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**Historic Context Study
Israel Lafayette Jones Site
Biscayne National Park**

Funded by the National Park Service

Support provided by CESU

Contractor - Florida Atlantic University Center for the
Conservation of Architectural and Cultural Heritage (CCACH)
and the Center for Urban Redevelopment and Education (CURE)
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**Final Report
Historic Context Study
Israel Lafayette Jones Site
Biscayne National Park
Consultant – Carolyn Finney
September 6, 2005**

Overview

This Final Report concludes research for the Israel Lafayette Jones Historic Context Study. It includes a summary of investigative activities and recommendations for further research, a table of contents, the Historic Context Study, footnotes, additional bibliography (sources not cited in the footnotes) and acknowledgements. In addition, I have included copies of church documents and census data that was not part of the original archival data already on file at Biscayne National Park.

Research began in earnest in November 2005 after the first payment from the project budget was received (please see Progress Report dated 1/3/05). A preliminary plan for site visits was generated and initial contacts were made with potential libraries, archives and individuals. The first site visit was made to Jacksonville, Florida in order to collect data on possible Negro Industrial schools that existed around the turn of the century and gather background data on African-American life in Jacksonville at that time. This included an interview with MaVynne Betsch, the great granddaughter of A.L. Lewis who started the Afro-American Life Insurance Company in Jacksonville.

A second site visit was made to Harbor Island, Bahamas in order to investigate the life of Mozelle Albury and collect copies of any relevant documents (please see Progress Report 2). Informal interviews were conducted with local residents and island officials, and I perused documents kept at the Methodist Manse. In addition, a working relationship was established with the National Archives in Nassau and librarians continued to search for relevant information on my behalf after I had left the Bahamas.

A third visit was made to the Black Archives in Miami to peruse and collect any relevant data relating to Mt. Zion Baptist church and a possible connection with Israel Jones. Documents were photocopied and are included with this report.

After close examination of existing documents and careful consideration, a trip to North Carolina was not undertaken. I was able to collect relevant census documents (1800's), birth and death records, and slave schedules for North Carolina through a major internet

site for a fee. In addition, I collected numerous academic sources from the University of Miami Library.

During the months of March and April, I focused on collecting additional secondary data relating to the nineteenth and early twentieth century America. This included library research. In the final months of the contract, I focused on analyzing all of the data and preparing the three drafts.

Methodology

Qualitative and archival methods were used in order to collect a wide range of data. Initially, I put together a research design in order to systematically collect the data relevant to this project. This included creating a master bibliography (a copy is included in this document) and a master name list of relevant individuals. Initial inquiries were made by phone and or e-mail in order to arrange potential meetings and assess what information the sources might have. In some cases, informal interviews were conducted (in Jacksonville and Harbor Island) which provided historical context for understanding potential motivations of Israel Jones and his family.

Secondary data was collected from a number of sources. Much of the census data was gathered through an Internet archive that provided access to census data in North Carolina and Florida as well as slave schedules. Background information was collected from books and articles on African-American, North Carolinian and Florida history. In May, I began data analysis which included reviewing all park documents, census data, interviews and academic literature. In order to create a narrative that reflected the chronology of events in Israel Jones life, I began separating particular documents and information into their appropriate time periods. From there, I began to construct the narrative on the Jones family. The first draft addressed the life of Israel Jones up to his death in 1932. The second draft began at the birth of his sons, Lancelot and Arthur, and ended with the death of Lancelot in 1997. In both of these drafts, I also identified gaps of knowledge that needed to be addressed. The final draft contained the completed narrative.

Site Visits

Below is a list of site visits and information that was or was not recovered:

Jacksonville, Florida – secondary data was collected regarding Florida Industrial schools in the region around the turn of the century from the Jacksonville Public Library. Ms. Emily Liska, a Jacksonville archivist, and Mr. Raymond Neal, a senior librarian at the Jacksonville Public Library assisted me in my investigation. In addition, I collected background information on the state of Black educational institutions at that time. I uncovered information about Florida Memorial College and Bethune-Cookman

Harbor Island, Bahamas – a visit to the Methodist Manse and Anglican church where church records were kept for primary data. Background information was collected through interviews of the following people:

Councilman Harvey Roberts

Rev. Marie Neilly (Methodist Manse)

Lillis Imlach, the secretary for the Commonage Committee

Sara Hutchinson (one of the islands oldest living residents)

Oswald Pinder, Parish Priest

Val Albury

Robert Arthur, owner of Roberts Bakery

Pearl Albury

Gwen Walker Davis

Jacklyn Percenty (Queen Conch)

While secondary information about Bahamian migration was collected, neither investigation at the local churches or the National Archives in Nassau revealed any documents relating to the birth or baptism of Mozelle Albury.

