared with 180 state parks for whites only. South Carolina was the most proactive in creating state park facilities for African Americans, having built four such parks between 1938 and 1952, and with one in the planning stage.<sup>49</sup> These state parks included Greenwood Lake, Hunting Island, areas at Campbell's Pond, near Cheraw State Park, and Mill Creek, near Poinsett State Park, as well as a state park exclusively for African Americans at Pleasant Ridge in

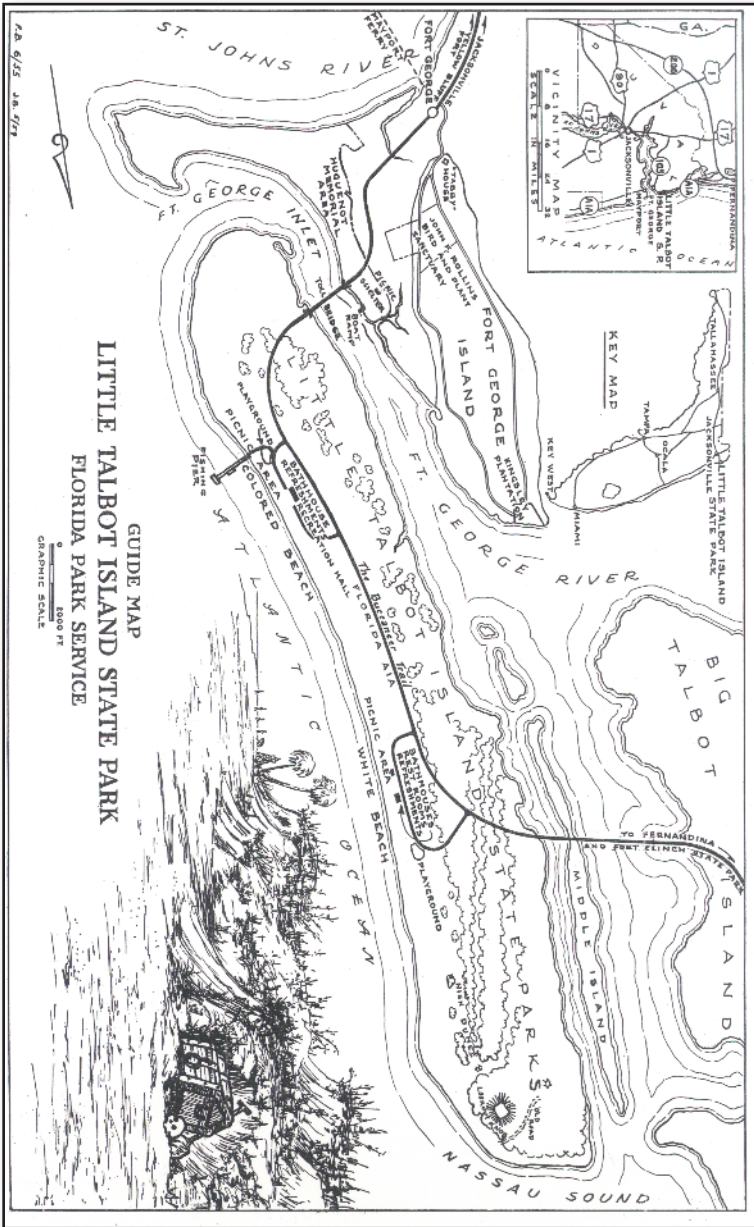


Figure 1. Map of Little Talbot Island State Park, 1959. Courtesy of the Jacksonville Historical Society.



Greenville County, which opened in 1955. A sixth area for African Americans was later created at Huntington Beach State Park.

Other states were less prolific in this regard by the early 1950s. Despite acquiring two of the earliest state park sites for African Americans in 1938, Tennessee ultimately built only two such parks—T.O. Fuller State Park, near Memphis, and Booker T. Washington State Park, near Chattanooga. Plans for additional such parks in the state were never carried out.<sup>50</sup> In 1952, Georgia also only offered two African American facilities, at Georgia Veterans Memorial State Park, not far from Albany, and George Washington Carver State Park, north of Atlanta. Throughout the remainder of the decade, however, Georgia expanded its offerings for African Americans at Ft. Yargo, Yam Grande, Fairchild and Lincoln State Parks, and at Keg Creek, near Mistletoe State Park.<sup>51</sup> Kentucky and Virginia created only one park each for African American use—Cherokee State Park in Kentucky and Prince Edward Park in Virginia. Kentucky, however, reportedly allowed African Americans to visit the natural wonders at its other state parks while Virginia also had “an organized group camp in Pocahontas State Park available to Negroes.”<sup>52</sup>

At the time of the SRC survey, Florida’s only park open to African Americans was the south end of Little Talbot Island State Park. However, by the mid-1950s additional facilities were opened at St. Andrews, Tomoka, Ft. Pickens, Florida Caverns, and Myakka River State Parks,<sup>53</sup> and by the early 1960s park facilities for African Americans would be extended to include John C. Beasley, Jim Woodruff, Magnolia Lake, and Frank Butler State Parks.<sup>54</sup> By the end of Jim Crow in the mid-1960s, in fact, Florida’s ten state park facilities available to African Americans was the largest number of any Southern state, though with the exception of Myakka River State Park, near Sarasota, all of these facilities were located in the northern third of Florida.

Other Southern states reported in the SRC survey having no parks available to African Americans, including Texas, Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi; however, each had opened at least one facility during that decade. For instance, news sources reported that Texas in 1951 had opened a section of Tyler State Park to African Americans, while by 1954 Alabama reported “they have tried to alleviate the situation by building a Negro Park in the northwestern part of the state”<sup>55</sup> at Joe Wheeler State Park. North Carolina did not provide information to the SRC survey, though by 1952 the state had created facilities for African Americans at Jones Lake State Park, in the Fayetteville vicinity, and later at William B. Umstead State Park, near Raleigh.

