



FILMS

ON THE

WATER

MILLER

“Create a timeline.”

Was the project given to my class for finishing up the book *Pet* by Akwaeke Emezi and our studies of African and African American history in Castine. At first, we expected our project to resemble a traditional timeline, but it quickly evolved into something much more artistic.



Life is like a tree, there's so many branches, leaves, and roots, like there are possibilities and choices.

So for our timeline, we chose to create a tree. We were inspired by one particular tree right by our town docks. The tree is a massive elm tree with branches that stretch all the way across the road, the tree is much, much older than any of us. Infact, much older than 100 years!



For our project, we're dividing into three groups: past, present, and future. The past represents the roots, because like history, the roots go deep into the earth and are the base for everything that happens. The present is the trunk, solid and always changing, connecting both the past and future. The future is in the leaves, which depend on the entire tree to thrive.



The town of Castine was a working waterfront, and they thrived off of the slave trade, we provided the cod to the southern plantations in exchange for cotton, which we would then bring to england. So there were no known abolitionists, except for one: Doty Little, who was an architect.



The first African people to appear in Castine were Esther and Emanuel, of course those were definitely not their real names, only names chosen when they were enslaved. Esther and Emanuel were recorded to be in castine it 1785-90. But they were not the last African people to come to Castine.



John Jackson was born somewhere between the Gold coast, and the Bight of Benin in Africa. He was captured into enslavement at a very young age, and sold to the Brazilian Sugar trade in Rio De Janeiro. He somehow escaped to Castine, and started a new life as a free man. He was a property owner, and even had the right to vote! He started a family, he had many children, but only one lived a full life.



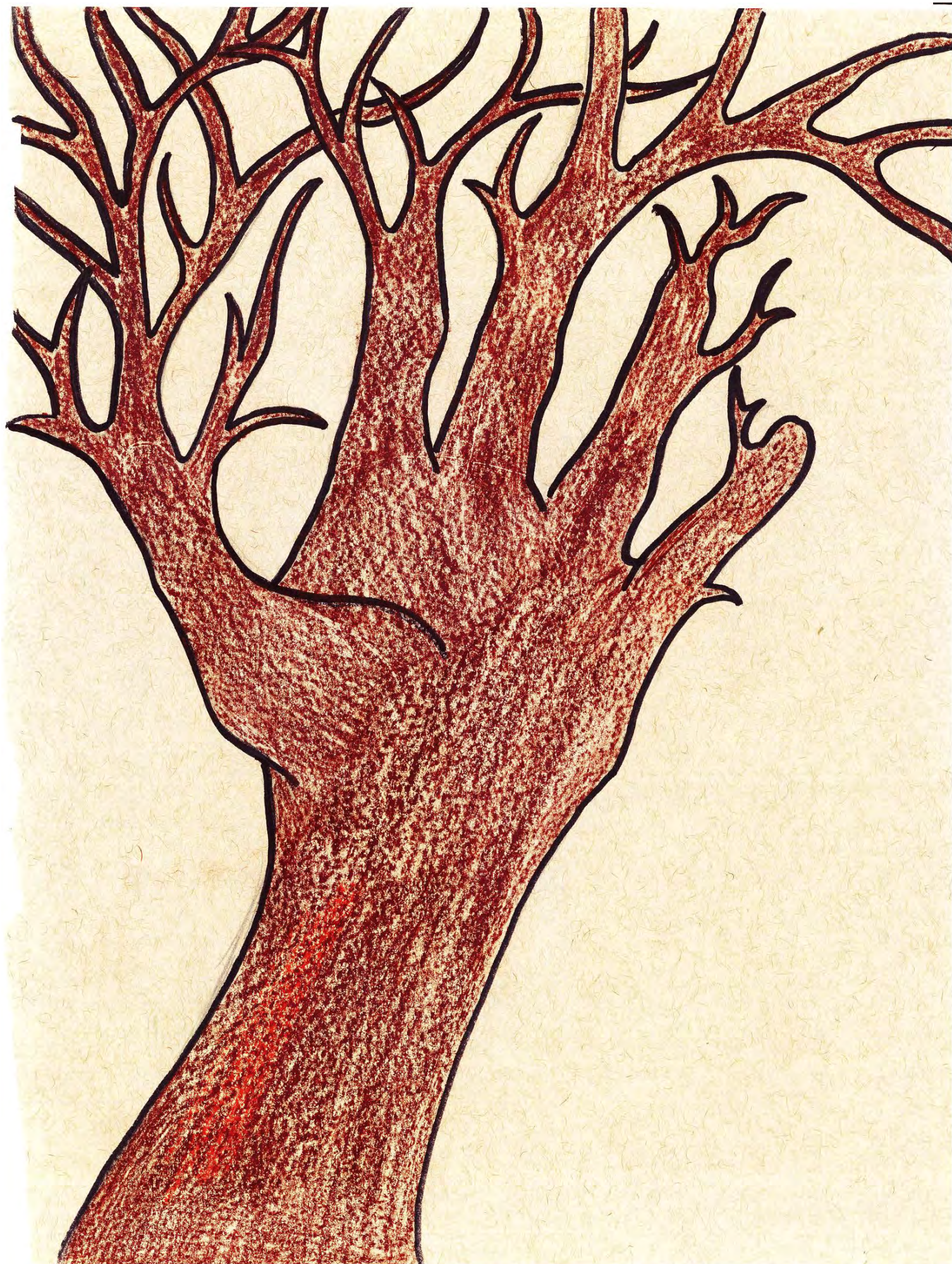
Mary Jackson was born a free black woman to John Jackson and became an orphan by the age of 14. She attended a local school and was later adopted by her best friend's family, the Whitings. While she was well-respected, Mary often did many chores for the family, though she loved them, and they loved her. She unexpectedly passed away one night and was found on the staircase, with her oil lantern placed at the top.