In addition, since some church records had been sent to the National Archives in Nassau, I made weekly phone calls to Edith Sturdith, a librarian there who, over a two-month period, searched for records pertaining to Mozelle Albury. While she found a baptismal record for a Mozelle Albury, the birth date was 1857, off by five years (Mozelle Alburys birth date was confirmed by the 1900 Census). She found no other existing documents.

Black Archives, Miami, Florida: A visit was made to the Black Archives to collect any information pertaining to Mt. Zion Baptist Church. While a number of documents were uncovered that discussed the founding of the church, there was no reference made to Israel Jones.

Resources Used

Academic Literature – much of the historical context of the U.S., North Carolina and Florida was gleaned from the pages of numerous books and articles, many found at the University of Miami Library in Miami, Florida. These are listed in the bibliography.

Ancestry.com – for a fee, this online site provided U.S. census data, slave schedules, and additional records dating as far back as the early 1800's.

Church documents – information on Mt. Zion Baptist church was perused and/or collected from the Black Archives in Miami and the Methodist Manse in Harbor Island, Bahamas.

Park Documents – the largest amount of documents was provided by Biscayne National Park who had a wealth of information on the Jones family. This includes newspaper articles, interviews, warranty deeds, census data and first-hand accounts. All original copies are in their possession.

Additional information was collected from Internet sites on Florida Memorial College.

Recommendations for Future Research

The Jones Family and Slavery – this was the most difficult information to find any leads on. Israel Jones shows up on only two census documents: 1880 and 1900. His father, Arter Jones only shows up by name on the 1880 census and Israel's birth mother doesn't show up at all (and her name is never mentioned in any future documents). I found a slave schedule from 1850 that lists a Jones as a slave owner who owned a black slave, 23 years of age, that would have been the age of Arter Jones, but without more information, it's difficult to make that connection. There were plenty of white men named Jones in North Carolina at that time who owned slaves. Also, it is interesting to note that nowhere in any of the documents or interviews on Israel or Lancelot Jones is any mention ever made in regards to whether or not Israel or his parents were slaves.

Annie M. Jones and Mozelle Albury – during the final days of my analysis and write-up, I noticed a discrepancy in some information that prompted me to consider a different conclusion than I had initially understood. Throughout all other documents that I have viewed, including census data, Israel Jones' wife is listed as Mozelle Albury. But, on a warranty deed dated 1929 (the NPS at Biscayne has the original copy) lists Annie M. Jones as Israel's wife. I had assumed that the M stood for Mozelle. But in revisiting that information, it is possible that Israel may have been married again briefly before his death. I did not turn up any marriage records, but I would suggest further research into this possibility.

Historic Context Study
Israel Lafayette "Parson" Jones
Final Draft
August 31, 2005
Carolyn Finney, researcher

Summary

The Jones Family Home site is significant at the local and state levels under **Criterion A** in the area of Exploration and Settlement. In the early nineteenth century, the U.S. was experiencing tensions that arose from the emancipation of thousands of enslaved Africans. While many northern blacks experienced a circumscribed freedom, blacks still struggled with being enslaved or feared re-enslavement in Southern states. In addition, further barriers were constructed for free blacks determined to build a new life. This included being denied the right to vote, frequenting white business establishments and educational institutions, and being forbidden to hold religious services without the presence of a licensed white minister.¹ Florida was no exception. Blacks who lived in what is now Dade County were largely runaway slaves and Bahamian blacks.² Few possessed the means to establish a homestead and successful business. It is within this context that Israel Lafayette Jones traveled from North Carolina to Florida, further developed agricultural and maritime skills, and successfully produced pineapples and limes on his own farm. In addition, he expanded his wealth through real estate, and played an integral role in the development of the black community in Dade County. While the Jones Family site is a significant example of the development of the black community in Dade County and of Dade County itself, it also provides a lens into the strategies undertaken by blacks and whites in Florida to negotiate a contentious time in American history.

The Parson Jones site is also significant under **Criterion D**. It has the potential to provide information about the daily life of black settlers in Dade County and to explore agricultural techniques and general strategies used to successfully farm and support families in the Keys and other coastal areas.

¹ Earle, John. 2000. *The Routledge Atlas of African-American History*. Routledge, NY.

² Dunn, Marvin. 1997. *Black Miami in the Twentieth Century*. University of Florida: Gainesville.