Among the facilities listed by the SRC, stand-alone parks for African Americans were relatively rare. According to them, “Most of the Negro state parks...were built in conjunction with white parks, or large-scale development programs which included parks for both races.”<sup>56</sup> In addition to Little Talbot Island State Park in Florida, other examples that included white and

African American areas were at Poinsett, Greenwood Lake, and Hunting Island State Parks in South Carolina, and Georgia Veterans Memorial State Park in Georgia. Parks developed as part of a complex of separate parks included Cherokee State Park in Kentucky, which was “located in the TVA Kentucky Lake-Kentucky Dam development along with two parks for white use, and Booker T. Washington Park in Tennessee is one of the parks in the Chickamauga Lake development.”<sup>57</sup> The SRC described Pleasant Ridge State Park, in northwest South Carolina, as “one of the few Negro parks built independently of white park development.”<sup>58</sup> They also pointed out that many of the parks for African Americans, such as Little Talbot Island State Park, were limited to day use facilities, though a few, including Prince Edward Park in Virginia, and Cherokee Park in Kentucky, had cottages in 1952, while others had camping areas.

Beyond describing the emergence and locations of state parks for African Americans in the South, the purpose of this article was to indicate ways in which the strategy failed to meet “separate but equal” demands. Prince Edward Park in Virginia, its sole state park open to African Americans, for instance, was illustrated by the SRC to exist at an exceedingly far distance from many of the major urban centers of the state in relation to the more regularly distanced parks for whites. And while they acknowledged that state parks for African Americans “provide much-needed recreational resources for Negroes in those cities,” they pointed out, “It is, however, 318 miles from Memphis to Chattanooga, and Florida extends 380 miles west of Jacksonville and over 400 miles south. Until vacation accommodations are added to these and other Negro parks, they cannot be thought of as rendering state-wide service.”<sup>59</sup> They continued, “Negroes in the Norfolk-Portsmouth-Newport News areas must drive from 120 to 135 miles to Prince Edward [State Park], though Seashore Park (for white people) is just 19 miles from Norfolk.”<sup>60</sup>

Furthermore, the SRC pointed out that in addition to unequal accessibility and a disproportionate amount of public land devoted to white parks, there was little relationship in 1952 between the number of parks for African Americans and the size of the black population. “Mississippi, 45 per cent Negro, had no Negro parks, nor did Louisiana, one third Negro. Georgia, almost one third Negro, had 20 parks for whites in its system, and two Negro parks under construction. South Carolina Negroes had one-fifth of the parks, though they make up two-fifths of the population.”<sup>61</sup>

Ultimately, the SRC argued that the equalization of separate white and African American state parks was not possible—despite arguments from state park agencies that facilities were equal—due partly to funding requirements and a lack of political will for such expenditures. Underlining a final point, they suggested a fundamental problem in generating an equality of the scenic resources of the various parks, particularly when it comes to unique at-

tractions. "A state's highest waterfall, deepest or only gorge, and its oldest Indian mounds obviously cannot be duplicated. The white parks generally developed first, and they have acquired most of the spots of unusual natural beauty, the extraordinary natural phenomena, and the historic relics of the state."<sup>62</sup>

### Two Beach Areas at Little Talbot Island State Park

While other such parks await more detailed research and description, archival research has provided at least some insight into Little Talbot Island State Park as one example. Located on Florida's northeast coast, Little Talbot Island was utilized for timber and cattle grazing from the eighteenth century while surrounding areas were established as plantations for cotton, rice, sugar, and subsistence. More recently, however, the land had remained undeveloped until purchased by the State Road Department in 1943. The intent of this purchase was to build a road "and deed the land to the Florida Board of Parks and Historic Memorials for development as a recreation area,"<sup>63</sup> which occurred in mid-1951, just prior to the park's opening.<sup>64</sup> The total area of the site was 1,651.12 acres.<sup>65</sup> Of this land area, the white recreation facilities would occupy 5.74 acres, while those in the African American section would occupy 4.59 acres.<sup>66</sup>

Available evidence indicates that the final decisions regarding plans for segregated facilities came relatively late in discussions about the creation of Little Talbot Island State Park.<sup>67</sup> While the eventual development of the site was known from the early 1940s, plans to create a section in the park for African Americans did not appear publicly until 1949. At this time a report on attendance projections, undertaken by the NPS, explicitly described potentials for both the white and African American sections of the future park.<sup>68</sup> They predicted that the white section's attendance could be lower than desired due to competition with other nearby beaches, while the African American section was presented as having greater attendance potential due to the lack of alternative beach opportunities.<sup>69</sup> The NPS cautioned, however, that the economic marginality of the African American population meant that the Florida Park Service should not over-invest in overnight housing and other facilities that would require high cost to patrons.

