



# BLACK LIVES AND WHITENED STORIES: *From the Lowcountry to the Mountains*

David E. Whisnant and Anne Mitchell Whisnant





# BLACK LIVES AND WHITENED STORIES: *From the Lowcountry to the Mountains*

By

David E. Whisnant, Ph.D.

Anne Mitchell Whisnant, Ph.D.

*Primary Source History Services*

## A HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY OF BLACK HISTORY AT ROCK HILL/CONNEMARA

*Presented to*

Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site

*In Partnership with*

the Organization of American Historians/National Park Service

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Cultural Resources Division  
Southeast Regional Office  
National Park Service  
100 Alabama Street, SW  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303  
(404) 507-5847

*Black Lives and Whiteness Stories: From the Lowcountry to the Mountains*

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<http://www.nps.gov>



*Cover Photos:*

*Smyth Servants:* Black female servant rolling children in stroller. Photograph, Carl Sandburg National Historic Site archives, (1910; Sadie “Boots” & Rosana [?]).

*Smyth Servants:* Swedish House HSR, p. 22; (Collection of William McKay, great-grandson of the Smyths). Also Barn Complex HSR Fig. 11, p. 7: Figure 11. The Smyths’ servants in front of the kitchen building, ca. 1910. (Collection of Smyth great-grandson William McKay).

*Sylvene:* From HSR, Main House, pp. 10, 37: Collection of Juliane Heggoy.

*Man and 3:* Swedish House HSR, p. 22; (Collection of William McKay, great-grandson of the Smyths). Also Barn Complex HSR Fig. 11, p. 7: Figure 11. The Smyths’ servants in front of the kitchen building, ca. 1910. (Collection of Smyth great-grandson William McKay).

*Charleston House:* Henry Capers, *The Life and Times of C. G. Memminger* (Richmond, VA: Everett Waddey Co., 1893), <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000317414>, accessed Feb. 5, 2017.

*James Fisher:* Swedish House HSR Fig. 24, p. 24 says “FIGURE 24. Undated photograph, probably of Smyth’s chauffeur James Robinson.” (CARL3002/10/ 05p) instead of James Fisher. Presumably, it is one or the other, but we have not information that would resolve this.

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**PAULINE ANGELAKIS** Digitally signed by PAULINE ANGELAKIS  
Date: 2021.01.26 12:56:33 -05'00'

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site      Date

**SIMONE MONTELEONE** Digitally signed by SIMONE MONTELEONE  
Date: 2021.02.10 13:42:46 -05'00'

Recommended by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chief, Cultural Resources, Partnerships and Science, Interior Region 2 - South Atlantic Gulf      Date

**KAREN CUCURULLO** Digitally signed by KAREN CUCURULLO  
Date: 2021.02.19 15:37:18 -05'00'

Recommended by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Regional Director, Interior Region 2- South Atlantic Gulf      Date

**KAREN CUCURULLO** Digitally signed by KAREN CUCURULLO  
Date: 2021.02.19 15:37:44 -05'00'

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
For Regional Director, Interior Region 2 - South Atlantic Gulf      Date





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# INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Historic Resource Study (HRS) explores the history of African Americans and the larger white-black racial dynamics at the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site (CARL) over a period of more than a century, beginning in the 1830s.

## *Original Scope of Work*

In the original Scope of Work for this project (2017), CARL staff noted that:

The architecture and cultural landscape of Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site represent stories of slavery and the subordination of black workers, but this history has gone untold. At least one building (known as the Chicken House or Wash House) was built by enslaved people; it is also possible that enslaved people used it as a dwelling, although the building's subsequent functions (housing chickens and/or the laundry) have subsumed its identity. Also, the two-story Gothic Revival building situated to the west of "the big house" was built specifically as a dwelling for enslaved people. According to oral tradition, the Sandburg family called this building the "Swedish House" because it reminded Sandburg of architecture in his ancestral country of Sweden. Although Sandburg's renaming may have been innocuous, the deferral to Sandburg-era "authenticity" silences the fact that the Swedish House has an important story to tell about enslaved people at the site. The African Americans who were employed by the Smyth family continued to live and work in these buildings and spaces, but we know nothing about their lives.

CARL staff further observed that some previous studies and reports had identified and evaluated the park's cultural resources, but they had not offered the needed historical context to understand social relationships between white land owners and enslaved persons of color (before or during the Civil War) or African American servants who lived and worked on site after the war.

This study aims to reframe the history of the site to encompass its entire post-1830s history, focusing both on specific aspects of Black life at the site and on the larger involvements and commitments of the white property owners that, in turn, shaped Black lives there.

The plan and parameters for this study were initially developed during the early months of 2017 through discussions among CARL staff (Steven Kidd, Jamie Mahan), National Park Service Southeast Region staff (Angela Sirna), Organization of American Historians (OAH) staff (Aidan Smith), and Drs. David and Anne Whisnant, co-principals of Primary Source History Services.

For NPS, the stated central concerns driving this project were:

- To complete a focused body of research on the social history of (primarily) African American life at the site, beginning with the Memminger period in the 1830s, continuing through the Civil War and Reconstruction, and continuing as far beyond Ellison Adger Smyth's death in 1942 as seemed useful for CARL's current and future development.
- To shape this research into an HRS useful for cultural resource management and interpretive purposes.
- To make the research, writing, and some relevant recommendations useful to inform expanded documentation of the site's National Register information to be undertaken later as a separately contracted project.

### *Mid-Project Adjustments*

While working on the project, the research team made several discoveries that necessitated adjustments in the project framing and work plan.

- Very early in our investigations, we became aware of the contradiction of designating the Memminger/Rock Hill site as the Carl Sandburg [first "Farm" and then "Home"] National Historic Site, given that Sandburg had never had any connection with either the site itself or the larger western North Carolina region prior to moving there in 1946. We realized, that is, that the Sandburgs' arrival represented a clear break in the site's history, and that thinking about Sandburg presented an obstacle to understanding the site's prior histories. This insight helped expand, deepen, refine, and strengthen our conceptual, analytical, methodological, and narrative work on this project.
- We were pleased to encounter a significant amount of useful data on Black life and Black workers in a substantial number of previous studies—some dating from prior to CARL, some produced by/for CARL, and some recent scholarly material. We have located, evaluated, assembled, and incorporated those data as they proved useful.
- What had always been a multi-polar process of demographic interaction and movement (between the South Carolina/Georgia Lowcountry and the Flat Rock area and surrounding portions of western North Carolina) appeared in prior CARL studies (and associated popular writing) as simply bi-polar (Charleston/Flat Rock). After 1947, the Flat Rock portion of the (in fact, larger and more diverse) receiving pole was romanticized as "Little Charleston of the Mountains." That formulation was untenable from the beginning of its use and has grown increasingly so over the years.
- One of the four families (William Gregg, Jr.'s) that had owned and occupied the Rock Hill property had been unjustifiably mostly eliminated from the CARL narrative some years ago. In places, including the CARL website, the park asserted that the Greggs had had little impact on the site, and possibly never



came there.<sup>1</sup> This proved untrue. We have enlarged and restored much of the Gregg-era story because it merits that on its own, and because it is importantly related to both the Memminger and Smyth histories.

- Because of the expected difficulty of finding detailed biographical or genealogical information about individual African Americans, we focused initially upon generating better data on general numbers and aggregated stories of enslaved or (later) free African American workers in the larger Flat Rock community and western North Carolina region. However, due largely to the growing number of digitized sources related to African American history, names and biographical details about a substantial number of individuals turned out to be more discoverable than we anticipated, and we have included all information uncovered. These leads may point the way to additional stories that could emerge through subsequent research, especially as more documents come online almost daily.

## *Structure of This Study*

Readers may find it helpful to understand that the narrative that follows includes one main narrative and two “meta-narratives” (narratives about other narratives).

First and most straightforwardly, the main narrative: we explore the histories of Black and white Rock Hill/Connemara owners, residents, and workers, beginning in the 1830s. This narrative includes C. G. Memminger, his family, enslaved Black workers, and his white and Black employees; William Gregg Jr. and Mary Fleming Gregg, their families (necessarily including in some cases their families of origin), and their employees; and Ellison Adger Smyth and his Black and white employees.

This narrative moves in more or less linear and chronological fashion and ends just before the Sandburg purchase of Connemara. These specific stories are placed in relevant larger contexts of the South Carolina Lowcountry, western North Carolina, and the route in between, along which elite South Carolina whites established outposts (some of which became—and have remained—established towns and cities) throughout the nineteenth century. The main narrative appears in chapters 1–7, and 10–11.

Were this narrative—anchored by the stories of Rock Hill/Connemara property owners—to be carried forward in time, it would also encompass the histories of the Sandburgs and the National Park Service as the subsequent *owners* of the property—not that different from Memminger, Gregg, and Smyth. These post-1940s histories were, on the whole, beyond the scope of our work.

In two regards, however, the post-1940s period could not be completely excluded from our account. To surface the buried stories of African Americans at Rock Hill/Connemara we have had to work through (and sometimes around) the post-1940s

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<sup>1</sup> “History of Connemara - Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site (U.S. National Park Service),” accessed July 18, 2020, <https://www.nps.gov/carl/learn/historyculture/history-of-connemara.htm>.

*history-telling projects* of both the National Park Service and various white individuals (including writers and journalists) and groups in Western North Carolina. In important ways, these projects made it harder to see the park as a site of Black history. We unpack these two meta-narratives in several places:

Meta-narrative #1 (opening part of chapter 1) focuses on how the National Park Service decision to create the park and focus its interpretation at the site on the *last twenty years of Carl Sandburg's life* has silenced earlier histories during which enslaved and, later, free Black Americans lived and labored at the site. Moreover, decades of NPS focus on Sandburg has allowed some contacts who might have known about other histories to die, and allowed some archival trails that would have illuminated their lives to attenuate and grow cold.

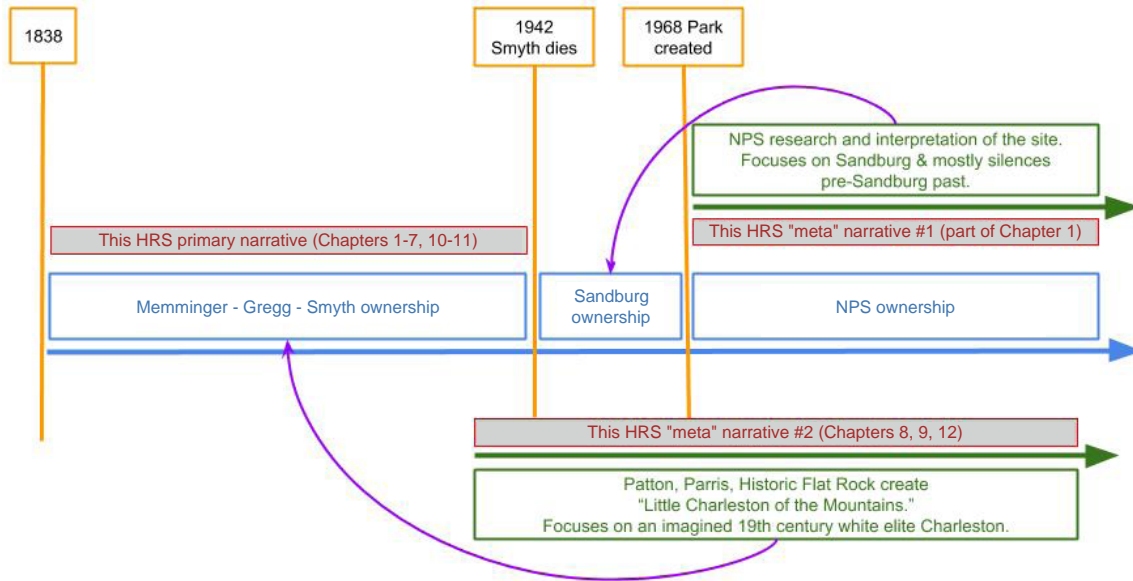
Meanwhile, meta-narrative #2 (chapters 8, 9, and 12) looks at how twentieth-century efforts in western North Carolina (largely by several white writers and community boosters) to refashion Flat Rock as the “Little Charleston of the Mountains” blanketed Rock Hill/Connemara’s history in a gauzy haze that borrowed and spread the “golden haze” that much earlier had mythologized Charleston and obscured its actual history. This hazy “history” (uncritically adopted by both the public and at times by CARL itself) has shrouded both the stories of Black individuals and the deeply white-supremacist activities in which the property’s first three owners were implicated.<sup>2</sup> To tell those histories requires clearing the haze and re-envisioning the entire history of Flat Rock.

The following graphic may help readers visualize what is happening in the chapters that follow.

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<sup>2</sup> This phrase to describe Flat Rock’s history appears on the CARL website, “History of Connemara - Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site (U.S. National Park Service),” accessed July 18, 2020, <https://www.nps.gov/carl/learn/historyculture/history-of-connemara.htm>.

Structural Overview: African American History Historic Resource Study  
 Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, 2020  
 Anne and David Whisnant



To make access to this document easy for readers, we have made extensive use of subheads, and we provide a detailed Table of Contents on page VII that includes all of them. Therefore, we will not provide chapter summaries here.

### *Major Conclusions and Interpretive/Management Ideas*

The most important conclusion of this study is that the history of the site now called the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site is far more varied, layered, and interesting than a focus on Sandburg either allows or suggests. To retain (and regain) relevancy to new (and more diverse) publics as Sandburg’s influence diminishes, the site would do well to develop some of its other histories as parallel management and interpretive frames.

Emerging from expanded contexts and narratives we have defined and pursued in the chapters that follow are a few themes worth considering:

- **Slavery in western North Carolina:** The history of Rock Hill and Flat Rock more generally demonstrate how deeply implicated in slavery parts of western North Carolina were. The stories represented here can illuminate many dimensions of slavery in the southern mountains, an area of burgeoning scholarship. Although popularly imagined to be a white region, the Appalachian region has always had a significant Black presence, and slavery and the internal slave trade

thrived there. Further, slavery in the region was not isolated from the larger dynamics of slavery elsewhere, as the history of the CARL site amply demonstrates.

- CARL could discuss these larger realities and explore specifically how the vast wealth of Lowcountry South Carolina—grounded in (often *very* large-scale) slaveholding—financed the Memminger enclave and the rest of the summer colony in Flat Rock and other western North Carolina communities. Memminger and many other white Flat Rock property owners were men so committed to a white-supremacist ideology that they became leaders in the Confederacy. And the intergenerational reverberations of the slavery-based political economy of Lowcountry South Carolina continued to undergird the development of the site and the community through the Smyth years.
- There are many elements of this history to explore, including the life histories, racial ideologies, and multiple activities of these wealthiest of the southern white wealthy and the related experiences of both the white western North Carolinians they employed and the Black individuals they enslaved.
- **North Carolina’s “inner civil war”:** Disunity and dissent within the Confederacy were perpetually on display in North Carolina as the Civil War ground on. The specific site-based story of the Union prisoners of war who escaped from South Carolina and were helped by blacks and whites in and around Rock Hill illustrates this conflict vividly. Several recent scholars (e.g., David Silkenat) have worked assiduously and productively in this area.
- **Reconstruction:** The site has several clear and important Reconstruction connections.
  - Most obvious are those related to C. G. Memminger himself. A place to begin would be the story of how he had to stay in Flat Rock while attempting to get his Charleston property restored. Discussing this situation could open a window to conversations about President Andrew Johnson’s amnesty proclamation and generally lenient treatment of former Confederate leaders, and to the eventual restoration of former Confederates (including Memminger himself) to political leadership in the South after 1876. Memminger’s racial views can also be explored as they were revealed through his reaction to both emancipation in general, and to the housing of Black orphans in his home in Charleston.
  - A second Reconstruction connection can be made through the life of “Captain” Ellison Adger Smyth. While, currently, the multi-stranded story of his life has been reduced to his activities as an “industrialist,” we have explored, documented and re-narrated that story to include Smyth’s involvement in the Red Shirts and similar groups in South Carolina whose violence toward Black citizens helped turn back the gains that emancipation and Reconstruction had promised. That story turns out to make a major, essential contribution to the complicated Black history we were engaged to investigate.
- **Black life after emancipation:** In the lives of the individuals who worked for Memminger and Smyth after the Civil War and into the twentieth century, there are a number of discrete stories here that demonstrate how Black people

navigated their new freedoms: deciding where to establish permanent homes, finding work, negotiating for their labor, maintaining familial connections, creating institutions (e.g. the Society of Necessity), serving in the military. Freed people's establishment of the Kingdom of the Happy Land in Henderson County, closely following the War's end, is a dramatic but poorly known story that connects Flat Rock to some of these larger dynamics.

- **Researching Black family histories:** With references to the individuals whose lives were entangled with those of the Memmingers, Greggs, and Smyths, it is possible to explore the processes of unpacking Black individual and family histories emerging from slavery and continuing through emancipation, Reconstruction, and Jim Crow. The threads of connection already uncovered could provide material for family history research workshops that highlight techniques and new digital sources and create opportunities to connect with diverse visitor groups, and possibly even descendent communities.
- **Southern industrialization:** In the lives of both Ellison Smyth and William Gregg Jr., the site connects to stories of southern industrialization (especially in textiles) beginning before the Civil War. This story, indeed, has far more relevance to the history of the site than do Carl Sandburg's twenty years there, but has never been treated at all in prior studies or interpretive efforts. It reaches (as we have been at pains to demonstrate) beyond the simplistic "great industrialist" lionization of Smyth to embrace William Gregg, Sr., who had no direct connection to Flat Rock, but who raised, trained, formed and employed William Jr. across several customary arbitrary southern divides between Black and white, and "agriculture" and "industrialization."

As the present study demonstrates, the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site has many more stories to tell than it has ever told. The ideas presented here about how to do some of that are meant to be suggestive, not exhaustive. With attention to these diverse histories and the ways the park landscape might support exploring them, the site has the potential to reconnect with its regional context and setting. Treated with creativity and courage, stories vital to understanding the history of race in the United States, the South, and the southern mountains could become reasons for new audiences to discover this fascinating site.





## CHAPTER ONE

# CHOOSING CARL: COLD CASES, NEW POSSIBILITIES, AND UNSILENCING THE PAST

## Introduction

**T**his study responds to a decision by the National Park Service and the staff of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site (which we will refer to by its NPS acronym, CARL) to expand the research and documentary frame of the site to include the presence of African Americans (both enslaved and free), from the construction of C. G. Memminger’s Rock Hill in the 1830s to the end of the site’s ownership by Ellison Adger Smyth in 1945.

In this regard, it is helpful to examine both pre-1968 historical narratives (that is, those that pre-date the establishment of the park), and post-1968 NPS and CARL documents and studies. We do so only schematically in this opening chapter to open and frame the discussion. More detailed attention to both sets of documents appear in later chapters.

In the process of inventorying these narratives, we have come to understand that a challenge of the present study is to recover histories that have effectively (though never completely) been *silenced* during the park’s history because of the 1967–1968 planning decision to focus the site completely on the “last twenty years” of Carl Sandburg’s life, and the consequent specification in the enabling legislation.

Thus, although it turns out that there are several cross-cutting narratives of the African American presence at the site, recovering those stories now is in some respects like revisiting a cold case, since much pertinent evidence and many knowledgeable informants have vanished.

Approaching these materials requires, first of all, that we frame all these stories—including the creation of the park and the effect of that action upon the project of telling pre-park stories—within their regional, national, and (it is helpful to point out for the first time) international contexts, as well as their specific formative historical and cultural moments.

## Pre-1968 Published Sources on the Pre-CARL Past

### *Biographical Studies*

Some biographical and historical data on Christopher Gustavus Memminger, Charles Baring, and related persons and contexts were in print decades before the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site even emerged as an idea. The most salient of those items would have allowed a serviceable (if incomplete) historical contextualization of main events and actors in and around what later became the CARL site, had the NPS and others examined and made appropriate use of them.<sup>1</sup>

As early as 1888 (eight decades before the 1968 formation of CARL), a brief entry on C. G. Memminger (misidentified as *Charles Gustavus*) in *Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography* said that he was a “financier” and briefly chronicled his early life and Civil War activities, but did not say that he was a slaveholder. It also did not mention his half-century of connection with Flat Rock.<sup>2</sup>

Four years later, McCrady and Ashe's *Cyclopedia of Eminent and Representative Men of the Carolinas of the Nineteenth Century* offered more extensive biographical sketches of both Memminger and later owner of Rock Hill (renamed Connemara), Ellison Adger Smyth. The somewhat hagiographic entry on Memminger cast him as a “distinguished son of South Carolina [who] was among her most honorable citizens,” who had worked to reform the state's public school system. It sketched his Civil War activities but did not refer to western North Carolina or Rock Hill.<sup>3</sup>

The year following the *Cyclopedia*, Henry Capers's *The Life and Times of C. G. Memminger* appeared.<sup>4</sup> Still the only full biography of Memminger, it was a dated 19th-century effort written by the man who had served as Memminger's private secretary during the Civil War years. The biography was burdened by the then-dominant romantic

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<sup>1</sup> Although primary personal, state and federal archival sources were also available (e.g., letters, journals and diaries, census records, deeds, wills), we confine ourselves at this juncture to published records which lay most readily at hand prior to the creation of CARL. Additional archival sources are used in subsequent chapters of this study.

<sup>2</sup> James Grant Wilson and John Fiske, *Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, 6th ed., vol. 4 (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1888), <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.hn35wk>, IV, 294–95.

<sup>3</sup> Edward McCrady and Samuel A. Ashe, eds., *Cyclopedia of Eminent and Representative Men of the Carolinas of the Nineteenth Century, with a Brief Historical Introduction on South Carolina* (Madison: Brant & Fuller, 1892), <http://hdl.handle.net/libproxy.lib.unc.edu/2027/uva.x004443880>, 174–175, accessed Nov. 5, 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Henry Capers, *The Life and Times of C. G. Memminger* (Richmond, VA: Everett Waddey Co., 1893), <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000317414>, accessed Feb. 5, 2017.

perspective and style, and focused on Memminger’s activities in the South Carolina legislature, the secessionist movement, and Confederate States government. It mentioned “his inviting country seat” in Flat Rock, but gave no context or details.<sup>5</sup>

## *Historical Narratives and Documents*

In 1908 (15 years after the Capers biography), Alicia Middleton Trenholm published her brief *Flat Rock, North Carolina; a Sketch of the Past*, but it would have been of limited use for understanding the history of the CARL site or its early owners and developers.<sup>6</sup> In brief discussion of “some cherished names,” Trenholm mentioned Memminger as the Confederate States’ Secretary of the Treasury (“most public-spirited and generous in every way”) and included a photograph of Rock Hill, but did not explore his time in Flat Rock. Neither William Gregg, Jr. nor Ellison Smyth were mentioned.

Margaret Morley’s more extensive and widely circulated *The Carolina Mountains* of 1913 included a brief chapter (“Flat Rock Community, An Ideal of the Past”) that offered names of the community’s early founders, but its narrative was too romantic and vague to be useful. The whole spectacle, she concluded idealistically, gave “promise of a renaissance . . . to the future development of all [this] beautiful region.”<sup>7</sup>

Buncombe County historian John Preston Arthur’s *Western North Carolina: A History (from 1730 to 1913)*—a more serious attempt at writing western North Carolina history than Patton’s—included a brief discussion of early Flat Rock history. It commented briefly on Judge King, Memminger, and the Smyth family, but more engagingly (and even less helpfully) upon Charles Baring and his flamboyant wife Susan.<sup>8</sup>

One can observe, then, that during the quarter-century beginning with the several biographical encyclopedias, some potentially useful historical and biographical detail on early lowlander arrivals in Flat Rock became available. Those details, though scattered and frequently brushed with romantic hues, could nevertheless have served as cues for later investigators endeavoring to plan a historically situated Rock Hill/Connemara site.

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<sup>5</sup> The volume did include a 150-page Appendix of Memminger’s college orations and public speeches, only one or two of which are helpful with regard to Rock Hill or his time in Flat Rock. We will consider several of these in a subsequent chapter.

<sup>6</sup> Alicia Middleton Trenholm, *Flat Rock, North Carolina; a Sketch of the Past* (Asheville, NC: Inland Press, 1908), <http://archive.org/details/flatrocknorthcar00tren>, accessed June 7, 2017.

<sup>7</sup> Margaret Warner Morley, *The Carolina Mountains*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1913), 111–18, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/coo1.ark:/13960/t84j12t4n>, accessed Feb. 18, 2018. Morley’s extended, highly romanticized discussion of the community these notables created is reserved for a later chapter.

<sup>8</sup> John Preston Arthur, *Western North Carolina: A History (from 1730 to 1913)* (Asheville NC: Edward Buncombe Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, 1914), 492–96, <https://archive.org/details/westernnorthcar00arthgoog>, accessed Dec. 26, 2017. Arthur said his discussion was based upon “that storehouse of information, ‘Asheville’s Centenary’” of fellow historian F. A. Sondley’s 4-page article in the *Asheville Daily Citizen* of February 5, 1898). Curiously, that article contains no reference to Flat Rock. Arthur also cites “the history of Henderson (town and county) by Mrs. Mattie S. Chandler, written expressly for this work” (493).

Close to the 1945 date of the Sandburgs' arrival, a source replete with reliable historical and biographical detail appeared in the *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* in 1939: Mabel L. Webber's transcription and tabulation of (selected, apparently all of whites) 50 tombstone (and "tablets in the church") inscriptions at St. John's in the Wilderness Episcopal Church.<sup>9</sup> The earliest death date was 1810, and the latest 1916; a few were undated. Death date and placement date of stone did not always coincide, since the predecessor chapel dated only from 1833, but clearly all were in place by 1939. A number of Memmingers (including Christopher Gustavus and his wife, Mary) appeared, as well as those of other early in-migrant individuals and families: Blake, de Choiseul, Drayton, Elliott, Izard, Johnstone, Middleton, Lowndes, Pinckney, Rutledge.

More extensive and detailed than any other published local source available prior to the formation of the park was Sadie Smathers Patton's *The Story of Henderson County*, published two years after the Sandburgs purchased Connemara. Unfortunately, the work was in some key respects rather amateurish in its uncritical deployment of romantic Charleston and "Little Charleston of the Mountains" myths.<sup>10</sup>

Closely after her account of the Sandburg purchase of the Flat Rock property, Patton mentions that Rock Hill is "now the home of Carl Sandburg, noted poet and historian," but in general, the details she offers on C. G. Memminger, Charles Baring, and other early arrivals from Charleston are unsourced.<sup>11</sup>

Patton's index names many individuals, churches, cemeteries, a few public buildings, and natural and infrastructural features, but little else in those domains, except for a single mention (143) that the Census of 1850 tabulated 3,892 whites, 924 slaves, and 37 free blacks in the county. Details on house design and decor, women's clothing and social activities, and the like—all centered around the "Little Charleston" configuration—predominate.

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<sup>9</sup> Mabel L. Webber, "St. John's in the Wilderness, Flat Rock, N. C.: Tombstone Inscriptions," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 40, no. 2 (1939): 52–57. We return to this article (and the related work of Elise Pinckney) in a later chapter. Pinckney's more thorough transcription of the tombstone information, more than two decades after Webber's, still predated the establishment of CARL, for the definition and design of which it could have served. See Elise Pinckney, "Register of St. John in the Wilderness, Flat Rock," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 63, no. 2 (April 1962), 105–11; 63, no. 3 (July 1962), 175–81; and 63, no. 4 (October 1962), 232–37. Pinckney's transcription appears to be less than complete, but nevertheless offers far more detail than Webber's.

<sup>10</sup> The myth (recognizable but still unnamed) had previously been advanced by Morley's *The Carolina Mountains* (1913), examined briefly above, Harriott Horry Ravenel's *Charleston: The Place and the People* (New York: Macmillan, 1906), Alice R. Huger Smith and D. E. Huger Smith, *The Dwelling Houses of Charleston, South Carolina* (Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott, 1917), and others. It is discussed more fully in a later chapter.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, her sometimes rather extensive sketches of Charles and Susan Baring, including a mention of Baring having bought two slaves in Buncombe County in 1830, 199–203; Judge Mitchell King, 204; planter Daniel Blake, 205; the Count de Choiseul, 207–9, and others in her chapter "Flat Rock--The Little Charleston-of-the-Mountains", 199–218.

Taken as a whole, Patton's history could nevertheless have alerted early NPS planners and CARL staff to the significant African American presence in the county since the beginning (and even before), to the county's connection with the Charleston multi-racial and multi-class patterns of population movement, and to the early development of transportation routes different from (and much more complicated than) the one Patton and her contemporaries assumed and described. Whether or to what extent it was consulted is almost impossible to assess.<sup>12</sup>

A few years after Patton's book appeared, C. G. Memminger's son Edward published his own *Historical Sketch of Flat Rock* (1954), which besides repeating the by then often-mentioned trading routes and roads, the coming of early lowcountry settlers, land grants, and early inns and taverns, also paid some attention to post-Civil War conditions in Flat Rock. It also referenced an 1830 deed for postmaster John Davis's sale of a small enslaved family to Charles Baring, and C. G. Memminger's journal entry concerning his search for land in western North Carolina in 1836 (a journal apparently lost after his son used and cited it).<sup>13</sup> Had pre-1968 NPS planners looked for Edward Memminger's brief (and easily available) *Historical Sketch* volume, it could have been useful as a signal (among a few others) that there was an important story to be told about the pre-Sandburg Black presence.

Appearing at the same time as Patton's *The Story of Henderson County* was a more carefully documented and contextualized (hence reliable) examination of the lowcountry-to-mountains population movement, historian Lawrence Fay Brewster's *Summer Migrations and Resorts of South Carolina Low-Country Planters*.<sup>14</sup> One key aspect of Brewster's analysis was his presentation of the Charleston-to-Flat Rock movement not as a single magical leap from Charleston to the western North Carolina mountains, but as a multi-phase, many-decades-long movement from the lowcountry through a series of middle- and upcountry locations, and finally into Flat Rock. Had Brewster's study been

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<sup>12</sup> What is clear, however, is that early discussions and planning related to CARL in the mid-1960s included numerous suggestions (e.g., from postmaster E. B. Quinn, other local people, some NPS officials, WNC Rep. Roy Taylor) that the Memminger era be considered for inclusion. See A.E. McCleary and D.Q. Butler, *The First National Historic Site Dedicated to a Poet: A History of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, 1968–2008* (National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office, 2016), 3–13. This administrative history does not reference Patton's book.

<sup>13</sup> Edward Read Memminger and Mrs. Walter M. Norment, *An Historical Sketch of Flat Rock* (Flat Rock: Mrs. Walter M. Norment, 1954). Mrs. Norment was Memminger's daughter. Memminger, born in Charleston in 1856, died in Flat Rock in 1949. This brief narrative focuses primarily upon the building of residences and the serial transfer of lands, but also includes considerable biographical detail. Since Henderson County was not formed until 1838, the sale was registered in Buncombe County, out of which Henderson was formed. Recently digitized Buncombe County slave deeds contain a deed from "John Davis et al." to Baring conveying ownership of Ralph (a "mulatto man"), Lucy ("his wife") and her child (Ellick), on September 30, 1830, for \$650 (Book 16, p. 375). The deed (filed December 21, 1831) is between "John Davis of Flat Rock" and "Charles Baring of Combahee South Carolina."

<sup>14</sup> Lawrence Fay Brewster, *Summer Migration and Resorts of South Carolina Low-Country Planters*, in *Historical Papers of the Trinity College Historical Society*, Series XXVI (1947). This was also published (possibly simultaneously) by Duke University Press the same year. It was widely reviewed and praised in major historical journals of the period. A more extensive discussion of Brewster's study appears in a later chapter.

consulted by CARL planners (we have seen no evidence it was), it would have called for and supported a broader, more detailed and historically deeper contextualization than that being urged at the time by numerous parties to the discussion.

## *Black History*

Besides biographical and general historical narratives, the pre-1968 published record paid potentially useful attention to Black history in the Flat Rock / Henderson County area. Some key aspects of that history were attended to in a few journal articles based upon local documentary sources.

Sadie Patton's 16-page booklet *The Kingdom of the Happy Land* (1957) deserved serious attention, but appears not to have received it until decades later.<sup>15</sup> It offered insights into Black migration *into* the local area after the Civil War, blacks' own model for cooperative social organization, the development of a local free Black community, its growth and demise, and the later movement of some of its members beyond the community's boundaries. Had its history received due attention at the time CARL was being discussed and formed, it might have encouraged more attention to Black history in the area. Unfortunately, it appears that it did not.

About a year after Patton wrote about the *Kingdom of the Happy Land*, a series of documentary articles based on the register of St. John in the Wilderness church appeared. Prepared by Elisa [Elizabeth Rutledge] Pinckney, the three-part series—the most extensive record available in print at the time—incorporated births, baptisms, and confirmations of both whites and blacks from 1840 to 1923. It could have served as a useful and authoritative source for CARL planners and developers.<sup>16</sup>

A final item published prior to the passage of the CARL legislation in mid-October 1968 was Susan Allston's *Early Sketch of St. John in the Wilderness and Flat Rock, North Carolina*. It contained a brief version of the by then familiar narratives of St. John church and the early founders of Flat Rock, but also offered potentially helpful commentary on the Mud Creek area and church (1805), which "in the early days . . . belonged to the Negroes," a longer account of the arrival of Judge Mitchell King than was available elsewhere, and a brief section on George Trenholm (C. G. Memminger's successor as Treasurer of the Confederacy).<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Sadie Smathers Patton, *The Kingdom of the Happy Land* (Asheville NC: Stephens Press, 1957). See map facing p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> These transcripts are evaluated in a subsequent chapter, and the black-related items within them are included in Appendix 4: Pinckney Transcripts from St. John in the Wilderness Register.