Historic Context

The U.S. 1800 - 1900

At the beginning of the 19th century, the institution of slavery still held sway over many areas of the United States, particularly in the South. While the states of the North, including New York, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania were home to thousands of free blacks, enslaved Africans could still be found in Florida, Alabama, Georgia and the Carolinas.³ The transition from slavery to freedom was one fraught with economic, political and social tensions, particularly in the South.⁴ For black Americans, the period after emancipation became a time of collective struggle to improve their status. Whether developing strategies within political, religious or social circles, black Americans worked to create communities and institutions where they could enjoy basic human rights.⁵ No where was this more contentious than in the South. Whether resistance to equality for black Americans was in the form of infringement upon political rights, denial of economic opportunities or outright violence, many black Americans found the post-Reconstruction South impossible to live in.⁶

North Carolina 1850 – 1900

Officially, the Civil War ended for North Carolinians on April 18, 1865.⁷ There were physical hardships; loss of land, shortage of farm animals and rampant crime devastated the states manufacturing and agricultural sectors. But the biggest challenge was dealing with the emancipation of more than 330,000 slaves.⁸ North Carolina ranked sixth among the slaveholding states – only 27.7 percent of white families owned slaves.⁹ But comparatively speaking, the free black population was large, second only to Virginia.¹⁰ In 1860, there were 30,463 free blacks representing 8.4 percent of the black population.¹¹ While generally considered one of the most liberal southern states with a small black population, the struggle between the state's white conservative leadership and the black

³ Earle, Jonathan. 2000. *The Routledge Atlas of African-American History*. Routledge: NY.

² Alexander, Roberta Sue. 1985. *North Carolina Faces the Freedmen: Race Relations during Presidential Reconstruction 1865-67*. Duke University Press: Durham, NC.

⁵ Mitchell, Michelle. 2004. *Righteous Propagation: African-Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny after Reconstruction*. University of NC Press: Chapel Hill.

⁶ Earle, J. 2000. *The Routledge Atlas of African-American History*. Routledge: NY.

⁷ Alexander, Roberta Sue. 1985. *North Carolina Faces the Freedmen: Race Relations during Presidential Reconstruction 1865-67*. Duke University Press: Durham, NC., p. 2.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid, xv

¹⁰ Ibid, p xvi

¹¹ Ibid.

community created an atmosphere of conflict and turmoil.¹² Some white North Carolinians refused to believe slavery had been abolished, denying blacks their freedom and in some instances, killing them.¹³ Those blacks that were freed often faced poor health, destitution, and violence upon their persons.¹⁴ The Freedmen's Bureau, which was an extension of the national government, became the organization responsible for all social and economic matters related to newly freed blacks.¹⁵ But problems of high turnover in the Bureau's ranks, understaffing and inappropriate use of white North Carolinians as officers left the Bureau struggling to meet the needs of freed blacks.¹⁶ Dire circumstances inspired many free men and women to migrate to other areas of the country in pursuit of great opportunity and a better life.

Florida 1880 – 1950

Florida was not immune to the conflicts and challenges that faced a young nation grappling with the consequences of slavery and emancipation. Between 1890 and 1930, Florida had more lynchings per capita than any other Southern state.¹⁷ In addition, Jim Crow customs, a white primary and a poll tax were strictly adhered to.¹⁸ By 1950, not a single Florida school was integrated and it would be another ten years before one would be.¹⁹ Despite these challenges, blacks were migrating to the South Florida area from various parts of the country and the Bahamas. By the beginning of the twentieth century, thousands of blacks were living in the South Florida area, including Miami, Homestead and Florida City.²⁰ While both white and Native American communities struggled to hold on to their identity, black culture was expressed on the South Florida landscape in the form of cultural institutions such as churches, places of educational enlightenment and their own businesses.²¹ The first Black school in Dade County opened in 1893 and the first black church in Miami was founded in 1896.²² Between 1896 and 1912, Henry Flagler's Florida East Coast Railroad brought employment opportunities for blacks from

¹² Ibid p. xiv.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Dunn, Marvin. 1997. *Black Miami in the Twentieth Century*. University Press of Florida: Gainesville.

¹⁶ Alexander, Roberta Sue. 1985. *North Carolina Faces the Freedmen: Race Relations during Presidential Reconstruction 1865-67*. Duke University Press: Durham, NC.

¹⁷ Morimino, Gary R. 2005. *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams: A Social History of Modern Florida*. University Press of Florida: Gainesville, p. 7.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Dunn, Marvin. 1997. *Black Miami in the Twentieth Century*. University Press of Florida: Gainesville.