Despite this rather clear indication of intent, other sources suggested that the final status of the African American section of the park was not entirely settled. In March of 1950, the *Florida Times-Union* announced a donation of \$10,000 by the Heckscher Foundation for Children for the construction of either one large playground or two smaller ones. The implication was that had the park been designated as a typical state park (i.e., for whites only) there would be a single playground, whereas a segregated park

would require separate facilities.<sup>70</sup> By the end of the year, however, Florida Park Service Director, Lewis Scoggin, affirmed the dual-use proposal, announcing that the Park Board had suggested the creation of a white recreation area as well as “another section proposed to be reserved for negroes.”<sup>71</sup> It was proposed, “the white area would be on the north end of the island, near where the new highway bends inland to Big Talbot Island. The negro section would be on the open beach near Fort George Inlet.”<sup>72</sup> As an indication that final plans might still be in flux, just three weeks later an article in the *Florida Times-Union* stated, “in the plans, the Park Board has provided one beach for white people and another for negroes, but there has been no determination where each will go.”<sup>73</sup>

No agency documents could be recovered that explain the rationale for designating Little Talbot Island State Park specifically as Florida’s lone dual-use state park facility. It is clear, however, through ASSPD meetings and additional correspondence with other states that Florida’s Park Service was keenly aware of potential legal challenges to African American exclusion from state parks. Park agencies throughout the Southeast hoped that providing separate facilities would forestall any movement toward integration. More specific to the site, there is evidence that local pressures in the Jacksonville area, with its large population and significant military presence, helped prompt the decision. Communications from the Jacksonville Beach Chamber of Commerce urged the quick development of the proposed beach area for African Americans to meet increasing demand. In June, 1951, Martin Williams, President of the Jacksonville Beach Chamber of Commerce wrote to the Board of Parks about the increasing need in Northeastern Florida “for a bathing beach for the negro population.”<sup>74</sup> Williams noted, “The increasing number of requests we are now receiving from the colored personnel of the Armed Forces in training in the Southeast add additional pressure to the long felt need.”<sup>75</sup>

That the issue of creating a beach area for African Americans was locally contentious, however, was evident in a handwritten Christmas letter from Park Board member Elizabeth Towers to Park Service Director Lewis Scoggin. “You are perfectly right—the Little Talbot question with the Negro Beach Problem is going to be a Hot Potato. Do we have any information about the Negro [illegible] at Pensacola that you were telling us about. The Negro organization that kept the area in line—If you do have any of this data or data from other parks about their Negro areas lets study it.”<sup>76</sup>

However, once the decision was made to create a segregated park with separate facilities for African Americans, it is apparent that a concerted effort was made to demonstrate that the facilities were not just “separate” but also substantially “equal”—even virtually identical. A table accounting for Florida state parks facilities and use from 1950-1951 noted that while the acreage of the African American recreation area was a bit smaller, the recre-

ation facilities provided were the same as those provided in the white area.<sup>77</sup>

The local media also promoted this emphasis on equal, while separate, facilities. Just before opening day, a caption to a picture of the park in the *Florida Times-Union* stated, "The picture shows structures at the white section —at the northern end of the island. Those for the negro area on the southern end of the island are identical with those shown."<sup>78</sup> They go on to emphasize this equality, stating that for each section, "the park board has drilled a 535-foot well at each center, providing a good artesian flow; covered the sand with pine bark, placed three wooden walks toward the beach, with shower heads at the end of each, and erected what will for the time being answer the purpose of dressing rooms, picnic areas with tables, benches and fireplaces, concession stands and toilet facilities....An additional facility planned is a play area for each center, to include swings, see-saws, etc., for use of children."<sup>79</sup>

There is evidence, however, that despite the presentation of equal facilities, the construction of the African American section had lagged in both funding and commitment. A letter to Park Board member, Karl Bickel, from Park Board Vice Chairwoman, Eileen Butts, pointed to potential problems in the creation of such facilities. She stated her concern, based on a meeting in Jacksonville that took place just prior to the park's opening, and that included major park officials as well as "a Negro group" and Jacksonville Beach officials, that the African American beach development at the site was not being pursued vigorously. Butts stated, "We felt with due reason that the negro project was in the Tally [Tallahassee] office discard. However, promise was extracted to rush work. Please keep the heat under them so that this promise is fulfilled by Labor Day. They only plan [on] spending \$15,500 Park funds, \$5,000 Herkscher Foundation money. With a good will, such simple construction can be finished by the above date."<sup>80</sup>

Additionally, the 1949 NPS projections did not urge equal expenditures for white and African American facilities in the park, but proposed that the latter facilities overall should garner only 42% of the amount spent in the white area (\$376,000 compared with \$891,000 respectively).<sup>81</sup> They also predicted that white areas would generate a \$48,000 annual profit, while the African American section would lose \$13,500 per year, among six park areas in the state that were projected to lose money.<sup>82</sup>

The park opened on September 1, 1951, and thereafter accounts of Little Talbot Island State Park in both internal communications and media depictions reflected the strangely ordinary quality of its segregation under all-pervasive Jim Crow. In October 1952, acting Florida Park Service Director Walter Coldwell issued a report on the state of the park system noting about Little Talbot Island State Park that the "use of the two beaches, one for colored and the other for white, has exceeded all estimates."<sup>83</sup> Most media de-

pictions described the natural and recreational features of the park, mentioning only in passing that the north of the park is for whites and the south for African Americans.<sup>84</sup> Driving home the taken-for-granted quality of Jim Crow at the time (at least among Southern whites), the Little Talbot Island State Park regulations in 1953 listed 16 rules ranging from the proper locations for fires, to hunting bans, to leashed dogs. Only at the bottom of the list was the rule, "Colored and white are allowed only in their designated areas."<sup>85</sup>

In the context of this peculiarly ordinary condition, park officials went about their business with all apparent sincerity, attempting to increase traffic into the park. In a 1956 letter, Florida Park Director, Emmet Hill, invited participants at a Florida Methodist Conference (described as a "colored church organization") in Jacksonville, to visit nearby Little Talbot Island State Park for religious and recreation purposes.<sup>86</sup> He stated, "We extend to all religious groups an invitation to use our State Parks for their Easter Sunrise Services," pointing specifically to Little Talbot Island State Park as a possible destination. Similarly cordial exchanges were evident regarding other Florida State Park facilities that were subsequently established for African American use. A 1962 inquiry to the Florida Park Service from Carver Jr. High School in Albany, Georgia, sought information on the availability of "facilities (beach) open to Negroes" near Daytona Beach. The letter prompted a polite response from the Park Service that pointed to Tomoka State Park, north of Daytona at Ormond, and the recently created Frank B. Butler State Park, located further north at Crescent City.<sup>87</sup> The same year, a similar letter to a Mr. H. E. Toombs of Florida A & M University listed all ten of Florida's state parks "providing facilities for our colored patrons."<sup>88</sup>