<sup>17</sup> Susan Allston, *Early Sketch of St. John in the Wilderness and Flat Rock, North Carolina* (Georgetown, S.C.: s.n., 1964), 4–6, 20–22.



Allston's narrative was (as one would have expected at the time) based significantly upon much-used published resources: Capers's biography of Memminger, Edward Memminger's *Historical Sketch of Flat Rock*, church records, and Patton's history of Henderson County. Going beyond those, however, Allston had also consulted Brewster's *Summer Migrations and Resorts of South Carolina Low Country Planters* (1947), which, as noted above, provided broader and more grounded context for the Lowcountry migration than was available in previously published Flat Rock-focused sources.

Instead of repeating the romantic myth of the Lowcountry migration proffered by Morley, Patton, and others, Allston opened with Brewster's historically grounded perspective:

“As the great rice empire of the south shifted from water reserves to tidal irrigation, malaria increased, and planters sought the antidote of a salubrious climate in the Blue Ridge Mountains.”<sup>18</sup>

To her credit, Allston also presented surprisingly nuanced commentary on Lowlanders' interactions with “interesting and much admired . . . Mountain Whites” who, through the years, had come to Flat Rock bringing vegetables, milk, butter, eggs, and fresh mutton. “We might say,” Allston observed, that

in more ways than one he lived in high places; he was lofty in his habitat and in his opinion of himself. Having wrested his living from the mountain steeps, he very properly had a high estimation of his own abilities and was able to look with undaunted eyes upon these “flat-landers.” Though he might be as poor as a pike staff, the mountaineer was independence itself, and his honest was such that you could leave an ax ( . . . a most highly prized tool) and come back the next day and find it where you left it . . . . Today with the great influx of a quite different group of people, many of whom vaunt themselves and their affluence, the tone of intercourse is much lowered. . . . However, there are still a lot of fine, unadulterated mountaineers left.<sup>19</sup>

In sum, it is clear that—meager as it was in some respects—the published record on the Lowcountry-to-mountains population movement, its main early participants, and the post-1830 formation of their seasonal (later permanent) community in Flat Rock, North Carolina, although not extensive, was substantial. Those sources would have allowed reasonably confident evaluation and contextualization of its key historical parameters and characteristics (especially its racial composition) during the time CARL was being

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<sup>18</sup> Allston, *Early Sketch*, 1. This is followed by a lengthy quotation from Brewster concerning early routes across the Blue Ridge.

<sup>19</sup> Allston, *Early Sketch*, 22–23. It is worth noting that C. G. Memminger's personal papers were by then available in the University of North Carolina library—where some of them may have been deposited as early as the 1940s. The accession record is not clear on the dates.

contemplated and formed. Unfortunately, we have encountered no substantial or persuasive evidence that those sources were examined prior to the authorization of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site in 1968.

How and why were these aspects of the site's history left unaddressed?<sup>20</sup>

## Emerging Consensus: The Formative Moment for CARL

To address this central question, it is necessary to realize that the park's formative moment was brief; that the urgency to establish the site derived from the social, cultural, and political configuration of that moment; and that the "Carl Sandburg" selected for such a focus was to some degree a construct of convenience and expediency.

What about the moment? Carl Sandburg and his family moved to Connemara in 1946. He died in mid-1967. Had his death occurred a few years earlier (or later), the historical/cultural juncture would have been importantly different and would not necessarily have produced the same commemorative outcome.

A decade or so earlier, it might have predated the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision (1954) and the early years of the Civil Rights movement, the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, and U.S. entry into the Vietnam War. A few years later, it would have occurred within a significantly altered political, social, and cultural frame: the Nixon administration (1969–1974) and the racist "southern strategy," a full-fledged women's movement and *Roe v. Wade* (1973), the rise of the "new social history" (women's history, Black history, native American history) and other similarly paradigm- and discourse-shifting events and developments.

As it actually did happen, the months surrounding Sandburg's death were marked by the Tet Offensive and the My Lai massacre in Vietnam, the 159 race riots of the "long hot summer" of 1967, and then the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert F. Kennedy, the Black Power salutes at the Summer Olympics, and Apollo 8's orbiting the moon—all in 1968.<sup>21</sup> Those months, that is to say, were at once promising, turbulent, disturbing, and destabilizing. More than would have been necessary to evoke a sense of urgency to create a historical/cultural memorial.

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<sup>20</sup> Fortunately, some key features of the specific CARL moment have recently been anatomized in McCleary and Butler's *Administrative History*, <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2238441>, accessed June 13, 2017.

<sup>21</sup> "1968: A Year of Turmoil and Change," National Archives, May 23, 2018, <https://www.archives.gov/news/topics/1968-a-year-of-turmoil-and-change>; Malcolm McLaughlin, *The Long, Hot Summer of 1967: Urban Rebellion in America*, First edition. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), <https://catalog.lib.unc.edu/catalog/UNCb7816364>.

Fortunately, during the fifteen months between Sandburg's death in July 1967 and President Lyndon B. Johnson's signing of the CARL legislation, the nearly 2:1 Democratic 90th Congress (January 1967–January 1969) produced reams of progressive legislation, including some related to the national parks.<sup>22</sup>

Within the National Park Service itself, President John F. Kennedy's secretary of the interior (1961–1969), Stewart Udall, an avid environmentalist, arts supporter, and Park Service advocate, joined with NPS Directors Conrad Wirth (1951–1964) and George B. Hartzog Jr. (1964–1972), in supporting new NPS goals, which included new historic sites. Together, they created 46 new national parks by the end of 1968 (the majority of them historical), and helped establish the new National Register of Historic Places as a part of the NPS.<sup>23</sup> This growth and development unfolded on the heels of the NPS's massive Mission 66 program, a \$1 billion effort to modernize and expand NPS facilities in time for the agency's fiftieth birthday in 1966.

What predisposed Hartzog, Udall, and others to home in on Sandburg, beginning (it appears) even before he died? McCleary and Butler's administrative history of CARL locates part of the explanation in a 1962 NPS list of "Themes, Subthemes, and Special Studies," Category XX (Arts and Sciences), which focused on literature, drama, and music.<sup>24</sup> Sites related to poets Robert Frost and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow emerged as early candidates for this sub-theme, but some obstacles arose regarding both. An early 1968 list still included Frost, together with Sinclair Lewis, William Faulkner, and the recently deceased Sandburg.

Udall, a long-time friend of the Sandburgs' daughter Helga, was strongly inclined to push for Connemara and its immediate surroundings as the new historic site. A proposed "three-fold program . . . , [included] preservation of the buildings and grounds as they were in Sandburg's lifetime, . . . interpreting Sandburg as a poet and bearer of American traditions . . . and operation of Connemara as a demonstration [goat] farm" like the one Mrs. Sandburg had operated.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> On the 90th Congress, see "90th United States Congress," *Wikipedia*, June 5, 2020, [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=90th\\_United\\_States\\_Congress&oldid=960903349](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=90th_United_States_Congress&oldid=960903349).

<sup>23</sup> On Stewart Udall, see "Bio · Stewart L. Udall: Advocate for the Planet Earth," Stewart L. Udall: Advocate for Planet Earth; Special Collections Online Exhibits, University of Arizona, accessed July 4, 2020, <http://speccoll.library.arizona.edu/online-exhibits/exhibits/show/stewart-lee-udall/bio>. During the entire decade, 65 units came into being. Historic units among them focused on Forts Davis (TX and AK), Bowie (AZ), Larned (KS) and others. Political figures included were Theodore Roosevelt, Abraham Lincoln, Herbert Hoover, Dwight Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy (MA) and Lyndon B. Johnson (TX), and William Howard Taft (OH). Cultural and artistic sites emerged for the Nez Perce (IA), Frederick Douglass, John Muir (CA), sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens (NH), Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts (VA). See also Kathy Mengak, *Reshaping Our National Parks and Their Guardians [Electronic Resource]: The Legacy of George B. Hartzog Jr.* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2012), chap. 7.

<sup>24</sup> McCleary and Butler, *Administrative History*, 14, <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2238441>, accessed Dec. 8, 2017.

<sup>25</sup> McCleary and Butler, *Administrative History*, 20.

## *Constructing a Particular Sandburg*

If a Sandburg NPS site was to come into being, the window of opportunity was narrow, so it was crucial to decide exactly what in Sandburg's nearly ninety-year life was appropriate to commemorate (and how to do that) at a western North Carolina site to which he had had virtually no connection before moving there in 1946, and lived on for only slightly over twenty of his eighty-nine years.

A formal establishment proposal wended its way through Congress during the politically turbulent spring and summer of 1968, with President Johnson's ratings falling because of Vietnam, a serious budget deficit, and his late March decision not to run for reelection. The Udall-Hartzog plan for the Sandburg/Connemara site was now facing a now-or-never moment. Urgency was essential.

With a flurry of site visits, revised and re-revised planning documents and cost estimates, and last-minute negotiations reaching all the way up from Mrs. Sandburg through Udall and into Congress (with major assistance by western North Carolina congressman Roy Taylor), the proposal moved ahead. On October 17, 1968, President Johnson signed P. L. 90-592 into law.<sup>26</sup>

The legislation's requirement that the historic site would focus on only the final 20 years of Sandburg's life created a problem: how could the Sandburg who had published much of his literary work decades earlier, and lived at the site for less than one-quarter of his life, be convincingly represented as the defining figure at an NPS site that had begun to be developed as a part of a seasonal community by wealthy Charlestonians in the late 1820s?

The problem was addressed by—in effect—redefining and reshaping Sandburg himself to be optimally congruent within the mid-60s historical and cultural moment, as well as representative of the whole of America.<sup>27</sup> It was a transformation Sandburg himself had been moving toward for several decades.

During the final decade of his life, he was still writing, but as his biographer observed, "he was a full-time celebrity, and only a part-time writer." His face and voice were everywhere, it seemed—in "television shows, advertisements, causes . . . public occasions,

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<sup>26</sup> A carefully sourced and detailed version of this skeletal history is available in McCleary and Butler, *Administrative History*, 5–26.

<sup>27</sup> He received a Pulitzer Prize for *Cornhuskers* in 1919, the Lincoln biography in 1940 and for *Complete Poems* in 1951. The American Academy of Arts and Letters gave him its gold medal for history the following year.

and motion pictures.”<sup>28</sup> He addressed a joint session of Congress on Lincoln Day (February 12, 1959), and in August received the *Litteris et Artibus* award from the King of Sweden. In 1964 President Johnson bestowed upon him the Presidential Medal of Freedom.<sup>29</sup>

By the time Sandburg died, a consensus had emerged that conflated him with the nation itself (not the first time such a thing had occurred within American letters). The *New York Times* called him “the embodiment of the American ideal,” and President Johnson elaborated fulsomely:

Carl Sandburg was more than the voice of America, more than the poet of its strength and genius. He was America. We knew and cherished him as the bard of democracy, the echo of the people, our conscience, and chronicler of truth and beauty and purpose.<sup>30</sup>

Such nation-encompassing and (subliminally) internationally framed praise appears to have had at least three important effects on the establishment of CARL and the development of its programmatic directions: it reinforced Sandburg’s attractiveness to the NPS (and his usability in the late 1960s) as the focus of a national park unit, and it predisposed planning for the unit in the direction of a purely Sandburg focus, rather than a more comprehensive historical frame—and hence a longer time line—that would have had to give attention to both Sandburg’s entire career, to the migrating South Carolina elites, and to African American life and work at the site long before his arrival. It also added what at the time was understood to be a compelling *international* frame and rationale.

Had the Sandburg memorial promoters taken a longer-range historical view of Sandburg, they would have encountered a more complicated person, poet and writer, and public figure than the one specified by the CARL authorizing legislation.

This Sandburg’s lifelong intellectual/political peregrinations (Sandburg the self-avowed Socialist, champion of workers and their unions, chronicler of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti’s travails, partisan of the Industrial Workers of the World, and friend of Eugene V. Debs) have been examined carefully by historian Philip Yannella, who locates the most radical elements of his political and social views in forty-one articles he published

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<sup>28</sup> Biographer Penelope Niven, quoted in McCleary and Butler, *Administrative History*, 4.

<sup>29</sup> Sandburg’s parents immigrated from Sweden, and he served there for a time as a correspondent during World War II. He renamed one of the early structures (1850–1852) on the CARL site, built as a residence for enslaved domestic servants,” as the “Swedish House” “because ... decorative things such as the high gable ... looked Swedish and ... reminded him of his Swedish heritage.” See George Svejda, “Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Historical Data on the Main House, Garage, and Swedish House” (1972), 40, and Tommy Jones, “Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Swedish House - Historic Structure Report” (2005), <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2191744>, accessed June 23, 2017. A contemporary article on the award is “Sandburg Given Swedish Medal,” *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, Aug. 16, 1959, p. 12.

<sup>30</sup> *The American Presidency Project: Lyndon B. Johnson; 320 - Statement by the President on the Death of Carl Sandburg, July 22, 1967*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=28362>, accessed Dec. 12, 2017.

in the *International Socialist Review* between 1915 and 1918 (in his late thirties and early forties—a half-century before CARL was created).<sup>31</sup> The earliest were under his own name; later ones were under a pseudonym. Sandburg believed, Yannella argues, that

America was a faithless monster of a country . . . He saw no possibility that the conditions in which most American then lived could be bettered by liberal reforms . . . . He held out only one hope for the country and its ordinary people . . . : massive direct action by workers, class conflict in the form of strikes . . . and, finally, revolution to overthrow capitalism . . . .<sup>32</sup>

Such a Sandburg could hardly have served the purposes of 1960s presidents and award bestowers. But as early as the end of the 1930s (in his early fifties)—pushed partly by the need to support a growing family and partly by the morphing of the political and social system, literary conventions and preferences, his own temperament, and other factors—a more public (and less radical) Sandburg began to emerge: New Deal apologist, “folk music” performer, lecturer, supporter of Kennedy and Johnson, and all-around “bard of democracy.” By that point, the cultural gears that ultimately produced the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site were meshing.<sup>33</sup>

## Two NPS Frames: National and International

### *The National Frame: Mission 66*

The most often (and appropriately) discussed large-scale context for NPS planning and activities during the post–World War II period has been Mission 66 (1956–1966). Following what NPS historian Lary Dilsaver has called the system’s “poverty years” (1942–1956), Mission 66 was designed under NPS Director Conrad Wirth (1951–1964) to provide major planning and funding for long-overdue investment (\$1 billion ultimately) in

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<sup>31</sup> See Philip Yannella, *The Other Sandburg* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1996). This was the Sandburg who published *The Chicago Race Riots* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Howe, 1919), <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/loc.ark:/13960/t21c29p8r>, accessed Dec. 19, 2017.

<sup>32</sup> Yannella, *Other Carl Sandburg*, xiv.

<sup>33</sup> These issues of Sandburg’s life, work, career trajectory, and public stature have been written upon extensively by literary scholars and historians. For two useful examples, see Brain M. Reed, “Carl Sandburg’s *The People, Yes*, Thirties Modernism, and the Problem of Bad Political Poetry,” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, Vol. 46, No. 2, Summer 2004, 181-212; and Sally Green, “‘Things Money Cannot Buy’: Carl Sandburg’s Tribute to Virginia Woolf,” *Journal of Modern Literature*, Vol. 24, No. 2, 2000, 291-308.



infrastructure (visitor facilities and services, roads, employee housing, preservation and reconstruction), programs (e.g., interpretation), planning and development, and system expansion.<sup>34</sup>

The Mission 66 decade proved a golden age for the NPS, during which any major project or proposed new unit had a better chance of authorization than it would have had a decade earlier or later. A total of twenty-seven new units were created between 1957 and 1963, with more to follow after. And under Wirth's successor George Hartzog's directorship (1964–1972), CARL became one of those units.<sup>35</sup>

The upshot of these two overlapping processes was that the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site came into being, and that it was to focus—as Udall wrote to Sandburg's widow—on her husband's career as a writer, Mrs. Sandburg's goat farm, and the Sandburg family. “Carl would have liked that,” Udall opined.<sup>36</sup> But whether “Carl” would have liked it or not, the decision had the crucial effect of limiting the time line of the new unit to post-1945.

Regarding the Carl Sandburg Home NHS, it is also important that the final five years of Mission 66 paralleled in some respects the advent of the Park Service's Division of International Affairs (1961ff.), which sought to shape and implement Park Service policy partly within an international framework.<sup>37</sup>

## *The International Frame: The Division of International Affairs*

Less well known as a shaper of the newly energized NPS system, but perhaps in some ways more important than Mission 66 in defining the subject and thematic focus of the Sandburg memorial unit, was the NPS Division of International Affairs (DIA), inaugurated during the Wirth directorship in 1961.<sup>38</sup> As Joana Arruda explains, the DIA's overseas

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<sup>34</sup> On Mission 66, see National Park Service, *Mission 66: To Provide Adequate Protection and Development of the National Park System for Human Use* (Washington: National Park Service, 1956), and Ethan Carr, *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), especially Part I, 19–123.

<sup>35</sup> Lary M. Dilsaver, ed., *America's National Park System: The Critical Documents* (Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1994), 165–96; see also Esri Story Maps, “National Parks Timeline,” Esri, accessed July 6, 2019, <http://storymaps.esri.com/stories/2016/nps-centennial>.

<sup>36</sup> See McCleary and Butler, *Administrative History*, 26.

<sup>37</sup> Joana Arruda, “Reimagining the History of the (Inter)National Park Service,” *National Council on Public History* (blog), Nov. 17, 2017, <http://ncph.org/history-at-work/reimagining-the-history-of-the-international-park-service/>, accessed Nov. 30, 2017.

<sup>38</sup> Joana Arruda, “The National Park Service Division of International Affairs: The Case for International Perspectives, 1916–2016” (M.A. thesis, Temple University, 2016), <http://digital.library.temple.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p245801coll10/id/368270>, accessed Dec. 11, 2018.

projects (often funded by the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development) were designed to provide technical assistance to park systems in other countries, but were also

fueled by larger Cold War anxieties . . . [and] fit into larger American concerns about containing communism and other political pressures. . . [But] even more importantly . . . [they showed that] NPS is not a neutral entity, nor its individual parks neutral spaces. . . [Historians] should be aware of and interrogate the degree to which the NPS has shaped both American and international landscapes, both spatially and ideologically.<sup>39</sup>

Doing so, Arruda urged, “propels us to think about how its mission has shaped and been shaped by global forces.” Following the framework set forth by the new Kennedy Administration, which was congruent with the DIA perspective, Director Wirth cautioned that

Our National Parks can never again be islands standing isolated and lofty on the face of the Nation. What happens in National Parks results from the same pressures and changes which shape every other reserve of scenic, recreational scientific, natural, and historic value.<sup>40</sup>

The DIA sought, Arruda continued, “audiences to teach about its national park model as it linked its mission to larger foreign policy issues—primarily containment.” Additionally, she noted, the State Department “recruited the NPS by way of its initiatives to teach people overseas, particularly in the Eastern bloc, about American values via national parks.”<sup>41</sup>

Arruda’s argument is compelling: the DIA perspective and its institutional activities seem to have been important factors in defining and authorizing the Sandburg site. They certainly meshed with the contextual factors of the historical moment in which the site’s legitimizing arguments rose to the surface and became decisive.<sup>42</sup>

Guided by the legislation (P.L. 90-592; October 17, 1968) that authorized acquisition of the property “where Carl Sandburg lived and worked during the last twenty years of his life,” the Park Service moved ahead with the Sandburg focus. Planning and

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<sup>39</sup> Arruda, “Reimagining the History.”

<sup>40</sup> Report of the National Park Service Mission 66 Frontiers Conference,” 11, April 24–28, 1961, National Park Service; in “Miscellaneous, Conference Proceedings,” Box 2780, RG 79. Cited in Arruda, “The National Park Service Division of International Affairs,” 31.

<sup>41</sup> Arruda, “The National Park Service Division of International Affairs,” 32. Arruda is careful to point out that, at least from the 1990s, historians had begun to establish that U.S. national parks were not the unique U.S. invention they had come to be understood to be.

<sup>42</sup> Arruda points out helpfully that her analysis rests partly upon the work of prior scholars, e.g., Dilsaver, *America’s National Park System* (1994); Terence Young and Lary M. Dilsaver, “Collecting and Diffusing “the World’s Best Thought: International Cooperation by the National Park Service,” *The George Wright Forum* 28 (2011); and Lary M. Dilsaver and William Wyckoff, “The Political Geography of National Parks,” *Pacific Historical Review* 74, no. 2 (May 2005).

development took about six years, and the site opened to the public in 1974. Visitation increased steadily, from about 30,000 in 1975 to 65,000 in 1991, but then decreased slowly to 21,000 in 2008. By the next year, quite unaccountably, it seems, it was reported to be 83,500 (nearly a 400 percent increase), and in three more years it rose to 89,721.<sup>43</sup>

## Carl and CARL: A Template and a Silence

Those who chose, defined, and created the CARL site knew (or easily could have known from then-available published and archival sources) that it occupied a subsection of the Flat Rock receiving area for elite South Carolina Lowcountry people, whose history reached back some 140 years.<sup>44</sup>

Key points on the extended time line were unmistakable, as pre-1968 sources discussed in this chapter show. C. G. Memminger began to build Rock Hill as a summer retreat for his family around 1838–1839. After his death in 1889, the site was sold to businessman William Gregg Jr. Gregg died in 1895, and in 1900 his widow sold the house and land to textile magnate Ellison Adger Smyth, who renamed it Connemara and developed and maintained it as an elegant English-style mountain manor. In 1945, the Smyths sold it to the Sandburgs, and shortly after her husband died in mid-1967, Mrs. Sandburg sold it to the National Park Service.

Despite the availability of this published record, those who planned, authorized, and built the park decided to focus site definition and development solely upon Sandburg. Not surprisingly, this historically and culturally constricted focus has functioned as an active, silencing choice that has left much other ground unplowed, and over the long haul has proved costly. The silencing of the site's Civil War, Reconstruction, and Black histories is particularly puzzling given that Sandburg's own fame rested in part on his biography of Abraham Lincoln.<sup>45</sup> It was to be, it turned out, some years before a variety of factors—local, national, and international—synergized to suggest that the time line should begin in the 1830s and encompass histories far longer than those bracketed by the Sandburgs' life at Connemara.

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<sup>43</sup> McCleary and Butler, *Administrative History*, 361.

<sup>44</sup> Edward Memminger and Mrs. Walter M. Norment, *An Historical Sketch of Flat Rock* (Flat Rock, N.C.: Mrs. Walter M. Norment, 1954) quotes from C. G. Memminger's 1836 journal concerning his purchase of land around Flat Rock. Alicia Middleton Trenholm's *Flat Rock, North Carolina: A Sketch of the Past* (1908) has a photograph of the Rock Hill/Connemara house. The Finding Aid to the C. G. Memminger papers in the University of North Carolina's Southern Historical Collection says: "Received from Edward Memminger before 1940 and purchased from Elbie Stiles of Franklin, N.C., in December 1997 (Accession 97196)." Its biographical note "is taken from Guide to the Microfilm Edition of the Christopher G. Memminger Papers. Southern Historical Collection: 1966."

<sup>45</sup> In this section, we employ the framing of historical *silencing* theorized in detail in Michel-Rolph Trouillot. *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995).

Despite the silencing, the site's pre-Sandburg history rather obstinately continued to surface intermittently in a number of CARL studies and documents as early as the 1970s, but especially from the 1990s and later. The site's 1971 Master Plan, for instance, contained considerable detail on Memminger and his period of residence. The Svejda Main House / Garage / Swedish House Historic Structure Report of 1972 drew on widespread print sources for extended commentary on Memminger.<sup>46</sup>

These early cautionary observations continued to crop up. In a letter of October 2, 1972, Area Superintendent Robert Thoman reminded that the Chicken House (ca. 1841) was built as "quarters for enslaved people by the Memminger family." Ongoing archeological investigations reinforced the importance of the Memminger era to the site.<sup>47</sup>

The National Register nomination for the site in 1973 commented upon numerous Lowcountry estates and houses in the area. A Historic American Buildings Survey listing on the Memminger house appeared in 1974, and two years earlier Svejda's *Historic Resource Study on the Main House, Family Garage and Swedish House* included periodized architectural data. Unfortunately, none of this data was carried into the *Historic Resources Management Plan* of 1977.<sup>48</sup>

The 1980s did not produce an abundance of analysis or discussion of this type, but a 1981 Historic Resource Study on some structures and landscape features contained significant information on the arrival of Charlestonians Charles Baring and Mitchell King in 1827 and thereafter, and their extensive land purchases (more than 4,000 acres); Christopher Memminger's arrival in the mid-1830s, his land purchases, and the construction of Rock Hill; and Ellison Adger Smyth's much later arrival, his purchase of Rock Hill, and his permanent residence there after 1925.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Comstock, Rock et al., "Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Master Plan," 1971; Svejda, George J. "Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Historic Structure Report," HSR, April 28, 1972, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Archive.

<sup>47</sup> McCleary and Butler, *Administrative History*, 89, 119–20.

<sup>48</sup> Rock Comstock et al., "Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Master Plan" (1971), 9–14; George Svejda, *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Historical Data on the Main House, Garage, and Swedish House* (Washington DC: National Park Service, 1972), 2–12; National Register Nomination: Flat Rock Historic District (1973), 8B; Donald W. Barnes, et al., *Memminger House, State Route 1123, HABS NC,45-FLARO,2*, 1974, <https://www.loc.gov/item/nc0048/>, accessed Oct. 26, 2017; Russell Jones, "Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: HSR Home Family Garage Swedish House Architectural Data" (Sept. 1976), 4–5, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Archive; "Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Historic Resources Management Plan," March 1977, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Archive.

<sup>49</sup> Frazier, C. Craig and John C. Paige, *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Historic Structure Report: Front Lake and Dam, Side Lake and Dam, Pond Bridge, Duck Cage*, Nov. 1981, Denver Service Center, 7-13, 14-16.

The *Historic Furnishings Report* of 1984 discussed features of several Main House rooms, presented evidence of interviews that helped explain how several rooms were used by pre-Sandburg owners, and offered names and photos of several Smyth-era Black servants.<sup>50</sup>

Despite the availability and historical relevance of such information, the *Carl Sandburg Home Official National Park Handbook of 1984* (the official NPS narrative of the site written by Sandburg's granddaughter Paula Steichen), was exclusively Sandburg-focused. Brief exceptions were several mentions of Memminger (he built the house and was Secretary of the Confederate Treasury “under Jefferson Davis”). The final pre-Sandburg owner Ellison Adger Smyth was mentioned only once (“a textile tycoon”), and Sadie Patton's by-then nearly 40-year-old “Little Charleston of the Mountains” name for the area was carried forward.<sup>51</sup>

From 1990 onward, evidence relevant to the pre-Sandburg era proliferated and became more detailed in studies commissioned by CARL itself.<sup>52</sup> The *Cultural Landscape Report* of 1993 was noteworthy in this regard, and the elaboration of archeological exploration and documentation at the site in the 1990s had the added effect of expanding the historical context.<sup>53</sup> The Final General Management Plan of 2003 granted that

the [by then renamed Connemara] estate had a long history - an ironic history for the biographer of Abraham Lincoln - for Christopher Memminger, who built the main house around 1838, had served from 1861 to 1864 as Secretary of the Confederate Treasury.<sup>54</sup>

Gently problematizing Memminger's position in the Confederate government (previously used only as an honorific—“under Jefferson Davis”), the report hinted at an alternative narrative.

The narrative expansion that that hint bespoke found purchase in later studies—especially those completed by SERO's meticulous and indefatigable architectural historian Tommy Jones and cultural resources consultant Joseph Oppermann.

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<sup>50</sup> Craig and Paige, *Historic Structure Report: Front Lake and Dam, Side Lake and Dam, Pond Bridge, Duck Cage* (1981). D. H. Wallace, *Main House and Swedish House ... Historic Furnishing Report*, 13, 50, 73, <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2191737>, accessed June 13, 2017.

<sup>51</sup> Paula Steichen, *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, Handbook 117* (Washington: National Park Service, 1982), 8, 14, 114, 120. Memminger, Smyth, and the “Little Charleston” myth will be discussed more fully in succeeding chapters.

<sup>52</sup> Susan Hart, *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Cultural Landscape Report* (NPS Southeast Regional Office, 1993), 7/1-7/2, 8/14-8/17, <https://www.nps.gov/carl/learn/historyculture/upload/CARL-Cultural-Landscape-Report.pdf>, accessed June 13, 2017. This report also included photographs.

<sup>53</sup> Heather Russo Pence, *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Archeological Overview and Assessment* (Tallahassee FL: Southeast Archeological Center, National Park Service, 1998), 7, 10, 29–33, 59–71.

<sup>54</sup> National Park Service, *Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site* (2003), 16, [https://www.nps.gov/carl/learn/management/upload/gmp\\_small%202.pdf](https://www.nps.gov/carl/learn/management/upload/gmp_small%202.pdf), accessed August 29, 2018.



As late as 2005, Jones's Historic Structure Report on the Main House explored the pre-Sandburg history of the site far more thoroughly than had any previous source. Jones's narrative and analysis included more detailed attention to the Memminger, Gregg, and Smyth eras (ca. 1836–1889, 1890–1900, and 1900–1945, respectively) than had any previous narrative or CARL study. Jones plumbed census and other records and also presented a more grounded and detailed history of Flat Rock that went considerably beyond the by then customary “Little Charleston” narrative. Similar detail also appeared two years later in Joseph K. Oppermann's *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site - Chicken/Wash House - Historic Structure Report* (2007).<sup>55</sup>

Appropriately, McCleary and Butler's extensive administrative history of 2016 collected and presented substantial evidence on this issue that was known and considered during the planning and legislative process. On the one hand, that evidence made clear that the site had a much longer than Sandburg-era history, but, conversely on the other hand, the study made clear that such evidence was explicitly relegated to the status of “minor theme,” if it was even mentioned.

As a result, CARL's option of actually *doing* something both justified and significant with the Memminger, Gregg, and Smyth stories slowly faded as the passage of years allowed a number of trails to go cold, sources to be lost (e.g., C. G. Memminger's journal, which appears to have existed at least at the time his son quoted from it in 1949), and potential informants to die—especially both blacks and whites who likely had their own memories of the Gregg and (especially) the Smyth eras.<sup>56</sup>

Fortunately, some of those tantalizing references did not stay fully buried, and recent and current CARL staff have become aware of the enlarged perspectives these sources (and others) would allow. A concise reprise of the evidence McCleary and Butler assembled on this score proves helpful at this juncture.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Tommy Jones, *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site - Connemara Main House - Historic Structure Report* (National Park Service Cultural Resources Division, 2005), 1–38, <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2191736>, accessed June 13, 2007. This study offered detailed information on individual Black workers at the site, for example. See also Joseph K. Oppermann, *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site - Chicken House/Wash House - Historic Structure Report* (Cultural Resources Division, National Park Service, 2007), sections 1.A.1 through 1.B.5; <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2191743>, accessed June 13, 2017.

<sup>56</sup> This “journal” appears to have been distinct from the annotated accounting *ledger* that still exists in the Memminger Papers in the Southern Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Close attention to the ledger shows that it should not, under any normal meaning of the term, be considered a “journal”. A few individuals—notably longtime Smyth butler James Fisher and Smyth caretaker Emily Jane Ballard—were interviewed in the 1970s, but apparently not cook Johnnie Simmons, who was also still alive at that time.

<sup>57</sup> The following discussion is based upon McCleary and Butler's *Administrative History*, 9–34, 89–92, 114–21, 158–62, 214, 278–80, 286, from which all citations and quotations are taken. The *Administrative History* appears to err, however, in noting that the Memminger Papers were not available in 2005. The Statement of Provenance in the UNC Southern Historical Collection for Collection Number: 00502, C. G. Memminger Papers, 1803–1915; <http://finding-aids.lib.unc.edu/00502> says ““Received from Edward Memminger before 1940 and purchased from Elbie Stiles of Franklin, N.C., in December 1997 (Acc. 97196).”

Shortly after Sandburg died in late July 1967, WNC Rep. Roy Taylor suggested that the Park Service consider the Connemara site. As word of Taylor's suggestion came out, Flat Rock's postmaster (and former Chamber of Commerce director) E. B. Quinn informed him that his idea was "creating a buzz" locally and suggested that "the historical association with Christopher Memminger be added to the property's significance." Taylor passed Quinn's letter along to NPS Director George Hartzog, whose Deputy Director Harthon Bill responded that the NPS would pursue the idea through the normal channels.

Hartzog quickly dispatched Assistant Directors Theodor Swem and William Everhart to visit the site to investigate its historical significance. Swem suggested that, besides Sandburg, the site focus on "other historical values, including Memminger's occupancy."

By the time Taylor introduced his bill in late September, however, Quinn's proposal had fallen by the wayside, and the new NPS site was to be called the Carl Sandburg *Farm* National Historic Site (despite the fact that Sandburg *himself*, unlike his wife, had never been involved in farming in any way).

Still, on November 1, a few days after Interior Secretary Udall and his wife Lee visited Paula Sandburg, he sent a memorandum to Hartzog saying that "house itself readily qualifies as a National Historic Landmark," based on its rich history with Memminger and its preserved landscape. "Most important of all," he added, however, were "the furnishings and mementos of a 'Great American,'" Carl Sandburg.

The Sandburg vs. Memminger vacillation continued. A draft master plan for the site (completed in December for the National Parks Advisory Board meeting scheduled for April 1968) suggested that the farm focus on the "Sandburg ownership and family occupancy," and quoted President Johnson's unmodulated statement that Sandburg "was more than the Voice of America, more than the poet of its strength and genius. He was America."