²¹ Earle, John. 2000. *The Routledge Atlas of African-American History*. Routledge, NY.

²² Nicholas, Alwyn. 2004. *A Chronological History of Blacks in South Florida*. Just the Facts: Miami, FL.

Ft. Lauderdale to Key West.²³ In addition, Bahamian blacks whose migration to South Florida was motivated by the downfall of the Bahamian economy in the 1880's, brought agricultural practices and a sense of entrepreneurship that became the backbone for many successful black communities and businesses.²⁴

Israel Lafayette Jones

Israel Lafayette Jones was born 1858 in Raleigh, North Carolina.²⁵ His father was Arter Jones, a farm laborer who lived in Clayton, Johnston, North Carolina. Israel had a brother, Samuel who was born in 1861.²⁶ By 1880, Arter had become re-married to Caroline Jones, who was just one year younger than Israel.²⁷ Israel Jones biological mother remains a mystery. While slave schedules cannot affirm whether or not Jones or his parents were born into slavery, in North Carolina around 1830, only one percent of the black population were freemen.²⁸ By 1860, there were less than 40,000 freed blacks.²⁹ In addition, in 1850, when his father would have been 23 years of age, seventy-five percent of all slaves were farm laborers.³⁰

When he was twenty-two years old, Jones worked as a farm laborer himself.³¹ During the 1880's, he moved to Wilmington, North Carolina where he was a stevedore and handled small boats.³² As a major seaport, Wilmington attracted many African-American maritime laborers who came there in search of work on or by the sea. They made up 60% of the total population in North Carolina's larger seaports.³³ While it is difficult to estimate the percentage of African-Americans working full-time in a maritime trade, it is

²² Ibid.

²⁴ Dunn, Marvin. 1997. *Black Miami in the Twentieth Century*. University Press of Florida: Gainesville.

²⁵ 1880 U.S. Federal Census, Clayton, Johnson NC., Roll T9_969, Family History Film 1254969, Page 349.1000, Enumeration District 156, Image 0235. 1900 Census data

²⁶ 1880 U.S. Federal Census, Cedar Creek Cumberland, NC., Roll T9_960, Family History Film 1254960, Page 417.4000, Enumeration District 59, Image 0213

²⁷ 1880 U.S. Federal Census, Clayton, Johnston NC., Roll T9_969, Family History Film 1254969, Page 349.1000, Enumeration District 156, Image 0235.

²⁸ Earle, Jonathan. 2000. *The Routledge Atlas of African-American History*. Routledge:NY.

²⁹ Alexander, Roberta Sue. 1985. *North Carolina Faces the Freedmen: Race Relations during Presidential Reconstruction 1865-67*. Duke University Press: Durham, NC.

¹⁴ 1880 U.S. Federal Census, Clayton, Johnson NC., Roll T9_969, Family History Film 1254969, Page 349.1000, Enumeration District 156, Image 0235.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Gilpin, Vincent. "Parson Jones of Porgee Key". P. 1-15. Date and Source unidentified. Original Copy at Biscayne National Park.

³³ Cecelski, David S. 2001. *The Waterman's Song: Slavery and Freedom in Maritime North Carolina*. University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill.

safe to say that most slaves and freemen who lived on the coast worked on the water at least occasionally. For black men, maritime occupations included laboring as sailors, fishermen, boatmen and pilots.³⁴

Israel Jones headed to Florida in 1892 in search of work.³⁵ Before settling in Key Biscayne, he tried his hand at growing oranges in Orlando, but was unsuccessful due to a freeze.³⁶ After a short stint in Tampa, he made his way further south.³⁷ In the mid-nineteenth century, South Florida was largely wilderness where black families often lived in isolation from each other on the groves and farms of white owners.³⁸ For many blacks, job opportunities came in the form of digging for coontie, a wild plant indigenous to the region, clearing land, and working in the lumber industry.³⁹ Walter S. Davies, a well-to-do white landowner, had significant property holdings on Cape Florida and needed a caretaker for his property.⁴⁰ He dispatched his agent Ralph Monroe (boat designer and commodore of Biscayne Bay Yacht Club in Coconut Grove) to find an appropriate employee.⁴¹ He hired Israel Jones, who became the caretaker on the Davis Grant and several other properties, including those belonging to Dr. John Clayton Gifford and Commodore Monroe.⁴² In 1893, Jones also went to work as a foreman for a pineapple farm belonging to Frank T. Budge.⁴³ During his tenure as caretaker and foreman, Jones developed skills in growing lime and pineapple trees.⁴⁴

Built in 1882, the Peacock Inn in Coconut Grove became a magnet for black pioneers who were newly arrived to the South Florida region and seeking employment.⁴⁵ Owned

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Oral History Narrative: John Nordt interview with Lancelot Jones, Biscayne National Park, 1990. Original copy at Biscayne National Park Headquarters.