Despite such cordial exchanges and the continuing expansion of facilities for African Americans in Florida, it was clear that the exclusionary rules of segregation were still in effect as the vast majority of Florida state parks were restricted to whites only. In 1957, for instance, park service employee, C. H. Schaeffer, wrote to Florida Park Service Director, Emmet Hill, about a phone conversation with whom he thought was the Dean of Students at Florida State University, who inquired about bringing 60 or 70 students to Killbuck Gardens State Park, near Tallahassee, for a student conference. The employee, however, learned subsequently that the inquiry was actually from Dean of Students, B. L. Perry, of Florida A&M University, the state's public university for African Americans. The letter continues:

I then told him that I could not give him permission to use a White picnic area, but that he and his group were welcome to use our Colored areas at St. Andrews or Little Talbot Island. He then brought up the matter of Natural Bridge and I told him that I could not give him permission to use the picnic facilities there. I explained to him the reason for our reluctance was to avoid friction or any incident on

our areas...and I explained to him that we had an additional area which had a Colored picnic ground at Florida Caverns and they could visit the Caverns as a group. He brought up the matter of the Natural Bridge Picnic facilities again and I told him we considered it a White picnic area, but we never made any effort to prohibit Colored people from looking at the historical features there....He seemed to be very well educated and I am quite hopeful that he will see our point of view and let it rest there. The second time I talked to him he brought out the fact that they did not really have any area nearby for their use and that one was needed and I agreed with him, and told him we were trying to take care of their needs as rapidly as we could.<sup>89</sup>

Regardless of the seemingly sympathetic and yet unyielding response of this state park employee, and despite the availability of separate facilities in Southern states, the unjust exclusion of African Americans would be the focus of lawsuits in the South throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s. Killebrew Gardens State Park and Florida A & M University in particular would figure as catalysts in the integration of the Florida state park system less than a decade later.

### **The End of Jim Crow's Segregated State Parks**

As with many of the significant advances during the Civil Rights era, the integration of state parks in the South came about through a combination of popular protest and legal action in the Federal court system. The great migration of African Americans from the South to Northern and Western industrial cities had encouraged thoughts that life beyond Jim Crow was possible, while the integration of the armed services after World War II and the legal experience gained by Civil Rights organizations like the NAACP during the war years led to new challenges to Jim Crow.<sup>90</sup> Despite a clear trend toward integration, however, white Southerners for the most part intensified their resistance, at many times to the point of violent conflict:

...white southerners—not all, but most—dug in their heels and resisted. They resisted every court decision that chipped away at the structure of Jim Crow, and they resisted the common sense that should have told them that their region's intolerance was holding the South ever further behind the rest of the country. They were angry at every black American who demanded the rights assumed as a patrimony by every white American. They hated any notion that their schools, their restaurants, their stores, their neighborhoods, would ever be forced to open to the black tenth of the nation that had always been kept away from these reserved bastions of their white

world. And their backlash made this the last generation before blacks gained their due—the two decades following the end of World War II—as bad as any time, perhaps even the worst of all times, since the end of slavery itself.<sup>91</sup>

This white anger in the South was vociferously expressed against “outside agitators,” and in particular the NAACP, as displayed in discussions of Southern state park systems. The Georgia State Park Director, for instance, stated at the 1954 ASSPD meeting, “There is no trouble between the races in Georgia, except that which is dictated and stirred up by outside influences. The Negro is not a free man since he lets outside organizations do his thinking for him and tell him what he wants.”<sup>92</sup>

The rumblings of legal action on state parks from the NAACP began at least as early as 1940 as evident in an inquiry into whether West Virginia’s newly developing facilities would be “available to citizens without racial discrimination.” The Division of State Parks Chief responded that no law existed that disallowed such park use, but “a study of this problem discloses that our Negro citizens would feel ill at ease in making use of the areas, concurrently with white people.”<sup>93</sup> He concluded that the state was studying the possibility of providing separate facilities “for our Negro citizens,” though no decision had been made at that time. In 1949, the Texas State Parks Board, facing legal pressure from the NAACP to open Tyler State Park to African Americans, sent inquiries to other Southern state park systems asking for information on their facilities and policies.<sup>94</sup> The Texas Legislature in 1950 responded by passing a law explicitly aimed at state parks that “provides for separate facilities for white and negro in state owned parks,”<sup>95</sup> containing language mandating equality in such facilities.

Despite these building pressures, park service directors denied that lawsuit threats had anything to do with their expansions of state park facilities for African Americans. According to Mississippi Park Coordinator, A. H. Nall, directors at the 1950 ASSPD meeting stated that the expansion of such facilities “should be done because they [African Americans] deserved these facilities and not because or until they were forced to provide them.”<sup>96</sup> Regardless, these legal threats, sustained through the 1950s and into the following decade, generated enormous concern among Southern state park agencies.