The following February, while the Park Service was considering adding some adjoining parcels to the site, several NPS officials met with Flat Rock landowners and reported in a March 4 memo that many of them "seemed disappointed that the Memminger name was not included in any press releases." The NPS team advised that "perhaps this area of significance should be included in the future"—not necessarily on its merits, but "to garner more local support" for the plan. Notwithstanding their advice, in mid-April the Advisory Board approved the Carl Sandburg *farm* proposal, citing a memo from Secretary Udall arguing categorically (and uncritically) that

the preservation and interpretation of the Sandburg farm and literary works, and the continued management of the site which he loved as a living farm will lend great insight to future generations, through this one man's example, into the whole chapter of American history experience[d] by his generation.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Minutes of the 58<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Advisory Board, 41. Cited in McCleary and Butler, *Administrative History*, 21.



The deed was done, and the final Master Plan (approved in the fall of 1971) specified that interpretation should concentrate on “Carl Sandburg’s life at his home, Connemara, and his works as a poet, historian, public speaker, and folk singer.” The interpretive program, it continued,

should convey to visitors of all ages Carl Sandburg’s feelings and philosophies and their relevance to the common man today. It should also encourage each visitor to evaluate for himself Sandburg’s greatness, and it should encourage people to read his works.

The Plan’s Management Objectives stated that the park would interpret Sandburg in his many roles—as poet, historian, and “bearer of American traditions,” and would be preserved “as a living farm to best reflect [his] life and times.” At great length, the Plan held forth on the “way of life” at Connemara, promising a tantalizing array of potential benefits. The daily walks, goat herd, love of nature, visits by “distinguished guests,” Sandburg’s erratic work schedule, the home environment, and his “simple” lifestyle would introduce this man to the public and provide an opportunity for the visitor to understand him and “to make his own decisions as to Sandburg’s greatness.”

The Interpretive Prospectus (1970) urged that five objectives would “strengthen” the interpretive themes: “To communicate to the young as well as adults, to encourage people to read Sandburg’s works, to convey the feelings and philosophies that motivated him, to create a wider understanding of his works and their relevance to the common man today, and to give the visitor an opportunity to decide for himself as to Sandburg’s greatness.<sup>59</sup> How visitors might actually be expected to decide anything (including about Sandburg’s officially established “greatness”) for themselves was left unexamined.

In any case, throughout the half-century policy and developmental history synopsized here, the Memminger era (and the subsequent periods of Gregg and Smyth) were never seriously considered as more than “a minor interpretive theme.”

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<sup>59</sup> McCleary and Butler, *Administrative History*, 158.

## Unsilencing a Past

Fortunately, although some valuable informants died, some trails went cold, and many pressing questions had been left unexamined, during the fifty-year dominance of the original Sandburg planning and development template, research on the site (archaeological, architectural, historical and dendrochronological) moved forward, expanded its range, and rendered temporizing less and less possible.

Additionally, some larger dynamics beyond the site itself (local pressure; social movements that emerged around civil rights and the Vietnam War; developments within the NPS; the advent of the “new social history”; the increasing range and sophistication of regional western North Carolina and Appalachian history, Black history and historiography; and perhaps even declining public interest in Carl Sandburg) also pushed expanded readings of the CARL site’s history to the surface repeatedly. By the 2010s, with the encouragement of engaged scholars both within and outside the agency, many NPS sites were looking at the histories they commemorated in new ways, becoming more self-critical about the agency’s and individual parks’ histories, and finding ways to surface a more diverse array of histories.<sup>60</sup> In tandem with powerful shifts in public discourse, new (and linked) historiographies, newly available data sources, newly allocated funding in the latter months of the Obama administration, and other factors, these new foci, new and expanded methodological approaches and frameworks, and reinvigorated technical approaches allow a fresh examination of the CARL site.

All of these dynamics—acting synergistically at some moments and in tension at others—have brought the site to request this present study.

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<sup>60</sup> One effort encouraging this process was Anne Mitchell Whisnant et al., *Imperiled Promise: The State of History in the National Park Service* (NPS and Organization of American Historians, 2011).



## CHAPTER TWO

# THE LOWCOUNTRY: RICE AND SLAVERY IN BLACK AND WHITE

*[Charleston] is a noble monument of what human avarice can effect; its soil is a barren burning sand; with a river on either side, overflowing into pestilential marshes, which exhale a contagion so pernicious as to render sleeping a single night within its influence, during the summer months, an experiment of the utmost hazard . . . But what will not men do, and bear, for money? These pestilential marshes are found to produce good rice, and the adjacent alluvions cotton; true, it is, no European frame could support the labour of cultivation, but Africa can furnish slaves, and thus amid contagion and suffering, both of oppressors and oppressed, has Charleston become a wealthy city—nay a religious one, too; to judge by the number of churches built, building, and to be built.*

—FRANCIS HALL, 1817<sup>1</sup>

**T**o explore Black history at Rock Hill/Connemara and in broader Flat Rock, one must begin in Lowcountry South Carolina. The two subregions are tightly linked throughout the period from the 1830s to the 1930s. More importantly, the wealth that undergirded and sustained Rock Hill and Connemara was built in South Carolina, among the Lowcountry slaveholding elites and their upcountry industrialist descendants.

## What (and Where) Was the Lowcountry?

What was “the Lowcountry”? And where was it? What characteristics did it have during the early nineteenth century? Why did some of those turn out to be important for western North Carolina and Flat Rock?

A map in Peter McCandless’s *Slavery, Disease, and Suffering in the Southern Lowcountry* (2011), based on data from 1760, early in the emergence of rice culture, is helpful.<sup>2</sup> It shows a South Atlantic Lowcountry anchored on Charleston, stretching north

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<sup>1</sup> From Peter McCandless, *Slavery, Disease, and Suffering in the Southern Lowcountry* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 3; <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977428.007>, accessed Nov. 10, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> McCandless, *Slavery, Disease, and Suffering*, Map 2, The South Carolina Lowcountry, showing Anglican parishes and slave proportion of population, c. 1760s, [p. xxiii].

to the North Carolina state line, south to Savannah, and inland up the Savannah, Edisto, Ashley, Cooper, Santee, Pee Dee, and Black rivers.<sup>3</sup>

Culturally, this map also reveals that the nomenclature for parishes (which were at once ecclesiastical, social, political, and cultural units) that cover much of this roughly 250-mile-long Lowcountry area is monolithically British and Anglican. Moving from south to north, one encounters the parishes of saints Peter, Luke, Bartholomew, George, Matthew, James (Goose Creek) John (two, actually: Berkeley and Colleton), Thomas and Denis, Philip and Michael, Stephen, James (Santee), Mark, and David. For good measure, there is Christ Church in the middle and All Saints at the north end. Sandwiched in on the south end is Prince William, and on the north end Prince George and Prince Frederic. Socially and culturally, then, it was a lock. But racially, it was a lock in another direction, as recent scholars have documented. We will return to this point below.

More nuanced than a strictly geographical definition is Brewster's, which factors in both race and class, and relates his description to the coastal, middle, back and upcountry areas:

The South Carolina low country, which originally included only the coastal region, came after 1790 to extend to the fall line . . . from the North Carolina boundary to the Savannah River and passes through . . . Columbia.

The original "back country" was pushed back beyond this line, and the up country . . . thereafter included the part of the state above the fall line. The country stretching from the edge of the coastal region to the fall line and partaking of the characteristics of both sections was often called the "middle country."

In another sense, the low country was a "way of life" or a state of mind, and any part of South Carolina in which that way of life or state of mind predominated was low country, regardless of its geographical location. Such a definition of the term takes into account the spread of the low-country system and influence in the up country . . .

The planter class in South Carolina consisted not only of planters but also of professional men (lawyers, physicians, clergymen, educators, writers), and some businessmen (prominent merchants and bankers), many of whom became planters themselves or were allied with planter families. Hence . . . [there were] planters who lived beyond the geographical limits of the low country proper, but who to all intents and purposes were low-country planters, and [also] low-country residents who were not planters, but who belonged to the planter class.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Until 1783, Charleston was called Charles Town.

<sup>4</sup> Brewster, *Summer Migrations and Resorts*, v.

A recent and more limited “Lowcountry” map is offered by the Lowcountry Digital History Initiative (LDHI).<sup>5</sup> Centered upon the Charleston Harbor Watershed, it reaches across Charleston, Dorchester, and Berkeley counties, Charleston and North Charleston. But the accompanying LDHI text points out that, with regard to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century *inland* (which differed in some respects from *coastal*) rice culture, “Lowcountry” stretched across not only the Cooper-Ashley-Wando River Basin but also those of the Ashepoo-Combahee-Edisto River and the Savannah River.<sup>6</sup>

In his recent book and website, James Tuten combines features of previous maps to construct “rice kingdom” maps of “rice rivers” and “rice lands” (both coastal and inland) that reach all the way from Savannah up the South Carolina coast to the Pee Dee and Waccamaw rivers, just south of the North Carolina line.<sup>7</sup>

However “the Lowcountry” is defined, a brief sketch of the advent, spread, and operation of Tuten’s “rice kingdom” is helpful.

## Slavery and Lowcountry Rice Culture

The history of rice culture goes back many centuries; it appeared in Virginia as early as 1609. “No development,” Peter Wood argued nearly a half-century ago, “had greater impact upon the course of South Carolina history than the successful introduction of rice.” But from introduction to the reliable marketing of a profitable crop took years. The plant itself, Wood explained,

Shallow-rooted and delicate, is now rare on the landscape it once dominated, but its historical place . . . is deep-seated and secure, hedged round by a tangle of tradition and lore almost as impenetrable as the wilderness swamps near which it was first grown for profit. . . .

To master the challenge of growing rice

took more than a generation, for rice was a crop about which Englishmen . . . knew nothing at all. White immigrants from elsewhere in northern Europe were equally ignorant at first, and local Indians, who gathered small quantities of wild rice, had little to teach them.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Hayden Smith, Lowcountry Digital History Initiative, *Forgotten Fields: Inland Rice Plantations in the South Carolina Lowcountry*, [http://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/forgotten\\_fields](http://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/forgotten_fields), accessed Feb. 7, 2018.

<sup>6</sup> This may be seen in a map of the Charleston Harbor watershed in Hayden Smith, *Lowcountry Digital History Initiative: Forgotten Fields: Inland Rice Plantations in the South Carolina Lowcountry*, [http://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/forgotten\\_fields](http://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/forgotten_fields), accessed Feb. 5, 2018.

<sup>7</sup> See James Tuten’s ACE Basin Map in *Lowcountry Time and Tide: The Fall of the South Carolina Rice Kingdom* (2010), <http://www.ricekingdom.com>, accessed Feb. 2, 2018.

<sup>8</sup> Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996), 35–36.

Our discussion here focuses on a short interval and limited spatial frame: antebellum Lowcountry South Carolina.<sup>9</sup> While there were important differences between earlier inland and later coastal processes, those are not germane to the dependence of both upon enslaved labor, or to the planter and Charleston elites' movement (whether seasonal, as it tended to be early on, or permanent) into and out of western North Carolina, which are the focal parameters for this current study.

In bare outline, inland rice culture was initially a rather simple system, likely influenced by the knowledge enslaved Africans had brought with them into captivity.<sup>10</sup> It involved choosing land with appropriate topography for drainage, where certain soil types predominated, and where there were reliable supplies of ground- and subsurface water. Transformation of such plots was the task of enslaved laborers, who were put to clearing it (a difficult and labor-intensive process), building dams and small holding reservoirs with clay, leakage-proof foundations, and embankments and ditches to channel the impounded water downstream through directional gates (or "trunks") to flood growing land that had been laboriously hoed level. When the growth cycle was complete, fields were drained into the rivers through a second series of embankments and trunks.

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<sup>9</sup> The following synopsis of the Lowcountry rice culture process is drawn principally from some excellent online sources: Hayden Smith, *Forgotten Fields: Inland Rice Plantations in the South Carolina Lowcountry*, [http://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/forgotten\\_fields](http://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/forgotten_fields), a project of the Lowcountry Digital History Initiative. It embraces cultivation, irrigation and landscape modifications; export and production decline; a plantation case study. Excellent list of sources (some online). *National Register Sites in South Carolina*, <http://nationalregister.sc.gov/#olindex>. State map of 1,400 sites, clickable by county, searchable by location, individual, topic (e.g., churches, plantations), including linked to full-text NR nominations and to South Carolina Department of Archives and History records. The majority of plantation sites were in Beaufort, Berkeley, Charleston, Dorchester, and Georgetown Counties. *National Register of Historic Places: Inland Swamp Rice Context, c. 1690–1783* (2011), <http://nationalregister.sc.gov/SurveyReports/HC08003.pdf>, accessed March 4, 2018. Detailed attention to early plantations and adjacent rice culture areas in Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester Counties. James Tuten, *RiceKingdom.com*, <http://www.ricekingdom.com/index.html> accessed Dec. 18, 2017. Maps (all South Carolina plantations, and featured ones; many annotated); biographical dictionary of planters; expanded links on six plantations. John Harris, *Voyage of the Echo: The Trials of an Illegal Trans-Atlantic Slave Ship* (2014), a project of the *Lowcountry Digital History Initiative* (LDHI, 2014), <http://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/voyage-of-the-echo-the-trials>, accessed April 14, 2018. The Atlantic slave trade, the Echo traders and captives, the ship's interception and capture, trial of the traders, and interactive map of the voyage. Extensive list of print sources.

The Wikipedia entry, "Rice Production in the United States," *Wikipedia*, May 31, 2020, [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Rice\\_production\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States&oldid=959969845](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Rice_production_in_the_United_States&oldid=959969845) also provides some useful summaries and references for entry into this topic: Early (African) history through the present. Maps, illustrations, photographs. Links to rice types; growth regions and subregions; planters and plantations; cultivating, growing, harvesting, and processing; slave demography, labor and working conditions; production data and economics.

<sup>10</sup> Technical details of the construction, operation, and management of the water supply and containment systems are available in the Inland Rice Cultivation section of the *Forgotten Fields* site, [http://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/forgotten\\_fields/inland\\_rice\\_cultivation](http://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/forgotten_fields/inland_rice_cultivation), accessed Feb.13, 2018, upon which this discussion is based. Wood, *Black Majority*, 59–62, also considers the extent to which African slaves had (or did not have) experience in and knowledge of rice culture prior to their arrival. Numerous additional images of various dates and many aspects of the process are available in Pringle, *A Woman Rice Planter* (1913), Alice Huger Smith's *Dwelling Houses of Charleston* (1913) and *A Carolina Rice Plantation of the Fifties* (1936), and many other sources.



The growth cycle was actually more complicated than this model suggests, however. It consisted of

three flooding stages, separated by periods when enslaved field hands had to remove weeds by hand from the drained fields. During the first flooding, or “sprout flow,” water eroded the trench banks causing soil to cover the grain. Trunk minders, a critical skilled position on rice plantations filled by enslaved Africans, would slowly let . . . water onto the fields . . . .

The seeds sat underwater for approximately twenty- one days until [they] sprouted and germinated . . . . [Then] trunk minders gradually drew off the water to prevent damaging the delicate crop. Fields dried for fifteen days [while] enslaved workers removed any competing weeds and volunteer rice. As the seedlings grew to a height of two to three feet, the trunk minders let out a second flooding, or “stretch flow,” for twenty-one days. During this flow, floodwaters would lift up the “trash” of pulled weeds and stalks. A second and possibly third hoeing took place during the forty-day period after trunk minders let the water off the fields. Finally, the harvest flow took place until the rice crop reached maturation. . . . [It required the most] water because the flooding needed to be as high as the plants . . . .<sup>11</sup>

While growing strategies were constantly being tested and refined, the learning curve was long.<sup>12</sup> But a pervasive and durable constant was that growing rice was highly labor intensive—so much so that low-cost labor (hired, indentured, or enslaved) was essential. During the earliest years, rice planters turned to the most proximate supply, local Indian tribes, but that proved problematic for numerous (e.g., diplomatic and strategic) reasons. The same proved true (but for different reasons) regarding indentured white labor.<sup>13</sup>

The upshot was that enslaved Black labor appeared to rice growers of the time to be the only viable option. The widespread exploitation of that labor source not only enabled the survival and spread of rice culture but also radically shifted (in effect, permanently) the demography of the Lowcountry and of South Carolina.

The quarter-century between 1690, when rice became a successful and reliable crop, and 1720, Peter Wood said in *Black Majority*, “represents the high-water mark of diversified Negro involvement in the colony’s growth.” During these years, he argued, Some fifteen thousand blacks came to make up the majority of the lowland population, and to a degree unique in American history they participated in—and in some ways dominated—the evolution of that particular social and

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<sup>11</sup> See [http://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/forgotten\\_fields/inland\\_rice\\_cultivation](http://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/forgotten_fields/inland_rice_cultivation).

<sup>12</sup> Wood discusses this challenge in *Black Majority*, 58–59.

<sup>13</sup> Wood, *Black Majority*, 37–43 details the relative merits and problems associated with these options (the first two of which proved unworkable). The Stono Rebellion occurred in 1739, about 20 miles southwest of Charleston on the Stono River. It has been examined and written about extensively. See *Two Views of the Stono Slave Rebellion*, <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/becomingamer/peoples/text4/stonorebellion.pdf>.

geographical frontier. . . [They became] the Black pioneers [who] constitute[d] the region's first real 'Afro-Americans.'

Despite efforts to use enslaved Native American and white labor from the founding of Charles Town in 1670, enslaved blacks eventually proved to be the most workable option, so that interest in the trans-Atlantic (and intra-American) slave trade grew markedly from the early 18th century.<sup>14</sup>

Growing numbers of enslaved Africans were tasked with transforming the natural landscape of the Cooper-Ashley-Wando River Basin of the Lowcountry into plantations. By 1708, the South Carolina colony had a Black majority—4,080 whites to 4,100 Black slaves (and 1,400 Indian slaves as well). By 1720, blacks outnumbered whites by 12,000 to 9,000, and between 1706 and 1739, over 32,000 slaves had arrived.<sup>15</sup>

The legal, social, and market “logic” of the unavoidable move toward enslaved Black labor was far from clear-cut, however, so that the move was, in fact, gradual. In *Black Majority*, Wood inventoried some of the advantages and disadvantages associated with it. On the positive side, many already “seasoned” African slaves were available in the West Indies; there were few “diplomatic or strategic” issues; slaves could be held for long periods, holding their value as a marketable form of capital; and they seemed more adaptable to the subtropical Lowcountry environment.<sup>16</sup>

On the negative side, especially early in the history of rice culture in the Carolinas, procuring slaves (mostly in the West Indies) presented serious problems. They were expensive to buy, the time required to amortize the cost of a particular slave was long, and the risks in buying, transporting, and maintaining them were many: piracy on the high seas, high mortality rates, rising prices in the market and competition from Spain and elsewhere, the constant possibility of escape—sometimes with assistance from local Indians—and/or rebellion. And yet the traders and owners (sometimes one in the same) continued to buy, transport, and rely upon them.

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<sup>14</sup> Full details of 10,000 intra-American slave voyages (including those that ended in Charleston) are available in “Slave Voyages” (Emory Center for Digital Scholarship, 2019), <https://www.slavevoyages.org>.

<sup>15</sup> Wood, *Black Majority*, 144–51. See also Lowcountry Digital History Initiative, *Forgotten Fields: Inland Rice Plantations in the South Carolina Lowcountry*, <http://ldhi.library.cofc.edu>. Many images are available in this source.

<sup>16</sup> The online site *Slave Voyages*, prepared by Emory University’s Center for Digital Scholarship, <https://www.slavevoyages.org/>, accessed March 26, 2019, comprises both the *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database* and the *Intra-American Slave Trade Database*. It offers vast detailed data on all aspects of the trade in enslaved people. Also valuable is the University of North Carolina at Greensboro’s *Digital Library of American Slavery*, <https://library.uncc.edu/slavery/>, accessed Nov. 30, 2017.

Before the turn of the eighteenth century, Wood discovered, “there were numerous households in which captured Indians, indentured Europeans, and enslaved Africans worked side by side . . . no one form of labor seemed sufficiently cheap or superior or plentiful to preclude the others . . . [and] no single economic activity preoccupied the varied workforce . . . .”<sup>17</sup>

In any case, these complicated, long-wave dynamics eventually had much to do with the Lowcountry development of “Little Charleston” (as it was fancifully dubbed) in the western North Carolina mountains from the 1830s onward. For the later decades of the intervening post-1730s interval, however, the racial and cultural situation within Charleston requires examination.

## The Black Majority and Antebellum Charleston

Charles Town, settled by the English in 1670, was by the mid-eighteenth century the fourth-largest city in British North America. By 1770, its estimated total population had grown to 11,000, and between 1800 and 1830 it grew from 18,824 to 30,289.<sup>18</sup>

During those many decades, the city (incorporated and renamed Charleston in 1783) developed into a tightly knit network of a few score (estimated at perhaps ninety) oligarchic white families living in walled estates and controlling a very high percentage of the wealth, the entire political process, and the Black population (both enslaved and free)—including religious life and institutions.<sup>19</sup>

If one wishes to understand the movement of so many people (rich and poor, white and black, owners and owned) from the Lowcountry to Flat Rock in historical context, it is essential to comprehend the Charleston (and a few coastal locations to the south) from which that movement emerged. There were in fact *two* Charlestons, one white and one black, intermingled, interactive, and synergistic in multiple ways. And as the post-1700 decades passed, the advantages whites were able to buy and build by exploiting undervalued and unacknowledged Black lives rose in a long curve and then began to diminish.

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<sup>17</sup> Wood, *Black Majority*, 43–55, 144–47. In Berkeley County’s St. John’s Parish, for which Flat Rock’s St. John in the Wilderness was (it appears) later named, slaves totaled 75% of the population in 1720.

<sup>18</sup> Ethan Kytte and Blain Roberts, *Denmark Vesey’s Garden: Slavery and Memory in the Cradle of the Confederacy* (New York: The New Press, 2018), Prelude; Harlan Greene, “Charleston,” in *South Carolina Encyclopedia* (University of South Carolina, Institute for Southern Studies, May 10, 2019), <http://www.sceencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/charleston>. Population figures from *Wikipedia*, “Timeline of Charleston,” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline\\_of\\_Charleston,\\_South\\_Carolina](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_Charleston,_South_Carolina), accessed Feb. 17, 2020.

<sup>19</sup> *Census of the City of Charleston, South Carolina for the Year 1861*, <https://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/census/census.html>, accessed Feb. 12, 2018.

Whatever the nature of white antebellum Charleston, it is essential to bear in mind that it was a *Black* majority city, and that rice (and, as the years passed, cotton) growing was crucially dependent upon vast numbers of enslaved workers. Hence to think only of a socially, racially, and ethically “high” culture is a critical error. The *entire* frame must provide the evaluative context.

Charleston was, as Ethan Kytte and Blain Roberts point out in their recent book *Denmark Vesey’s Garden*, “the capital of American slavery,” and a hub of the slave trade. In the years from 1670 to the end of the transatlantic slave trade in 1808, nearly half the slaves transported for sale in this country (two hundred thousand people) “first set foot on North American soil in Charleston or on neighboring Sea Islands.” Charleston also, they note “had a vibrant market for slaves traded locally, as well as for those sold down the river to the cotton and sugar plantations of the Deep South. The enslaved people who toiled in Charleston and the surrounding Low-country made the region’s planters among the richest men in America by the end of the eighteenth century . . . .”<sup>20</sup>

Kytte and Robert continue: Charleston was a “slave society from the beginning,” with nearly one-quarter of its population enslaved as early as the 1670s. “No American city,” they write, “rivalled Charleston in terms of the role that slavery played in its formation and success, nor in the political, economic, and ideological support it provided for the expansion of slavery in the United States.” Rice, cotton, and the Atlantic, and later, the internal North American slave trade (of which the city was a “vital center”) made many white Charlestonians incredibly rich.<sup>21</sup>

Whites were a minority of the population in Charleston, however, from the 1700s to the 1850s. They perched atop a social pyramid that included a broad base of Black slaves at the bottom and a sizeable free Black community (including a small mulatto elite).<sup>22</sup>

Bernard Powers’s study of Black Charlestonians provides key details concerning slaves, free blacks, and elite whites in the antebellum period.<sup>23</sup> A major structural difference between slavery on the plantations and in the city, he points out, is that—unlike those on the plantations, who were kept isolated from whites, blacks in the city were not. The latter “were quick to seize every opportunity to live normal lives and continually acted to enlarge the cracks in the wall of oppression . . . .” Their efforts produced “a complex and varied slave community.”

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<sup>20</sup> Ethan Kytte and Blain Roberts, *Denmark Vesey’s Garden: Slavery and Memory in the Cradle of the Confederacy* (New York: The New Press, 2018), Introduction.

<sup>21</sup> Kytte and Roberts, *Denmark Vesey’s Garden*, Prelude.

<sup>22</sup> Kytte and Roberts, *Denmark Vesey’s Garden*, Prelude.

<sup>23</sup> Bernard E. Powers, Jr., *Black Charlestonians: A Social History, 1822–1855* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1994), 9–35. Subsequent discussion here is from this source, unless otherwise indicated.

Between 1790 and 1860, blacks consistently outnumbered whites, and by 1850, the Black population in the city as a whole had already reached twenty-three thousand. Prominent Charleston minister John B. Adger observed that the slaves “belong to us. We also belong to them. They are divided out among us and mingle up with us and we with them in a thousand ways.”<sup>24</sup>

By 1848, enslaved people worked in at least thirty-eight different skilled and unskilled occupations (thereby contributing importantly to the local economy). They worked in brickyards, on the waterfront as stevedores, on coastal steamboats and sloops, and in building bridges, canals, and railroads (the South Carolina Railroad Company owned 111 people). Others worked in shops as clerks and salesmen, and some constituted a majority in some flour mills, rice mills, and sawmills. Some of these entities owned their own slaves.

Many owners and businesses hired out their slaves, a widespread practice throughout the south. Not surprisingly, white workers frequently viewed enslaved workers as scabs, complained that such work “introduces [them] into situations which are inconsistent with their condition” and endeavored to put protective structures and regulations into place. City officials shared an objection to “any engagements which require the exercise of greater intelligence” than they believed blacks had.<sup>25</sup>

To counter such views (and the impediments that flowed from them) blacks shared their knowledge, experience, and skills with each other: literacy, travel, languages other than English, religion, music (of many forms and traditions), and healing and survival skills.

Although some whites (and churches) both allowed and, in some ways, facilitated these efforts at self-care, group interaction, and Black family and community building, they controlled and patrolled the boundaries assiduously through badges and passes; restrictions on group gatherings; drinking, gambling, swearing, and socializing with whites; dancing, parties and balls; racetrack betting; and beyond-curfew prayer meetings.<sup>26</sup>

Free or not, elite or not, effective or not in finding niches of autonomy, Charleston blacks during the early decades of the nineteenth century were never allowed to forget the tentativeness and conditionality of their situation. And however stable the class- and race-based system appeared to be, its foundational plates were always in motion. The slave trade reopened during a five-year window (1803–1808), exacerbating white paranoia. The War of 1812 (June 1812–March 1815) brought turbulence, privateering against British and

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<sup>24</sup> Powers, *Black Charlestonians*, 10. See his tabulation of Charleston population, 1790–1860.

<sup>25</sup> Powers, *Black Charlestonians*, 10–15.

<sup>26</sup> Powers, *Black Charlestonians*, 15–25.

Spanish merchant ships by local shipowners, and frenzied garrisoning of local forts against foreign invasion. An October 1812 fire of Biblical proportions destroyed nearly two hundred homes, and a great hurricane in August 1813 brought widespread devastation.<sup>27</sup>

Black families (and individuals), Powers is careful to note, were also subject to constant pressures from slave masters, overseers, white men in general (especially toward women, who came to outnumber men by about 10:8 in 1861). Blacks' resistance to slavery took many of the forms (including running away). Most dramatically, many helped plan the uprising urged by local slave Denmark Vesey in 1822. It failed, but resulted in Vesey and thirty-four others being hanged, thirty-seven banished for life, and new, more repressive laws.<sup>28</sup>

Many blacks who lived in Charleston were free. By 1850, there were 3,441 of them—more than in all but three other southern cities (Baltimore, New Orleans, and Washington, D.C.). Of free blacks in the South Carolina, 40 percent lived in Charleston, and of those in Charleston County, 89 percent. Although they were legally free, they were nevertheless oppressed. But Charleston prosperity allowed “a comparatively prosperous, cultured, mulatto elite” to develop, some of whose members themselves owned slaves, and who in general “were viewed as a buffer against the much darker and more ‘dangerous’ slave majority.” They were able to hire themselves out, and to purchase freedom for themselves and their families. Most gained freedom from manumission provisions in wills, including mistresses and their mulatto offspring—to such an extent that 75 percent of free blacks in the city in 1860 were mulattoes (versus 8 percent among slaves).<sup>29</sup>

Such social and sexual freedom was not condoned freely by the state, however; it was subject to regulation, regarding manumission in particular, especially in the 1841 Act to Prevent the Emancipation of Slaves, but also to lesser freedoms. Not surprisingly, blacks (not infrequently with collusion by whites) found a range of subterfuges in creating situations of “virtual freedom.”

Free blacks also guarded their own freedom and social status carefully—trying to ensure that marriage partners were appropriate to their status, which was more difficult for women than men because in 1861 there were almost twice as many free Black women as free Black men.<sup>30</sup>

Economic opportunities for free Black men were relatively abundant; those for women were scarce. Taken together, in 1860 they worked in sixty-five occupations (including many skilled ones). Some of the most skilled were sometimes hired to train enslaved

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<sup>27</sup> Powers, *Black Charlestonians*, 190–94.

<sup>28</sup> See a well-sourced, meticulously detailed and argued web site (component part of *History in Focus: Guide to Historical Resources*) by Tim Lockley, *Runaway Slave Communities in South Carolina*, <https://www.history.ac.uk/ihr/Focus/Slavery/articles/lockley.html>, accessed March 7, 2018.

<sup>29</sup> Powers, *Black Charlestonians*, 36–38. Subsequent page numbers in parentheses.

<sup>30</sup> Powers, *Black Charlestonians*, 41.



craftsmen, and one skilled person in a family might train others, thus gaining publicly acknowledged family status within that skill. Some small-business entrepreneurs became quite wealthy, as was Jehu Jones, who owned and operated his own hotel, granted to be the best in the city, and “the resort of the South Carolina elite.”<sup>31</sup>

Ever vigilant, however, city officials passed regulations to limit the status and achievements of Black workers: capping or freezing wages, forbidding them to testify in court, barring them from certain trades, enforcing preferences for hiring white workers, and in other ways rendering them subservient—however “free” they might legally be.<sup>32</sup>

Notwithstanding such latitude—and achievement—free blacks were always imperiled. They could be (and were) captured and sold into slavery, imprisoned (with the same ultimate result) for debt (including jail fines and court fees), entrapped in one of the multiple legal vagaries of miscegenation. At last, Powers concludes that “as objects of suspicion in the slaveholding South, free blacks became painfully aware that their freedom was exercised only at the sufferance of whites.”<sup>33</sup>

Negotiating this thicket of regulations, strategies, and subterfuges was a constant burden and struggle for free blacks, no matter how economically well-off. In August 1860, as war approached, free Black James Marsh Johnson wrote to a friend that there were cases of persons who for 30 yrs have been paying capitation Tax & one of 35 yrs that have to go back to bondage & take out their Badges, & for the consolation of those who are exempt we are told this is the beginning. The next session will wind up the affairs of every free col[ore]d. man & they will be made to leave. Those who are now hunted down have divined what is to be done with them & before their destiny is sealed by an amendment are wisely leaving by every Steamer & Railroad too.<sup>34</sup>

As war approached, such strictures were even more rigidly enforced. Free persons of color had to pay a capitation tax over and above those paid by whites. “Exempt” refers to persons who had already proved their freedom (by, for example, a receipt for payment of the capitation tax). Destiny “sealed by an amendment” means that those exempt under existing law could again become vulnerable under new laws or amendments to existing ones.

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<sup>31</sup> Powers, *Black Charlestonians*, 43.

<sup>32</sup> Powers includes statistical data with regard to most of these issues and problems. He also discusses the activities of several free Black slave owners, including their community-oriented benevolent societies, schools, libraries, literary societies and other organizations and endeavors. (48–55)

<sup>33</sup> Powers, *Black Charlestonians*, 57, 62–72 continues with the situation after 1850, leading to the opening of the Civil War, but that discussion is not useful for our purposes.

<sup>34</sup> Michael P. Johnson and James L. Roark, eds., *No Chariot Let Down: Charleston's Free People of Color on the Eve of the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), letter of Aug. 20, 1860, 85. These letters (Oct. 12, 1848–Dec. 6, 1861) are from the family of free Black (formerly enslaved) William Ellison, who came to own more slaves than “any other free Negro in the entire South except Louisiana. The letters contain many references to these and other aspects of the lives of free elite mulattoes in Charleston.

## Elite White Charleston: Markers of Cultural Status

White elite families began in the early eighteenth century to plan and develop Charleston into the economic, social, and cultural center it continued to be for upward of a century.

Rogers's examination of the city's natural environment and material culture provides abundant evidence of its early preeminence in those sectors. "The people came and went, prospered and went bankrupt; the rivers, beaches, and islands, the marshes, trees, and buildings remained," he says, "creating the sights and sounds, the taste, feel, and smell which lingered on for new generations to absorb, savor, and love."<sup>35</sup>

Magnificent public buildings and churches began to appear in the mid-eighteenth century. Among them was the Exchange building (1767–1771) with its grand portico and sweeping staircase; St. Michael's Episcopal Church (1751–1761) and more than a dozen others.

A canal planned but never built was designed "to give the city some of the appeal of Venice," and imposing protective fortifications appeared from the close of the American Revolution through the War of 1812.