³⁶ Mensch, Joseph S. 1988. "Sir Lancelot Fished with the Big Shots". *Update: The Historical Association of Southern Florida*. Vol. 15(2). May pages 3-5, 14.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Dunn, Marvin. 1997. *Black Miami in the Twentieth Century*. University Press of Florida: Gainesville.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Gilpin, Vincent. "Parson Jones of Porgee Key". P. 1-15. Date and Source unidentified. Original Copy at Biscayne National Park.

⁴¹ McIver, Stuart. 1988. *Glimpses of South Florida History*. Florida Flair Books: Miami, FL.

⁴² Gifford, John C. 1972. *On Preserving Tropical Florida*. University of Miami Press: Coral Gables, p. 47.

⁴³ Oral History Narrative: John Nordt interview with Lancelot Jones, Biscayne National Park, 1990. Original copy at Biscayne National Park Headquarters.

⁴⁴ Gifford, John C. 1972. *On Preserving Tropical Florida*. University of Miami Press: Coral Gables, p. 47.

⁴⁵ Dunn, Marvin. 1997. *Black Miami in the Twentieth Century*. University Press of Florida: Gainesville.

and constructed by Charles Peacock, the inn hired many black Bahamians new to the area. Though not Bahamian, Israel Jones procured a job as a handyman and met his future wife, Moselle Albury at the inn.⁴⁶ They married in 1895.⁴⁷ Born in December 1861 in Harbor Island, Bahamas, her family migrated to Key West in 1871.⁴⁸ This was not unusual; during the 1880's many Bahamians arrived to the South Florida region to work as farm laborers or at the inn.⁴⁹ Economic exploitation and racial discrimination convinced many Bahamians that they'd be better off in the South Florida area, particularly in Biscayne Bay and the Florida Keys.⁵⁰

Shortly after their marriage in 1895, Israel Lafayette Jones and his wife Moselle had their first son King Arthur Lafayette Jones, born in March of 1897.⁵¹ Their second son, Sir Lancelot Garfield Jones was born almost a year and a half later in October of 1898.⁵² Both sons are believed to be the first black Americans born on Key Biscayne.⁵³ Lancelot was delivered by a midwife and Dr. Henry Jackson, whom Jackson Memorial Hospital is named after.⁵⁴

After a prosperous nine-year stint as a caretaker and foreman, Israel Jones decided he was interested in expanding his horizons.⁵⁵ So in 1897, Jones purchased Porgy Key from Fletcher Albury for \$300, approximately \$5 an acre.⁵⁶ This is particularly remarkable because of the racial atmosphere in Dade County between 1896 and 1926. While there was an increase in the presence of black institutions and possibility for upward mobility,

⁴⁶ Gifford, John C. 1972. *On Preserving Tropical Florida*. University of Miami Press: Coral Gables, p. 47.

⁴⁷ 1900 Census, Lemon City Precinct 3 and Coconut Grove Precinct 4, Dade County. Sheet 35, 285A, p. 188-189.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Dunn, Marvin. 1997. *Black Miami in the Twentieth Century*. University of Florida Press: Gainesville.

⁵⁰ Dunn, Marvin. 1997. *Black Miami in the Twentieth Century*. University of Florida Press: Gainesville.

⁵¹ 1900 Census, Lemon City Precinct 3 and Coconut Grove Precinct 4, Dade County. Sheet 35, 285A, p. 188-189.

⁵² 1900 Census, Lemon City Precinct 3 and Coconut Grove Precinct 4, Dade County. Sheet 35, 285A, p. 188-189. Delayed Certificate of Birth, Filed August 15, 1974. No 98159. Florida.

⁵³ Unidentified source. *A History of the Island of Key Biscayne*, microfiche, p. 112. Original copy at Biscayne National Park.

