This is believed to be the earliest published engraving of Fort Hill and the grounds, c. 1881. In the foreground, the artist portrayed two African-Americans with a small horse cart. The article was published in *Scribner's Monthly* magazine and included another sketch of the interior of Calhoun’s office. The landscape was open; the main drive came to the north entrance and turned around past the kitchen building. Formerly, the building beyond the kitchen was once a spin house, weave room and a laundry building. A spring house in front, which provided fresh water and food storage, remains today.
This is perhaps the earliest photograph of Fort Hill, circa 1871, and it shows an African-American woman holding a child. That child is believed to be Floride Isabella Lee, and she is being held by Marie Calhoun. Floride was the daughter of Floride Elizabeth Clemson and Gideon Lee.
Thomas Fruster and his wife, Frances, are pictured here on the lawn of Fort Hill, c. 1883. The Frusters were mentioned in Clemson’s biography by Alester Holmes in 1937. Numerous descendants of the Fruster family still live in the greater Clemson-Central area. This photograph is part of a series of stereopticon slides of Fort Hill, which includes the images of Thomas Clemson on the porch and lawn. On the porch is Jane Prince, housekeeper of Thomas Clemson.
Thomas Clemson is pictured in this photograph sitting on the south lawn of Fort Hill. Near the back porch is standing an African-American woman who is believed to be Nancy Calhoun Legree. Nancy was one of many former slaves who were employed by Thomas Clemson, either as household staff or as sharecroppers and tenant farmers. This view shows Cornelia’s garden. She had a childhood African-American companion, Issey Calhoun.
The Fort Hill Plantation was approximately 1,100 acres and covered most of the immediate campus. In addition to the block where the main house, kitchen, spring house and office are located, remnants of the plantation extended to the Woodland Cemetery where eldest son, Andrew Pickens Calhoun, is buried and to the Calhoun bottoms agricultural area where a grist mill stood along Sawney’s branch, later called Hunnicutt Creek. Field slave quarters were attached stone structures approximately two blocks behind the house. Sawney Calhoun was a childhood companion of John C. Calhoun, and his family held a prominent place in the slave community. His father Adam was a slave of John C. Calhoun’s father, Patrick Calhoun.
Marie Calhoun was born into slavery at Fort Hill and was the same age as the Clemsons’ daughter, Floride Elizabeth Clemson. They were categorized as childhood companions and remained close after emancipation. Marie learned French and was a seamstress and educated to be a “lady’s maid.” Following Floride Lee’s death, Marie cared for her infant daughter, Floride Isabella. She is pictured here with the girl in her christening dress. Following the remarriage of Gideon Lee to Pendletonian Ella Lorton, a girlhood friend of Floride Elizabeth, Lee discharged Marie at the urging of his new wife and aided getting her a job with the Rhett family in New Orleans.

Marie Calhoun, c. 1871, pictured with Floride Isabella Lee
Susan Clemson, as a teenager, lived at Fort Hill and cared for the Clemsons’ young children. Susan often slept in the room adjacent to the Clemsons’ bedroom with a string attached to her wrist that Anna Clemson could use to awaken her. Myrtle Herlong, sister of Byron Herlong, the boy photographed with Susan here, provided insight into her early years at Fort Hill. Susan later married William “Billy” Richardson and lived in Saluda where the Clemsons owned their plantation, Canebrake. Susan was the daughter of Daphne Calhoun and Bill Lawrence. Daphne had been Anna’s “personal maid” and had served as a wet nurse. Thomas Clemson instructed his agents that they be kept together as he sold his Canebrake property, which included enslaved African Americans.

Susan Clemson, pictured with Byron Herlong, c. 1880, in Saluda, S.C.
William “Bill” Greenlee was employed by Thomas Clemson in the 1880s and was 16 years old in 1888 when Clemson died. Bill worked for the college most of his life and relayed stories of Clemson to cadets. He had been a stable boy and carriage driver for Mr. Clemson. Bill was interviewed about his experiences with Clemson by J.C. Littlejohn. The Bill Greenlee Room in the Clemson House was named in his honor.

Bill Greenlee, c. 1940, in Calhoun, S.C.
Matilda “Tiller” Calhoun was born into slavery at Fort Hill. Her father was Sharper, and they were listed on the 1865 appraisal of the estate of Andrew Pickens Calhoun. Another Andrew “Andy” Calhoun was a young slave boy who lived with the Clemsons in Maryland and was the son of Nelly Calhoun, Floride Calhoun’s cook. The Clemsons also traveled to Belgium with an African-American male named Basil.
Nancy Calhoun Legree was said to have been 106 years old in this early 20th-century photograph. She was born into slavery at Fort Hill. The oldest recorded enslaved person during the antebellum era was Menemin Calhoun who was reported to have been 112 in 1849. She and her husband, Polydore, were first-generation slaves from Africa and held a respected place in the slave community.
Priest Robinson was employed as a butler, and his sister, Mary Robinson, was employed as a maid by Patrick Calhoun, son of Andrew Pickens Calhoun and grandson of John C. Calhoun in Cleveland, Ohio, in the early 20th century. Their parents and grandparents were African-American slaves at Fort Hill. Their grandmother Jane Calhoun was a maid to Floride Calhoun. Jane’s daughter was a laundress and married Alex Robinson who was a coachman. They had eight children who were employed by the family of Patrick Calhoun in Cleveland.
Alick Calhoun, sometimes written as Aleck or Alec, was often the only male household slave at Fort Hill. Fearing punishment when he “offended” Mrs. Calhoun in 1831 he ran away. Once apprehended, John C. Calhoun wrote this letter to his brother-in-law, James Edward Calhoun, saying Alick was to be jailed and given lashes “to prevent repetition.” In another letter to Armistead Burt, Calhoun asked that, once apprehended, he be jailed and be given lashes as punishment, “to prevent a repetition.” This account was the most severe recorded treatment of any of the Calhoun slaves and occurred a month after the Nat Turner rebellion.
An appraisal of the estate of A.P. Calhoun, this 1865 document itemizes 127 field slaves and 12 household and skilled trades. The larger number of slaves was attributed to the property of A.P. Calhoun from his Alabama plantation, Canebreak, also called Cuba Plantation.
A bill of sale, from Floride Calhoun to A.P. Calhoun, is for Stephen, described as a “bright mulatto boy,” age 13, sold within the family for $800. Floride Calhoun, widow of John C. Calhoun, agreed to sell the Fort Hill plantation and property to her eldest son, Andrew Pickens Calhoun three years later. The sale in 1854 enumerated some 50 enslaved African Americans at Fort Hill in a schedule of slaves.
Following the death of John C. Calhoun, Mrs. Calhoun sold the property to their son Andrew Pickens Calhoun and moved to Pendleton to MiCasa with a handful of household slaves including her cook, Nelly. Following A.P. Calhoun’s death in the spring of 1865, his widow, Margaret met the Union forces at Fort Hill during the Civil War.

One account from her son, Patrick, then 9, was that he was told to hide with Rasmus (Erasmus), a slave boy of the same age, while the troops took horses and supplies from the plantation. The sale of property and African-American slaves was a debt that A.P. Calhoun never fully paid resulting in later foreclosure on his widow, Margaret, by executor of her estate in 1866, son-in-law, Thomas Clemson.
Top: Easter Reid and the Reid family worked during the reconstruction era at Fort Hill.

Bottom: In 2007, the Reid family held a reunion at Fort Hill.