Several court cases figured prominently in the eventual desegregation of Southern state park systems. The first of these prominent cases was filed in federal court in 1951 in Virginia. In this case, known as *Tate v. Department of Conservation and Development*, four plaintiffs claimed that they were excluded from Seashore State Park, near Norfolk, “solely by reason of the fact that they were members of the Negro race.”<sup>97</sup> The judge ruled in 1955 “that plaintiffs’ rights to use and enjoy the facilities at Seashore State Park have been



violated under the Constitution of the United States,” and the state was thereby restrained from denying access to the park.<sup>98</sup> The decision in that case was influenced by two other important federal court decisions during the previous year. The 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* declared segregation in public education to be unconstitutional and stated categorically that separate public facilities were inherently unequal. The second decision was in the case, *Dawson v. Mayor and City Council of Baltimore*, heard in the same Circuit as the Seashore State Park case, which struck down the separate but equal doctrine regarding municipal recreational facilities (which the U.S. Supreme Court later upheld). Following these decisions, the judge ruled in the Seashore State Park case that state park facilities “are governed by the same general principles.”<sup>99</sup> He expressed, “separate but equal” facilities have not existed at any of the state parks in Virginia. It could not be successfully argued that the establishment of a state park for Negroes in Prince Edward County (approximately 100 miles from Seashore State Park) meets the ‘separate but equal’ test.”<sup>100</sup>

As a major blow to Jim Crow generally, the *Brown v. Board* decision prompted discussion at the 1954 annual ASSPD meeting under the heading, “Effect of Supreme Court Ruling on State Park Use.” A poll of directors at the meeting suggested a mixture of defiance regarding integration and resignation regarding legal trends. The Florida representative expressed hope that the Southern strategy of increasing park offerings to African Americans would continue to hold integration at bay: “It is hoped that, if equal facilities are available, the Negroes will use their own areas and leave the white areas alone.”<sup>101</sup> Striking a more defiant tone, the South Carolina representative expressed that the state “has always resented others who tried to tell them how to run their internal affairs” and that they expected to continue the current program of providing state parks for both races. Speaking of its own park service, West Virginia’s representative took a more resigned stance, simply declaring, “They will obey the law of the land.”<sup>102</sup> By 1956, several Southern states had acquiesced to prevailing trends and integrated their state parks, including Maryland, Mississippi, Kentucky, and Oklahoma, with West Virginia soon to follow.<sup>103</sup>

The rest of the South resisted, however, with some states threatening to close or privatize state parks in order to avoid integration. The South Carolina Assistant Director of State Parks, T. D. Ravenel, wrote a memo to his boss in 1956 that stated, “You...and I know that this state, certainly in our lifetime, will never accept integrated parks.”<sup>104</sup> The same year, Florida Park Service Director, Emmet Hill, reported to the ASSPD about “an act, passed by the Governor in an extraordinary session, enabling the Florida Parks to close rather than be integrated.”<sup>105</sup>

While awaiting a decision in the Seashore State Park case, the Vir-

ginia Governor contemplated abandoning state parks entirely by selling them to avoid the integration that would be demanded of public facilities. While this never occurred, Virginia did plan to lease Seashore State Park for operation in the 1955 summer season. The action was blocked, however, by a court injunction that stated, "the lease must not, directly or indirectly, operate so as to discriminate against the members of any race." The U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear Virginia's appeal, allowing the Seashore decision to stand. Georgia, on the other hand, did lease twelve of its state parks to private operators in 1956 and had plans to lease several more. Officials denied that the aim was mainly to prevent integration, but instead represented the action as mainly a cost saving measure.<sup>107</sup>

South Carolina's defiance of state park integration is the best documented among Southern states. In early August 1955, the NAACP filed a federal lawsuit in South Carolina aimed at integrating Edisto Beach State Park. Expecting a court loss, the South Carolina Commission of Forestry closed the park in February of 1956. The closure effectively brought an end to the lawsuit that demanded South Carolina not operate the park on a segregated basis (they simply stopped operating the park), and it remained closed until 1964.<sup>108</sup> Changing tactics, the NAACP subsequently filed a lawsuit against the State Forestry Commission in 1961, this time aimed at integrating all of South Carolina's state parks. The judge in the case waited for the U.S. Supreme Court to reach a decision in the case of *Watson v. City of Memphis* in which the Court ruled that segregated public recreational facilities were unconstitutional, ordering that such facilities be integrated without delay.<sup>109</sup>

Following the *Watson* decision in May 1963, the judge in the South Carolina case ruled in July in favor of the plaintiffs, and the state was given 60 days to comply with the integration order. The state's Attorney General announced instead that all South Carolina state parks would close on September 8, 1963 pending Legislative deliberations the following year. After statewide public forums on the topic in the ensuing months, however, South Carolina's state parks were opened on June 1, 1964 on an integrated basis, though prohibitions were placed on swimming and cabin rental.<sup>110</sup> These restrictions were lifted on July 1, 1966.<sup>111</sup>

These court decisions, beginning in 1954 with *Brown v. Board*, indicated trends toward integration that would eventually affect Florida more directly. During this tumultuous period, however, business at Little Talbot Island State Park appeared to continue more or less as usual, at least on the surface. Newspaper accounts of Little Talbot Island State Park proceeded with their normal promotional approach. Even as the Civil Rights movement grew in strength and intensity, articles in the

*Florida Times-Union* and *The Clearwater Sun* in 1957 and 1959 simply described the scenic beach environment and recreational facilities, and included the ever present statement reminding readers that the north end of the island state park was for whites and the south for African Americans.<sup>112</sup> There was no mention of even the potential for controversy over the status of Little Talbot Island State Park or the segregated Florida park system generally. The 1959 article did note, however, that the African American area had enhanced its offerings by adding a fishing pier—a feature that the north end lacked. The rising tide of integration could not be ignored for long, however. In July 1960, for instance, Tomoka State Park, near Daytona Beach, was closed “after two busloads of Negro children picnicked in an area designated for white persons.”<sup>113</sup>