⁵⁴ Oral History Narrative: John Nordt interview with Lancelot Jones, Biscayne National Park, 1990. Original copy at Biscayne National Park Headquarters.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Warranty Deed (original document is poor quality). Filed January 18, 1929, Dade County, Florida. Original copy at Biscayne National Park.

economic and political exploitation, racial segregation and lynching constrained the efforts of black families working to improve their quality of life.⁵⁷

Along with his ventures into real estate, Israel Jones developed a reputation for being a preacher and a philosopher. He became known as the "Pahson", which reflected the high esteem that many held him in.⁵⁸ Although not a minister in the traditional sense, Parson Jones was deemed qualified by his peers to preach.⁵⁹ He spoke on Sundays at Mt. Zion Baptist Church and is said to have been involved in its' development.⁶⁰ Founded in 1896 by the Reverend T.M. Tramell, it was organized and built by black Baptists.⁶¹ Like many other black churches established in Dade County at that time, it provided a spiritual home for blacks and was a source of mutual and charitable support.⁶²

In 1898, Israel Jones purchased Old Rhodes Key (Porgy Key is legally part of Old Rhodes) and moved his family to the island within two years of that date.⁶³ When Jones and his family first arrived, there was already a two-bedroom house constructed on the property belonging to the previous owner. The second house, a two-story, four-bedroom structure, was completed by Israel Jones and his brother Samuel in 1912.⁶⁴ In addition, Jones dug a trench in order to put in a dock for his boat. In the true spirit of homesteading, the Jones family made this place their own. Along with building a house, Israel Jones began the Herculean task of clearing the land by hand. This involved cutting through vines and plants not familiar to the mainland, gumbo-limbo, palmetto and mahogany trees, and thorny vines that could slice through the skin.⁶⁵ Once Jones and his sons cut through the foliage, a landscape of coral limestone was revealed. For Jones, this was a boon because he knew that pineapples, tomatoes and limes would grow well here.⁶⁶ He began farming pineapples and key limes and within two years of planting, the

⁵⁷ Dunn, Marvin. 1997. *Black Miami in the Twentieth Century*. University Press of Florida: Gainesville.

⁵⁸ Gifford, John C. 1972. *On Preserving Tropical Florida*. University of Miami Press: Coral Gables, FL.

⁵⁹ Oral History Narrative: John Nordt interview with Lancelot Jones, Biscayne National Park, 1990. Original copy at Biscayne National Park Headquarters.

⁶⁰ Ibid., Avant Freda. 1932. "Impressive Funeral Given Parson Jones". *The Herald*, p. 2.

⁶¹ Dunn, Marvin. 1997. *Black Miami in the Twentieth Century*. University Press of Florida: Gainesville.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Greene, Juanita. 1959. "Wealth Come to Pioneer Keys Workers". *The Herald*, June 21.

⁶⁴ Oral History Narrative: John Nordt interview with Lancelot Jones, Biscayne National Park, 1990. Original copy at Biscayne National Park Headquarters.

⁶⁵ Gilpin, Vincent. "Parson Jones of Porgee Key". P. 1-15. Date and Source unidentified. Original Copy at Biscayne National Park.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

Jones family began to see profit.⁶⁷ In addition, he produced fruits and vegetables in order to supplement his income.⁶⁸ Eventually, the Jones farm became one of the largest producers of pineapples and limes on the East Coast of Florida.⁶⁹ Adding to his landholdings, Israel Jones purchased Totten Key from Frank T. Budge in 1911.⁷⁰ This land had previously been home to an approximately 250-acre pineapple plantation.⁷¹ This purchase would prove to be quite an investment - he bought the island for \$1 an acre and eventually sold 212 acres for \$250,000.⁷²

Israel Jones, while busy with farm production, purchasing additional land and building a new home, still had time for community involvement. Along with providing ongoing support for Mt. Zion Baptist church in Miami, he participated in the creation of a Negro Industrial School in Jacksonville. While there were a number of industrial schools created around the turn of the century, one in particular stands out in existing documents in relation to Israel Jones. Originally known as the Florida Baptist Academy, this school was founded in Jacksonville in 1892.⁷³ In 1918, the school moved to St. Augustine (where Lancelot and Arthur attended classes) and eventually merged with the Florida Baptist Institute to become the Florida Normal and Industrial Memorial Institute.⁷⁴ In 1963, the school was renamed Florida Memorial College and relocated to Miami in 1968.⁷⁵

As his sons got older and were able to take over much of the labor needed to maintain the land, Israel Jones spent more time preaching in Miami and taking part as a trustee in the continuing growth of this Negro industrial school in Jacksonville.⁷⁶ Back on the homestead, Moselle oversaw the maintenance of the home, took care of their sons, and

⁶⁷ Ibid., Oral History Narrative: John Nordt interview with Lancelot Jones, Biscayne National Park, 1990. Original copy at Biscayne National Park Headquarters.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Unknown author. 1925. "250,000 Paid for Island". *The Herald*, June 13.

