

served as Fort Hill's cook. Around 1854, Nelly gave birth to a son, Andy. In 1856, Nelly died in childbirth. Floride Calhoun then sent Andy to be "trained" as an enslaved domestic worker, but, in 1859, the young boy caught a fever and, once recovered, was taken by Floride Calhoun to Maryland. Historians have postulated that due to his mother's expulsion from Fort Hill, his father was A.P. Calhoun. At The Home near Washington, D.C., Andy was sent to a neighbor, Dr. Septimius Cook, as Anna returned to Pendleton. On November 1, 1864, Andy was freed, along "with all Md. negroes," as recorded on December 11, 1864, by Floride Clemson in her diary.

Additional families include the Greenlees, Frusters and Reeds. 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.

Acts of Resistance

Throughout Fort Hill's history, enslaved African Americans resisted bondage. Vice President John C. Calhoun, while in Washington, D.C., requested assistance from his brother-in-law John Ewing Colhoun Jr. of neighboring Keowee Heights Plantation to help bring the enslaved community into submission.

In the summer of 1831, Aleck, who was often the only male enslaved domestic worker at Fort Hill, took to "the woods" after Calhoun described that Aleck "offended" Floride Calhoun and "she threatened him, with a severe whipping." Aleck, once apprehended in Abbeville, was jailed "for one week ... fed on bread & water" and given "30 lashes well laid on" in order "to prevent a repetition."

Sawney Jr. was sent to Marengo County where he set fire to the white overseer's tent and was accused of attempted murder. Afterwards, Issey, who was an enslaved domestic worker who primarily cared for Cornelia Calhoun, set the bedding on fire in William Lowndes Calhoun's room. Although the fire, whose intentionality is unknown, was extinguished, Issey was sent to Marengo County. When Calhoun requested his son A.P. return Issey



Marie Elizabeth Venning (1842-1915) holding Floride Isabella Lee, the Clemsons' only grandchild, in Carmel, New York, in August 1870.



Bill Greenlee c. 1935 Bust by Abraham Wolfe Davidson Photograph courtesy of Special Collections

to Fort Hill, it is unknown if she ever returned.

African Americans of Fort Hill

Hector, an enslaved African American, served as the driver for the Calhouns in the fall of 1817; he drove the carriage with four Calhoun family members from Fort Hill, then called Clergy Hall, to Washington, D.C., after John C. Calhoun became secretary of war.

Learning more about Hector and other enslaved persons who were with the Calhouns in Washington, D.C., is an ongoing project for Historic Properties.

On December 29, 1842, Marie Elizabeth Venning was born into enslavement at Fort Hill. By 1854, Marie was sent away from Fort Hill. She returned to Floride Calhoun by April 1865. In 1869, Marie traveled to Carmel, New York, to work for Thomas and Anna Clemson's daughter, Floride Clemson Lee, and her husband, Gideon Lee. By 1880, Marie worked for Benjamin Rhett's family through her death on March 18, 1915. Marie died in Mobile, Alabama, and she is buried in Magnolia Cemetery in Mobile. She was described as a lady's maid, fluent in French and a seamstress.