The year 1960 saw an upsurge in acts of civil disobedience that most famously included lunch counter sit-ins, but expanded to various means of challenging Jim Crow customs and laws. Such protests occurred in Tallahassee, Miami, Tampa, and elsewhere in the state. In Tampa, lunch counters in 18 major stores were integrated in September 1960, though a similar attempt in Jacksonville was met with violence.<sup>114</sup> Even though much of the pressure on state parks came from the Federal court system, popular protest clearly had an impact, as officials grew more concerned about the potential for violence (most typically from white reaction) during the escalation of civil disobedience in this turbulent time.<sup>115</sup>

Regarding the integration of Florida's state parks, a 1963 report on public parks declared that Florida, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Texas had “opened their state parks to all persons,”<sup>116</sup> while Virginia followed not long after.<sup>117</sup> The *Pittsburgh Courier*, identified by Packard as “one of the country's most influential African-American newspapers,”<sup>118</sup> announced on July 4, 1964, “The Florida Park Service says that it has quietly allowed desegregation at state parks for many months and that there have been no incidents.”<sup>119</sup> In fact, across the South, concerns about a potentially violent state park integration process proved unfounded.<sup>120</sup>

The full integration of Florida's state parks commenced as a settlement to a lawsuit filed by the NAACP some months after an incident in May 1963 in which two African American faculty members at Florida A&M University, Dr. Clarence Owens and W. O. Mack, with their families, tried to enter Killearn Gardens State Park. They were refused and Dr. Owens was threatened with arrest.<sup>121</sup> According to the account, “They were subsequently allowed use of the park but it was then closed one month ahead of schedule so as to thwart desegregation.”<sup>122</sup> The NAACP later sued the Florida Board of Parks and Historic Monuments on March 17, 1964, to desegregate all state parks, and by September 3 of that year, “consent agreements were signed for the removal of signs directing segregation, and for the desegregation of all

parcs, with notice to all state employees of this policy.”<sup>123</sup> In the *Pittsburgh Courier*, Florida Park Service Director, N. E. Miller noted in the immediate aftermath of state park integration, “Negroes have visited the white parks, although whites generally leave when Negroes arrive at a predominantly white park, and there have been no reported cases of whites desegregating predominantly Negro parks.”<sup>124</sup>

The quiet desegregation of the Florida state park system seemed to pass by most observers without notice. The silent approach was, in fact, a deliberate strategy employed not only in Florida, but evident also in Virginia and Tennessee as a means of avoiding possible disturbances.<sup>125</sup> The process was undertaken so quietly, in fact, that the *Florida Times-Union* in Jacksonville failed to note the integration of nearby Little Talbot Island State Park nearly a full year after the fact. A state senator from Jacksonville was quoted in the paper in 1965 as saying, “the Little Talbot Island park is the only recreation area in Northeast Florida for Negroes...”<sup>126</sup> This error might have been partly due to a *de facto* continuation of park segregation, at least for a while, as “Negroes continue[d] to use the hitherto all-Negro parks and whites continue[d] to use the hitherto all-white areas.”<sup>127</sup>

## Conclusions

By 1966 an apparent silence regarding the formerly segregated status of Florida’s state parks had begun. For the next four decades there has been virtually no published discussion of the historical fact of state park segregation and African American exclusion. The *Florida Times-Union* article from 1966 quoted at the beginning of this paper displayed photos of white patrons enjoying the beach and facilities, and announced the new camping facility, but forever gone was the reference to the once ever-present reminder, “whites on the north end and colored patrons on the south.” The eternal new mantra is simply, “The island-park has two beach areas.”<sup>128</sup> Likewise, across the South this history appears largely to have faded from public view.

The reasons for this general silence are unclear, though it is in some ways not surprising from an institutional perspective. There was likely an initial reluctance to revisit the issue as Jim Crow segregation rapidly transformed from a staunchly defended custom by whites in the region to a widely vilified stain on American history. As time moved on perhaps this initial reluctance and lack of discussion has translated into a loss of institutional memory about the details of state parks under Jim Crow. It could also be the case that this silence was tied to a desire to put the past behind and to heal wounds by advocating a newfound “colorblindness.” Yet this so-called colorblindness should be challenged as it also permits the evasion of direct confrontation of racial problems that persist as legacies of slavery and Jim Crow in the United

States. Regardless of the reasons for silence, reviving public discussion of state parks under Jim Crow now provides an opportunity to face issues that have so profoundly shaped the U.S. from its inception.

Racial issues regarding parklands, in fact, have not been avoided altogether, and under different circumstances they have been enthusiastically embraced. Former slave quarters at Kingsley Plantation, for example, operated by the NPS and located in the same park complex as Little Talbot Island State Park, have been restored and turned into a visitor attraction. As another example, during Black History Month in 2005, the Florida Governor's office issued a press release titled, "Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park Honored as a Network to Freedom Site." The state park site, on Key Biscayne, was "one of the state's first meeting sites for freedom seekers [and]...provided a gateway to liberty for slaves," thus warranting its new official designation as an Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Site.<sup>129</sup>

Addressing this troubling feature of our racialized history by refocusing attention on Jim Crow in Southern state parks may create some discomfort since the agencies themselves are implicated in the history. However, Jim Crow's legacy remains with us in myriad ways. Moving forward on race issues requires confronting the uncomfortable past, and just as some parks are addressing slavery, the incorporation of Jim Crow history in state park interpretive programs and park descriptions would promote this honest accounting. Such reminders at parks such as Little Talbot Island State Park would serve as an acknowledgement of where we have been, and how far we still need to go to resolve the enduring problems of race in America.