⁷⁰ Oral History Narrative: John Nordt interview with Lancelot Jones, Biscayne National Park, 1990. Original copy at Biscayne National Park Headquarters. Warranty Deed (original document is poor quality). Filed January 18, 1929, Dade County, Florida. Original copy at Biscayne National Park.

⁷¹ Unknown author. "Totten Key Pinery". *Miami Metro*, Aug. 23, 1901

⁷² Unknown author. 1925. "250,000 Paid for Island". *The Herald*, June 13.

⁷³ Hunt, Thomas C. and James C. Carper, Eds. 1995. *Religious Higher Education in the United States*. Garland Publishing: NY.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Gilpin, Vincent. "Parson Jones of Porgee Key". P. 1-15. Date and Source unidentified. Original Copy at Biscayne National Park.

received visitors fairly regularly.⁷⁷ In between bone fishing and taking care of their fruit trees, the boys received a formal education from a teacher who had been brought in from St. Augustine to live with the family.⁷⁸ Eventually, much to the dismay of Lancelot and Arthur, the two boys were sent to St. Augustine to attend the Florida Industrial College (Florida Baptist Academy).⁷⁹

In 1929, Israel handed ownership of Totten Key over to his sons, Arthur and Lancelot.⁸⁰ Soon after, Moselles' health failed and she passed away. A few years later, in 1932, Israel Lafayette Jones died at the age of seventy-three.⁸¹ His funeral was held at Mt. Zion Baptist church and was well attended by black and white mourners alike.⁸² D.A. Dorsey, considered to be Miami's first black millionaire, spoke of Jone's achievements in the face of adversity.⁸³ Reverend J.R. Evans echoed those sentiments in his sermon and Jone's funeral received generous coverage in the Miami Herald.⁸⁴

Lancelot Jones

Lancelot and Arthur carried on the key lime business. Using their 32-foot boat named the Lone Star, they would carry 250 bushels of limes into Miami every week.⁸⁵ They paid John Graham twenty-five percent of their earnings to come up with a quote, then to pack and ship them.⁸⁶ They were arguably the largest individual key lime producers in the state. But in 1938, Lancelot and Arthur left the lime business because they felt they couldn't compete with key lime production in Mexico, which had a considerably better environment for growing limes.⁸⁷ In addition, the 1926 hurricane had curtailed lime production.⁸⁸ Known as the Great Hurricane, an estimated 392 people died and more

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Unknown author. "Greater Miami Deaths, Pioneer Fishing Guide". *The Miami News*, Feb. 24, 1966, p. 11A.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Warranty Deed (original document is poor quality). Filed January 18, 1929, Dade County, Florida. Original copy at Biscayne National Park.

⁸¹ Avant Freda. 1932. "Impressive Funeral Given Parson Jones". *The Herald*, p. 2.

⁸² Gilpin, Vincent. "Parson Jones of Porgee Key". P. 1-15. Date and Source unidentified. Original Copy at Biscayne National Park.

⁸³ Avant Freda. 1932. "Impressive Funeral Given Parson Jones". *The Herald*, p. 2.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Oral History Narrative: John Nordt interview with Lancelot Jones, Biscayne National Park, 1990. Original copy at Biscayne National Park Headquarters.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Mensch, Joseph S. 1988. "Sir Lancelot Fished with the Big Shots". *Update: The Historical Association of Southern Florida*. Vol. 15(2): May p. 3-5, 14.

than 17,000 families were affected.⁸⁹ Damage to businesses and homes were estimated to be around five million dollars.⁹⁰ While the Jones boys managed to continue lime production, the effects of the hurricane initiated the changes that would eventually influence their decision to leave the lime business.

Three years earlier in 1935, the Jones brothers had started doing guiding. But during WWII, it became difficult to get fuel, so they stopped guiding for two or three years. They eventually went into bone fishing and resumed guiding.⁹¹ Lancelot fished with many notable men during the forties and fifties, including Herbert Hoover, Lyndon Johnson, Bebe Rebozo and Richard Nixon.⁹² These men would visit the Coco Lobo Club, a private club built in 1921 which eventually became the Coco Lobo Fishing club.⁹³ Supported by wealthy families which included the Firestones and the Honeywells, Lancelot and Arthur provided stone crabs and lobster for the club's guests.⁹⁴ In addition, Lancelot's expertise was well known and he was often hired as their guide.