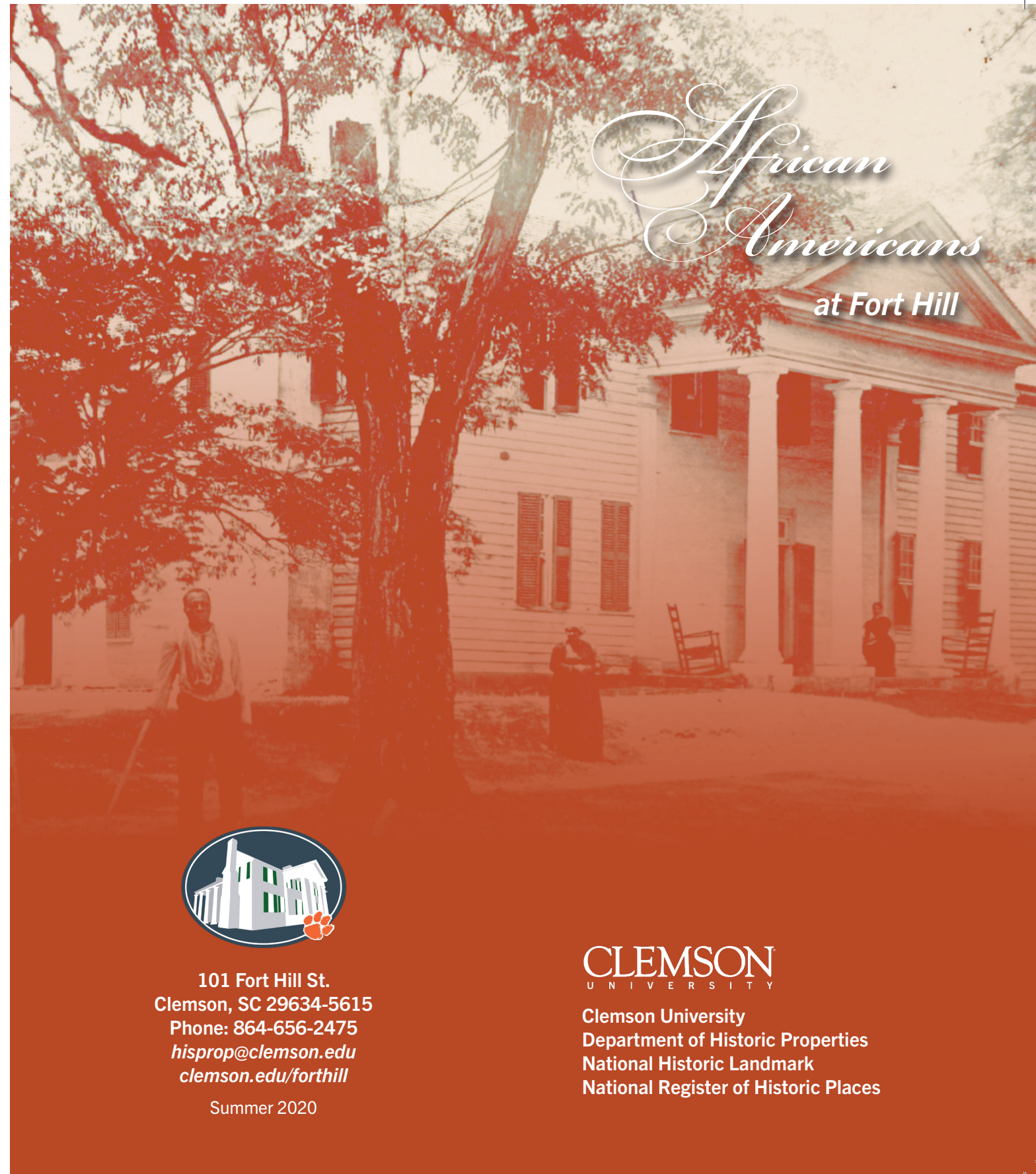
Basel, an enslaved African American, accompanied the Clemsons to Belgium from 1844-1851. According to Anna Clemson, Basel's skin color was seen as an oddity in Europe. Little is known about Basel's life prior to his journey to Belgium with the Clemsons while Thomas G. Clemson was a diplomat. Anna argued that enslaved persons were better off in the South than European wage workers.

Rasmus, an enslaved child, hid with 8-year-old Patrick Calhoun, the son of A.P. and Margaret Green Calhoun, when Union soldiers came to Fort Hill during the Civil War. There is no other known reference to Rasmus.

Bill Greenlee, who was born around 1871, worked as a stable boy and carriage driver at Fort Hill during Clemson's last years. Bill was later employed by Clemson College and the town of Clemson.

Clemson's Department of Historic Properties conducts ongoing research into the African Americans and their stories into the narrative of Fort Hill.

African Americans at Fort Hill



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Clemson University
Department of Historic Properties
National Historic Landmark
National Register of Historic Places

The piedmont frontier of South Carolina was developed into plantations by African Americans in bondage. Their resilience, determination and resistance are essential to the full and complete history of the land we know as Clemson University.

The Clergy Hall enslaved community, on the land that became Clemson University, grew steadily, beginning in 1803. By 1810, there were

A full history of Clemson University cannot be told without a true understanding of the enslaved community that worked the land, plantation and home of Fort Hill.

25 enslaved persons who labored during Rev. James McElhenney's residency. Fort Hill, from 1830-1850, showed an increasing enslaved community that grew from 37 to 75 individuals, according to U.S. Census data. The death of John C. Calhoun on March 31, 1850, brought transition. In 1854, his son Andrew Pickens (A.P.) Calhoun initiated the purchase of Fort Hill from Calhoun's widow, Floride. By 1865, following A.P.'s death, there were 139 African Americans enslaved at Fort Hill. Later that summer, following Appomattox, freedom came to African Americans in Pendleton, Floride Clemson recorded in her diary that 15 freed persons of color remained at Fort Hill. Afterward, freed persons of color signed employment contracts with A.P.'s son, John C. Calhoun, and later Thomas Green Clemson at Fort Hill.



Tiller, the daughter of Sharper and Caroline, was 9 years old in 1865.

Enslaved African American laborers managed all aspects of the household and plantation, including trade workers such as gardeners, seamstresses, blacksmiths, millers and carpenters. Freedmen's Bureau contracts during reconstruction, however, restricted African Americans from experiencing their newfound freedom as former Black Codes became restrictive Jim Crow laws.

Earliest Accounts

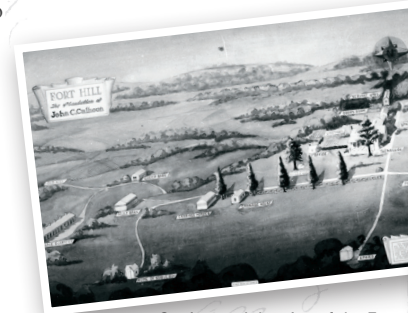
Prior to 1850, the U.S. Census recorded numbers of enslaved persons. Starting in 1850, ages, gender and race were added without names. These records, along with estate records, wills, personal family correspondence and diaries, provide information about the enslaved community at Fort Hill; however, readers must be aware of potential biases hidden in these documents since laws and practices prevented most African Americans from leaving behind any written records.