The most splendid houses were those of Charles Pinckney (1740s) and Miles Brewton (ca. 1765), the city's "leading slave merchant." Pinckney's was "designed to emulate, if not excel, the finest mansions of the day." One ascended high stone steps and passed between Ionic columns into a paved entry hall. Beyond lay a parlor with window seats, high mantels "carved in processions of shepherds and shepherdesses," and heavy wainscoting and moldings everywhere.

Brewton's house was "the most exquisite" of them all. It was separated from the street by "a fine iron fence with a double gateway," a marble-paved platform and two flights of marble steps." Inside, one ascended "a mahogany staircase with a triple-arched window" leading to drawing rooms that reached all the way across the front of the house, outfitted with paneling, ornate ceilings, and carved mantle pieces.

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<sup>35</sup> The following details are from Rogers's chapter on The Sensuous City in *Charleston in the Age of the Pinckneys* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), 55–88. We will return later to Stephanie Yuhl's *A Golden Haze of Memory: The Making of Historic Charleston* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), which focuses on the 1920–1940 period, when Charleston revitalizers deployed selected aspects of its 18th-century and antebellum history in the service of a marketable myth. Rogers's analysis did not extend to that period, and in any case appeared several decades too early to have taken advantage of Yuhl's account of this process.

When the Massachusetts gentleman Josiah Quincy dined with Brewton in 1773, he was awed. “The grandest hall I ever beheld,” he called it, with

azure blue satin window curtains, rich blue paper with gilt . . . most elegant pictures, excessive grand and costly looking glasses. . . [A] sideboard [with] very magnificent plate: a very exquisitely wrought Goblet, most excellent workmanship and singularly beautiful. . . *[It was]* vastly pretty!<sup>36</sup>

“The most nearly perfect home in Charleston,” Rogers called it.<sup>37</sup>

Furnishing and outfitting the mansions required many skilled carpenters, bricklayers and stonemasons, plasterers, wrought iron workers and cabinetmakers. Some furniture was imported from England and New England, but Charleston craftsmen built a lot of it. The number of cabinet makers in the city, Rogers calculated, “doubled between 1740 and 1750, and doubled again by 1760.” By 1790 there were sixty-three, and the number peaked at eighty-one in 1810.<sup>38</sup>

Similar numbers of silversmiths, textile makers and upholsterers, portrait painters and miniaturists either lived in the city or passed through regularly to ply their trades and maintain their clientele.

Portraiture emerged as a favored genre with pastels by Henrietta Johnston (ca. 1674–1729), but more noted practitioners came to be preferred.<sup>39</sup> Portraiture peaked in the 1790s, Rogers notes. Two painters, Jeremiah Theus (1716–1774) and Benjamin Wollaston, Rogers said,

tried to make a living by painting the portraits of the newly emerging rich. They did much to whet the appetite for more accomplished artists. . . The intent was that families were surely being founded for the new nation, and the founders wanted to be remembered.<sup>40</sup>

A surviving account book for cabinetmaker Thomas Elfe, Rogers notes, shows that between 1768 and 1775 he built 1,500 pieces. Twenty-five years after Rogers wrote, Samuel Humphrey—with assistance from some Charleston families (some of them Elfe’s

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<sup>36</sup> Rogers, *Charleston in the Age of the Pinckneys*, 81–82. A 1940 photograph of the Miles Brewton House by C. O. Greene is available in the Historic American Buildings Survey (148732pu.tif), <https://www.loc.gov/resource/hhh.sc0262.photos/?sp=1>.

<sup>37</sup> On the Brewton House, see South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Miles Brewton House, Charleston, National Register of Historic Places, <http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/charleston/S10817710002/index.htm>, accessed July 5, 2018,

<sup>38</sup> Rogers, *Charleston in the Age of the Pinckneys*, 73.

<sup>39</sup> See Henrietta Johnston entry in *South Carolina Encyclopedia*, <http://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/johnston-henrietta-de-beaulieu-dering/>, accessed July 4, 2018; and in *Wikivisually*, [https://wikivisually.com/wiki/Henrietta\\_Johnston](https://wikivisually.com/wiki/Henrietta_Johnston), accessed July 4, 2018.

<sup>40</sup> Rogers, *Charleston in the Age of the Pinckneys*, 75. A representative 1757 painting of Mrs. Gabriel Manigault by Theus is available in *Wikimedia Commons*, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mrs\\_Gabriel\\_Manigault\\_Jeremiah\\_Theus.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mrs_Gabriel_Manigault_Jeremiah_Theus.jpg).

descendants) who still owned examples of Elfe's work—looked into the record more in detail. Humphrey says that Elfe arrived in Charles Towne about 1747, when rice was booming and the city was rich, and would quickly outstrip New York and Philadelphia in wealth.<sup>41</sup>

The middle and last names of some of Elfe's clients and their descendants (Ravenel, Heyward, Middleton), are familiar in the history of Charleston and the rice plantations, as well as (later) in Flat Rock. Elfe pieces are also represented in numerous museum collections.

## Grand Charleston Houses and Skilled Enslaved Charleston Workers

The National Register of Historic Places lists 185 Charleston and Charleston County sites and properties (twenty churches and synagogues, more than forty houses, a dozen plantations, and many other buildings, sites and districts). They include the house of Charleston's largest slave-trader Miles Brewton (designated a National Historic Landmark in 1960 and added to the new National Register as one of its earliest listed properties in 1966).

At the opposite end of the social/racial spectrum, what was then believed to be the Denmark Vesey house was not listed until 1976, and has since been shown not to have been Vesey's house at all.<sup>42</sup> Thus the (mis-designated) Vesey house site crucially reminds us that—however many material cultural items, houses, and other sites populate the Charleston landscape, vast numbers of them were produced by Black rather than white workers. And that whatever architectural evidence is left of Black Charlestonians' lives has only very lately come to be (partially) known and valued cultural patrimony.

Thus, in the late 1960s, when Rogers counted skilled Charleston workers, he was not able to comment systematically on their racial makeup. The Stono Slave Rebellion site was not designated a National Register site until 1974 ("the site has been plowed, and appears to have been used for agricultural purposes," the nomination said); the Old Slave Mart in 1975; Edisto Island [Black] Baptist Church in 1982; the slave street at Boone Hall

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<sup>41</sup> Rogers, *Charleston in the Age of the Pinckneys*, 73; Samuel A. Humphrey, *Thomas Elfe: Cabinetmaker* (Charleston: Wyrick & Company, 1995), vii–ix. One small Elfe piece is in the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts.

<sup>42</sup> South Carolina Department of Archives and History, State Historic Preservation Office, *National Register Properties in Charleston County SC*, <http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/charleston/nrcharleston.htm>, accessed July 6, 2018. All listings are accompanied by the official nomination documents. For a detailed discussion of Denmark Vesey and related Charleston history, see Ethan Kyle and Blain Roberts, *Denmark Vesey's Garden*. John Vlatch's thoroughly documented *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993) provides an extraordinary discursive and visual record of the "back of the big house" built environment of plantation slavery.

Plantation in 1983; the Seaside Colored School on Edisto Island in 1994; Bethel AME Church in 2004. The black-related sites, one has to observe, were added belatedly, following the elite white-related sites by years or decades.

Fortunately, the online database of the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts (MESDA) in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, contains detailed records of 973 named enslaved artisans (many of them—nearly half, in fact—runaways from elsewhere) who worked in Charleston, the Charleston area, and its parishes between 1700 and 1855. The earliest arrival was Guiliom, an enslaved blacksmith who came in 1700. But he remained there for only one year, it appears, and it was 1723 before another one (also a blacksmith) arrived. By 1750, seventy in many occupations had arrived, and by 1800, the arrivals totaled 540.<sup>43</sup>

Numbers rose rapidly thereafter, the MESDA database confirms. Black skilled workers included (at various times) a dyer and an engineer, 5 silversmiths, 10 gardeners, 15 cabinet makers and chair makers, more than twenty millwrights and wheelwrights, nearly fifty painters and a half-dozen plasterers, eighty-five blacksmiths, nearly ninety shipwrights and boat builders, 111 brick makers and bricklayers, and more than 250 carpenters.<sup>44</sup> Of these, 759 were located in the city of Charleston; two hundred were in one or another of the parishes. Within St. John Colleton and St. John Berkeley parishes (from which a significant number of elite whites sallied forth into western North Carolina—and many points along the way) there were almost fifty.

These details can do no more than hint at the mass of architectural and other evidence of the rise of Charleston as a cultural center during its century-long (1720–1830) heyday.<sup>45</sup> “To the great rice and cotton planters,” Fraser observed, antebellum Charleston was the social and cultural capital of the plantations. From late January through March they brought their families and their household slaves into the city for the annual season of horse races, balls, concerts, and theatrical performances. Some stayed in hotels or with family and friends while others took up residence in their summer homes to which they returned in May and remained until the first frosts of fall to escape the so-called sickly season on the plantations.

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<sup>43</sup> These numbers do not indicate how many were there at any one time, since MESDA’s dates are inclusive for each artisan (e.g., 1799–1812, or only 1799)

<sup>44</sup> MESDA: <http://mesda.org/collections/mesda-collection/>, accessed July 12, 2018. There are no recognizably female names of enslaved persons in the list, although some are ambiguous with regard to gender (e.g., Quash, a gardener). For the historical period, female blacksmiths, wheelwrights, or bricklayers would have been unlikely. A needleworker named Charlotte and weaver Kit also appear, but cooks (as skilled as other types of household workers) were not included as a category. We are indebted to Kim Wilson May, Manager of the MESDA Research Center, for expert advice and assistance with their collection database.

<sup>45</sup> *National Register Properties in Charleston County SC*, <http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/charleston/nrcharleston.htm>, accessed July 6, 2018. All listings are accompanied by the relevant detailed official nomination documents.

As the Civil War approached, however, there was still much to be pleased about. Rice and cotton prices had been rising, so many planters and their families had plenty of money to spend. They could, as Fraser pointed out, attend social events with their equals (and maybe betters as well at the Jockey Club Ball), seek out advantageous marriage partners for their offspring (and maybe business partners in the bargain), and perhaps get bumped upward in the social and economic hierarchy.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Walter J. Fraser, Jr., *Charleston! Charleston! The History of a Southern City* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989), 195–96. Fraser's extended analysis of antebellum Charleston (pp. 169-246) is a mine of detailed information on this period.



## CHAPTER THREE

# LOWCOUNTRY, MID-COUNTRY, UPCOUNTRY AND MOUNTAINS: PUSHES AND PULLS ALONG THE WAY

*[Flat Rock] is quite a Charleston settlement now.*

—HARRIOTT MIDDLETON, FLAT ROCK  
to her cousin Susan Middleton, Columbia, South Carolina, June 19, 1862<sup>1</sup>

## Pushes and Pulls within Charleston

**A**mid Charleston's wealth and opulence, by the early nineteenth century, the city's social/cultural strains were increasingly evident. As one weary participant commented, even the social whirl had its downside: "Ball has succeeded to Ball, dinner to dinner, concert to concert, & Masquerade to Masquerade." Idleness, dissolute behavior, and fatigue after nights at the gambling tables were much in evidence.<sup>2</sup>

"After twenty-five years of prosperity," Walter Fraser observed, "a long period of economic stagnation and a mood close to despair were setting in." The price of cotton (on a roll since the post-Revolution years) began to fall, workers in the industry (and related businesses) lost jobs, and the port of Charleston lost traffic as steamboats altered their course toward newly accessible northeastern harbors. The "anemic local economy" of the early 1830s, as well as state and national politics with regard to new slave states and territories, Nullification, abolitionism, and related issues and dynamics, tightened and homogenized the state's and city's political factions.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Robert B. Cuthbert, ed., *Flat Rock of the Old Time: Letters from the Mountains to the Lowcountry, 1837–1939* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2016), 23.

<sup>2</sup> These and the immediately following details are drawn for an extended discussion in Fraser, *Charleston! Charleston!*, 196–210.

<sup>3</sup> Fraser, *Charleston! Charleston!*, 206–10.

These dynamics—and even larger ones—were ultimately beyond control by those local elites, however strenuously they endeavored to do so. Brothels and dance halls flourished, along with widespread “dissolute behavior” by elite young men, the new Carolina Academy of Fine Arts failed, and its Greek Revival temple closed its doors. Hundreds of children were placed in orphanages, alcoholism and prostitution increased, brothels multiplied, prison populations swelled, syphilitic seamen crowded the Poor House—the whole capped by widely destructive fires during the early months of 1835.<sup>4</sup>

In his examination of the Pinckney family, George Rogers foregrounds strong “push” factors (in addition to the oft-mentioned epidemiological ones) that influenced elite white Charleston families’ move outward from the city, from the post-revolutionary period into the 1830s:

Slave insurrections, local and distant: the Stono Rebellion in 1739; the Santo Domingo slave revolt of 1791, from which refugees flooded into Charleston; the Haitian Revolution of 1791–1804; Gabriel’s [Prosser’s] Rebellion of 1800 in Richmond; the 1822 Charleston plot led by Denmark Vesey; and the Nat Turner rebellion of 1831. Prosser, Vesey, and Turner—as well as numerous followers—were quickly tried and executed. Widespread fears led to tightened repressive measures.

The spread of cotton, especially into the upcountry, which reshaped the historically rice-based economy as cotton prices rose sharply after 1815, expanded the demand (hence, prices) for slave labor, and altered social networks and hierarchies.

The city’s post-1800 economic decline, provoked by the rise of the port of New York; the embargo against importing slaves after 1808; the city’s failure to embrace railroads, steamships, and manufacturing as alternatives to exporting rice and cotton to the eastern markets on sailing ships; and its failure to understand the potential of internal western markets. Fortunes were still being made and grand houses continued to be built, but the ominous economic news was undeniable.<sup>5</sup>

From surviving interviews and written records, historian William DusiBerre offers useful details about the “dark days” of American slavery in rice country. DusiBerre explores the elegant estates and cultural posturing of South Carolina and Georgia rice plantation owners—especially those of the Manigault and Heyward families’ Gowrie estate and the plantations of Robert Allston. By the 1770s, Nathaniel Heyward’s father Daniel had owned seventeen plantations and 999 slaves, and by 1800 he himself came to own (by

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<sup>4</sup> Fraser, *Charleston! Charleston!*, 196, 206.

<sup>5</sup> Rogers, *Charleston in the Age of the Pinckneys*, 135–40.

bequest and marriage) 656 slaves. Meanwhile, DusiBerre notes, for example, that “the Manigaults shared the gentry’s fondness for family portraits,” including one by the preeminent Thomas Sully (1783–1872) and another by a Parisian painter.<sup>6</sup>

The cost of the Manigaults’ and the Heywards’ elegant possessions and lifestyles—and the status they bought—to enslaved Black people was well-nigh unimaginable. DusiBerre’s chapter on mortality among the enslaved—from maternal and infant mortality, overwork, unsanitary conditions, poor nutrition, rampant disease and savage punishments—is aptly entitled “The Charnel House.” Mortality rates were high: 25 percent of all the slaves died in 1854, and over a thirty-year period (1833–1864) the death rate for enslaved children under age sixteen was 90 percent.<sup>7</sup>

To complicate matters, the long arc of history was bending in favor of neither rice nor cotton planters. Paralleling growing racial strains and strife, the economic woes of Charleston’s heavily rice- (and to an increasing extent, cotton-) based economy have recently been evaluated carefully in a global context. In *Plantation Kingdom: The American South and its Global Commodities*, Richard Follett and his colleagues argue persuasively that the developmental arc of four agricultural commodities in the South (mainly rice in the Lowcountry, and cotton, sugar, and tobacco elsewhere) was shaped by global dynamics that sparked and sustained their rise, and determined their demise.

DusiBerre’s *Them Dark Days* presents corroborating figures on rice production. Although by 1860 it still averaged over 100 million pounds per year, it had risen only a little over one-third during the nine decades since 1767, when it was already about 72 million pounds. And during those decades there were two production plateaus of around 90 and 110 million pounds each. In the 1850s, South Carolina’s highest-producing counties (Beaufort and Colleton) shifted thirteen thousand enslaved laborers from rice into cotton production.<sup>8</sup>

Particularly helpful is Peter Coclanis’s “The Road to Commodity Hell” essay that analyzes the rapid eighteenth-century rise and pre–Civil War decline of the South Carolina and Georgia rice industries.<sup>9</sup> By the 1830s and 1840s, Asian rice growers benefiting from cheap labor, abundant capital resources, and superior transport and marketing

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<sup>6</sup> William DusiBerre, *Them Dark Days: Slavery in the American Rice Swamps* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000), 25, 31.

<sup>7</sup> DusiBerre, *Them Dark Days*, 48–83. Figures from 50–53.

<sup>8</sup> DusiBerre, *Them Dark Days*, 389. Figures are from Table 22: American Rice Production, 1767–1850.

<sup>9</sup> Coclanis, Peter A. “The Road to Commodity Hell: The Rise and Fall of the First American Rice Industry,” in *Plantation Kingdom: The American South and Its Global Commodities* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016), 12–38

resources—factors that had enabled American rice to rise to global prominence in the eighteenth century—produced a standardized commodity that undercut the price of the American staple and made it less and less viable economically.

Such conditions helped spark a decades-long movement of Lowcountry elite whites and their enslaved Black servants and workers that eventually reached western North Carolina.

## The Epidemiological Arc

To complicate matters further, another long arc intersected with both economic downturn and natural disasters (fires, hurricanes) to increase seasonal flight from the city for those who had the resources to manage it. For many decades, Charleston had been ravaged repeatedly by disease. This epidemiological arc was also a major factor in the development of the Lowcountry-to-western North Carolina movement with which this current study is centrally concerned.

The Charleston cholera epidemics of the 1830s mentioned by Fraser were not the city's first such events. There had been smallpox as early as 1697, and it came in again, accompanied by whooping cough (among enslaved people, it was then thought) in 1738 (infecting one-third of the population, inducing efforts—which failed—toward mass inoculation, and killing several hundred), followed by yellow fever in 1739. Some outbreaks derived partly from (or were exacerbated by) abysmal lacks in city sanitation. Fraser counted twenty-five yellow fever outbreaks between 1800 and 1860.<sup>10</sup>

Following upon Brewster, Fraser, and McCandless, historian Peter Coclanis has looked closely at the environmental (more particularly, epidemiological) determinants of disease within Lowcountry rice culture. Those determinants formed a loop, he concluded: “Climate and disease . . . Disease and climate.”<sup>11</sup> “Even by the [appalling] standards of the day,” he said,

life in early modern South Carolina was a . . . doubtful proposition. This fragility, this doubt was due in large part to the great commingling of peoples . . .

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<sup>10</sup> Fraser, *Charleston! Charleston!*, 64–65, 99, 107, 175, 189–90, 207–8. Charleston (like not a few other cities) was still playing public hygiene catch-up on into the 1920s (366). Widespread seasonal threats to health in the Lowcountry (some tied directly to rice culture) have drawn scholarly attention at least since St. Julien Ravenel Childs's *Malaria and Colonization in the Carolina Low Country, 1526–1696* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1940), but had been commented upon as early as 1809 by planter/physician David Ramsey in his *History of South Carolina from its First Settlement in 1607 to the Year 1808* (Newberry, SC: J. W. Duffie, 1809). These references are from Brewster, *Summer Migrations and Resorts*, 3–9. Wood, *Black Majority*, 63–91, discusses pre-nineteenth-century disease history at length. McCandless's *Slavery, Disease and Suffering*, 149–248 discusses Charleston disease history in detail. Similar problems continued well into the Reconstruction period.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Coclanis, *The Shadow of a Dream: Economic Life and Death in the South Carolina Low Country, 1670–1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 38. The discussion which follows draws heavily from Coclanis.

[from which] came epidemiological disequilibrium . . . [and then] demographic disaster . . . [Though migrants] leave behind many things, they cannot escape their own epidemiological pasts. . . Migration, thus, changes and often completely transforms the disease pattern of the receiving region.<sup>12</sup>

And what epidemiological pasts were those, in this case? Coclanis's catalog is dramatic: from the Afro-Eurasian landmass, smallpox, influenza, measles, chicken pox, whooping cough and other so-called childhood maladies, tuberculosis, diphtheria, and even a mild form of malaria; from sub-Saharan Africa, yellow fever, yaws, dengue fever, sleeping sickness, and *falciparum* malaria.

And what was the epidemiological result in the Lowcountry?

Wave after wave of epidemic, with malaria, filariasis and, to a lesser degree, yellow fever, [were] endemic. All of the temperate and tropical diseases . . . and dysentery, typhus, and typhoid fever, to which almost no immunities could be secured. Through the interaction of hosts, environment, and agents of infection, [it was] what can only be described as a disease explosion.

"Mortality was great in every season," Coclanis continued, and "nowhere in North America was life for whites more fleeting than in Carolina's funereal lowlands."<sup>13</sup>

It was "ghastly and incredible" that 86 percent of whites whose births and deaths were recorded in the Christ Church Register during the colonial period died before the age of twenty, and 80 percent of the rest were dead before reaching age fifty. Other parishes (including St. John's, the predecessor of Flat Rock's St. John in the Wilderness) had comparable mortality rates. Blacks actually fared slightly better—enough to give the Lowcountry a two-thirds Black population during the entire eighteenth century.<sup>14</sup>

## Time to Go and Time to Come Back: The Annual Calendar

Estimates and calculations of the timing of Lowcountry people's periodic movement—inland, upland, and eventually *upward* into the mountains—either seasonally or across the decades, vary greatly.

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<sup>12</sup> Coclanis, *Shadow of a Dream*, 38.

<sup>13</sup> Coclanis, *Shadow of a Dream*, 42.

<sup>14</sup> Subsequently Coclanis analyzes the data for Native Americans, who were not involved in Lowland rice culture. McCandless's *Slavery, Disease, and Suffering* carries the demographic data forward to 1760, when the parishes surrounding Charleston [Charles Towne] had from 80 to 89% enslaved populations, and that one tier of counties back from the coast had 90 to 94%. During the ensuing seventy or so years until Charleston elites began moving to western North Carolina, the black/white ratio fluctuated from decade to decade, but by 1860, South Carolina as a whole was still nearly 60% black.

There were many theories at the time about *why* after about 1790 Lowcountry residents began to have to cope every year with what they called “the sickly season.” A prominent one was that it happened because of the very development and spread of rice planting itself. Contemporary physician and planter David Ramsay thought it was because in the rice-planting areas

sluggish rivers, stagnant swamps, ponds, and marshes are common; and in or near to them putrefaction is generated. In all these places, and for two or three miles adjacent to them, the seeds of febrile diseases are plentifully sown and from them are disseminated.<sup>15</sup>

About the only thing that is clear about this seasonal threat is that no one really knew what to do about it except to flee when the “sickly season” came. A widely used medical guide, Charleston physician J. Hume Simons’s *The Planter’s Guide and Family book of Medicine* (1848), which included “Particular Instructions Respecting Asiatic [or Epidemic] Cholera”—a common, loosely conjectural term for the seasonal affliction. Simons listed symptoms in several increasingly dire phases. Possibly useful for the first stage were laudanum, camphor, “tincture of red-pepper, compound spirits of lavender, tincture of ginger or tincture of cardamom, or ten or fifteen drops of the aromatic spirits’ of hartshorn,” calomel, sugar of lead, or opium. For the second stage, more of the same, but with hot mustard poultices, hot air, or bags of hot salt or ashes on the body. For the third stage (“an attack of mild typhus fever”) all one could do was to administer a strong emetic for severe cramping and hope for the best.<sup>16</sup>

Strategically, the cholera section was followed by “Directions for Raising Negroes.” House construction was a central concern: air circulation underneath, tight floors, good chimneys, hygiene, adequate nutrition (two meals well-cooked a day), the whole monitored by a “capable and trusty” nurse to make sure the children are *thriving*, and to warn blacks against lack of foresight, improvidence, stealing from others, and “general waste.”

Simons closed with pointed cautions to planters regarding the low intellectual, social, and cultural characteristics of their enslaved people and how to deal with it, to optimize their investment and yield other general benefits:

It is a notorious fact . . . that in all countries, the peasantry who are much more exposed, and work much harder than our negroes, nevertheless increase rapidly, and raise a great many children, while the reverse ‘takes place on our plantations. . . [Hence] the planter who wishes his negroes to be healthy, must not allow them to indulge their natural propensities. In Africa, in their free

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<sup>15</sup> Ramsay, David. *The History of South Carolina, from Its First Settlement in 1670 to the Year 1808* (2 vols., Charleston: David Longworth, 1809), II, 100.

<sup>16</sup> J. Hume Simons, *The Planter’s Guide, and Family Book of Medicine; for the Instruction and Use of Planters, Families, Country People, and All Others Who May Be Out of the Reach of Physicians, or Unable to Employ Them*, (Charleston: McCarter & Allen, 1848), 205–7; <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/ien.35558005329186>, accessed July 5, 2019.



state, they are among the most Barbarous inhabitants of the earth, living in the woods and subsisting chiefly on the natural productions of the earth. They retain their habits and propensities the same among us, and we must not expect to find among them the same providence or civilization as is observed among the poorest classes in Europe. . . .

Finally; I am convinced that if more system and discipline (like regulations in an army), were pursued on plantations, the condition of the negroes, as well as that of the planter, would be materially improved . . . as also the condition of our entire population . . . rendered more flourishing . . . .<sup>17</sup>

The meta-message, then, was that—besides its immediate object of heading off “the sickness” and keeping the enslaved blacks healthy—tightening the plantation *system* and instituting more stringent (military-style) regulations and discipline would cause them to live longer and reproduce faster, in turn benefitting both planters and “our entire [free white, elite] population.”<sup>18</sup>

With regard to seasonal patterns, a rough consensus held that, for one’s health, one had best decamp when summer arrived. Not everyone agreed exactly when “summer” arrived, or how long it lasted, but many left around the third week of June (or even in May) and did not return until the third week of October (at the earliest), with the first hard frost. Thus, the functional consensus was that “the sickly season” lasted roughly five months.

## The Years-long Stream as Historical Process

From reading almost any heretofore available account of the Charleston-to-Flat Rock trek, one would conclude that around 1830 it rather suddenly occurred to dozens of wealthy, white, elite, formerly rather comfortably home-bound Charlestonians to assemble their Black house staffs, roll out their elegant carriages, hitch up the thoroughbreds with costly harnesses, and hie themselves to the mountains of western North Carolina in the summertime, in search of cool and healthful breezes, relatively cheap land, and spend “the season”—Charleston-style—nestled within picturesque forested landscapes.

The actual historical process, however, was more complex. Whatever the conjectures about causes and treatments, and however varied the timing of the “season,” widely agreed upon by later scholars is that the periodic movement of population into and out of the epidemiologically, culturally, and economically threatened and unstable Lowcountry was in motion at least by 1790, lasted through decades, and resulted in broad and fairly

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<sup>17</sup> Simons, *Planter’s Guide*, 207–10. See Brewster, *Summer Migrations and Resorts*, 3–5, for other notions about what was causing the “sickly season.”

<sup>18</sup> Simons, *Planter’s Guide*, 210.



permanent demographic, cultural, and economic realignments. The realignment that took place annually (beginning in the late 1820s) in western North Carolina was therefore only one late phase of a multi-phase process.

The most durably influential of the simplified popular accounts, Sadie Patton's *The Story of Henderson County* (1947), appears to have introduced the branding phrase of the process, "Little Charleston-of-the-Mountains." Paradoxically, Patton published her history the same year a far more grounded scholarly account appeared: Clemson College historian Lawrence Fay Brewster's *Summer Migrations and Resorts of South Carolina Low-Country Planters*. Patton's volume, a product of considerable documentary research (much of it, unfortunately, unfootnoted and filtered through romantic memory), proved to be much preferred to Brewster's meticulously documented historical narrative.<sup>19</sup>

Brewster focused his analysis on the process as a necessary response to the advent of "the sickly season" on the plantations in and around Charleston. That season as he described it reached from as early as April through "the first hard frost" sometime in late October or even into November—more or less on each end, depending upon the locale, the families involved, the year, and turns in the weather. Whenever it came and however long it lasted (or was thought to last), "the sickly season," Brewer observed, "precipitated an annual migration that carried planter families and planter society far afield in search of more salubrious and congenial residences or resorts." Similarly, where they sought such places varied greatly over the years.<sup>20</sup>

Oddly, given the distance, Newport Rhode Island was an early (and regular) summer refuge for South Carolina planters. Some had turned up there (traveling by coastwise packet from Charleston) as early as 1765, as "both health seekers and pleasure lovers": Allstons, Izards, Middletons, Manigaults, Vanderhorts, Rutledges, and other families.<sup>21</sup> So numerous were the health seekers that the town was sometimes referred to as "Carolina Hospital." Interrupted by the Revolution, the treks resumed shortly thereafter—modest houses slowly replaced by grander ones.

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<sup>19</sup> Sadie Smathers Patton, *The Story of Henderson County* (Asheville: Miller Printing, 1947); Brewster, *Summer Migrations and Resorts*. We have encountered no evidence that Brewster's study was known or consulted during any aspect of the planning, formation, subsequent development, or retrospective analysis of the CARL site. Patton's brief *A Condensed History of Flat Rock: (The Little Charleston of the Mountains)* (Asheville: Church Printing, 1961) returned to the Little Charleston thematic. Unfortunately, neither author attended sufficiently to the biracial character of the process—a lack we endeavor to remedy to the extent possible.

<sup>20</sup> Brewster, *Summer Migrations and Resorts*, 7–10.

<sup>21</sup> This brief account of Newport as an early destination is drawn from Brewster, *Summer Migrations and Resorts*, 30–34. In turn, Brewster drew upon Carl Bridenbaugh, "Charlestonians at Newport, 1767–1775," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, XLI, no. 2 (April 1940).

## *Coastal Towns and Cities*

During the latter decades of the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth, the migratory stream initially did not reach far inland. Charleston itself, along with Beaufort and Georgetown were the preferred nearby destinations. There the planters built expensive and elaborate townhouses, summer moves that presented serious logistical challenges. Boats carried families, relatives and friends, servants, and (repeatedly through the summer) supplies, and some townhouses served as staging platforms to more far-flung refuges (e.g., Newport, Rhode Island).

The planter families, Brewster reported, “took up urban life with easy adjustment. The obvious advantages of the metropolis [most importantly Charleston]—economic, cultural, and social—were sought for and enjoyed”: shops, business houses, banks, schools, churches, clubs, and hotels. Entertainments included piazza parties (their favorite), soirees, musicales, and balls. The Battery focused much of the outdoor social life with pools, private baths, ice cream, and pastry shops, a German band, and the musical Derwort and Hughes families.

The “imposing mansions” of planters (Cuthberts, Elliotts, Rhetts, and others) who trekked to Beaufort were “ornately decorated and handsomely furnished.” Georgetown was “more of a commercial town, but less of a resort,” Brewster judged, “than Beaufort.” Entertainments were fewer, less elaborate, and mostly outdoors (watching boats on the river in the evenings, for example).<sup>22</sup>

## *Pinelands*

Planters in the more inland areas also began early in the eighteenth century to seek sickly season refuge, and the little pine barrens town of Summerville—twenty to forty miles up the Ashley River Road—had emerged as a health resort by 1730.<sup>23</sup> By 1828 there were twenty-three houses, and by 1830 the new South Carolina railroad could transport passengers from Charleston in two hours. The “hot, sweltering air of Charleston,” said one sojourner, was displaced by a morning breeze “that swept through the boughs of the long-leafed pines,” and the evening luxury of “a Spanish cigar and a rich glass of Madeira” under the oaks. To return to Charleston was “to be again annoyed by the dust, the rattling of carts and drays, mosquitoes and sand flies.” Incorporated by 1847, Summerville grew

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<sup>22</sup> Brewster, *Summer Migration and Resorts*, 11–15, catalogs specific families who did so, the locations of their Charleston townhouses, and (in some cases) the years they (or their descendants) lived in them. The summer social scene that became established there foreshadowed key aspects of the one that developed at the far end in western North Carolina—either earlier or simultaneously. Indeed, some of the family names (Heyward, Izard, Middleton, Ravenel, Pinckney) resonated in Henderson County.

<sup>23</sup> These pinelands details are drawn from Brewster, *Summer Migration and Resorts*, 35–40.

steadily, boasting nearly four hundred homes and servants' houses, five hotels and boarding houses, several stores and churches by 1860, and a population of nearly 1,100 (roughly half white and half black).

But Summerville was not the only such pinelands town; Adams Run and Walterboro—the latter favored by rice planters by 1800—lay southwest of Charleston. Each boasted of elegant homes, public buildings, and imposing churches. McPhersonville (laid out about 1800), Grahamville (“culture, refinement and hospitality,” it promised), and Gillisonville followed similar trajectories, and reliably drew their coterie of rice planters and other Charleston elites.

North of Charleston, planters from St. Stephen's and St. John's parishes established Pineville just before 1800, and built a chapel, library, market, and a clubhouse for their Santee Jockey Club. Speaking years later of the club's race meet, one attendee recalled that

The company in attendance is always of so select an order, composed of the gentry of the immediate neighborhood, that it resembles a large united family party, rather than the promiscuous throng . . . it is usual to find . . . on a race ground in other places.

By 1832 there were many houses, and the population totaled nearly eight hundred, two-thirds of whom were black. After the bad summers of 1834 and 1836, another town, Pinopolis, was established nearby to challenge Pineville, and Whiteville began to draw Cooper River planters. Such summer retreats continued to be developed in the pinelands for years.