During the forties, Arthur served as a technical sergeant in the army in World War II and had previously served in the Navy in World War I.⁹⁵ Arthur died Feb. 22, 1966, in a VA hospital.⁹⁶ He left a wife, Kathleen and a stepdaughter named Leah Forbes.⁹⁷

Starting in 1961 and continuing throughout the sixties, a harsh political battle ensued between investors who incorporated the city of Islandia and hoped to develop the islands.⁹⁸ Islandia was Miami-Dade county's smallest municipality, comprised of a chain of thirty-two islands that included the Jones's property.⁹⁹ Lancelot and Arthur were the second largest property owners within Islandia.¹⁰⁰ In addition, they were the only

⁸⁹ Dunn, Marvin. 1997. *Black Miami in the Twentieth Century*. University of Florida Press: Gainesville.

⁹⁰ Ibid

⁹¹ Oral History Narrative: John Nordt interview with Lancelot Jones, Biscayne National Park, 1990. Original copy at Biscayne National Park Headquarters.

⁹² Mensch, Joseph S. 1988. "Sir Lancelot Fished with the Big Shots". *Update: The Historical Association of Southern Florida*. Vol. 15(2): May p. 3-5, 14.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Oral History Narrative: John Nordt interview with Lancelot Jones, Biscayne National Park, 1990. Original copy at Biscayne National Park Headquarters.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ "Unknown author. "Greater Miami Deaths, Pioneer Fishing Guide". *The Miami News*, Feb. 24, 1966, p. 11A.

⁹⁸ Bennett, Brad. 2002. "A Wild Legacy". *The Herald*, July 16.

⁹⁹ *The Miami News*, Nov. 15, 1985

¹⁰⁰ Unknown author. "Greater Miami Deaths, Pioneer Fishing Guide". *Miami News*, Feb. 24, 1966

permanent yearlong residents from north Key Largo to Soldier Key. By 1985, only one other private citizen aside from Lancelot Jones lived within the boundaries of Islandia along with park rangers.

In 1968 the area was declared a National Monument and in 1980 it was declared a National Park.¹⁰¹ Motivated by the belief that the area should be preserved prompted Lancelot and his sister-in-law Kathleen to sell their share of the island to the National Park Service in 1970.¹⁰² Made up of more than 277 acres, the National Park Service paid them 1.2 million dollars. Lancelot Jones was granted the right to live out his remaining years in the family home.

During this period, Lancelot spent most of his time alone, reading and relaxing in a home where he used solar panels for electricity and rainwater for washing.¹⁰³ Sometimes Lancelot would share his ecological knowledge, particularly about sponges, with all who would listen, including school children who visited the nearby Adams Key Ranger Station's Environmental Education Center.¹⁰⁴ The sponge industry was a subject particularly close to Lancelot's heart and important to the environmental history of the region. In 1890, hundreds of fishermen - Cuban, American and Bahamian - depended upon commercial sponge fishing for their livelihoods.¹⁰⁵ At this time, sponging was a one million dollar a year business.¹⁰⁶ But by the turn of the century, business began to decrease.¹⁰⁷ When Lancelot wasn't speaking to visitors, he would occasionally venture into Miami to visit friends or pick up mail.

Lancelot's final years on the island were not without adversity. In 1982, the Jones family home burnt to the ground as a result of a propane tank gas fire. Lancelot moved into former caretaker's shack nearby. In 1992, Hurricane Andrew destroyed the shack and Lancelot moved off the island, assisted by park rangers.¹⁰⁸ For the second time, his home

¹⁰¹ Oral History Narrative: John Nordt interview with Lancelot Jones at Biscayne National Park, 1990. Original copy at Biscayne National Park Headquarters.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Gale, Anabelle de. 1997. "Sir Lancelot Jones, Key Biscayne Pioneer". *The Herald*, Dec. 27.

¹⁰⁴ Tomb, Geoffrey. 1991. "Man, 92, Shares Bastion of Natural Beauty with Kids". *The Herald*, April 17.

¹⁰⁵ Toney, Mike. 1979. "Sponge Industry Thriving Again in South Biscayne Bay". *Miami Herald*, April 22.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Bennett, Brad. 2002. "A Wild Legacy". *The Herald*, July 16.

was destroyed. He lived out his remaining days with the Adderlys who were family friends¹⁰⁹. Lancelot Garfield Jones died on December 22, 1997.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Gale, Anabelle De. 1997. "Sir Lancelot Jones, Key Biscayne Pioneer". *The Herald*, Sunday December 26.

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