One man, Andrew Walker, was a former enslaved man who was bought by Daniel Johnston and became his servant. Then the Johnston family moved up to Castine, where Andrew lived for the rest of his life. It's said that he was found dead on a foggy morning, face down in the water.



There is so much African and African American history of Castine, but little is really known. These people are part of the roots that build our tree, some of the first black people in Castine



It's important to remember our history, that's what the trunk of the tree is all about. How to remember all of these people that were so hard working, and are barely known now.



There are two islands near the mouth of the bagaduce river, called upper and lower negro islands. An uncomfortable name. But soon, They will be known as Esther and Emanuel islands, after the first known Africans in Castine.



The process to rename the Negro Islands began in 2020, aiming to replace the name: the negro islands, with more appropriate names. Each island will receive its own individual name, but a collective name for the group is still being chosen. An expert is set to visit the islands soon to propose a more fitting joint name.



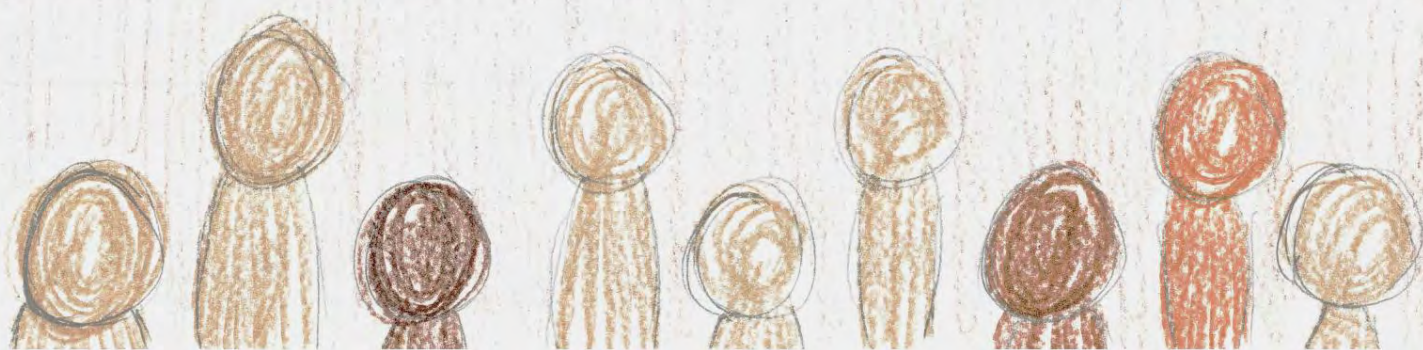
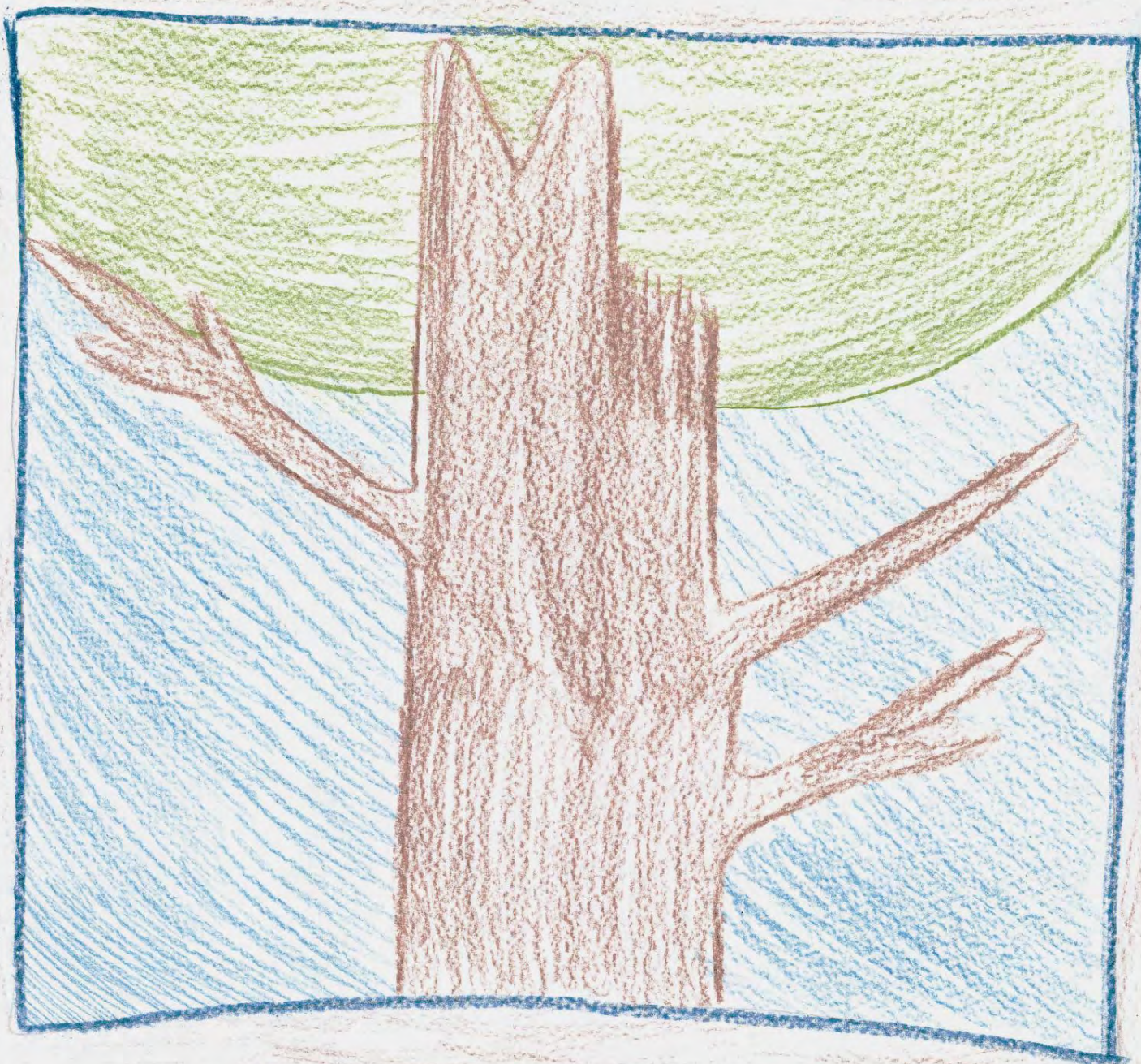
All this has happened now, in the present. It's happening because of something that happened in the past, and we can't change that. However, we *can* change what will happen in the future, like will more people know about what happened in our past?



In the future of Castine we hope that great changes will be brought to our town, like having lots, and lots more people know about this history, and contribute to helping remember it. most of our information we have is from old documents and files found, one day will all of this be found? Is this all we will have to remember our history?



It's so, so, important to know our history, it's how we make sure bad mistakes aren't repeated, and good ones are, like a family recipe. We hope that one day people will be able to all remember our beautiful history.



Illustrator
Story, Amelie, and Owen

Writer

Amelie, thanks to Story for saving us

Credit to
Owen, and Ellie,
Malcolm