Brewster's characterization of “These little villages” is both colorful and revealing: **[Completely]** deserted in winter, or sheltering a few lonely families . . . [they] were awakened early one morning by the advance guard from the plantations, sent to prepare for the arrival of the planter families. . . . [Into] the enclosed yard of the scattered frame cottages came lumbering oxcarts and loaded carry-alls beginning the transfer of the plantation households. Soon . . . the Negroes of each household proceeded leisurely and noisily to their accustomed tasks. . . . The dwelling house was aired and tidied; its simple furniture . . . was dusted and repaired and augmented by cast-off sideboards and wardrobes and the “indispensable piano” brought from the plantation. The cottage and its few outbuildings . . . were freshly whitewashed; the yard . . . was swept clean. . . . **[The]** village . . . settled quickly into the . . . social season that began in earnest with the coming together from isolated plantations of these families with their common culture and their close connections of blood and marriage. . . . Everybody knew everybody else, and, having little else to do, went to see everybody else every day and at all hours. Sociability became almost oppressive until one got used to it. The routine never altered, but nobody ever tired of it.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Brewster, *Summer Migrations*, 44–46.

The defining markers of the process were foregrounded: race as a marker of role and status, shared elite culture structured by blood and marriage, seasonal social rituals facilitated by complicated logistics.

## *Middle Country*

Another step inward (and upward) from the pinelands were “the sandhills of the middle country,” a twenty-two-mile-long and five-mile-wide chain of hills running from the Santee River to Kershaw County (in the vicinity of Statesburg), “a unique and healthful region of red clay, white sand, and dark green pines” to which Lowcountry planters began to come and build summer homes at the turn of the nineteenth century: Hugers, Rutledges, Caperses, Pinckneys, and others. As the years passed, satellite villages and towns spread out from this node. Railroad access from Charleston, Augusta, and Greenville spurred growth in the area. Kalmia Village was built on lands owned by industrialist William Gregg, whose son William Jr. at a later stage, moved on to Flat Rock, North Carolina.<sup>25</sup>

One of the towns, Aiken, named for the President of the South Carolina Canal and Railroad Company, was surveyed in 1832 and soon got passenger railroad service from Charleston. A decade later it was judged “remarkable for its health, its bracing, dry atmosphere, which makes it a place of retreat for invalids.”<sup>26</sup> The town also boasted several hotels, and some planters built substantial homes there. Importantly, as we shall presently see, the railroad was intersected by stagecoach routes toward the mountains.

Through this penetration into the “middle country,” Brewster explains “the low-country planters not only discovered healthful summer retreats near their plantations, but also began to penetrate into the back country and to leave their mark upon it. They ended by making much of the ‘middle country’ their own, so that there remained, in some respects, only low country and up country.”<sup>27</sup>

## *Upcountry*

As early as 1808, Lowcountry planters (again, the names evoke elite Charleston: Pinckney, Huger, Cheves, Galliard, Calhoun) discovered the upcountry, judged to have “the natural requisites of health and longevity.” During the “sickly season,” they repaired to Piedmont villages such as Pendleton, Greenville, Spartanburg, Pleasantburg, and Winnsboro, their path marked by a succession of Episcopal churches, hotels, and other built structures.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Brewster, *Summer Migrations*, 46–49.

<sup>26</sup> Brewster, *Summer Migrations*, 49.

<sup>27</sup> Brewster, *Summer Migrations*, 52.

<sup>28</sup> Brewster, *Summer Migrations*, 52.

They sent their sons and daughters to the Pendleton male (1825) and female academies, enjoyed “a society not surpassed for intelligence, refinement and hospitality in the interior of our State,” shopping in a “fine shop” owned by a New Yorker, comforted by knowing that John C. Calhoun’s residence stood nearby. A visitor from England in the mid-1840s reported that he

went in the carriage with the ladies to the Episcopal Church . . . , a neat temple prettily situated in a shady grove. The congregation was numerous, and principally composed of well[-]dressed and very genteel people. Eight or ten nice-looking carriages were drawn up, and the scene reminded me of an English country church in a good neighbourhood.<sup>29</sup>

Pendleton offered library societies, a Farmer’s Society, and a jockey club in addition to cool water, bracing atmosphere, railroad service, and proximity to the mountains (one of its hotels was named the Blue Ridge House).<sup>30</sup> Pendleton was a stopping point for the Adger and Smyth families—important later to our story of Flat Rock—who purchased Woodburn Plantation, originally built by Charlestonian Charles Coatsworth Pinckney (1789–1865), after the 1850s.<sup>31</sup>

And from Pendleton the road ran to Greenville, which boasted similar advantages, but lay even closer to the mountains. Every year, one observer noted as early as 1839, there were “more and more country villas” belonging to elite Charlestonians (Alstons, Calhouns, Izards, Lowndeses, Middletons, Poinsetts, and Memmings), culturally positioned and marked with English, Italian, French, and other names (e.g., *Rivoli*, *Rusticello*), usually together with Episcopal churches. In the public realm, the Lowcountry planters worked to secure good roads, stage lines, and “public houses” to serve the traveling public.<sup>32</sup>

Not all of the upcountry visitors built their own houses, however. Some stayed with relatives who already had houses, and others stayed at “public houses” that catered to them. Greenville had a resort hotel as early as 1815, and got an Episcopal mission (St. James’s) in 1821 and a church (Christ Church) in 1829. By 1824 the city had the Mansion House hotel. Designed “to excel any house in the upper part of the State . . . for the traveling public, [the hotel] had heart-pine floors, a tin roof, a circular staircase of rare workmanship, and a parlor as deep as the building itself, requiring two fireplaces,” it became “the fashionable center . . . of Greenville’s gay but cultured society,” many of its patrons

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<sup>29</sup> Brewster, *Summer Migrations*, 55.

<sup>30</sup> Brewster, *Summer Migrations*, 55–56.

<sup>31</sup> Pendleton Historic Foundation, “Resources: Woodburn,” Pendleton Historic Foundation, accessed July 7, 2019, <https://www.pendletonhistoricfoundation.org/resources-woodburn/>; “Inalienable Rights: Living History through the Eyes of the Enslaved Part III: Woodburn Plantation, Pendleton, SC | The Slave Dwelling Project,” accessed July 7, 2019, <https://slavedwellingproject.org/inalienable-rights-living-history-through-the-eyes-of-the-enslaved-part-iii-woodburn-plantation-pendleton-sc>.

<sup>32</sup> Brewster, *Summer Migrations*, 53, 55, 58, 60. St. Paul’s in Pendleton was formed in 1815.

summer visitors who came “in little cavalcades of carriages, baggage wagons, and outriders” or in the tri-weekly stagecoaches passing both north and south from Columbia South Carolina, Augusta Georgia, and Asheville North Carolina.<sup>33</sup>

Brewster notes that Greenville’s permanent residents “did not always . . . approve of some of the village’s summer visitors,” judging some of them “disposed to gratify their animal propensities without cultivating their interests at all, if they have any to cultivate—drinking, eating, gambling & whoreing is the summit of their ambition . . . .”<sup>34</sup>

Nearby Spartanburg (1831) essentially repeated much of Greenville’s developmental trajectory, as did Winnsboro around 1836. In the mid-1830s a number of families from Charleston’s St. John’s and St. Stephen’s parishes (Gaillards, DuBoses, Porchers, Ravenels, and others) moved to Winnsboro, forming (as usual) an Episcopal church in 1841.<sup>35</sup> It was an old Black Belt cotton town that, by the Civil War, would be majority Black and majority slave. Thus, it seems reasonable to suppose that these named families (or their extended branches) who moved into western North Carolina prior to the war took slaves with them.

Greenville and Spartanburg were the last significant towns developed along the Lowcountry-to-mountains route, but by the 1830s and 1840s the thirty-six-mile strip that lay between them and the North Carolina state line was not lacking in respite for travelers. By 1839, one could rest at “Colonel Hodges’s place” twenty-four miles above Greenville, and ten years later there was also Lynch’s, only ten miles out of Greenville. By the next night, one could be at Davis’s, only eleven miles from Flat Rock, before finally arriving at Summey’s Blue Ridge House in Flat Rock.<sup>36</sup>

What drew so many travelers up the mountain was the abundance of land on the far side of Saluda Gap. Traveling back and forth to that area from the Lowcountry (especially in what frequently amounted to family-sized wagon trains) remained slow and daunting before the advent of a two-state road-building project in the mid-1820s.

“The first main route,” as Brewster described it nearly seventy-five years ago, was the Saluda Gap Road, . . . a part of the state road from Charleston to Columbia and Greenville, . . . completed . . . in the years following 1825 as a result of the clamor of the up-country residents and the influence in the Legislature of the lowcountry visitors. The two Carolinas co-operated in

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<sup>33</sup> Brewster, *Summer Migrations*, 59.

<sup>34</sup> Brewster, *Summer Migrations*, 59–61.

<sup>35</sup> Brewster, *Summer Migrations*, 62–63. Winnsboro was much older, and farther south, than Spartanburg. Founded in 1785, it was the seat of the Piedmont-bordering Fairfield District, roughly 20 miles north of Columbia). Brewster does not say whether lowcountry migrants were there before the 1830s, but presumably they were. The area began to develop for the growing and processing of short-staple cotton after Whitney invented the cotton gin in 1793.

<sup>36</sup> Brewster, *Summer Migrations*, 67–68.



building the turnpike section of the road over the mountains. In North Carolina *[it]* was built by the Buncombe Turnpike Company . . . *[Its]* first toll gate . . . opened in 1827.

Crossing the top of the mountain, Brewster said, “the low-country migrants and travelers . . . found new sites for summer residences, new resorts to be patronized or developed, and new scenery that was a revelation to them.”<sup>37</sup>

And indeed, they did find such things. We turn to the concrete details of that mountaintop experience now, but with the following caution: The foregoing synoptic sketch of the early near-low-country, middle-country and upcountry “sickly season” migrations makes clear that the romantic “history” of Flat Rock as the singular chosen destination of elite Charlestonians’ great 1830s (and thereafter) leap straight from Charleston into the western North Carolina mountains is historically unsupportable.

This supposed great leap was actually made up of numerous earlier (and later) stepwise migrations (running rather meanderingly northwest from Charleston), easily traceable through successive town sites with their roads, churches, hotels, low-country-esque houses and estates—from which sites many of those who went on into western North Carolina emanated, rather than directly from Charleston.

Thus, what came to be called the “Little Charleston of the Mountains” was not the upper end of a unique and culturally redemptive rainbow anchored at one magical moment in the Lowcountry, but one of the successive, leapfrogging upper ends of a very un-rainbow-like, longwave process shaped by the same mundane factors that shape most migration processes in most places and times: weather, topography, race, religion, economic and industrial enterprise, roads and railroads, family networks, and the like.

Moreover, that long-wave migration did not start from the “point” of Charleston, nor did it move in one long leap to settle upon the Flat Rock “point.” Rather it took on an elongated hourglass shape, collecting at the rather bulbous, coastwise, Lowcountry end, channeling through a long and bumpy middle- and upcountry neck, and terminating in another bulbous far end that stretched toward Fletcher and Asheville, thus including more territory than present-day Flat Rock.

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<sup>37</sup> Brewster, *Summer Migrations*, 63–64. “New resorts” requires a brief comment: In the 1830s and 1840s, “resorts” were not numerous in the area, but they did exist. By 1840, Asheville was into its fifth decade, and the first Sulphur Springs resort hotel west of Asheville was nearly a decade old. For an extended examination of this resort, see David E. Whisnant, “The Several Lives of West Asheville, Part I: Sulphur Springs as Proto-Land of the Sky, 1827–1861,” in *Asheville Junction: A Blog by David E. Whisnant*, <https://ashevillejunction.com/the-several-lives-of-west-asheville-part-i-sulphur-springs-as-proto-land-of-the-sky-1827-1861>.

## Two Versions of the Story: Brewster and Patton

As the years have passed, the dominant understanding of what kind of process the movement of Lowcountry people was, and what sort of development actually ensued at the far end of it has come to depend upon what interpretive sources one chooses. And for twenty years after Brewster's meticulously documented and carefully argued book appeared, it did not gain the recognition or credibility accorded a competing title that appeared the same year: local historian Sadie Smathers Patton's *The Story of Henderson County*.<sup>38</sup> A brief evaluation of the two accounts will be helpful here; more detailed treatments of both are reserved for later chapters.

To her credit, one must grant at the outset that Patton had done substantial documentary research in many areas, so that her account of some aspects of the process were congruent with Brewster's. Her treatment of the early history of roads into and through western North Carolina, to take one example, is grounded, detailed, and credible.<sup>39</sup>

On the other hand, her nearly exclusive focus on Flat Rock (however bounded) as *the* terminus of the journey (for specific individuals, families, or groups) caused her to overlook almost entirely the more complicated dynamic Brewster identified and examined.

The truth was, for example, that most of the trekkers did *not* come to identify with and settle at any *particular* terminus, wherever it lay along the corridor. Through the years, as noted above, many moved either from locale to locale—either within a single season, or from season to season. Brewster learned from the record that J. B. Grimbball, of St. Paul's and Charleston

visited such resorts as Edingsville, Aiken, and Glenn Springs in South Carolina; Fletcher, Asheville, and Sulphur Springs in North Carolina; and Salt Sulphur Springs in Virginia. The R. F. W. Allstons, of Georgetown spent their summers at the seashore in the pineland, at Charleston and Newport, and in Europe. Mr. and Mrs. Joel R. Poinsett went up from their Georgetown plantation to their

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<sup>38</sup> Sadie Smathers Patton, *The Story of Henderson County* (Asheville: Miller Printing Co., 1947). Patton (1886–1975), a Henderson County native, had had some training and experience related to this county history. See brief biographical note by George M. Stephens, "Patton, Sadie Smathers," *NCpedia*, <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/patton-sadie>, accessed Aug. 1, 2018

<sup>39</sup> Patton, *Story of Henderson County*, 88–102. It is evident within the narrative that she had read carefully and widely in court and other public records, local and state histories, biographical volumes, institutional histories (e.g., churches, schools), business records and other print and documentary sources. From the 1850 census she reported the presence of 924 slaves in the county.

Unfortunately, Patton's book lacks the necessary apparatus (e.g., footnotes, bibliography, archival collections) that would allow readers to identify, evaluate and verify some of them—especially those from early correspondence, travel accounts, interviews, and the like. Those tend to be referred to vaguely ("a diary of the period," "travelers at the time said ..." and the like). Her index is also rudimentary and sparse. Formal public presentation of the completed book occurred in a review in the *Asheville Citizen*, April 8, 1947, 11.

summer place at Greenville and occasionally traveled on over the mountains to the springs of North Carolina and Virginia or visited the watering places in the North.<sup>40</sup>

Nor was there a reliable correlation between building an elegant house and/or estate at a certain location along the way, and settling there. Some travelers leased or rented quarters, some stayed with relatives or friends wherever they were bound during any particular summer, and others built or developed such establishments at more than one location—simultaneously, or over an extended period.

An important factor in this variability was the attractiveness of mineral springs resorts throughout the southeast and as far north as Saratoga Springs, New York. Brewster devotes more than thirty pages to documenting and discussing these springs and the visits of Lowcountry people to them from the 1820s onward.<sup>41</sup> The nature of the mineral springs resorts predisposed visitors to stay in hotel rooms or other rented quarters for days or weeks at a time, but not necessarily to build their own residences there. Many Lowcountry visitors were attracted to springs in western North Carolina (Sulphur Springs just west of Asheville, Waynesville's White Sulphur Springs, and Warm [later, Hot] Springs).<sup>42</sup>

The problematic "Little Charleston" phrase also obscured the bi-state (North and South Carolina) reach of the Lowcountry population stream, as our discussion above—based upon Brewster's expansive and meticulous documentation—makes clear.

Clearly, if one wants to understand the Lowcountry-to-mountains population movement occurred, Brewster is by far the best source. Its evaluation and articulation of the nature of black-white cultural exchange is worth careful attention if one wishes to comprehend the elites (planters and others) who were involved.

The term *Black* does not appear in Brewster's account except as part of a name (e.g., Black River), but *negro(es)* occurs about a dozen times, and Brewster's footnotes (28) show that he had consulted at least Mason Crum's then recent *Negro Life in the South Carolina Sea Islands* (1940), the 1830 census data from Pineville (an early stopover for planters traveling up-country) where blacks outnumbered whites by 554 to 235 (42), newspapers and numerous memoirs and travel narratives, as well as caches of correspondence he found in university libraries.

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<sup>40</sup> Brewster, *Summer Migrations*, 109–11.

<sup>41</sup> Brewster, *Summer Migrations*, 74–108.

<sup>42</sup> Many Lowcountry visitors were attracted to springs in western North Carolina (Sulphur Springs just west of Asheville, Waynesville's White Sulphur Springs, and Warm [later, Hot] Springs. On these and other "springs" resorts in the area, see two blog posts in David E. Whisnant, *Asheville Junction*: "The Several Lives of West Asheville, Part I: Sulphur Springs as Proto-Land of the Sky, 1827–1861," <https://ashevillejunction.com/the-several-lives-of-west-asheville-part-i-sulphur-springs-as-proto-land-of-the-sky-1827-1861/>, and "The Several Lives of West Asheville, Part III: Edwin Carrier in West Asheville," <https://ashevillejunction.com/the-several-lives-of-west-asheville-part-iii-edwin-carrier-in-west-asheville/>, accessed Aug. 1, 2018.

He penned an extended account (42–46) of Plantersville in the Georgetown District (named for “the rice planters who had their summer houses there, built of logs by slave labor”) and brought to life by the resident Negro caretakers and servants every summer as the planters arrived (44). There and in other villages like Pineville, the “fire stands” glowed red at night, and around them “the children played and attendant Negroes hovered.” Fires were started in the detached kitchen-houses, and in the servants’ quarters “numerous bowlegged and half-naked pickaninnies played” (44).

Farther along the way, the inns, hotels, and “public houses” such as the Walker House and the Palmetto House in Spartanburg (62) that were already in the 1830s catering to Lowcountry travelers caught Brewster’s attention.

To call the book Brewster wrote a cultural ethnography would be overly generous, but it was nevertheless far more embracing of race and class, and more analytically sophisticated, than anything written by Flat Rock’s Lowcountry partisans during the decades that followed. His rendering of Charles Baring said it bluntly: Baring in his four-thousand-acre Flat Rock estate was “served by a retinue of sixty slaves” (64)

As the travelers approached and entered Flat Rock, Brewster (through the many informants he found in what turned out to be abundant published and archival resources) paid careful attention to what they saw, heard, and experienced. At the end of the 1830s, in the town’s only inn, fifty or so guests were crammed into “dark and dingy” bedrooms with “coarse and dirty” linens. Attended by “filthy negro servants,” they ate meals of “coarse, greasy, tough, badly-dressed and cold” food in a dining room with smoke-darkened ceilings (67).

The complicated and long-running process Brewster described, which occurred in identifiable intermediate steps through two states over more than a half-century, begged for analysis as a continuous cultural exchange marked by sharp racial and class boundaries. But after Brewster it was to be sanitized, simplified, and romanticized by Sadie Patton, Louise Bailey, and other popular writers whom we discuss in later chapters.



## CHAPTER FOUR

# SLAVERY IN NORTH CAROLINA, “APPALACHIA” AND WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

## Slavery in North Carolina, 1700–1860<sup>1</sup>

**B**ecause the patterns and dynamics of slavery differed so significantly from state to state across the south, it is useful to sketch the situation in North Carolina briefly for context before examining the Appalachian region and North Carolina’s western counties. Slavery in North Carolina differed in scale from that in South Carolina—which had a Black majority for most of the years from 1708 to the Civil War.<sup>2</sup>

There were slaves in North Carolina from the outset, but slavery grew relatively slowly during the early years. By 1712 (when North and South Carolina were separated) there were only about eight hundred blacks in the entire colony. Between 1730 and 1767, however, the number grew from six thousand to forty thousand. The first federal census (in 1790) listed more than 100,000 slaves in the colony (compared to fewer than 300,000 whites).

Even though slaves constituted about one-third of the state’s population at the opening of the nineteenth century, North Carolina’s slave population was far smaller than that of neighboring states. By 1860, it peaked at 331,000, Virginia had about 491,000, South Carolina 402,000, and Georgia 462,000. These totals gave North Carolina and Virginia about fifty-two slaves for every one hundred whites, while Georgia had ninety-one,

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the data and language in this section come from David E. Whisnant and Anne Mitchell Whisnant, *Gateway to the Atlantic World: Cape Lookout National Seashore Historic Resource Study* (Southeast Region, National Park Service, 2015). Footnote citations from within that source are also included here. “Appalachia” is in quotation marks because it has never been a stably defined political or administrative entity. Definitions have changed repeatedly over many decades, for numerous reasons. This issue is discussed below.

<sup>2</sup> *South Carolina Encyclopedia*. “African Americans.” Accessed Feb. 10, 2020. <http://www.scencyclopedia.org/sc/entries/african-americans>.



Mississippi 105, and South Carolina 140.<sup>3</sup> By 1860, North Carolina’s free Black population, by contrast, exceeded that of any other southern state except Virginia. From about five thousand in 1790, it had doubled by 1810 and doubled again, to nearly twenty thousand, by 1830. In 1860 there were more than thirty thousand free blacks in the state. The growth had come from immigration, race mixing, and manumission.<sup>4</sup>

Slave laws in North Carolina were stringent from the beginning. The Fundamental Constitutions of 1669 gave masters absolute power over slaves. By 1715, voting and unauthorized travel were forbidden, as was (of course) miscegenation. Slaves were tried by a jury of slaveholders, and there were public executions. Following the Stono Rebellion in South Carolina in 1739, a new slave code of 1741 tightened restrictions further. Enslaved people could not raise their own livestock, carry arms, or trade with other slaves. Public whipping, neck yokes, and summary hangings were constant threats. A Johnston County slave named Jenny was burned at the stake in 1780 for poisoning her master, and slaves’ decapitated heads were sometimes displayed on poles as a warning.<sup>5</sup>

As the Revolution approached, the South’s large slave population rendered it vulnerable to race-based civil disturbance. Already in 1774, the North Carolina Provincial Congress forbade further importation of slaves, the first of several pieces of legislation passed by 1808 that restricted importation of slaves into North Carolina.<sup>6</sup>

Even after Black Continental troops distinguished themselves at the Battle of Bunker Hill in June 1775, southern states continued to resist arming blacks, and fears of slave revolt spread.<sup>7</sup> During the Revolution, there were persistent fears that slaves would revolt, join with the British, or instigate a separate war.<sup>8</sup> The decade following was tense and perilous.

Some leaders among North Carolina’s enslaved themselves were well aware of the window of opportunity that seemed to be opening. Enslaved people in eastern North Carolina’s Pitt County planned to revolt in July 1775, but the plot was discovered. More than forty blacks were jailed; five were whipped and had their ears cropped. Slaves also

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<sup>3</sup> John Larkins, *The Negro Population of North Carolina: Social and Economic* (Raleigh: North Carolina State Board of Charities and Public Welfare, 1944), <http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/larkins/menu.html>, accessed March 14, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Guion Johnson, *Ante-bellum North Carolina a Social History* (Chapel Hill: Academic Affairs Library University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1937), 582–83, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/johnson/menu.html>, accessed Feb. 4, 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Paul D. Escott, Flora J. Hatley, and Jeffrey Crow, *A History of African Americans in North Carolina*, rev. ed. (Raleigh, NC: Department of Cultural Resources, Office of Archives and History, 2002), 1–11, 21, 26–30.

<sup>6</sup> Powell, *Encyclopedia of North Carolina*, 1047. The encyclopedia’s article on slavery in North Carolina, written by Jeffrey Crow, notes that another ban on slave importation in North Carolina was passed in 1786, and yet others in 1794 and 1795. The 1795 law expressly banned importation of slaves by immigrants from the West Indies out of fear of a spreading rebellious sentiment.

<sup>7</sup> Escott, Hatley, and Crow, *A History of African Americans in North Carolina*, 31.

<sup>8</sup> Escott, Hatley, and Crow, *A History of African Americans in North Carolina*, 14.

defected to the British in large numbers. Cornwallis’s invasion of the Carolinas in 1780–1781 led to mass defections by slaves, whom Cornwallis used to support, maintain and feed his army, taking food and other needed supplies from sequestered plantations.

At length, the racial irony of the Revolution became clear: the ideology of freedom and independence had in some respects washed over racial boundaries. For the next nearly three-quarters of a century, those boundaries were maintained only with increasingly tight legal restrictions, local repression, and (at critical moments) campaigns of terror.<sup>9</sup>

Conditions in North Carolina as the century turned were not propitious for slave revolts, but slave numbers continued to grow, and prices to escalate. Field hands that had cost \$300 in 1804 brought \$800 in 1840 and \$1,500 to \$1,700 in 1860.<sup>10</sup> By 1860, enslaved persons accounted for over 36 percent of the population.

As the early decades of the nineteenth century passed, laws restricting slaves’ freedom continued to tighten in North Carolina. New laws in 1826 and 1830 forbade teaching enslaved persons to read or write. An 1835 law stripped free blacks of voting rights and of the right to own or control a slave (hence removing the opportunity for free blacks to buy their families’ freedom). Patrollers were given wide discretion in dealing with runaways, and the power of masters, state Supreme Court Chief Justice Thomas Ruffin wrote in a seminal 1829 decision, had to be absolute “to render the submission of the slave perfect.”<sup>11</sup>

## Defining “Appalachia”

Until the mid-twentieth century, blacks were commonly believed to constitute only a small percentage of the Appalachian regional population, including western North Carolina. From such a perspective, the demographics of the Lowcountry-to-Flat Rock dynamic were cast by popular writers as consisting (mostly) of wealthy slave owners moving from a heavily black, slaveholding but culturally elevated area into an almost completely poor white and culturally benighted one.

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<sup>9</sup> Escott, Hatley, and Crow, *A History of African Americans in North Carolina*, 48–69.

<sup>10</sup> These average prices are from Powell (ed.), *Encyclopedia of North Carolina*, 1046–47.

<sup>11</sup> Brinkley, Martin H. “State v. John Mann | NCPedia.” In *NCPedia*, 2006. <https://www.ncpedia.org/state-v-john-mann>. Drawing from the Badgett Papers in the North Carolina Department of Archives for his meticulous discussion of the domestic slave trade, Michael Tadman points out that “the persistence of the [domestic] trade is shown by traders’ account books, correspondence, and advertisements, as well as by reports of contemporary observers. Henry Badgett had been in the trade (mostly from North Carolina to Georgia) from the 1840s and was still reporting good profits in 1863.” For Tadman’s full discussion, see [http://www.inmotionaame.org/texts/viewer.cfm?container=%2F&sub=%2F&q=North+Carolina&find.x=15&find.y=7&id=3\\_000T&page=1&view=1&anchor=1](http://www.inmotionaame.org/texts/viewer.cfm?container=%2F&sub=%2F&q=North+Carolina&find.x=15&find.y=7&id=3_000T&page=1&view=1&anchor=1).

But recent scholarship and the conceptual and analytical perspectives that flow from it, have swept that simplistic notion aside, and replaced it with a more grounded understanding of how slavery shaped the area that surrounded (and included) western North Carolina, Henderson County, and Flat Rock.

The slave population map above, prepared in 1861, is a compelling and corrective reminder that on the eve of the Civil War, slavery was not confined to a neat “Southern” array of states and counties. But at least *states* (as opposed to *regions*) existed as named and (at whatever chosen time) boundable and mappable entities.

If the array one wants to consider is a region called “Appalachia,” however, special difficulties ensue. The name itself has changed over a long period. Early on, *the Alleghanies* was in common use. Later, *the Southern Highlands* and *the Southern Mountains* were more in favor. “Appalachia” was a rather late comer.<sup>12</sup> The term was little used in the nineteenth century until the Civil War, but slightly more in the 1870s and 1880s, when natural resource discovery and exploitation increased. It maintained a ragged plateau as the “genteel magazines” emerged and promoted the local color literary genre focused considerably upon the region and other areas considered exotic and enticing. It turned sharply upward around 1960, when state and federal anti-poverty and economic development programs appeared, but turned sharply downward again about 1972, when program funding was reduced or eliminated. Moreover, whatever the name, “Appalachia,” bounded somehow or other, for some reason(s) and by means of some set of criteria (topographical, geological, social, cultural, economic), has been a fluctuating entity.<sup>13</sup>

Even though a consensus boundary did not begin to emerge until the 1960s, the dominant popular (and too frequently, scholarly) view persisted into the 1970s, at least, that (as everyone “knew”) “Appalachia” was an exception to the rest of the United States: persistently rural and agricultural, isolated from other areas and lagging them developmentally, characterized more by quaint “handicrafts” than by industrial development, wholly white and Protestant, culturally recalcitrant and “traditional,” and the like. The problem with such benchmarks is that none of them were true.

So if Appalachia was in fact not totally white, why and how was such a notion promoted and maintained for so long? Several factors interacted through the decades:

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<sup>12</sup> See for example, John Alexander Williams’s discussion in *Appalachia: A History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 9–14. His examples of changing nomenclature date from a Minnesota newspaper of 1861 (“the Alleghanies”) to the state-federal Appalachian Regional Commission in 1965.

<sup>13</sup> The definitional complexities are fully evident in Rudy Abramson and Jean Haskell (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Appalachia* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2006), 3–37. This 1832-page encyclopedia is a key source of convenient, detailed, and reliable information on a vast number of topics related to the region. Unfortunately, only a small section of it is online.

- The “local color” literary genre (1870ff.) in the “genteel magazines,” whose (mostly New England-based) readers thirsted after romantic, exotic and picturesque fare<sup>14</sup>
- Formation, cultural definition, and spread of folk and settlement schools in the region after 1890.<sup>15</sup>
- Collection and dissemination of the folklore (mainly handicrafts and Anglo-American ballads) of the mountains (e.g., Kentucky and western North Carolina) from the late 19th century onward—to both the local tourist trade and major extra-regional urban marketing centers<sup>16</sup>
- The economic usefulness of “white Appalachia” images to regional tourist inns and hotels looking for patrons, railroads looking for passengers, photographers and postcard publishers looking for marketable subjects, and others. This symbiotic dynamic was present since shortly after the incorporation of Asheville before 1800 and was augmented by the opening of the Buncombe Turnpike in 1827 and of the railroads into Asheville and Hendersonville after 1880.
- Commercial recording and dissemination of “old time,” “hillbilly,” and vaguely defined “folk” music in the early 1920s and thereafter.<sup>17</sup>
- The folk festival phenomenon, of which many examples emerged after the late 1920s. Virtually all promoted the Anglo-British “origins” of Appalachian folklore. Neither of the two most prominent early festivals (Bascom Lamar Lunsford’s Mountain Dance and Folk Festival in Asheville, 1928ff, and Annabel Morris Buchanan’s White Top Folk Festival in southwest Virginia, 1934ff) included Black performers, although the former included some native American ones.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Henry Shapiro, *Appalachia on Our Mind: The Southern Mountains and Mountaineers in the American Consciousness, 1870–1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), discusses the genre at great length, 3–31. Two typical examples of local color stories (by Mary Noailles Murfree and John Fox, Jr.) are easily accessible in Robert Higgs and Ambrose N. Manning (eds.), *Voices from the Hills: Selected Readings of Southern Appalachia* (New York: F. Unger Publishing, 1975), 131–60. A representative image of a ferry on the French Broad River near Asheville from 1872 may be found in William Cullen Bryant, ed., *Picturesque America; or, The Land We Live In* (New York: D. Appleton, 1872), I:145.

<sup>15</sup> Shapiro, *Appalachia on Our Mind*, pp. 32–58; David E. Whisnant, *All That Is Native and Fine: The Politics of Culture in an American Region* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983; rev. ed., 2009), 17–179 on the Hindman Settlement School in eastern Kentucky and the John C. Campbell Folk School (1925) in western North Carolina.

<sup>16</sup> Shapiro, *Appalachia on Our Mind*, 244–65 for a synoptic discussion of early activities in this domain. Jane Becker’s *Selling Tradition: Appalachia and the Construction of an American Folk, 1930–1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998) examines later activities in the domain of material culture.

<sup>17</sup> The scholarly and popular literature on this topic is vast. One might best begin with Bill C. Malone’s richly sourced *Country Music, U.S.A.* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968; rev. ed. 1985). Malone’s numerous other works are also key sources, as are many volumes in the *Music in American Life* series published by the University of Illinois Press.

<sup>18</sup> On Lunsford’s festival, see David E. Whisnant, “Finding the Way Between the Old and the New”: The Mountain Dance and Folk Festival and Bascom Lamar Lunsford’s Work as a Citizen,” *Appalachian Journal* 7, No. 1–3 (1979), 135–54, and Whisnant, *All That Is Native and Fine*, 181–252, on the White Top Folk Festival.

Grounded research and writing on the Black presence in Appalachia did not begin in earnest until the 1960s, so that earlier formulations of regional history and culture remained relatively unchallenged until then.<sup>19</sup>

During the past several decades, however, this pandemic and staunchly defended “exceptionalist” view of the region has come under challenge from a growing number of scholars, partly because of their focus upon intra-regional racial and cultural differences.

## Slavery and Blacks in Appalachia: Post-1960s Accounts

Knowing and comprehending this post-1960s work is essential if one is to move beyond the “white Appalachia” syndrome and its related typologies. It allows one to examine the actual, historically verifiable, Black presence in some defensibly defined Appalachia, in western North Carolina (in more detail), and in Henderson County and Flat Rock.

In 1985, pioneering Black Appalachian scholar-activists William H. Turner and Edward J. Cabbell assembled two dozen examples of the earliest grounded analytical work on blacks in Appalachia, some of it dating from the 1970s.<sup>20</sup> The collection *Blacks in Appalachia* aimed to “demonstrate that blacks in the Appalachian region are neither aberrations nor epiphenomena, neither invisible nor insignificant.” Statistical tables in Turner’s own essay, “The Demography of Black Appalachia,” supported such a judgment, as did key region-wide articles and more focused ones on labor history, Black industrial workers, urban blacks, interracial solidarity and Black unionism, and the “whitening” of Appalachia in mid-twentieth-century Appalachian development policy documents.

