Beginning in 1848, the Clemsons also had a small number of slaves at their home in Maryland — including Andy, the son of Floride Calhoun’s cook, Nelly. Before moving back to South Carolina in December 1864, Floride Calhoun wrote in her diary that Andy would not be returning with them as “he was free with all Maryland negroes.”

**Sale of the Estate**

After John C. Calhoun’s death in 1850, his wife sold the Fort Hill estate to their oldest son, Andrew, who operated the plantation from 1854 to 1865. The inventory of the estate in the 1854 sale included a list of the property with 50 slaves in family groups. The list began with the family of Sawney (age 59) and his wife, Tilla (age 50), followed by Ned (age 25), Nicholas (age 18), Jonas (age 16), Jim (age 12), Mathilda (age 10) and Chapman (age 8). A second appraisal was performed in 1865 after the death of Andrew Pickens Calhoun, and the number of slaves had increased to 127 field and 12 domestic and skilled trades men and women for a total of 139 enslaved persons.

Andrew Pickens Calhoun and his wife, Margaret, occupied Fort Hill during the Civil War. One account mentions a young slave boy named Rasmus who hid with 8-year-old Patrick Calhoun when Union soldiers arrived.

After 1866, Floride Calhoun recovered Fort Hill through foreclosure and willed it to her daughter and remaining child, Anna Maria Calhoun Clemson. The Clemsons hired many of the former Calhoun slaves — who were freed during the Civil War — as wage hands. One of the Clemson family’s employees was Bill Greenlee, who was 17 when Thomas Clemson died in 1888. He worked as a stable boy and carriage driver at Fort Hill during Clemson’s last years. He was later employed by the college and town of Clemson.

**The Stories Don’t Stop Here**

Families who worked at Fort Hill, such as the Greenlees, Frusters and Reidis, have numerous descendants still living in the Clemson area. Many were interviewed as part of the “Black Heritage in the Upper Piedmont Project,” and their stories — told through oral recordings — are deposited in the Clemson University Libraries’ Archives and Special Collections unit.

Clemson’s Department of Historic Properties conducts ongoing research to study black history and incorporate the stories about African-Americans in the narrative of the total life experience at Fort Hill.
African-Americans were a vital force in the operation and economy of Fort Hill, the home of John C. and Floride Calhoun from 1825 to 1850, Andrew Pickens and Margaret Green Calhoun from 1851 to 1871, and Thomas Green and Anna Clemson from 1872 to 1888. Like many Southern planters of the time, Calhoun raised cotton as a cash crop using enslaved African-American labor to run his household and plantation. The Calhouns owned skilled workers such as gardeners, seamstresses and carpenters in addition to agricultural workers and field hands. Since the slaves who occupied Fort Hill left no written record, their perspective is virtually voiceless in history.

Earliest Reports
One rare documented account comes from a reporter for a New York newspaper who paid a visit to Fort Hill in 1849. He noted, "The Calhoun slaves lived approximately one-eighth of a mile from the mansion. The houses are built of stone and joined together like barracks, with gardens attached, and a large open space in front. There are perhaps 70 or 80 negroes on and about the plantation known as Canebrake, which was owned by Andrew, Calhoun's eldest son.

Another child of Sawney Calhoun, Issey was a strong-willed and defiant house slave who attempted to burn the house down by placing hot coals under a pillow in the room of another of Calhoun's sons, William. Luckily, the smell of burning feathers floated throughout the house, and the fire was extinguished. Described as dangerous, Issey was also sent to Alabama until Cornelia Calhoun's urging she returned to Fort Hill.

Other documents record the lives of slaves who were more inclined to conform to the status quo. One such account is about a girl named Susan Clemson, who took care of Thomas and Anna Clemson's children when the family lived at Fort Hill for a short time in the 1840s. Susan often slept in a room adjacent to the Clemsons' room, and she later moved with the Clemsons to their home in Edgefield County, also known as Canebrake. After the war, she married Billy Richardson and moved near Saluda, S.C.

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