In 1849, New York reporter Joseph Scoville, writing an article for The New York Herald, included his observations of the enslaved community at Fort Hill. He noted, "In the sight of the house and office is the negro quarter, on a hill 100 feet above the valley, and 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 place." In 1860, there were only 14 enslaved quarters in what Anna Clemson referred to as the "yard" for enslaved field workers and other household and domestics, such as cooks, beyond the kitchen structure. Historical archaeology seeks to aid in telling the African American story at Fort Hill through artifacts and historic preservation recovery.

Scoville revealed that the majority of the enslaved persons "owned" by Calhoun labored in Marengo County, Alabama, "under the management of his son, Andrew." In the 1840 U.S. Census, there were 69 enslaved persons at Fort Hill, and there were 86 enslaved persons on Calhoun's Marengo County plantation. In the 1850 U.S. Census, the Calhoun family owned 75 enslaved persons at Fort Hill and 116 enslaved persons in Marengo County. Thomas Green Clemson and A.P. Calhoun invested financially in the Calhoun family's Alabama holdings, including enslaved persons.

Previously, Scoville had served as Sen. John C. Calhoun's private secretary. Scoville regularly published works anonymously, like this article that favorably portrayed Calhoun for a northern audience. He recorded that Fort Hill "consist[ed] of about 1,000 acres, 450 of which are in cultivation. After an hour had spent in passing through these fields, we returned to his out-buildings, cotton press, barns, granaries, etc."

Other observations of Scoville included that, "while touring the enslaved persons' quarters, Mr. Calhoun stopped a few moments, making inquiries in regard to some who were sick; among them, seated under a cherry tree, was an aged man, who was — as he informed me — the oldest on the place ... He was allowed to cultivate some four or five acres of land for cotton and other things; the proceeds of which became his property, and sometimes produced \$30 to \$50 a season."



Conjectural drawing of the Fort Hill plantation based on historical documents and early campus topographical maps

At Fort Hill, some enslaved African Americans lived among their families; however, enslaved persons may have been married to enslaved persons on other plantations. From 1844-1849, there were no documented deaths among the enslaved community. On Scoville's second night, a male enslaved domestic worker at Fort Hill married an enslaved woman "on an adjoining plantation. ... The ceremony was performed by the oldest negro who was a sort of an authorized, or rather recognized, parson of the Methodist order." There is little knowledge of funerals or burials. Documents point to the hillside of the former orchard as the last resting place of many of the enslaved African Americans.

The article supported John C. Calhoun's public, paternalistic view of slavery. Calhoun termed the "peculiar institution" of enslaving African Americans in the antebellum South as "a positive good." His attitudes espoused supremacist ideas about race.

Enslaved Families

Some enslaved families at Fort Hill did reside together, while other African Americans were separated across the plantations of the extended Calhoun families. Menemin, the widow of Polydore, was encountered by Scoville, who was told that Menemin and her late husband, Polydore, were both born in Africa. In 1849, Menemin was 112

years old, and she had "63 living descendants" at Fort Hill. Polydore was reported to have lived "to a very old age." Polydore and his children were first enslaved by Patrick Calhoun, John C. Calhoun's father. Polydore, Menemin and their descendants were moved amongst the Calhoun extended families.



Susan Clemson Richardson (1828-1910), daughter of Daphne and Bill Laurence, was photographed with Byron Herlong c.1880.

At Fort Hill, Sawney and his family resembled the story of Menemin's family, including being forcibly separated from family members. Sawney's father was Adam, and Adam was the first enslaved person purchased by the same Patrick Calhoun. Sawney was similar in age to John C. Calhoun who was born in 1782. After Patrick's death in 1796, Adam and his young son, Sawney, were listed in Patrick's estate documents. Later in life, Sawney recounted hunting and fishing with young Calhoun and plowing together in the Abbeville District. Sawney, along with his wife, Matilda, or "Tiller," and children were enslaved by John C. Calhoun. They had at least two children: Sawney Jr. and Issey. Although both Sawney and Tiller remained at Fort Hill until emancipation came in the summer of 1865, their children were both sent to Marengo County in the 1840s.

Daphne, an enslaved domestic worker at Fort Hill, was married to Bill Laurence. Around 1828, their daughter, Susan Clemson Richardson, was born. Later, they had a son, Benjamin. Beginning in 1844, they were moved to Cane Brake plantation in Saluda, South Carolina, by the Clemsons. Daphne served as the wet nurse for the Clemsons' children. Later in life, Susan recalled sleeping in a room adjacent to the Clemsons' bedroom with a string attached to her wrist. While in Saluda, Susan married Billy Richardson who was enslaved on a neighboring plantation.

In the summer of 1847, Gargar, the daughter of David, and her husband, "Pegg's Mosés," had twins. Tom, an older enslaved man at Fort Hill, was the twins' great-grandfather.

In 1848, Nelly became the enslaved personal domestic worker of Floride Calhoun; Nelly also