In Turner and Cabbell’s collection, James Klotter’s “The Black South and White Appalachia” (from 1980) made a crucial connection between the late nineteenth-century perspective and the persistence of “white Appalachia” into the mid-twentieth century. “The ‘discovery’ of a needy and ‘pure’ people in the late nineteenth century,” Klotter argued,

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<sup>19</sup> Thomas R. Ford and Rupert B. Vance’s *The Southern Appalachian Region: A Survey* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1967). covered a short time period (roughly 1935–1965), and hardly referred to blacks at all.

<sup>20</sup> William H. Turner and Edward J. Cabbell, eds., *Blacks in Appalachia* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1985). The Council on Black Appalachians and the John Henry Memorial Foundation (before 1973) were dedicated to identifying and promoting the well-being of Appalachian blacks. The Eastern Kentucky Social Club for Black Appalachian out-migrants had local units in nine northeastern and midwestern cities. This volume’s Selected Bibliography (262–65) contains a number of references reaching back to the turn of the twentieth century, especially with regard to Black Appalachian coal miners.



Had coincided with increased racism and northern disappointment over Reconstruction. Mountain “whiteness” together with the people’s real needs—ironically similar to Black ones—had allowed some reformers to turn with clear conscience away from blacks to aid Appalachia . . . .<sup>21</sup>

And in the process to continue to “overlook” the presence of blacks in the region, one might add.

Fifteen years after Klotter wrote, and a decade after the Turner-Cabbell book appeared, historian John Inscoe’s essay, “Race and Racism in Nineteenth-Century Southern Appalachia,” provided a clarifying precis of the emerging new consensus concerning blacks in the region.<sup>22</sup> A few of his central arguments were:

- “No other aspect of the Appalachian character has been as prone to as much myth, stereotype, contradiction, and confusion as [have] . . . race relations and racial attitudes among mountaineers” (104).<sup>23</sup>
- “Part of the romanticization of Appalachia . . . in the late nineteenth century lay in its perceived [but not actual] racial and ethnic homogeneity” (105).
- Memes such as “pure Anglo-Saxon blood,” whiteness,” “black invisibility,” and others, nestling within the myth “that African Americans were a negligible presence” have been thoroughly discredited by recent scholarship.
- “Slavery existed in every county in Appalachia in 1860 . . . [when] the region had a Black populace, free and slave, of over 175,000” (106).
- Analyses (past and recent) have varied greatly concerning mountaineers’ fear of and hostility toward blacks, and the status of abolitionism, secessionism and unionism among them. (107–18)
- Slave trading and slave markets existed in “a number of mountain communities . . . [and] slave auctions elsewhere in the upper South were . . . dependent on slaves supplied from highland areas . . .” (118).
- There was finally “nothing truly unique about Appalachian racial attitudes. The region’s residents . . . [held] views and treatments of African Americans that were well within the mainstream of attitudes and behavior elsewhere in the South, a mainstream that was in itself by no means monolithic” (123).

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<sup>21</sup> James Klotter, “The Black South and White Appalachia,” *Journal of American History* 66 (March 1980), 62.

<sup>22</sup> In Mary Beth Pudur, Dwight B. Billings, and Altina L. Waller, eds., *Appalachia in the Making: The Mountain South in the Nineteenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 103–31. Twelve other essays in this volume examine economic, political, gender, social, technological and other aspects of the region in the 19th century. We will return to Inscoe’s broader work on Appalachia: his pathbreaking UNC Ph.D. dissertation in 1985; *Mountain Masters, Slavery, and the Sectional Crisis in Western North Carolina* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989); (with Gordon B. McKinney), *The Heart of Confederate Appalachia: Western North Carolina in the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); *Appalachians and Race: The Mountain South from Slavery to Segregation* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2001); and *Race, War, and Remembrance in the Appalachian South* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008).

<sup>23</sup> With regard to this observation, see Wilma Dunaway’s later discussion of slavery and poor whites in *Slavery in the American Mountain South* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 139–62.



In the years that followed Inscœ’s early work, other scholars expanded and deepened the analysis of slavery in the region. In 2001, Inscœ edited a volume that demonstrated how and in what directions this analysis had developed in less than two decades.<sup>24</sup>

Several of the articles focused on industrial slavery—a double paradox, since neither slavery nor blacks in industry nor slavery had previously been treated substantially.

David Williams looked at African American miners (both enslaved and free; no one knows exactly how many) in the 1829 Georgia gold rush. Local farmers took enslaved workers to the mines during the off season and worked them in mines they themselves owned or rented them out to other owners and operators. Some were killed in roof falls; some ran away. A few were allowed to keep a small portion of what they found; others pilfered what they could. A few earned enough to buy their own freedom, but most, Williams concluded, “were taken [to the mines] as slaves and remained slaves

John Strealey III focused on slaves in the Kanawha River salt industry (1808ff.). “The phenomenal growth of the industry” amidst a labor shortage, Strealey said, “attracted slave owners as furnace proprietors and lessors of chattels.” They brought enslaved workers from Kentucky and all over Virginia. In 1810 there were only 352 in the county, but by 1850 there were 3,140.<sup>25</sup>

Charles B. Dew told the story of Black forge man Sam Williams, an industrial slave at Buffalo Forge in Rockbridge County Virginia. The county’s leading ironmaster William Weaver died in 1863 a very wealthy man—owner of seventy enslaved people (twenty-six men, Dew said, fourteen women, and thirty children). Like gold mining and the salt works, forge work was extremely dangerous—especially to eyesight. Dew’s account of Sam Williams, his family and its history, his work, outbreaks of diphtheria, tuberculosis, and typhoid, their freedom following the War, and William Weaver’s business dealings, was richly detailed.<sup>26</sup>

Ronald L. Lewis and Joe William Trotter Jr. contributed related essays on Black workers in the coal industry—Lewis on convicts in the mines, and Trotter on Black communities in the West Virginia coalfields.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Inscœ and McKinney, eds., *Heart of Confederate Appalachia*.

<sup>25</sup> John E. Strealey III, “Slavery in the Kanawha Salt Industry,” in Inscœ and McKinney, eds., *Heart of Confederate Appalachia*, 50–73. For an image of these workers, see Inscœ, *Appalachians and Race*, 54.

<sup>26</sup> Charles B. Dew, “Sam Williams, Forgerman: The Life of an Industrial Slave at Buffalo Forge, Virginia,” in Inscœ and McKinney, eds., *Heart of Confederate Appalachia*, 74–100. Dew had written a book on Confederate iron works and another on Buffalo Forge in Rockbridge County, Virginia.

<sup>27</sup> Ronald L. Lewis, “African American Convicts in the Coal Mines of Southern Appalachia,” and Joe William Trotter Jr., “The Formation of Black Community in Southern West Virginia Coalfields,” in Inscœ and McKinney, eds., *Heart of Confederate Appalachia*, 259–83 and 284–301, respectively. Lewis brought years of prior analysis of Black workers and related areas to the task, and Trotter (the son of a West Virginia coal miner) had earlier worked extensively on Black miners in the state and those who had migrated north into other industrial occupations.

The post–Civil War convict labor system, Lewis pointed out, was slavery by another name, under an industrial rather than agricultural regime—born in the antebellum practice of plantation owners hiring slaves out to each other when labor needs outstripped their own supply. The system became, Lewis said, “a hydra-headed monster that corrupted politics and business and undermined public morality” wherever it operated (in Appalachia, primarily in the coalfields of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Alabama). It was, he argued, “an adaptation of [slavery] to the needs of a nascent industrial capitalism in its aggressively exploitative stage.” Widespread criticism of the system at the time was no match for the enormous gains favored by mine owners and supported by the courts and prison system, state governments, and any other entity situated to lower operating costs and extract profit from it.<sup>28</sup>

Trotter’s examination of Black communities in southern West Virginia highlighted the extraordinary demographic shifts that arose from vastly increased coal production after the mid-1880s:

- 1887–1910: coal production rose from 5 to 40 million tons.
- 1880–1910: population rose from 80,000 to 300,000.
- Immigrants from central, southern and eastern Europe increased from 1,400 to 18,000 in the same period.
- Black population rose from 4,800 to 40,000.
- The percentage of the state’s Black population living in the area rose from 21 to 63.

These demographic shifts by themselves throw a strong, corrective light upon the “white Appalachia” myth, especially since similar dynamics were in evidence throughout the region during the post–Civil War period.

From these southern West Virginia numbers, Trotter moved out to make his central argument. “At the same time that these transitions were taking place,” he said, Black miners and their families also contributed to the formation of Black community . . . Black religious, fraternal, and political organization dramatically expanded. African American institution-building reflected growing participation in the coal economy . . . and the effects of racial discrimination; they also reflected and stimulated the rise of a vigorous Black leadership.

Trotter’s article also detailed the strong resistance blacks encountered from the white establishment.

Inscoe examined pre-eminent landscape designer Frederick Law Olmsted’s observations on slavery and racism during his journey through “the Southern Highlands” in 1854; Gordon B. McKinney explored the relationship between Southern Mountain Republicans and blacks at the end of the century; Nina Silber wrote on race and northern

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<sup>28</sup> For an image of housing for Black convicts, see Inscoe, *Appalachians and Race*, 262.

reconciliation with “Southern Appalachia” during the same period; and Fitzhugh Brundage offered a sharp new perspective on “racial violence, lynchings and modernization in ‘the Mountain South.’”<sup>29</sup>

Space here does not permit elaboration of other meticulously crafted analyses in this volume.<sup>30</sup> One is essential, however, with regard to the focus of our next chapter: Wilma Dunaway’s pathbreaking analysis of interstate slave trading in “the Mountain South.”<sup>31</sup>

Dunaway shifts in three important ways the long-established tenet that the region (and its western North Carolina subregion) had (1) few blacks and no plantations, (2) that there was thus “no slavery,” and (3) that even if some bits of data argued to the contrary, whatever slavery there may have been was static and uncharacteristic, small-scale, and scattered in a few places.

To the contrary, Dunaway makes clear that slavery was a *pervasive, systemic, and dynamic* feature of Appalachian regional economic, political, and cultural life, tied closely in all of those sectors to life in the piedmont and lowland South. At the outset, she says, while the export of southern tobacco, rice, and indigo declined sharply after the Revolution, cotton production increased dramatically between 1810 and 1860, and demand for labor tracked that change. Not surprisingly, the “Lower South demand for slaves increased by more than 1800 percent . . . [and] two-fifths of the African Americans enslaved in the upper South were forced to migrate to the cotton economy.” And—contrary to

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<sup>29</sup> John C. Inscoe, “Olmsted in Appalachia: a Connecticut Yankee Encounters Slavery and Racism in the Southern Highlands, 1854,” 154–64; Gordon B. McKinney, “Southern Mountain Republicans and the Negro, 1865–1900,” 199–219; Nina Silber, “What Does America Need So Much as Americans?”: Race and Northern Reconciliation with Southern Appalachia, 1870–1900,” 245–58 ; Fitzhugh Brundage, “Racial Violence, Lynchings, and Modernization in the Mountain South,” 302–16. For an extensive, mapped online record of lynchings in North and South Carolina, see the web site *A Red Record*, <http://lynching.web.unc.edu>, accessed Feb. 23, 2018, which includes an excellent bibliography.

<sup>30</sup> Richard B. Drake, “Slavery and Antislavery in Appalachia,” 6–26; Cecelia Conway, “Appalachian Echoes of the African Banjo,” 27–39; Kenneth W. Noe, “A Source of Great Economy?: The Railroad and Slavery’s Expansion in Southwest Virginia, 1850–1860,” 101–15; Marie Tedesco, “A Free Black Slave Owner in East Tennessee: The Strange Case of Adam Waterford,” 133–53; Kathleen Blee and Dwight B. Billings, “Race and the Roots of Appalachian Poverty: Clay County, Kentucky, 1850–1910,” 165–88; John Cimprich, “Slavery’s End in East Tennessee,” 189–98; Jennifer Lund Smith, “Negotiating the Terms of Freedom: The Quest for Education in an African American Community in Reconstruction North Georgia,” 220–34; Conrad Ostwalt and Phoebe Pollitt, “The Salem School and Orphanage: White Missionaries, Black School,” 235–44.

<sup>31</sup> Wilma Dunaway, “Put in Master’s Pocket: Cotton Expansion and Interstate Slave Trading in the Mountain South,” 116–32. Two years later, Dunaway’s *Slavery in the American Mountain South* (Paris: Cambridge University Press, 2003) presented a much fuller treatment of these arguments. To achieve readable flow in our précis, we will not interrupt it with excessive quotation marks, footnotes, and page numbers. The ideas, details, and much of the language, come from Dunaway.

nearly all previously written Appalachian “history”—four of the key routes of that forced migration, and much of the slave trading associated with them, passed through some part of the Appalachian region.<sup>32</sup>

One route led out of Baltimore, overland across upper Virginia, and by canal and river into Wheeling West Virginia, which grew into “a major regional slave-trading hub,” partly to serve the salt industry as well as others down the Ohio River. A second Tidewater Virginia route led south to Richmond and thence to small, regional trading hubs in Abingdon, Knoxville, Chattanooga, and Rome, Georgia. Along the region’s eastern boundary, a third route linked Norfolk to Richmond and then ran south through the North Carolina piedmont to Salisbury, and finally to Charleston, Montgomery, Mobile, or Natchez—along the way tying into (for example) slave-heavy Burke County, North Carolina. The fourth route ran “southward from Louisville via Lexington and Nashville to . . . Vicksburg and Natchez.” Lexington dealers traveled through eastern Kentucky buying slaves, where in 1829 a local clergyman watched “a company of slaves, some of them heavily loaded with irons, singing as they passed along.”

Outside these major organized routes, independent, itinerant, interstate traffickers (some with “Cash for Negroes” signs on their hats, and some in collaboration with local lawyers) traded widely through the region on regular annual or biannual circuits through large and small towns, sometimes buying free blacks from jails or penitentiaries and selling them into slavery. Others (ranging from local elites to poor and landless) were so numerous that Appalachian towns levied taxes and fees for local trading.

Some such traders purchased children and raised them until they would bring higher prices. Others hired out as “bounty hunters,” stalking and capturing “runaways” and selling them back into captivity for a reward and “expenses.” Still others (sometimes called “slave rustlers”) practiced the “human export business” of “blackbirding”—capturing free blacks (also Cherokees and sometimes hired-out slaves) and selling them illegally into slavery.

Dunaway’s analysis concludes with a wrenching discussion of “slave coffles”—long lines of enslaved men and women chained together, ranging from dozens or scores to hundreds, followed by wagon loads of tents and provisions, and herded (literally) by three or four men over long distances to markets. A writer in the *Kanawha Register* of February 1830 offered a grotesque account of

the Demon in human form, the dealer in bones and sinew, driving hundreds . . . clanking the chains of their servitude, . . . and destined to send back to us from the banks of the Mississippi the sugar and the cotton of that soil moistened with sweat and blood.

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<sup>32</sup> For a map of these routes, see “Put in Master’s Pocket,” 118.

“As part of the exporting upper South,” Dunaway concludes, Appalachia lay at the hubs of the national slave trade routes. . . . Appalachia was neither isolated from nor culturally antagonistic toward the interstate slave trade. . . . [E]very courthouse, even those in counties with tiny Black populations, sported its own slave auction block . . . .<sup>33</sup>

The core fact that such topics as these, most of them hardly examined before at all, could be explored in such unarguable and illuminating ways was evidence that the Appalachian region was indeed (in these respects as in so many others) what it had never been understood to be before:

- Situated within a dynamic national and world economy (not an “isolated” exception).
- Socially, racially, culturally, and politically modern (not “pre-modern”).
- Multicultural and multi-ethnic (not White Anglo-Saxon Protestant, not determinedly “traditional”).
- Urban, industrial, and capitalist (not exclusively agricultural or rural), containing major industrial cities such as Pittsburgh (steel), Morgantown (river shipping) and Charleston West Virginia (salt, natural gas, coal, chemicals), Roanoke (railroads), Asheville (cotton mills, tanneries and furniture plants), Chattanooga (railroads) and Birmingham (coal and steel).

By the year 2000, then, a new conceptual and analytical paradigm, grounded in meticulous documentation and research, had replaced what one might call an Appalachia that never was: *non*-exceptional, historically situated, culturally syncretistic and dynamic, modern in all its aspects, nationally and globally integrated. Scholars who have worked (or continued to work) since then have continued to build upon *that* ground, viewing evidence through more and more finely graded lenses, arguing with ever greater precision.

In her later *Slavery in the American Mountain South* (2003), to take a prime example of new work, Wilma Dunaway deployed her own meticulous and wide-ranging scholarship, as well as that of others (as always must be the case in such endeavors), to look at virtually every aspect of slavery within this “new” Appalachia.

Examining a 215-county “target area that stretches through nine states from western Maryland to northern Alabama” and basing her statistical analysis upon “26,000 households drawn from nineteenth-century county tax lists and census manuscripts,” Dunaway demonstrates that the region has always been incorporated within both the national and the world economies, sending out raw materials (coal, lumber, agricultural

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<sup>33</sup> Dunaway, “Put in the Master’s Pocket,” 130. An image of a slave coffle camped along the New River in Virginia is available in Inscoc, *Appalachians and Race*, 124.

products) to both the northeastern United States and to Europe, and importing manufactured goods from both—along Indian trading paths, drovers’ roads, rivers and canals, turnpikes, and railroad lines.<sup>34</sup>

From such a national and global perspective, Dunaway argues that “all Black workers . . . [were] locked into an economic and political symbiosis with the plantation economies of the U.S. South, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the West Indies.”<sup>35</sup> With regard to the Appalachian region, that expanded geographical frame expanded her time frame as well, and drew in at least five other groups and issues that not had been attended to in previous analyses: (1) Cherokee involvement in slavery and the slave trade before and after white arrival; (2) enslaved blacks in all of her nine chosen Appalachian states in the early decades of the nineteenth century (and their periodic percentage fluctuations); (3) enslaved workers (and how their labor was defined and managed) on the small and large plantations that actually existed within the region, (4) the nearly three hundred thousand “unfree” (regulated and exploitable) Black laborers just prior to the Civil War; and (5) the economics of slaveholding within the region (and the class tensions arising from it).<sup>36</sup>

Like Ronald Lewis and others before her (but at greater length) Dunaway also documented the involvement of blacks (both enslaved and “free”) in nonagricultural sectors.

Prior to the Civil War, she computed,

Nearly ninety thousand Black Appalachians comprised more than two-fifths of the region’s nonagricultural labor force, and 88 percent of them were enslaved workers. In the Appalachian counties of Alabama, Kentucky, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia, slaves and free blacks accounted for more than half of all the nonagricultural workers. More than two-fifths of the nonagricultural occupations in western North Carolina and northern Georgia were held by Black Appalachians.<sup>37</sup>

The presence of such workers varied from state to state (and from place to place within states), depending upon (for example) the presence or absence of waterways, extractable resources, tourist attractions, or commercial development and activity.

Some of the major sectors Dunaway documents and discusses are:

- domestic service (both in owners’ homes, and hired out)

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<sup>34</sup> Dunaway, *Slavery in the American Mountain South*, 1–7. Dunaway and many other scholars have made corroborating arguments that “anti-exceptionalism” has replaced exceptionalism as the primary paradigm of regional analysis. Two other paradigm-challenging stages along the way were “internal colony” and “core/periphery,” both of them helpful at a certain stage but not as encompassing and serviceable as the anti-exceptionalist approach proved to be.

<sup>35</sup> Dunaway, *Slavery in the American Mountain South*, 26.

<sup>36</sup> Dunaway, *Slavery in the American Mountain South*, 16–41. See especially Map 2, *Slaves in the Appalachian Labor Force, 1860*, p. 21.

<sup>37</sup> Dunaway, *Slavery in the American Mountain South*, 73–101.



- commerce, with its “commodity chains” linking small towns, larger nearby “bulking centers” (such as Wheeling and Knoxville), urban “distribution centers” (Richmond, for example), and trade centers (outwardly linked, mostly port, cities such as Baltimore, Charleston, New Orleans)
- small business, artisans (retail stores, shops; blacksmiths, shoemakers, masons)
- “travel capitalism” (hotels, inns, tourist resorts, mineral spas; as servants, cooks, musicians, hostlers, chambermaids).<sup>38</sup>
- internal transportation (on rivers, canals, other waterways)<sup>39</sup>
- extractive industries: coal, salt, gold, copper, marble, stone, lumber<sup>40</sup>
- manufacturing, including on plantations (flour, meal, whiskey, liquor, cloth, clothing, tobacco products, tools, buckets and barrels, processed livestock)
- public works (streets, bridges, canals and sewers, garbage collection, railroad construction)<sup>41</sup>

## Slavery in Western North Carolina: Early Commentators

Commentary on slavery in the mountainous region of North Carolina emerged quite early, as recent scholars have noted—and eventually bulked too large for evaluation and treatment here. But early attention to the topic by three commentators who became popularly designated as authorities on the topic will provide a bit of useful background.

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<sup>38</sup> For an image from Asheville’s Eagle Hotel, see Reid, *Land of the Sky* (1875), p. 28.

<sup>39</sup> Dunaway, *Slavery in the American Mountain South*, 90–94: “The Muscle Shoals canal contractor advertised to hire five hundred slaves annually, and the company drew most of those laborers from the Appalachian counties of northern Alabama. The canal was so desperate for workers that it offered day wages to entice temporary hires, in addition to the customary annual contracts.” Virginia’s James River and Kanawha Canal used both Black convicts and slaves. For an account of a harrowing trip on western North Carolina’s Broad River, see p. 94.

<sup>40</sup> Dunaway, *Slavery in the American Mountain South*, 113–19. Dunaway discusses (123–28) slaves in iron production (mostly in Virginia), coal mining (mostly West Virginia and Kentucky), in copper mining and timber production (129–38).

<sup>41</sup> Dunaway was careful not to present Black free or enslaved workers as pure victims who lacked agency within their own lives and social circumstances. Two carefully documented and argued chapters prove the contrary: “Repression and Antisystemic Resistance on Mountain Plantations” (163–97) and “Cultural Resistance and Community Building on Mountain Plantations” (198–240), which explore resistant, counter-hegemonic actions and activities of many sorts (e.g., social gatherings, music and dance, family formation and maintenance, ceremonies, religion, literacy, running away, community building). Among her sources is Roger D. Abrahams’s excellent *Singing the Master: The Emergence of African American Culture in the Plantation South* (New York: Penguin Books, 1992), a study of “corn-shucking ceremonies of the [antebellum plantation] South, where white masters played host to local slaves and watched their ‘guests’ perform exuberant displays of singing and dancing” in which the masters could be (and were) subjected to carnival-like satire based partly on role swapping and inversion.

## *Horace Kephart (1913)*

“Who are these southern mountaineers?,” adopted mountaineer Horace Kephart—from his perch near Bryson City in Swain County—asked in his widely popular (and by now, numerous timesoft cited and reprinted) *Our Southern Highlanders* of 1913. Whoever they were, he asserted categorically, they were white, not black:

Before the Civil War they were seldom heard of in the outside world. Vaguely it was understood that the Appalachian highlands were occupied by a peculiar people called “mountain whites.” This odd name was given them not to distinguish them from mountain negroes, for there were, practically, no mountain negroes . . . throughout most of Appalachia the population is almost exclusively white.<sup>42</sup>

## *John Preston Arthur (1914)*

A similar (although less categorical) view was echoed at the same time by John Preston Arthur’s *Western North Carolina: A History* (1914)—widely taken at the time it was published and for years thereafter as a reliable historical source.<sup>43</sup> Arthur linked the growth of lowland plantation slavery to the (salutary, in his view) peopling of the mountains by whites:

The rapid growth of slavery, no doubt, discouraged many, who, unable to succeed in the Slave-States, were crowded to the mountains, or else became the “Poor White” of the South, who must not be for a moment confounded with the “Mountain White,” the latter having brought some of the best blood of his nation to these blue heights. He brought into the mountains and there nourished, the stern virtues of his race, including the strictest honesty, an old-fashioned self-respect, and an old-fashioned speech, all of which he yet retains, as well as a certain pride . . . [Surnames in the mountains are] indicative of the English, Scotch and Irish descent of our people—names that “are crowned with honor out in the big world.”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Horace Kephart, *Our Southern Highlanders* (New York: Macmillan, 1913, 1922), 429, 453. Full text available at <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.49015002348747>, accessed Feb. 14, 2018. On Kephart, one of many “outlanders” who took up residence in the western North Carolina mountains at the time, see “Kephart, Horace” in Rudy Abramson and Jean Haskell, *Encyclopedia of Appalachia* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2006), 1017–18.

<sup>43</sup> Until the 1950s, a pervasive problem with the existing literature on the Appalachian region was that it was not grounded in research and was biased by ethnocentric perspectives and ridden with cultural myths. This ambient condition allowed early (and not-so-early) writing on the region to achieve and maintain credibility it did not deserve. The reputation of Arthur’s work, although partly research-based, benefitted from this laxity.

<sup>44</sup> John Preston Arthur, *Western North Carolina: A History (1730 to 1913)* (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton, 1913), 15, 146. Arthur took his Poor White vs. Mountain White discussion almost verbatim from Margaret Morley’s *The Carolina Mountains* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1913), 141–42.

Arthur essentially dismissed (496) the importance of slavery in North Carolina and Tennessee mountain counties.<sup>45</sup> He wrote that, fortunately,

in the greater portion of that section of the State extending from the eastern foot-hills of the Blue Ridge to the western boundaries of Clay and Cherokee, the slave-owners in 1861 were so rare that the institution of slavery may be said, practically, to have had no existence . . .

Arthur’s brief mention of Henderson County, Hendersonville, and Flat Rock merely celebrated their “social charm . . . fine and well-kept hotels . . . [and] many wealthy and fashionable people from the lower part of South Carolina.” He specifically identified Charles Baring and Judge Mitchell King as having come up from Charleston in 1820 and 1830 and built grand houses, noting that they were followed later by C. G. Memminger and then “the Smythes.”<sup>46</sup>

The problem with Arthur’s general perspective was that much of his own data was internally contradictory. Quoting from the Asheville *Sunday Register* of 1840, he seemed to minimize the issue, saying that “the white population [of Asheville] then did not exceed 300, and the total number of slaves, owned by eight or nine persons, did not exceed 200.”<sup>47</sup> But even these numbers would have given Asheville a 40 percent Black population at the time.

Searching the now-available digital edition of Arthur’s history actually turns up many detailed references to slaves and slaveholders (frequently with names) in western North Carolina:

- Benjamin Howard had an “African slave named Burrell” who helped him herd stock “near the village of Boone”;
- Richard Gentry of Ashe County “divided his property into three parts, two in land and one in slaves.” His son James “got the slaves.”
- When Buncombe County’s first white settler Samuel Davidson walked up the mountain from Old Fort in 1781, he brought with him his wife, his child and “a female negro slave.” The Cherokees killed Davidson, but his wife and slave fled back down the mountain.
- Colonel George Bower (b. Ashe county, 1788)—merchant, farmer, livestock raiser, hotel owner at Jefferson and State Senator—“owned a large number of slaves” . . . Following “a runaway slave” to a ford on the Yadkin River in 1861,

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<sup>45</sup> Arthur, *Western North Carolina*, 347–49, 496.

<sup>46</sup> Arthur, *Western North Carolina*, 182–83, 202–3, 493. Fortunately, the increasingly widespread digitization of public and other records has allowed expanded access to primary (as well as published) sources bearing upon slavery in Henderson County and Flat Rock. For example, online records of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History contain at least some of Charles Baring’s land and slave purchases in South Carolina before he established his Flat Rock estate. As early as 1798, in a single transaction, Baring and his wife bought 78 enslaved people. Other transactions (the last in 1850) are recorded for 2, 8, 63, and 96 slaves (purchased or sold), and for up to 4,500 acres at a time in several locations. In recently digitized Buncombe County slave deeds, one finds five Baring transactions for slaves (1831–1833) and 13 for land (1830–1843).

<sup>47</sup> Arthur, 146.

“Bower was in his carriage with a negro driver . . . who told him the river was too swollen to admit of fording it at that time. Col. Bower, insisting, however, the colored man drove in. The current took the carriage with its single occupant far beyond the bank. Col. Bower was drowned, but the driver and horses escaped.”

- “Abraham Harshaw, the largest slave owner [in Cherokee County], four miles south of Murphy.”
- “A Romance of Slavery Days” in 1849 between “ignorant and infatuated . . . dusky lovers” Millie, owned by William Mast of Valle Crucis (Watauga County) and Silas.<sup>48</sup>
- In 1859 or thereabouts, Joshua Pennell of Wilkes County “left a will setting all his slaves free.”<sup>49</sup>

On the final page of his nearly seven-hundred-page text, one notes with great surprise, Arthur listed (from “Wheeler’s History of North Carolina”) 1850 county-by-county totals of whites, free negroes, and slaves in Ashe, Buncombe, Cherokee, Haywood, Henderson, Macon and Watauga counties.<sup>50</sup> Numbers of slaves ranged, he said, from 1,717 in Buncombe to 129 in Watauga—a total of 4,669. Burke, a heavy slaveholding county, was not included in Arthur’s list of seventeen counties.<sup>51</sup>

## *John C. Campbell (1921)*

Sociologist John C. Campbell’s slightly later *The Southern Highlander and His Homeland* (1921), based upon systematic observation and research, was in some ways ahead of its time. He distinguished among sub-regions (e.g., “the Greater Appalachian Valley” and the “Alleghany-Cumberland” plateau), and included brief state-by-state commentary, thus moving beyond the pan-regional generalizations that had prevailed for decades. He also paid attention to religion, education, resource extraction, agriculture, and the movement of local whites into the burgeoning piedmont textile industry.

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<sup>48</sup> Much later, reluctance to mention slavery in connection with western North Carolina led Ora Blackmun, in *Western North Carolina: Its Mountains and Its People to 1880* (Boone NC: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1977) to characterize the enslaved woman who traveled with Davidson and his family as “a Negro house servant” (159).

<sup>49</sup> These and related references occur frequently in Arthur’s *History*: 82, 85, 109, 142–47, 164–65, 187, 239, 347, 349, 353–55, 636–51.

<sup>50</sup> Arthur, 658. “Wheeler’s History” may have been John H. Wheeler, *Reminiscences and Memoirs of North Carolina and Eminent North Carolinians*. (Columbus, Ohio: Columbus print works, 1884), <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/002780934>.

<sup>51</sup> Inscow’s Map 4 in *Mountain Masters*, 64, based upon 1860 census data, is helpful for Burke and all other western North Carolina counties. Even more broadly, Darin Waters has compiled census-derived Black population figures for 17 western North Carolina counties by decade, 1860–1890, in “Life Beneath the Veneer: The Black Community in Asheville, North Carolina from 1793 to 1900” (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, 2012), Appendices I-IV, 233–36. See our Appendix 5: County Black Populations in WNC, 1860–1890.

With regard to blacks in the region, Campbell was less successful. Using data from the 1910 census (but ignoring information in Arthur’s then fairly recent history), he came up with a substantial (11.7 percent) Black population.<sup>52</sup> Equivocating later, however, he added that “Generally speaking, there were few Negroes in the Highlands in early times,” although “In one very remote Highland region there still exists a small community of this sort, living an independent and respected life.”<sup>53</sup>

Unfortunately, more rigorous and thorough analysis of slavery in the region and its western North Carolina counties was very slow (decades, really) in coming. But it did come.

## Recent Scholarship: Perdue, Inscoe and Dunaway

If one looks beyond Kephart, Arthur, and Campbell to recent, focused scholarship on blacks and slavery in *western North Carolina* (WNC), specifically, what does one find? How (if at all) did the situation there differ from other parts of the Appalachian region already discussed above? Who owned slaves in western North Carolina? How did they get the capital to buy them? Where did they get their slaves, and how? What kinds of work did slaves do? What about the distribution, levels of wealth, and degree of social and political integration of slaveholders?

An early account was historian Theda Perdue’s 1979 essay “Red and Black in the Southern Appalachians,” which argued that the Black presence (and slavery) in (what became) western North Carolina could be traced to the mid-1500s. There is substantial evidence, she said, that the Cherokees, whose nation encompassed a large portion of the western North Carolina mountains, “encountered Africans at least as early as they did Europeans and may have seen blacks even before the Spanish conquistadors visited their towns” in the 1540s.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> John Campbell, *The Southern Highlander and His Homeland* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1921), 74.

<sup>53</sup> Campbell, *The Southern Highlander*, 94, 94n1. “This sort” appears to mean where there are a few descendants of early slaves. Further complicating the contested matter of racial composition is the fact that “white” or WASP as descriptors were often linked with one or more (derogatory) others: isolated, illiterate, inbred, rural, clannish, suspicious, violent, backward and the ubiquitous hillbilly, which are still widely in evidence. For the best recent historical treatment of this syndrome, see Anthony Harkins, *Hillbilly: A Cultural History of an American Icon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004) and Jerry Williamson, *Hillbillyland: What the Movies Did to the Mountains and What the Mountains Did to the Movies* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

<sup>54</sup> Turner and Cabbell, eds., *Blacks in Appalachia*, 23–30. Perdue’s essay was adapted from her book *Slavery and the Evolution of Cherokee Society, 1540–1866* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1979), which made her a very early voice on the topic of slavery among the Cherokees—hence in Appalachia. Dunaway, as noted earlier in this chapter, later engaged this topic.