## Notes

1. The title refers to C. Vann Woodward's classic text, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955).
2. Toni Morrison, "Five Years of Terror," *U.S. News & World Report*, October 19, 1987, 75.
3. Shirrel Rhoades, "Camp-out at Little Talbot Island," *Florida Times-Union Magazine*, September 11, 1966, 14.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Tom. Hoey, "Little Talbot Island State Park," *Florida Times-Union*, May 12, 1969, B10.
6. Florida Department of Environmental Protection. Division of Recreation and Parks. *Big Talbot Island State Park and Little Talbot Island State Park Unit Management Plan*, Tallahassee, June, 1998; Little Talbot Island State Park is now administered jointly along with other adjacent park areas that include the more recently created Big Talbot Island State Park, Fort George Island State Cultural Site, and Amelia Island State Recreation Area.
7. Only one of these cultural sites is located on Little Talbot Island, the rest are found in the adjacent parks.
8. *Talbot Island State Parks*, Florida State Parks...*The Real Florida* (brochure), 2005; Florida Online Park Guide, "Little Talbot Island State Park," <http://www.floridastateparks.org/littletalbotisland/default.cfm>, Accessed 17 November 2006.
9. Ney C. Landrum (ed.), *Histories of Southeastern State Park Systems* (Association of Southeastern State Park Directors, 1977); Billy Townsend, "History of the Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites Division," [http://gastateparks.org/content/georgia/parks/75th\\_Anniv/parks\\_history.pdf](http://gastateparks.org/content/georgia/parks/75th_Anniv/parks_history.pdf), Accessed 17 November 2006; Florida Department of Environmental Protection, *History of Florida's State Park Sys-*

- tem, <http://www.floridastateparks.org/information/history.cfm>, Accessed 6 February 2005.
10. Ney C. Landrum, *The State Park Movement in America: A Critical Review* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2004): xi.
  11. Landrum, *Histories of Southeastern State Park Systems*, 43, 45, 147-148.
  12. Morrison, "Five Years of Terror," 75.
  13. James W. Loewen, *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* (New York: The New Press, 2005), 15.
  14. Landrum, *State Park Movement in America*, xii.
  15. *Ibid.*, xii; Freeman Tilden, *The State Parks: Their Meaning in American Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 4.
  16. Landrum, *State Park Movement in America*.
  17. Thomas Cox, *The Park Builders: A History of State Parks in the Pacific Northwest* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), 12.
  18. Tilden, *The State Parks*; Landrum, *State Park Movement in America*.
  19. Tilden, *The State Parks*, 4.
  20. In Landrum, *State Park Movement in America*, ix.
  21. *Ibid.*, xi.
  22. Florida Department of Environmental Protection, *History of Florida's State Park System*.
  23. Landrum, *Histories of Southeastern State Park Systems*.
  24. The name, Florida Board of Forestry, was changed to Florida Board of Forestry and Parks in 1941. Florida Department of Environmental Protection. *History of Florida's State Park System*. In 1949 the Legislature created the Florida Board of Parks and Historic Monuments to oversee the Florida Park Service, replacing the Board of Forestry and Parks. "Five Named Members of Park Board," *Florida Times-Union*, July 3, 1949, 6. Today the Florida Park Service is housed under the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.
  25. Florida Department of Environmental Protection. *History of Florida's State Park System*.
  26. Lewis Scoggin, "Florida State Parks," March 1, 1944, Series 1951, Carton 1, File Folder 6, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida.
  27. Scoggin, "Florida State Parks," 3.
  28. *Ibid.*
  29. Board Ousts Florida Park Service Chief," *Florida Times-Union*, 5 August, 1952, 16.
  30. "Receipts and Attendance Show Progress," Series 1945, Carton 2, File Folder 38, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida.
  31. *Ibid.*
  32. National Park Service, "State Park Statistics 1960," Series 1945, Carton 3, File Folder 6, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida.
  33. Loewen, *Sundown Towns*, 18.
  34. Jerrold M. Packard, *American Nightmare: The History of Jim Crow* (New York, St. Martin's Press, 2002), 56; see also Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*.
  35. Packard, *American Nightmare*, 62.
  36. Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 47.
  37. Packard, *American Nightmare*, 64, emphasis in original.
  38. In Florida, for instance, state law by 1939 not only required separate schools for white and African American children, but also separate storage of textbooks that have been used in these schools. Pauli Murray (ed.), *States' Laws On Race and Color* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1997), 82.
  39. Helen F. Schwartz, "Recreation and the 14th Amendment," *New South*, April 1955, 5-7.
  40. North Carolina Board of Conservation and Development, "Minutes of the July 1 and 2, 1957 Meeting," Series 226, Carton 3, File Folder 10225, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida.
  41. *Minutes of the 13th Annual Meeting of the Association of Southeastern State Park Directors*, October 14, 1954, 12, RG-SG-S 030-01-011, Box 1, Accession # 2986-01. Series Title, Directors Subject File, Georgia, State Archives, Morrow, Georgia.
  42. Penn Community Service, Inc., *Public Parks and Recreational Facilities: A Study in Transition*, (Frogmore, SC, 1963), S162024, State Forestry Commission, Desegregation State Parks, Box 2, Folder, Park Study Data, South Carolina Archives, Columbia, South Carolina.
  43. *Ebony*, "Annual Vacation Guide: National Parks," June 1957, 104.
  44. A 1941 report from the NPS provided a state-by-state assessment of state park needs, including the need to expand the number of separate facilities for African American residents in Southern states.

