

Hilton Head fruit stand vows to survive new flyover

Wesley Campbell has been peddling vegetables on Hilton Head Island since he was a child.

At age 5 or 6, he literally pedaled whatever was ripe to homes in Brannan Point on his bicycle.

The entrepreneurial seeds planted by his best customers, the McIntosh family in Spanish Wells Plantation, blossomed into a traditional Lowcountry career for Campbell, now 59.

For more than a decade, Campbell has operated one of the most visible roadside vegetable and seafood



DAVID LAUDERDALE
dlauderdale@islandpacket.com
843-706-8115

stands in southern Beaufort County. From near the foot of the bridge to Hilton Head, he sells peaches, tomatoes, shrimp and more from beneath the hut umbrellas. For many visitors, a stop there is

as much a part of their vacation as beach chairs and bicycles.

Now a large crane looms in the marsh behind Campbell. It represents progress. It is laying the groundwork for a \$45 million flyover that will link the Bluffton Parkway to U.S. 278, in what appears to be a Lowcountry version of Atlanta's "Spaghetti Junction." That groundwork seems to be coming right at the vegetable stand.

But Campbell tells me the flyover will be flying over his business, as well as the private welcome center and convenience store nearby. He

has a concern about parking, but he plans to remain a roadside fixture beneath the looping new bridges.

He doesn't think the flyover is necessary.

But by now, the member of one of Hilton Head's oldest and most venerable families is almost immune to the pinch of progress.

At one time, he ran a dozen roadside stands on Hilton Head. He even had one in Harbour Town. But local laws made it harder to do because of safety concerns, and few stands

Please see FRUIT on 4A

FRUIT

Continued from 3A

remain. Campbell operates a fruit and seafood business in the old Arthur Frazier building on Hilton Head, and his brother, Solomon Campbell, operates one on Spanish Wells Road.

Wesley Campbell thinks the little man gets the brunt of progress, not the national chains or gated communities. "Have you ever seen any of them be told, 'You've got to go away; you can't be here anymore'? You think they ever lose sleep at night like I do?"

The fruit stands are the last vestiges of the farming com-

munity that petered out about the time they started planting condominiums on Hilton Head.

Campbell said he grew up selling corn, tomatoes, okra and other vegetables planted right outside the door by his father and uncle. The island was so rural, you could take naps in the middle of Spanish Wells Road, he said.

Now, there are so many cars, we're building a flyover. They bring customers, but seem to take away a way of life.

"It's hard to live with," Campbell said. "But what else can you do?"

Follow columnist David Lauderdale at twitter.com/ThatsLauderdale.



DAVID LAUDERDALE • Staff photo
Wesley Campbell serves a customer Thursday at his roadside vegetable and seafood stand near the bridge to Hilton Head Island.