Serious scholarly analysis of blacks and slavery in western North Carolina received wider framing and a major boost six years later from John Inscoe’s 1985 Ph.D. dissertation.<sup>55</sup> Demographically, he concluded,

slaves made up a very small part of the region’s populace, but the “peculiar institution” proved profitable to those mountain residents, usually professional or business men, who owned slaves. Because these mountain masters did not form a distinct planter class and were, to a large degree, responsible for the economic development and political gains made by their section of the state, they enjoyed the loyalty and support of the vast majority of mountain residents, the non-slaveholders . . . .

Four years later, Inscoe’s *Mountain Masters, Slavery, and the Sectional Crisis in Western North Carolina* (1989), based on his dissertation, emerged as the first thorough, grounded, closely argued treatment of slavery in the fifteen WNC counties—from Cherokee on the Georgia-Tennessee border to Alleghany of the Virginia border—in existence in 1860.

Inscoe situated this fifteen-county WNC area within the state (and beyond) and in comparison with each other and the state. WNC had market connections eastward to Salisbury and Charlotte, to the south through Spartanburg to Charleston, through Greenville to Athens, Milledgeville, and Macon, and on down the Savannah River to Augusta and Savannah. Compared to road and river, virtually no access by rail existed until after the Civil War, except a Salisbury to Morganton link.<sup>56</sup>

With regard to where and how WNC slaveowners acquired their slaves, Inscoe argued that more typically than buying and selling them through the interstate trade, WNC owners (and purchasers) made such transactions “within the area and between western North Carolinians.” Moreover, during the antebellum period, prices rose steadily, so that slaves (children were widely sought for this purpose) could safely be held for later sale to local buyers, without the cost and risk of interstate trade.<sup>57</sup>

In her later work, Wilma Dunaway provided examples of interstate slave trading in some western North Carolina counties (Buncombe, Burke, Rutherford, Surry, and Wilkes).<sup>58</sup> They are quite similar to examples from elsewhere in the region:

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<sup>55</sup> We do not wish to imply here that Inscoe was the first ever to present data or commentary on slavery in western North Carolina, as he himself never claimed, and as his marshalling of extensive previously published primary and secondary materials establishes.

<sup>56</sup> John C. Inscoe, *Mountain Masters, Slavery and the Sectional Crisis in Western North Carolina* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), Map 1, p. 26, Map 2, p. 42, and Map 5, p. 168. Subsequent page and other references in parentheses within text.

<sup>57</sup> Inscoe, *Mountain Masters*, 82–83.

<sup>58</sup> Wilma Dunaway, “Put in Master’s Pocket: Cotton Expansion and Interstate Slave Trading in the Mountain South” in Inscoe (ed.), *Appalachians and Race*, 116–32.



- A Burke County resident informed his family in 1821 that buyers for the Louisiana market were driving up prices in Norfolk.
- A female plantation owner in Wilkes County reported buyers transporting some of her slaves for sale in Mobile.
- An enslaved person in Buncombe County remembered how—when traders were known to be in the area—masters sent all slaves to work in the fields, where they could be observed, bought, and transported.

Between 1839 and 1841, William Holland Thomas, a white man adopted by the Cherokee, and later their lawyer and leader of the Eastern Band, “bought and sold eight to twelve slaves every year.”<sup>59</sup>

Wilkes County was a hotbed of activity. James Gwyn and a partner became very wealthy by buying low (from debt-pressed neighbors, and at auctions) and selling high to make up coffles for transport to markets lying to the west. Merchant Calvin Cowles hired and purchased slaves, then hired them out for a profit. Frank White and William Beasley “gathered coffles . . . for the Charleston market.”<sup>60</sup>

Rutherford County “blackbirder” William Robbins “colluded with poor whites to ‘rustle’ slaves” for the interstate trade.<sup>61</sup>

Blackbirders in Surry County kidnapped and sold “a group of colored people . . . illegally held in bondage.”

Beyond slave trading routes and mechanisms, Inscoc also looked at how those who aspired to own slaves, or buy more of them, got the money to do so. Most farms were too small to generate such surplus capital. But almost one-third of the slaveholders, he found, were professional men (doctors and lawyers, mostly) who had enough money to invest. Businessmen could realize a profit from using slaves in a wide range of ventures, and by hiring them out. Hotel owners, storekeepers, operators of small manufacturing operations (tanning, blacksmithing, sawmilling, shoemaking), and land speculators all found ways to make owning slaves profitable—and to provide surplus income for purchasing more.<sup>62</sup>

To understand what links slave labor had with WNC agriculture, Inscoc ranked counties by farm size and crops produced (Table 1.3 and Table 1.1, respectively). In 1860, two had more than two hundred 100+-acre farms (Buncombe 268 and Wilkes 219), six others had more than one hundred, and Jackson had only forty-six. Depending upon the crop, Ashe, Buncombe, and Wilkes tended to rank high in production, and Yancey usually

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<sup>59</sup> On Thomas, see <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/thomas-william-holland>, accessed Feb. 22, 2018.

<sup>60</sup> Inscoc has a more detailed account of Cowles and his activities in his essay “Mountain Masters as Confederate Opportunists” in *Race, War and Remembrance in the Appalachian South*, 83–84.

<sup>61</sup> “Blackbirder,” which meant corralling and transporting slave labor by deception, generally referred to commerce in enslaved people in the Pacific region, but was known and used in the Appalachian region as well.

<sup>62</sup> Inscoc, *Mountain Masters*, 64–72. Inscoc lays out a large catalog of uses for slave labor by specific owners in various WNC counties.

lower. Compared with state production (Table 1.2), WNC as a whole produced 96.7 percent of the buckwheat, 40 percent of the flax, 66 percent of the molasses, and 47 percent of the cheese, but far lesser amounts of everything else.

But agriculture was far from the only relevant sector. “Mining,” he concluded, “was the nonagricultural activity that involved the largest number of slaves most profitably” in western North Carolina, owing to the discovery of gold there in 1828 and a five-year gold rush that spawned mining towns and operations in Rutherford and Burke counties.<sup>63</sup> Some slaveholders opened their own mines, and some hired slaves out to other mine owners. Later, copper mining also provided similar opportunities for profit, as did public works projects and trying (against financial, legal, and other odds) to push the Western North Carolina Railroad up the mountain from Morganton to Asheville.<sup>64</sup>

Regarding slavery as a percent of county population, Burke was highest with nearly 32 percent; McDowell, Buncombe, and Caldwell had a little more or less than half that many (18.3, 15.3, and 14.5, respectively); Henderson was among the top five at 13.2 percent; and the remaining ten had between 4 and 9 percent, except for Watauga at 2 percent.<sup>65</sup>

Inscoe cast another light upon WNC slave numbers in his list of the fifty largest slaveholders and their wealth in 1860. Burke County’s William F. McKesson was largest of all (174 slaves), and the county had two others with more than one hundred and five with fifty to eighty. Buncombe had eight of them, from N. W. Woodfin in second place (122), and James W. and John E. Patton (seventy-eight and sixty-eight, respectively, at sixth and tenth). Twenty-six owners from ten other counties had from thirty to forty-nine.<sup>66</sup>

Personal wealth was highly correlated with slave ownership. In 1860, WNC’s 1,877 slaveholders (9.9 percent of the population), who owned 12,051 slaves, held \$18.7m (about 43.4 percent) of the real and personal wealth. The other 90 percent, with no slaves, had the rest.

To complicate the record further, slaveholding families in WNC were extensively intermarried. These slaveholders, Inscoe explained, were

mountain “masters” in many more ways than their Black property holdings alone implied. Through their wealth, family connections, business interests, and governmental power, they dominated highland society to a degree that would have made them the envy of planter “oligarchies” or “slaveocracies”

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<sup>63</sup> Inscoe (ed.), *Mountain Masters*, 72; Jean H. Seaman, “Gold Rush,” in *NCPedia*, 2006, <https://www.ncpedia.org/gold-rush>, accessed 5 July 2020.

<sup>64</sup> Inscoe, *Mountain Masters*, 72–79.

<sup>65</sup> Inscoe, *Mountain Masters*, Table 3.1, p. 61.

<sup>66</sup> See appendix in Inscoe, *Mountain Masters*, 265–66. We will return to Henderson County numbers subsequently. It is important to understand, as we explain in detail later, that in these tallies, the numbers of slaves owned by any listed owner were those the person owned *in western North Carolina*. Numerous Henderson County owners, however, also owned slaves in Lowcountry South Carolina—in some cases *many* more than they owned locally.

elsewhere in the South. . . . Despite assumptions that the Old North State, unlike its neighbors north and south, lacked an aristocratic gentry or that the southern highlands had bred a classless society, . . . mountain masters formed an influential and remarkably stable elite that exercised considerable control over the society, the economy, and the politics of both their communities and their region.<sup>67</sup>

The resonant family names tumble forth: the Avery, McDowell, and Erwin families in Burke County; Coxe, McMillan, and Greer in Ashe County; Patton, Baird, Vance, Smith, and Woodfin in Buncombe; Love in Haywood; Lenoir in Caldwell. The kinship ties (frequently through strategic marriages across the boundaries between adjacent counties) were “striking,” and the names remain upon WNC commercial buildings (and public ones elsewhere in the state), roads and streets, communities and towns, monuments, and other features.<sup>68</sup>

Such relationships helped solidify every dimension of control. In 1860, to take the political dimension as an example, 93.7 percent of WNC’s state legislators were slaveholders, compared to 85.8 percent for the state as a whole. For all slaveholding states, it was only 65.1 percent. “No southern state was represented by a group with as large a percentage of slaveholders,” Inscoc emphasized, “as were the mountain counties of North Carolina.”<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Inscoc, *Mountain Masters*, 115. These relationships are explored at length in his Chapter 5: Privilege, Power, and Politics, 115–30.

<sup>68</sup> Inscoc, *Mountain Masters*, 117–19. Inscoc’s observations are grounded in extensive genealogical research by others (cited in his notes). He is also careful to point out that such inter-relationships among slaveholders in WNC were also pervasive (and frequently even more pronounced) elsewhere in the south, as well as in other elites elsewhere.

<sup>69</sup> Inscoc, *Mountain Masters*, Table 5.3, 125.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# BLACKS IN CIVIL WAR-ERA HENDERSON COUNTY AND FLAT ROCK

## Introduction

**I**t is essential to recognize that although slavery in Henderson County has not received the repeated and detailed attention it has had in some other counties (e.g., Buncombe, Burke, McDowell, Caldwell), the institution and its attendant social, political, and personal dynamics were present and significant in Henderson and surrounding counties from very early.

Inscoe relates, for example, how in an area where marriages were routinely made to consolidate family interests, neighboring wealthy Burke County slaveholder Waightsill Avery's daughter Polly's 1796 marriage to yeoman farmer Caleb Poor so disappointed him that he denied her a dowry. He later allowed her to live on one of the family's plantations and gave her husband a job in his tannery, but the marriage ended "in a bitter divorce" in 1813. It took twenty-eight years to repair the damage, which Polly's granddaughter accomplished by marrying merchant, slaveholder and politician Leander Gash in 1841, "thus linking the Averys with one of Henderson County's leading families."<sup>1</sup>

Nearly two decades later, following John Brown's raid at Harpers Ferry, Inscoe (and other scholars) observe,

The mountain residents of North Carolina responded just as passionately to [the] dreaded possibility [of a slave uprising] as did their counterparts elsewhere throughout the slaveholding states. . . . In Buncombe and Henderson counties, particularly, with their constant influx of visitors, many of them accompanied by slaves, strong measures were deemed necessary.<sup>2</sup>

Clearly a closer look at the Civil War era is necessary, and fortunately is possible from institutional and public records, as well as increasingly in recent scholarship. Even Sadie Patton, who, in general, paid scant attention to Black history, concluded her *Story of Henderson County* (1947) chapter on early

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<sup>1</sup> Inscoe, *Mountain Masters*, 119.

<sup>2</sup> Inscoe, *Mountain Masters*, 211–12.

Hendersonville and Flat Rock with three demographic details on the county from the census of 1850: there were 3,892 whites, 924 slaves, and 37 free negroes (a 19 percent enslaved population).<sup>3</sup>

In this chapter we present a necessarily selective summary account of Black persons (enslaved, free, or freed) in Henderson County and Flat Rock, as well as whites with whom they significantly interacted, during the pre-war and Civil War years.<sup>4</sup>

## Early Records at St. John in the Wilderness: Webber (1939) and Pinckney (1962)

Fortunately, some materials useful for reframing the narrative were preserved in the register of St. John in the Wilderness—Flat Rock’s socially central Episcopal church (ca. 1836).<sup>5</sup> Its records not only contain demographic details on both Black and white life in Flat Rock during the nineteenth century but also offer insight into social, economic, cultural, and racial relationships and processes.

Close to the 1945 date of the Sandburgs’ arrival at Connemara, a source replete with reliable and useful historical and biographical detail appeared in the *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*: Mabel L. Webber’s transcription and tabulation of tombstone inscriptions in the St. John’s in the Wilderness cemetery and “tablets in the church.”<sup>6</sup>

Webber’s article, which appeared nearly thirty years before CARL was authorized, would have been useful in naming prominent families in the area around Rock Hill, and in providing early documentary clues (some South Carolina birthplaces were given, for example) regarding the Charleston-to-Flat Rock population movement. It contains

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<sup>3</sup> Patton, *Story of Henderson County*, 143. Given Patton’s skill with and extensive use of public documents, it is striking that—as a historian and resident of a county with such a racial history (and still 11% blacks by 1890, four years after Patton was born) she did not sort through or explore these aggregated details. Conversely, one of Patton’s (unfortunately predictable) practices as a historian was to drop blocks of more or less relevant but undigested and unanalyzed data into her text.

<sup>4</sup> Some of these details are presented in Appendix 3: Flat Rock Properties, Owners and Related Persons.

<sup>5</sup> The history of St. John in the Wilderness has been written about so many times that there is little need to recount it here. Readers unfamiliar with it may consult: Susan Allston, *Early Sketch of St. John in the Wilderness and Flat Rock, North Carolina* (Georgetown SC: self-published, 1964); and Louise Bailey and Joseph B. Brignolo, *Saint John in the Wilderness, 1836–: The Oldest Episcopal Church in Western North Carolina* (Flat Rock: St. John in the Wilderness, 1995).

<sup>6</sup> Mabel L. Webber, “St. John’s in the Wilderness, Flat Rock, N. C.: Tombstone Inscriptions,” *The South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 40, no. 2 (1939): 52–57. Pinckney’s more thorough transcription of the tombstone information, more than two decades after Webber’s, still predated the establishment of CARL, for the definition and design of which it could have served importantly.

transcriptions of nearly fifty tombstone (and “tablets in the church”) inscriptions.<sup>7</sup> The earliest death date is 1810, and the latest is 1916; a few are undated. Death date and placement date of stone do not always coincide, since the predecessor chapel dates only from 1833, but clearly all were in place by 1939. A number of Memmings (including Christopher Gustavus and his first wife, Mary) appear, as well as those of other early in-migrant individuals and families: Blake, de Choiseul, Drayton, Elliott, Iazard, Johnstone, Middleton, Lowndes, Pinckney, Rutledge.

In mid-1962, in a series of three articles in the *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, Elise Pinckney published additional detailed transcriptions from the St. John Register: baptisms, confirmations, marriages, and burials from 1847 to 1881.<sup>8</sup>

The first of the three articles—the most interesting and productive in some respects—covered baptisms between April 1840 and October 1866.<sup>9</sup> It mentions the church’s slave gallery and burial ground, and many entries contain names of Lowcountry plantation (and slave) owners who summered (or lived year-round) in Flat Rock: Baring, Blake, Huger, Johnstone, King, Lowndes, Middleton, Memminger, Pinckney, Rutledge, and Trenholm. An entry for September 26, 1847, mentions the baptism of George and Peg, “servants” (the only designation used) of “A. H. Seabrook of Beaufort, South Carolina.” An entry of June 7, 1862, notes that a four-month-old enslaved child had been “baptised in extremis” [expected to die]. In seven other entries, thirty-two other servants (first names only) are listed, with the names of their owners and sometimes of their birth parents. Such entries end in early November 1862.

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<sup>7</sup> Since Webber marked no transcribed inscriptions by “colored” or a similar term, all appear to have been of white persons. A single first name only tombstone inscription (Edward 22 July, 1875 aged 4 mos.) could indicate enslaved status.

<sup>8</sup> For a full list, see Appendix 4. These records were transcribed only partially, it appears. Pinckney published them in three parts under the title “Register of St. John in the Wilderness, Flat Rock” in the *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 63, No. 2 (April 1962), 105–11; 63, No. 3 (July 1962), 175–81; and 63, No. 4 (October 1962), 232–37. Entries from 1847–1865 use the term *servant* rather than *slave*, but dates and other contextual clues clearly imply the latter. Entries later than 1865 use *Colored*. All materials presented here come from Pinckney’s published work. Note that (1) neither enslaved children nor their parents are given surnames, (2) non-enslaved children tended to be baptized within a few days or weeks after birth, but enslaved ones perhaps months later, (3) witness names are not included here unless they are revealing in some way (e.g., known slaveholders), and (4) page numbers follow entries.

Although Pinckney was a familiar Lowcountry name in both Charleston and Flat Rock, Elise Pinckney’s precise family position is not clear. The biographical note to the South Carolina Historical Society’s Elise Pinckney papers, 1963–2013 SCHS 493.00 says that “Elizabeth Rutledge Pinckney is an editor and writer, and a direct descendant of Eliza Lucas Pinckney. The daughter of Edward Rutledge Pinckney (1869–1954), she edited the letterbook of Eliza Lucas Pinckney for publication, and is the author of numerous articles about South Carolina history. She was the editor of the *South Carolina Historical Magazine* from 1975 to 1986.” The Rutledges and the Pinckneys were both prominent Lowcountry rice planter families. Both had had Flat Rock connections, where they owned property, houses and estates, for many decades. See Cuthbert, *Flat Rock of the Old Time*, 96ff.

<sup>9</sup> Elise Pinckney, “Register of St. John-In-The-Wilderness, Flat Rock (Continued),” *The South Carolina Historical Magazine*, Vol. 63, No. 2 (April 1962), 105–11. [Baptisms; Aug. 30, 1840–Oct. 14, 1866]. Although the title says “(Continued),” there apparently was no earlier installment. McCleary and Butler’s *Administrative History* of CARL does not mention this publication.



In her next (July 1962) installment, Pinckney listed births, confirmations, and marriages between 1847 and 1892.<sup>10</sup> Her list (which embraces births, confirmations, marriages, and deaths) includes “colored” persons—children and parents, some by full names, some not. Also, many servants, usually (but not always) by first names only. C. G. Memminger appears several times, in several capacities (e.g., on October 20, 1864, when Martin married Kate, a servant of Henry T. Farmer). After 1865, “servant” disappears as a designation, replaced by “colored,” and last names are added.

Pinckney’s final installment in October 1962 listed burials 1847–1923.<sup>11</sup> It contained first-name-only, pre-1865 references to nearly twenty “servants” of a named white person, and—after 1865—about a half-dozen “colored” persons (most unnamed, with ages given as “about . . .”). The last such reference was in 1881. Four Memmingers were on the list, as were many other Lowcountry family members.<sup>12</sup>

Several other useful observations are possible from these entries: Many blacks listed as buried (eleven out of eighteen) had died during the Civil War, and fairly young—as infants or young children, or in their late teens or twenties. Most are still listed as *servants* (the usual euphemism for enslaved) after emancipation on January 1, 1863, until early August 1864 (nineteen months later). Burial listings continue through 1904, but there are no *colored* entries later than 1881, with the possible exception of the August 20, 1900, burial of Thos. Sibna Drake, “Aged 18 mos. 12 days” at Mud Creek Baptist Church.

## Census Records and Recent Scholarship

Recent scholarship (portions of it already deployed and discussed previously in this study) on the Appalachian region, western North Carolina in general and individual counties deals with blacks. Some of it attends specifically to Henderson County (with a courthouse, like many others, was built with slave labor). Much of this scholarship draws upon public (especially census) records, increasing troves of which are being digitized.

The 1850 federal census’s “slave schedules” did not include slaves’ names, but it did name slave owners and the number of people owned. That census for Henderson County is replete with Flat Rock names and numbers: Charles Baring (30), Walter Blake (30), various Britains, Count de Choiseul, William Elliot (7), several Featherstones, Andrew Johnson, W.

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<sup>10</sup> “Register of St. John-In-The-Wilderness, Flat Rock (Continued)”, *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, Vol. 63, No. 3 (July 1962), 175–81.

<sup>11</sup> *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, Vol. 63, No. 4 (October 1962), 232–37.

<sup>12</sup> For the detailed list, see Appendix 4: Pinckney Transcripts from St. John in the Wilderness Register.

S. Johnston, Mitchell King (and other Kings), R. H. Lowndes, C. G. Memminger (12), various Millses, various Pattons (20+), C. C. Pinckney (5+), Elijah [?] Patton (1), Valentine Ripley (30), Jonathan B. Shulbred (9), various Summeys, and numerous others.<sup>13</sup>

The total numbers of both free and enslaved blacks in Henderson County reported in the next decennial census are available in historian Darin Waters's 1860–1890 census-derived tables.<sup>14</sup> In 1860, Henderson County ranked in the middle of the seventeen-county list, with 1,467 slaves (14 percent). Those with the highest were Burke 2,371 (28 percent), Rutherford 2,514 (21 percent), and Buncombe 2,044 (16.2 percent), while Watauga had only 185 (3.7 percent). Henderson's more thinly populated neighbor Polk had only 720, but that placed it at 18 percent. Ten counties had 10 percent or more, and eight had 7 percent or less.

At the level of individual slave owners, Inscoe's list of the fifty largest slaveholders in western North Carolina in 1860 includes seven Henderson County names: Daniel Blake (the region's 15th-largest with 59), Valentine Ripley (51), F. W. Johnstone (39), Walter Blake (36), Mitchell King (4th-largest with 34), William C. Kilgore (33) and William H. Thomas (32). Together, these seven owned 284 slaves, but Inscoe counted 211 slaveholders in the county for that year, up from 159 a decade earlier.<sup>15</sup> As corresponding South Carolina census records show, however, some of these individuals (especially those who were only seasonal residents in Flat Rock) owned many more slaves in *South Carolina* than they did in Henderson County. We will return to this issue in a subsequent chapter.

If one cross-checks this list with Buncombe County records (in which early Henderson County land and slave trader Daniel Blake is listed as buying only one slave in 1853 but buying or selling thousands of acres of land in twenty-eight transactions between 1827 and 1860), one finds several other county residents to have been heavy land traders, but none (except the Barings) were buying or selling slaves in Buncombe County, and numbers tended to be small.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The census is frequently difficult to read, so these details are approximate, based on a copy in the Henderson County Genealogical and Historical Society (HCGHS) *1850 Slave Census—Henderson Co. NC*. These slave owner names are taken from both the manuscript census and from a handwritten transcript at the beginning of the document.

<sup>14</sup> See Appendix 5, a combined version of Waters's Appendices I–IV, 233–36, for county-by-county data across these decades. From Waters, *Life Beneath the Veneer*

<sup>15</sup> Inscoe, *Mountain Masters*, 78, 33–34, 45–46, 50.

<sup>16</sup> After the formation of Henderson County in 1838, deeds for slaves purchased within the county would have been registered there. CARL has made a preliminary effort at locating and retrieving these deeds for Henderson County, working on the model provided by neighboring Buncombe County, and we received this information too late to reflect it in this draft. The county itself has not begun an official effort in this direction (telephone call with Henderson County Registrar Lee King, March 5, 2018), but a statewide slave deeds documentation project is now underway at UNC Greensboro (see People Not Property project, <https://library.uncg.edu/slavery/deeds/>). Congruently with our comment above, however, even Flat Rock residents (seasonal or year-round) who reported owning few (or even no) slaves in North Carolina may have owned many in South Carolina. Neither time nor space allows us to pursue this possibility in detail but doing so when they become available digitally could yield important insights.

Interspersed with Inscoe's more numerous observations on slavery in other western North Carolina counties, there are some on Henderson County. Thomas Lenoir's papers, for example, contain a brief reference to Walter Blake's Henderson County estate, where he lived, remarked a visitor, "in baronial style" with "its own mills and tanyards, curriers, and shoemakers." Inscoe also deduced that during the summer when more Lowlanders tended to be present with their slaves, "Slave patrols were maintained on a regular basis in the county. Slave labor was also plentiful enough that the courthouse was "constructed largely by slaves hired by or loaned . . . by prominent local citizens."<sup>17</sup>

One of Henderson County's private citizens, Valentine Ripley, held the contract to haul mail via his stagecoach line from Augusta, Georgia, through Greenville, South Carolina, through Saluda Gap and Flat Rock, and on through Asheville to Greeneville, Tennessee. Ripley owned and hired enslaved artisans and drivers to operate the line. Stopping at inns along the way to discharge passengers, take on new ones and change teams, they could average about sixty miles a day.<sup>18</sup>

## The Secession Moment and Blacks' Petitions for Free Status

When it came time for a vote on whether North Carolina would secede, only five of the fifteen western North Carolina counties (including heavily slave-owning Buncombe and Burke) favored it, but those five favored it by large margins. Five of those who were opposed (Ashe, Caldwell, Cherokee, Watauga, and Wilkes) did so by 78 percent or more. Henderson (13 percent of whose population was enslaved) split nearly evenly, with 53 percent of its voters (slightly higher than the state average of 50 percent) favoring a secession convention.<sup>19</sup>

Such outcomes emerged, the record shows abundantly, from the legislators' constant monitoring and management of the situation in their home districts. Reams of their correspondence and other documents preserve the details of their vigilance.<sup>20</sup>

Contrary to what one might have expected from the level of opposition to secession, when the war actually came, western North Carolina men

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<sup>17</sup> Inscoe, *Mountain Masters*, 74, 78, 98, 100.

<sup>18</sup> Dunaway, *Slavery*, 97.

<sup>19</sup> Inscoe, *Mountain Masters*, Table 9.2, 245.

<sup>20</sup> Inscoe, *Mountain Masters*, 211–57, provides a detailed discussion of the secession debate.

were among the first to fill the volunteer quotas . . . [*enlisting*] in greater numbers than did North Carolinians elsewhere . . . [*and*] gathered and departed from their county seats amid overwhelming community support.<sup>21</sup>

On the other hand, Inscoe quotes the county's Alexander H. Jones, "one of western North Carolina's most vocal Unionists," as asserting (somewhat ambivalently) that "by throwing off . . . the Constitution and the Union—southern states have done the cause of slavery more injury than anyone else could have done."<sup>22</sup> In any case, when secession actually came to a vote in February 1861, Henderson County voted 647 to 573 (53 percent) against it. In the Edneyville precinct, however, "free-for-all combat" broke out at the polls during voting for secession convention delegates.<sup>23</sup>

Another useful (but unfortunately fragmentary) source—Jones's "Free People of Color in Henderson County" (2004)—focuses upon the few weeks from June through August 1861 (following closely upon the outset of the Civil War) when free local blacks were urgently trying to verify and record their free status.<sup>24</sup> A headnote from the item's editor provides essential context:

We were aware that there were free people of color in Henderson County, but these certificates name these few people. There were probably others. It is significant that some leading citizens of the County were willing to make these certifications. A free person of color who could not offer certification of this freedom was arrested and resold. With the outbreak of the Civil War it was imperative that their free status was recorded.

"Leading citizens of the county" who signed the documents included slave-owning stagecoach operator and Justice of the Peace Valentine Ripley (1807–1879), himself a large slaveowner.<sup>25</sup> He signed certifications for brothers C. C. and Moses Owin, attesting that

Personally appeared before me, Valentine Ripley . . . and made oath that Moses Owin has been and is now regarded as a free negro and is understood to be the brother of another free negro, C.C. Owin.

Moses, Ripley said, "was raised in said county and has been treated as a free negro and so regarded by everybody . . . ."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Inscoe, *Mountain Masters*, 260–61.

<sup>22</sup> Inscoe, *Race, War, and Remembrance*, 28.

<sup>23</sup> Inscoe, *Mountain Masters*, 245 (Table 9.2), 253.

<sup>24</sup> George A. Jones, "Free People of Color in Henderson County," *Henderson County North Carolina Genealogical and Historical Society Journal* XIX, No. 1 (March 2004), 1–9. Subsequent quotations are from this source.

<sup>25</sup> Ripley also built the Ripley House (1842), possibly Hendersonville first hotel. Jody Barber and Louise Howe Bailey, *Hendersonville and Henderson County: A Pictorial History* (Norfolk: Donning, 1988), 59.

<sup>26</sup> Quoted in Jones, "Free People of Color" from Deed Book #7, 545.

Other examples contain clues to the certification process: Joseph Maxwell swore that he knew Bobe [sic] Bunch (“bright mulatto with blue eyes”), the son of Caty Bunch, a “free woman of mixed blood.” Sheriff Isaac Arledge went on record saying that he knew former Rutherford (adjacent to Henderson) County residents John and Susie Laws and their son Thomas (5 ft. 7 in., “copper color, rather heavily built”), and that Thomas had been in Henderson County for about ten years.<sup>27</sup>

Laudable and important as these efforts were, they seem to have affected a relatively small number of people, while the broader dynamics of the war impacted everyone.

## Two Wars: Refugee Planters and Local People

As we have noted and discussed previously, recent scholars have paid careful attention to the Civil War in the Appalachian region, and more particularly in western North Carolina. Historian David Silkenat has recently provided a concise, meticulously documented analysis of the Flat Rock sector of that history.<sup>28</sup>

As both Lowcountry and Flat Rock refugee planters watched the early days of war in 1861–1862 (whether from Charleston or the mountains), two fears surged among them: that they themselves would in time be molested by Union troops, and that their slaves would run away to Union lines. One initial response of many was to take themselves and selected slaves to the mountains, even if the far end of the journey did involve (as one of them reported) a fourteen-hour stagecoach ride up from Greenville and through the Saluda Gorge.

By the 1860s, the earliest arriving Lowcountry planters had been in the mountains for upwards of thirty years, and despite Sadie Patton’s (and others’) insistence upon their culturally beneficent relationships with local people, the refugee planters had viewed mountaineers at best ambivalently. Some saw them (at least at times) as admirably independent, honest, rugged, and individualistic, and many hired them to work on their estates—cleaning, gardening, landscaping, building—and relied upon them to bring their surplus produce to sell. Others, Silkenat observes,

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<sup>27</sup> How many such attestations may lie in the record will become clearer as digitization of county records proceeds beyond the recent ones currently being processed. Jones’s final item in his article lists 1860 Henderson County census entries on the five families involved (Moses Owen, John Pain, William Pain, Joshua Pene [sic] and William Bunch), a total of 10 parents and 26 offspring ranging from 1 to 19 years old.

<sup>28</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, the following discussion is based upon David Silkenat, *Driven from Home: North Carolina’s Civil War Refugee Crisis* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2016), “A Home for the Rest of the War,” 184–215, which focuses on Flat Rock. All quotations not otherwise attributed come from this source, which is also the basis of our overall analysis.

developed negative stereotypes, emphasizing the financial, intellectual, and moral poverty of [a] region . . . [populated by] poor tenants of small farms . . . or still ruder mountaineers, dwelling in squalid log huts, and living by fishing . . . [an] occasional day's work in the gold mines, by illicit distilling, roguery of all sorts and other invisible means of support.<sup>29</sup>

On balance, the planters carefully maintained their social distance from local people—a distance emphasized by the architecture of their grand estates (including C. G. Memminger's Rock Hill), as well as by social cues and boundaries.<sup>30</sup>

When war actually came, many local people initially supported it, but came to view it as “a rich man's war and a poor man's fight” (a long-lived phrase, as it turned out). A major crux for mountain farmers was conscription, instituted during the winter of 1862 with several class-specific loopholes (e.g., exemptions for preachers, teachers, and those who could afford \$6,000 to buy themselves out). Some local men—fearing starvation for their families if they left—“took to the woods” and formed a band of draft resisters. Others made their way to join Union forces. And large numbers of those who had already joined deserted.

Some refugee planters were skeptical of these ominous trends. Planter Andrew Johnstone's wife Mary wrote to her mother about the “conscription commotion” among “country people,” reporting “a great deal of animosity . . . against the low country gentlemen.”<sup>31</sup>

A critical dilemma for the refugee planters was what they should do (or had any hope of doing) about their slaves (both in the mountains and back home on their South Carolina plantations). By 1861, Andrew Johnstone had moved his family and most of his slaves from South Carolina to his eight-hundred-acre, eighteen-room *Beaumont* estate in Flat Rock. Local people, fearful that the presence of so many slaves and would drive up food prices and that “Negro ravages” would endanger their own families, warned Johnstone in writing that they would burn down *Beaumont* unless he, with his family and slaves, immediately left the state. If he didn't, one hundred local men told him, we will do it for you.

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<sup>29</sup> Silkenat, *Driven from Home*, 190–91.

<sup>30</sup> See Silkenat's description of the Memminger estate, *Driven from Home*, 191.

<sup>31</sup> Mary Johnstone to her mother from their Beaumont estate in Flat Rock, March 2, 1862; Elliott and Gonzales Family Papers. Personal Correspondence, 1861–1865, University of North Carolina library, <https://docsouth.unc.edu/impls/gonzales/gonzales.html>, accessed Aug. 30, 2018.



At an urgent meeting around Johnstone's dining table, other refugee planters developed a plan to defend him. But anxiety continued through the following months, especially around Christmas 1863, when reports of an "insurrectionary attempt" among "the negroes" surfaced. Mary Johnstone dismissed it as "a farce," and reported smugly that when confronted, the "darkies" folded.<sup>32</sup>

As the months dragged by, other vexing problems emerged: How could the refugee planters grow or buy enough food for their families and large numbers of slaves? As previously seasonal residents began to remain year-round (especially after the Confederate loss at Antietam in September 1862), they were challenged by having to house slaves in meager buildings not built for winter use. What about illness and disease? And how much longer *would* the war last?