- National Park Service, *A Study of the Park and Recreation Problem of the United States* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1941).
45. A. H. Hall to Anna Holden, 21 November 1952, Southern Regional Council Papers, 1944-68, Reel 133, Series III, No. 1697, Auburn Avenue Research Library on African-American Culture and History, Atlanta, Georgia.
  46. "State Parks for Negroes – New Tests of Equality," *New South*, April-May 1954, 1-7, 16.
  47. Packard, *American Nightmare*, 214.
  48. An article based on this same survey was published the same year in a law journal. Robert B. McKay, "Segregation and Public Recreation," *Virginia Law Review* 40 (1954): 697-731.
  49. "State Parks for Negroes," 4.
  50. Bevely R. Coleman, "A History of State Parks In Tennessee" (PhD diss., George Peabody College for Teachers, 1963), 243-244.
  51. Georgia Department of State Parks, "Georgia's State Parks and their Progress in the 1960-61 Fiscal Year," December 1, 1961. Georgiana Collection, Hargrett Rare Book & Manuscript Library, University of Georgia.
  52. "States – Summary," Southern Regional Council Papers, 1944-69, Reel 133, Series III, No. 1701, Auburn Avenue Research Library on African-American Culture and History, Atlanta, Georgia; Randolph Odell to Anna Holden, 24 November 1952, Southern Regional Council Papers, 1944-69, Reel 133, Series III, No. 1701, Auburn Avenue Research Library on African-American Culture and History, Atlanta, Georgia.
  53. Florida Board of Parks and Historic Memorials, "Florida's State Parks Invite You," 1956, Series 1945, Carton 1, File Folder 43, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida.
  54. Ralph S. Hager to H. E. Tooks, 7 May 1962, Series 1945, Carton 2, File Folder 2, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida.
  55. "Court Ruling Effect Is Seen," *Wichita Falls Times*, November 8, 1955; 13th Annual Meeting of the Association of Southeastern State Park Directors, 12.
  56. "State Parks for Negroes," 3.
  57. *Ibid.*
  58. *Ibid.*
  59. *Ibid.*, 4.
  60. *Ibid.*
  61. *Ibid.*
  62. *Ibid.*, 6.
  63. Florida Department of Environmental Protection, *Big Talbot Island State Park and Little Talbot Island State Park Unit Management Plan*, 92.
  64. Florida Department of Environmental Protection, *Unit Management Plan*, 92.; "Funds Increased as Talbot Isle Added to Park System," *Florida Times-Union*, June 8, 1951, 23 & 26.
  65. Florida Department of Environmental Protection, *Big Talbot Island State Park and Little Talbot Island State Park Unit Management Plan*, A 1-3.
  66. "Facilities and Use of Florida State Parks" (Table), 1 July, 1950 to 30 June, 1951, Series 1951, Carton 1, File Folder 6, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida.
  67. A 1948 report from Tennessee indicated that Florida had "no state parks for Negroes," however, "there are plans but insufficient funds for carrying them out." Council of Community Agencies, "State Park Facilities for Negroes in the Southeastern States," June 22, 1948, S162021, State Forestry Commission, State Parks Construction and Maintenance Files, Box 1, Folder: Black State Park Facilities in the S.E., South Carolina Archives, Columbia, South Carolina. Additionally, the Florida Park Service after the end of fiscal year 1948 counts Little Talbot Island State Park among its "undeveloped state parks," but the future park's description gives no indication of plans to create separate areas for whites and African Americans. "Florida State Parks Invite You," (no date, 1948), Series 1951, Carton 1, File Folder 6, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida.
  68. National Park Service, "Analysis of major problems involved in setting up capital improvement program for Florida State Parks," November 28, 1949, Series 1945, Carton 2, File Folder 49, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida.
  69. The NPS apparently did not account for (or perhaps discounted) the nearby alternative of American Beach, a popular beach among African Americans on Amelia Island just to the north of Little Talbot, which had been available since the mid-1930s; for more information on American Beach, see Marsha D. Phelts, *An American Beach for African Americans* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997), and Russ Rymer, *American Beach: A Saga of Race, Wealth, and Memory* (New York: HarperCollins,

- 1998).
70. "Fund Offered for Park on Little Talbot," *Florida Times-Union*, March 12, 1950, 21.
71. "Little Talbot Island Park Development Under Study," *Florida Times-Union*, December 1, 1950, 59.
72. *Ibid.*
73. "Little Talbot Will Be Given for Park Site," *Florida Times-Union*, December 21, 1950, 28.
74. Martin. G. Williams to J. Kenneth Ballinger, 22 June 1951, Series 1944, Carton 1, File Folder 1, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida.
75. *Ibid.*
76. Elizabeth Towers to Lewis Scoggin, (no date, December 1950), Series 1945, Carton 2, File Folder 35, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida.
77. "Facilities and Use of Florida State Parks" (Table).
78. "Little Talbot Island Park Opening Set Saturday," *Florida Times-Union*, August 31, 1951, 23.
79. *Ibid.*
80. Eileen Butts to Karl Bickel, 10 July 1951, Series 1944, Carton 1, File Folder 1, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida.
81. National Park Service, "Analysis of Major Problems Involved In Setting Up Capital Improvement Program for Florida State Parks, NPS Region One Office, Richmond, VA, November 28, 1949, Series 1945, Carton 2, File Folder 49, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida.
82. National Park Service, "Analysis of Major Problems..."
83. Walter A. Coldwell, "Report to the Florida Board of Parks and Historic Monuments," October 6, 1952, Series 1945, Carton 2, File Folder 17, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida.
84. "On Little Talbot Island, Nature's Grandeur," *Florida Times-Union*, August 25, 1957, 60; J. L. Beardsley, Two State Parks on Little Talbot Island, *The Clearwater Sun*, May 17, 1959, 12B.
85. P. A. Walker, "Little Talbot Island Rules and Regulations," September 10, 1953, Series 1995, Carton 1, File Folder 1, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida.
86. Emmet L. Hill to Bishop Nichols, 17 October 17 1956, Series 1951, Carton 1, File Folder 22, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida.
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88. Ralph S. Hager to H. E. Tookes, 7 May 1962, Series 1945, Carton 2, File Folder 2, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida.
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