With regard to food, conflicts between the planters and local farmers who had sold them surplus produce multiplied. Men were drafted and marched away to fight, and crops suffered. Passing troops confiscated draft animals and left corn cribs empty. Farm tools went unrepaired. Women trying to feed families had to choose between having eggs and eating the hens. The country people, Mary Johnstone complained, "have taken to eat[ing] their own poultry, butter and eggs"—a practice she stigmatized as "hoarding."

So dire was the scarcity of food (watery potato soup was a welcome delicacy) that in the spring of 1864 Andrew Johnstone put one hundred acres of his estate under cultivation and bought another sixty along the French Broad River. Meanwhile, the lack of food, shelter, and adequate clothing and sanitation left many enslaved people with diphtheria, scarlet fever, and typhoid. Many died (at least five during the summer of 1864), including Johnstone's enslaved nurse Nonie Gran, who had cared for his entire family and other slaves.

Amid such a welter of distortions, class, racial, and cultural cleavages were magnified. As prices for slaves declined, local people who had never owned any purchased "surplus" ones. And when owners hired out their slaves (partly to avoid having to house, feed, and clothe them) local people resented the competition in the labor market. Such competition was merely one sign of the class, racial, and cultural cleavages that worsened as the war raged on. "During the summer of 1863," Silkenat observes,

tensions between Flat Rock refugee planters and their neighbors, intensified. The increasing size and strength of deserter gangs, formed the previous summer, terrorized the civilian population . . . . Refugee planters came to be particular targets of the deserter and bushwhacker gangs, because they were wealthy and also associated with the secessionist impulse, a physical manifestation of a war and a government that many mountain residents had soured on.

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<sup>32</sup> Silkenat, *Driven from Home*, 197.

In an incident recounted repeatedly in popular histories of wartime Flat Rock, Andrew Johnstone, who had been threatened repeatedly, was killed in his own dining room by a half-dozen men.<sup>33</sup>

To make matters worse, mail and newspapers from the Lowcountry (which reached the mountains slowly and irregularly) brought news of planter homes—including those of the Middletons, Manigaults, and Lowndeses of Flat Rock—burned or occupied by Union troops, and slaves fleeing.

Ultimately, the option of leaving Flat Rock and going back down the mountain began to appeal. Although most stayed, Johnstone's widow, her son, and a few others decided to leave for Greenville, where they crowded together into a small house. C. G. Memminger and many others stayed in Flat Rock, where Memminger fortified his home and waited it out.

But the situation was not good for them, either while the war dragged on or after it ended. Silkenat quotes an insightful characterization of their situation by a contemporary observer. Refugee planters, it said,

found no better treatment in the interior [*than those in the Lowcountry*]; the mountaineers hated them as cordially as did the Yankees, and visited their places with like vengeance. Many of their residences were burned down, the flocks and cattle destroyed, they themselves drive[n] away by threats, violence and assassination. It was a wheel within a wheel, and none pitied them, for they were mainly instrumental in putting the first in motion. Unaccustomed to labor, and raised in luxury and affluence, they were reduced to great wretchedness and poverty.<sup>34</sup>

Once the Civil War came to western North Carolina, some long-established patterns with regard to slavery (and related matters) necessarily ended, some new ones emerged, and others persisted in altered form.

Inscoc's essay on the western North Carolina slave trade during the war, for example, explores "the continued stability and profitability of slavery for most of the war's duration."<sup>35</sup> Why was that the case? Most importantly, because the slaves were not concentrated on plantations and were "not in the path of liberating armies." Instead, slave owners were, for the most part, "chiefly professional men, shop-keepers, and men in office who are also landowners [who] give only divided attention to farming." As relatively less endan-

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<sup>33</sup> Silkenat's account of the incident in *Driven from Home*, 206–213—and of the operation of deserter/bushwhacker bands in general—appears to be the most detailed and documented one available.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted from J. J. O'Connell, *Catholicity in the Carolinas and Georgia* (New York: D&J Sadlier, 1879). We have seen no corroborating evidence of "many" Flat Rock planters' homes being burned, or other Johnstone-like "assassinations," but the structural characterization seems insightful, appropriate and credible. For her own part, the widow Johnstone stayed in Greenville, where, by 1868, she was teaching school to support herself.

<sup>35</sup> Subsequent quotations drawn from Inscoc, "Mountain Masters as Confederate Opportunists: The Slave Trade in Western North Carolina, 1961–1865), in *Race, War, and Remembrance in the Appalachian South* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008), 80–100.

gered property, slaves continued to be traded (and hired out) actively until close to the end of the war. Threats along the coast also stimulated the relocation of slaves to the mountains, and drew offers for their purchase or hire by opportunistic mountain buyers. Other mountain residents saw “the care and supervision of others’ slaves as . . . a financial opportunity.”

Taken together, such changes temporarily expanded the mountain slave population, and drove up prices for enslaved persons’ hire and sale. Inscoe details how mountain traders, individuals, families, and communities sought advantages amid these changing patterns in Cherokee, Haywood, Rutherford, Caldwell, Buncombe, Henderson, and Wilkes counties. Some sold slaves at much appreciated prices to pay off debts. Both debtors and creditors treated enslaved people as “financial pawns” to leverage transactions. Others sold or bought children because they offered long-term benefit. As a result of these and other factors, between 1840 and 1860, the enslaved population grew by 32 percent in the state overall, but by 46 percent in the mountain counties.<sup>36</sup>

The end of the war brought substantial demographic (as well as other) changes. The first postwar census figures (1870) showed some changes. The Black population in Burke County had dropped to 23.6 percent. In Rutherford it had remained almost constant at 20 percent, and in Buncombe dropped slightly to 15 percent, while Henderson it had risen to 16 percent and Polk to 22.6 percent.

By 1890 (the latest totals given by historian Waters), Rutherford’s 20 percent led the percentage list. Buncombe and Polk each had about 18.5 percent, but Burke’s Black population had fallen from its pre-war 28 percent to 17 percent as the white population had grown by nearly five thousand while the Black population remained virtually unchanged. Eight counties had Black populations between 10 percent and 20 percent (including Henderson, which had fallen from its pre-war 14 percent to 10.9 percent). Polk’s percentage remained fairly stable because both Black and (the much larger) white population had risen by about 50 percent.

Evidence and arguments presented in this chapter (and others in this study) make abundantly clear that, with regard to blacks in Flat Rock and Henderson County, the myths, romantic stories, sanitized narratives, lack of adequate historical contextualization and whites-only perspectives and boundaries are worse than useless. As carefully and fully as possible, we have titled subsections, marked logical turns, and provided numerous intratextual connections to guide readers toward more tenable analysis and conclusions.

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<sup>36</sup> Inscoe, *Race, War, and Remembrance*, 81, 82–86,

## CHAPTER SIX

# BLACKS AND WORKERS IN CHRISTOPHER MEMMINGER'S WORLD

*The country people have objected to Mr. Johnstone's bringing up his negroes from the plantation, saying it would raise the price of provisions. A hundred men swore to put him and his people beyond the state line. All the gentlemen in the neighborhood assembled at the house . . . and so prevented any demonstration. The men went off to a village near here and fought the secessionists there.*

—HARRIOTT MIDDLETON, FLAT ROCK, NORTH CAROLINA,  
to her cousin Susan Middleton, Columbia, South Carolina, August 19, 1862

*Some strange things have taken place here this summer, but the strangest happened this morning. Old Dr. and Mrs. Hanckel, Mr. and Mrs. Means . . . were carried off to the Henderson jail, accused of having beaten an old country woman nearly to death! She was found tied to her bed, and dreadfully bruised and cut up, and averred that they had done it. The whole church was convulsed after service today on hearing this. The Johnstones had met them in the sheriff's custody, when they were coming to church. Mr. Farmer hurried off and I hardly think they could have been committed to jail, for as a magistrate he would prevent it. It shows the bitter feeling entertained here to the Low Country people. Isabella has an enemy, and I am beginning to fear that when he hears this he may try the same towards her.<sup>1</sup>*

—HARRIOTT MIDDLETON, FLAT ROCK, NORTH CAROLINA,  
to her cousin Susan Middleton, September 18, 1862

## Whitening (and Unwhitening) History at Flat Rock: Three Principal Figures

**A**s foregoing chapters show, the published history of Flat Rock from the 1820s onward features elite white rice planters from Lowcountry South Carolina (Charleston and nearby) who trekked (first seasonally and later permanently) through upcountry South Carolina and eventually into western North

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<sup>1</sup> Cuthbert, *Flat Rock of the Old Time*, 28.

Carolina's Henderson County (and beyond). There they bought vast acreages, built lavish estates, and lived in grandiose self-satisfaction and (one would be remiss in failing to say) self-importance.

Meanwhile, later observers said, these elite planters modeled a "high" culture that cast supposedly benighted local people into sharp relief and thereby raised the what they considered to be the low cultural level of the surrounding area.

"The refinement of living among the Lowlanders," local historian Sadie Patton wrote in 1947,

was to keep before the people here high standards, so that taste and manners were almost imperceptibly improved by the contrast. . . . With the passing of time, customs, manners and traditions of the [local] people . . . have been . . . so strongly marked . . . by the Low Country strain . . . that today the two have been welded into a whole."<sup>2</sup>

Under the rubric of "Little Charleston of the Mountains" this oft-told story of unproblematic cultural fusion and uplift appealed to many and has lasted for a very long time. The problem is that much of it was not documentable as true, and much else that was true was excluded, as local white people—and Black people in particular, local or not—had known since Flat Rock's early days.<sup>3</sup>

Most importantly, this preferred story includes (even yet) almost no Black people at all, except some early images (e.g., in Patton's *Story of Henderson County*) of happy (and nameless) blacks trundling up the mountain behind stagecoaches bearing elegantly dressed Lowcountry folk and wagon loads of their worldly goods, and then attending to their domestic duties in the elegant households.

"These people from the Lowlands," Patton said, *[created]* here in the mountains the pastoral whose memory will never dim,—the romantic and leisurely Tidewater country life transplanted into a woodland setting. . . .

*[The]* little colony at Flat Rock brought to a still primitive region an era of luxury, ease and brilliant social activities patterned closely on the splendor of life in the Old Country. The Little River Road . . . became with them a boulevard, which on bright afternoons was thronged with carriages and riders, plumes, laces and ruffles of the gay ladies accented by resplendent colors in the livery of footmen and drivers, the glistening coats of the horses, and the jingle of silver-mounted trappings.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Patton, *Story of Henderson County*, 99.

<sup>3</sup> This widely deployed (and accepted) name for a highly problematic narrative is discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 9. The nearby historical marker P 45, erected by North Carolina Archives Conservation and Highway Departments, in 1954, the year of *Brown v. Board of Education*, refers only to "the Indians and pioneer whites."

<sup>4</sup> Patton, *Story of Henderson County*, 213–14.

So presented, this was no less than a brilliant image of festival magic and transformation—a gift bestowed by cultured lowlanders upon “a still primitive region.” Or in the vernacular of that region: a thoroughbred gift horse not to be looked at in the mouth.

This almost universally accepted story, moreover, includes virtually no evidence that any conflict ever emerged within the decades-long, deeply class-biased, race-biased, and culturally biased process that moved scores of rice planter-beneficiaries (made wealthy in South Carolina and elsewhere by the mortally costly labors of hundreds of enslaved Black people) into Henderson County, where they could be waited upon compliantly (perhaps even gratefully) by servants and workers of both races.

And finally, the “Little Charleston” story refrained from exploring the long-term distorting effects (structural, racial, economic, and cultural) of the process within Henderson County. This constructed history was devoid of such evidence not because none existed, but because it was systematically omitted from the whites-only “Little Charleston” narrative.

Even the two late 1862 Middleton slave-owning family letters in the epigraphs above are peppered with contrary details. The “country people” of the August 18 letter were local rural whites, and Mr. [Andrew] Johnstone was a rice planter and owner (in 1860) of approximately 215 enslaved people who had bought eight hundred acres in Flat Rock. There he proceeded to use the labor of his enslaved blacks whom the “country people” saw (justifiably) as uncompensated scab laborers.<sup>5</sup> The “gentlemen” who assembled to protect him from anti-secessionist local “men” would most likely have been his wealthy Flat Rock neighbors.

Harriot Middleton's letter contains additional clues of conflict. “Old Dr. [Christian] Hanckel” was the retired, longtime rector of Charleston's St. Paul's Episcopal Church, who owned property in Flat Rock and in 1850 had enslaved thirty-eight people in South Carolina.<sup>6</sup> His daughter Mrs. [Anne Hanckel] Means and her husband, Parris Island physician and rice planter Stewart Means, also lived in Flat Rock. Magistrate [Henry or “Squire”] Farmer owned the local Farmer Hotel, which he had built with slave labor.<sup>7</sup>

Since the romantic “Little Charleston” narrative dealt almost exclusively with white elites from Charleston—both in Charleston and later in Flat Rock, the aim of this chapter and the two that follow later in this study is to document and evaluate the history of race and class at the Rock Hill/Connemara site by focusing specifically on three successive pre-Sandburg owners.

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<sup>5</sup> On Johnstone, see U.S. Federal Census, Slave Schedules, Henderson County, NC and Prince George's Parish, SC, 1860.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census, 1850, Slave Schedules.

<sup>7</sup> Cuthbert, *Flat Rock of the Old Time*, 241nn. 29–31; *Flat Rock Historic District Boundary Increase, Boundary Decrease, and Additional Documentation* (National Register), 7/333.



These chapters do not present full biographical narratives of C. G. Memminger, William Gregg Jr., or Ellison Adger Smyth. Instead, they focus on their views on race, their relationships with people who worked for them (enslaved and free, Black and white) as well as their larger entanglement with systems of white supremacy throughout their lives, both in South Carolina (where they were all from) and in Flat Rock.

Christopher Memminger was not the first of the early nineteenth-century Charleston elite to turn up in western North Carolina looking for seasonal respite in a more healthful climate, picturesque scenery, plentiful and cheap land, and a local supply of white workers to augment the enslaved workers brought up from the stiflingly hot, malarial, and economically, socially, and racially unstable Lowcountry.

Additionally, as has been explained and documented previously, by no means all of the Lowcountry-connected arrivals came either within a short time frame, or directly from the Lowcountry (more specifically, Charleston). The migration stream extended from Baring's arrival in 1827 through William Gregg's in 1889, and on to Ellison Smyth's in 1900.

Charles Baring arrived before Memminger and bought three hundred acres as early as 1827 and built his Mountain Lodge, establishing the first "estate" in what became the Flat Rock settler community. In 1830, Judge Mitchell King bought his first acreage from local owner John Davis. Memminger bought his first land from Baring. Later came the Lowndses, Pinckneys, Rutledges, and other rice planter families, buying land from other early local families (Kuykendalls, Earls, Millers, Stepps, Justices, Edneys and others).<sup>8</sup>

The black/white racial demography of the area—before, during, and after the Civil War—was, and has remained, of great historical significance. But besides bringing enslaved blacks (who after the war ended established their own families and institutions in the area), Lowcountry settlers also came bringing their complexly intermarried families, cultural capital and norms deriving from their elite social and cultural status, and long-established ideas and social practices with regard to blacks. Indeed, many of the prominent early white wealthy founding owners of Flat Rock owned large numbers of enslaved people, both in North Carolina and (often many more) in South Carolina.

This point bears elaborating, because an examination of census records related to a key set of those pre-Civil War Flat Rock luminaries reveals that many of these part-year North Carolina residents owned far more enslaved people than did all of the individuals listed in John Inscoe's *Mountain Masters* (1989) as western North Carolina's fifty largest slaveholders in 1860. Since Inscoe's count apparently only drew upon census records from North Carolina, it significantly undercounts slave ownership for several of the Henderson County owners listed, and does not reflect at all the part-year presence in Flat Rock of a

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<sup>8</sup> Griffith, *Flat Rock Historic District Boundary Increase, Boundary Decrease*, 7/295, 8/377–80.

disproportionate number of *very* large slave owners (and thus, part-year presence in Flat Rock of many enslaved blacks). Many of these enslavers would indeed have been among the nation's—and certainly North Carolina's—largest slaveholders in 1860.

For instance, the person Inscoe lists as Henderson County's largest slaveowner in 1860, Daniel Blake, is shown owning fifty-nine people in Henderson County in 1860. A broader search, however, reveals that Blake owned a total of at least 586 individuals (fifty-nine in Henderson and another 527 in St. Bartholomew's Parish, South Carolina). This made him one of the United States' largest slaveholders in 1860. Similarly, a second large Henderson County owner and Flat Rock founder, Judge Mitchell King, held thirty-four enslaved persons there, but also owned another nineteen in Charleston and two hundred at his plantation in Chatham County, Georgia, for a total in 1860 of 253.<sup>9</sup>

Most of the other key early Flat Rock founding South Carolina in-migrants, indeed, owned sizeable numbers of enslaved people in other states. Founding land purchaser Charles Baring in 1850 owned thirty people in Henderson County and another 170 in St. Paul's Parish, Colleton, South Carolina, figures that remained similar in 1860 (26 in North Carolina; 101 in South Carolina). Andrew Johnstone owned over 200 people, mostly in South Carolina, in 1860, while William R. Maxwell owned 126 and Rev. C.C. Pinckney owned 161. These levels of slave ownership place these men in the company of the Burke County owner (William F. McKesson) that Inscoe identified as WNC's largest slaveholder, with 174 slaves. And by these measures, Buncombe owner N.W. Woodfin's 122 slaves (second largest total on Inscoe's WNC list) seems almost modest. Antebellum Flat Rock, in short, was dominated by very wealthy individuals with a substantial investment in the system of slavery.<sup>10</sup> That fact has fundamentally shaped Flat Rock's history.

## Memminger and Slavery: The Received Account

*Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (1892) said that C. G. Memminger was a "financier," born in Germany (1803), brought to Charleston by his mother as an infant, adopted by Gov. Thomas Bennett, educated at South Carolina College, began to practice law in 1825, and served in the state legislature from 1836 to 1859.

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<sup>9</sup> U.S. Federal Census, Slave Schedules, 1860 for Charleston Ward 4, Henderson County, NC, and Chatham County, GA, search for Mitchell King, *AncestryInstitution.com*. On King, see also Smith, *Slavery and Rice Culture*, 110–11. On slaveholding in the US, 1860, see Tom Blake, "The Sixteen Largest American Slaveholders from 1860 Slave Census Schedules, April to July 2001, <https://sites.rootsweb.com/~ajac/biggest16.htm>, accessed Feb. 12, 2020.

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Federal Census, Slave Schedules, 1850 and 1860, *AncestryInstitution.com*.

In the main, the fulsome (indeed, hagiographic) entry on Memminger cast him as a “distinguished son of South Carolina [who] was among her most honorable citizens.” He was, it said

left an orphan, and . . . [at] the age of nine years . . . was adopted by . . . [the] governor of South Carolina . . . , brought up with the same care and training as that of his own children. As soon as he had finished his collegiate course he studied law under Mr. Bennett, and after three or four years of study commenced a most brilliant career in the field of politics, and at the bar. In 1836 he was elected to the house of representatives . . . . In 1854 he undertook the colossal task of reforming the public school system of the state . . . , presented a bill . . . levying an educational tax, and put the school system of the state on a strong and enduring basis.<sup>11</sup>

The *Cyclopedia* did not say that Memminger was a slaveholder, but did chronicle his involvement in the issue. In 1832, it said,

when the question of nullification was exciting the leading minds of the south, he espoused the union party in the state, and published most withering satire on his side of the [nullification] question . . . .

Near the end of his years in the pre-war legislature, the *Cyclopedia* noted, Memminger was appointed as “a commissioner . . . to Virginia to secure cooperation against the abolitionists,” and

immediately after the passage of the ordinance of secession [he] was appointed a member of the celebrated Confederate congress and drafted the constitution of the Confederate States. Upon the organization of the government he was appointed secretary of the Confederate Treasury . . . .

The entry concluded by saying that “after the Civil War he lived in retirement,” without mentioning his half-century of connection with Flat Rock.

Henry Capers's *The Life and Times of C. G. Memminger*, which appeared the year following the *Cyclopedia*, lacked any discussion even of Black *servants* (frequently a euphemism for *slave* at the time), and *slave* itself occurs only in the context of secessionist discourse.<sup>12</sup> Hence Memminger was represented as an important participant in the discourse, but not as an owner of human beings as property.

More recent sources and statements on Memminger frequently downplay his commitment to slavery. Most widely read of them, no doubt, is Sadie Patton's *The Story of Henderson County* (1947). Patton's Memminger was “a descendant of a line of ancestors who had been leaders in military, political and circles.” Patton reported that he “took an active part . . . in the question of Nullification . . . and the subject of Abolition” and helped

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<sup>11</sup> *Appleton's Cyclopedia of American Biography* (1888), IV, 294–95. For analytical and narrative clarity here, some parts of the entry have been reordered.

<sup>12</sup> Capers, *Life and Times of C. G. Memminger*. The volume includes a 150-page Appendix of Memminger's college orations and public speeches.

draft the Confederacy's Constitution, but she avoided discussing details. He worked for "a system of public schools" (for white children, it was).<sup>13</sup> Rock Hill and its grounds, she was careful to note, "were laid out under direction of skilled landscape gardeners and planted with rare trees, shrubs and flowers." Enslaved and free blacks—as well as many other "hands" (as they were called in Memminger's Rock Hill ledger)—who provided much of the labor went unmentioned.<sup>14</sup>

Clearly more detailed narrative and analysis are required than were provided in any of these sources. We turn to that challenge at this point.

## Memminger and Slavery: Filling Out the Record

Even with digitization proceeding apace, the reality remains that only a limited picture of life at Rock Hill during the Memminger years—especially for the enslaved, as well as for white laborers—can be reconstructed. A Memminger "diary" referenced in several mid-twentieth century histories of Flat Rock (including the one published by his son Edward Memminger and his daughter Marjorie Memminger Norment and a later work by Louise Bailey), which appears to have described his original journeys to the area and his selection of the home site, can no longer be located.<sup>15</sup>

Fortunately, digitization of public records and early published materials has made it possible to investigate Memminger's relationship to slavery both in Flat Rock and his lifelong home base in Charleston.

One can now say unequivocally that C. G. Memminger believed that blacks were inherently inferior to whites, that he himself enslaved people, that as a lawyer he provided legal expertise that enabled other slave owners to transact business involving human property, and that he continued to defend the institution of slavery throughout his life. He was a central player in Confederate politics and by his sunset years in the 1880s (spent in Flat Rock), was someone "in whom all who loved the Lost Cause feel an interest." That the

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<sup>13</sup> An extended discussion of this aspect of Memminger's work may be found in Laylon Wayne Jordan, "Education for Community: C. G. Memminger and the Origination of Common Schools in Antebellum Charleston," *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, 83, No. 2 (April 1982), 99–115.

<sup>14</sup> Patton, *Story of Henderson County*, 206–7.

<sup>15</sup> See Memminger and Norment, *An Historical Sketch of Flat Rock* (1954). Edward Memminger died in 1949, and his co-author, C. G. Memminger's daughter Marjorie Memminger Norment, died in 1957. "Marjorie Drayton Memminger Norment Death Certificate," Aug. 29, 1957, in North Carolina, Death Certificates, 1909–1976, *AncestryInstitution.com*. It appears that Norment and husband Walter Norment had no surviving children. See "W. M. Norment Obituary," *Greenville News*, May 1, 1966, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/189027012/?terms=%22walter%2Bnorment%22>, accessed June 4, 2019, and Bailey's bibliography in *From Rock Hill to Connemara*.

reporter of this sentiment was North Carolina newspaperman Josephus Daniels—who soon thereafter became an architect of a virulent white supremacy campaign by North Carolina's Democratic party—is itself telling.<sup>16</sup>

A new look at census records from 1840–1860 reveals that Memminger owned more people than previously understood. Earlier NPS studies seem not to have recognized that in both the 1850 and 1860 slave schedules, Memminger was listed as an owner of slaves in *both* Charleston, South Carolina and Henderson County, North Carolina. Given that Memminger's Rock Hill ledger (at which we also take a new look below) makes clear that enslaved people in his household traveled back and forth annually between the two locales, one must assume that Charleston-based slaves were integral to the Flat Rock operation.

The 1840 Federal census for Charleston's Ward no. 4 listed the Memminger household as including fifteen slaves (seven males and eight females; three of the fifteen were boys under age ten). The 1850 Slave Schedule for Charleston (enumerated in November) listed twelve persons aged ten through forty. In the same year, but with no enumeration date included, the Slave Schedule for Henderson County, North Carolina, also listed Memminger as owner of twelve additional people, ages three to thirty-four (for a total of twenty-four).<sup>17</sup>

By 1860, the numbers for Memminger were smaller. The Charleston Ward 4 Slave Inhabitants tabulation for him (June 24) included eight slaves (four male, four female; ages nine to forty-five). The Henderson County enumeration (July 16) included six (four males, two females; ages thirty-two to forty-five) for a total of fourteen. Newly from previous years, Memminger's listing in the 1860 schedule of free inhabitants in Charleston's 4th Ward included in his household two “mulatto” women in their forties: Caroline Carson and Susan Beaty. Carson was listed as a “nurse,” and a faint ditto mark on the page may have indicated that Beaty was as well.<sup>18</sup>

Other previously unexplored records shed additional light on Memminger's relationship to slavery, and name some of the people he owned. Documents preserved in the South Carolina Department of Archives and History show that on March 1, 1826, when he was barely over twenty-three years old, Memminger bought a slave named Ellick.<sup>19</sup> In 1831

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<sup>16</sup> Josephus Daniels, “On the Oclawaha,” *The State Chronicle*, Aug. 4, 1887, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn91090200/1887-08-04/ed-1/seq-2/>, accessed May 3, 2019.

<sup>17</sup> Tabulating and comparing all persons in the two schedules by age, gender, and listing location strongly suggests that the two lists are additive—that is, they do not both include the same people. See Appendix 8.

<sup>18</sup> “U.S. Federal Census 1860 -- C G Memminger, Charleston, SC” (1860), Family Search, <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MZTH-3LJ>, accessed Dec. 12, 2017. U.S. Federal Census 1860 -- Slave Schedules -- C G Memminger, 4th Ward, City of Charleston, SC, and Henderson County, NC, *Ancestry.com*. With one confusing exception (discussed below) we have been unable to find records of these two women either before or after this year in searches within *Ancestry.com* or Family Search.

<sup>19</sup> South Carolina Department of Archives and History (SCDAH), Series: S213003, Volume: 005D, Page 00178.

he was the administrator for the sale of four slaves, Bess, Chloe, Molly and Tom.<sup>20</sup> Three years later, he prepared the bill of sale for 25 year-old Betsy.<sup>21</sup> He himself purchased twenty-five-year-old Thomas on February 25, 1853.<sup>22</sup> On April 8, 1857, he bought Ben (“about 40 years” and “warranted sound”).<sup>23</sup> On July 18, 1853, he acted as executor and prepared the Bill of Sale for 66 slaves “including an infant” in a single transaction.<sup>24</sup> Five days later, he prepared another Bill of Sale for 27 slaves.<sup>25</sup>

Charleston death records provide illuminating detail about four Memminger slaves at the end of their lives. During the week of May 5–12, 1839, just after Memminger had recorded several receipts in his ledger for shipping furniture and other goods to outfit the new house at Rock Hill for its first summer, one of his slaves, a little girl named Pricilla, six years old, died of consumption in Charleston and was interned at the “City Burial Ground.”<sup>26</sup>

1850 was an especially bad year for slave mortality.<sup>27</sup> In February, months before the census taker made the rounds in Charleston, Memminger's 55 year old enslaved man John died of “dropsy” (as they called edema at the time) and was taken to the colored burial ground at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, where the Memmingers belonged and owned a burial plot in which they had buried two infant daughters (Mary in 1843, and Susan in 1846). In late March, Memminger's unnamed month-old baby girl slave died of “debility” (vaguely, weakness). Her burial place is unknown. St. Peter's Cemetery records show that Memminger's own infant daughter Rose, only a week old, was buried there the next week

<sup>20</sup> SCDAH, Series: S213003, Volume: 005K, Page: 00467.

<sup>21</sup> SCDAH, Series: S213003, Volume: 005O, Page: 00478.

<sup>22</sup> SCDAH, Series: S213050, Volume 006C, Page: 00613.

<sup>23</sup> SCDAH, Series: S21350, Volume: 006D, Page: 00597.

<sup>24</sup> SCDAH, Series: S213050, Volume: 006D, Page: 00020.

<sup>25</sup> SCDAH, Series: S213050, Volume: 006D, Page 00025. “Negroes at Private Sale,” an undated image from the South Caroliniana Library is a brochure advertising the sale of 57 slaves by John S. Ryan, in Charleston, ages 1 ½ months to 60 years. All are described as “prime” (including 10-year-old twins Ben and Isaac), except 8-year-old James, afflicted with “prolapsus” (perhaps of heart valve) and 20-year-old Sarah, who had a crippled leg. Individuals are separated into what appear to be family groups. Given the number of slaves recorded for Memminger in census documents (which we explore below), there must have been other purchases not recorded in SCDAH documents.

<sup>26</sup> South Carolina Death Records--Pricilla, Slave of CG Memminger (1839), South Carolina, Death Records, 1821–1965, *Ancestry.com*. An 1844 map of Charleston shows a “public cemetery” near present-day Rutledge and Fishburne streets in an area not currently used as a cemetery. Whether this is the “City Burial Ground” referenced in Pricilla's death record is unknown. See William Keenan, *Plan of the City and Neck of Charleston, S.C. Reduced from Authentic Documents & Engraved by W. Keenan. Pub. Sept. 1844*, (Charleston, SC: W. Keenan, 1844), David Rumsey Historical Map Collection.

<sup>27</sup> As we have observed previously, Dusinger's *Them Dark Days: Slavery in the American Rice Swamps* presents a meticulous examination of mortality among enslaved people in the Lowcountry—especially at the Manigault family's Gowrie Plantation, at Butler Island (co-owned by a Gowrie niece and her husband John Butler of Philadelphia), and the multiple plantations of Robert Allston.



(March 31).<sup>28</sup> Three years later, in January 1853, Peter, a thirty-five-year-old man that Memminger owned in Charleston, died of “apoplexy” (a stroke). His burial location is not listed in the records.<sup>29</sup>

## Memminger and the Ideology and Policy of Slavery

The foregoing sections of this chapter make clear that Memminger's actual *involvement* with slavery was far more extensive than previously known. He owned enslaved people, he prepared legal documents for others to buy and sell them, they lived and worked in his household, he worked to evangelize enslaved people and to enroll them in the Christian church, and he arranged for their burials.

But that was not all: he thought, talked, and wrote about the institution of slavery. In the South Carolina legislature he debated slavery as policy and law, and as a basis for the state's leaving (or not) the federal Union. He helped write Confederate South Carolina's constitution, and agreed to manage (and hopefully optimize) its assets for war purposes.

Memminger assembled his own thoughts on slavery in several documents during the antebellum period. In March 1845, he signed (along with other Flat Rock owners Daniel Huger, Rev. John Grimke Drayton, Rev. C. C. Pinckney) a “circular” sent out to survey “holders of slaves in South-Carolina” regarding what activities were in progress to promote “the Religious Instruction of our Negroes.” The circular enjoined its recipients to provide details on their work and attend a meeting in Charleston in May to discuss religious work among the enslaved.

The signers of the circular hoped that the information collected would demonstrate “that the inculcation of the truths of the Gospel, in plainness and simplicity, upon our negroes, is not only valuable in itself, but has been proved to be practicable.” It requested respondents to describe the “degree of benefit apparently derived by the negroes” from religious instruction, “particularly as it regards their morals—their tempers and their

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<sup>28</sup> South Carolina Death Records, South Carolina Department of Archives and History (Columbia, South Carolina), via *AncestryInstitution.com* [Year Range, Death County or Certificate Range; date of death]: John, Slave of Memminger” [1850–1874; Charleston, 1850]. Slave Baby Owned by Memminger [1850–1874; Charleston, 1850]. Find A Grave Memorial, Rose Memminger (1850), <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/27483914/rose-memminger>, accessed June 15, 2019. Find-A-Grave lists five Memminger children buried at St. Peter's, all but one (Willis Wilkinson) dying when under 18 months old. On Memminger church membership, see Episcopal Church Diocese of South Carolina Convention, *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (The Diocese, 1842); and on burial plot, see finding aid for C.G. Memminger Papers, 1803–1915, UNC Library.

<sup>29</sup> South Carolina Death Records: Peter Memminger (Slave) [1850–1874; Charleston, 1853]. See also Eliaz Engelhardt, “Apoplexy, Cerebrovascular Disease, and Stroke: Historical Evolution of Terms and Definitions,” *Dementia & Neuropsychologia* 11, no. 4 (2017): 449–53, <https://doi.org/10.1590/1980-57642016dn11-040016>, accessed June 15, 2019.

conduct in relations of parent and child, and husband and wife—their chastity—their regard to truth—to the rights of property—and their observance of the Sabbath.” It also asked about the influence of the religious activities “upon the discipline of plantations, and the spirit and subordination of the negroes.” Memminger apparently did not attend the called meeting, but Thomas Smyth, D. D.—father of Ellison Adger Smyth, who would later purchase his Flat Rock estate—did.<sup>30</sup>

Additionally, W. H. Barnwell, the Rector of St. Peter's Church (where Memminger attended) submitted a report to the meeting. The St. Peter's congregation had, he noted, held Sunday schools for “coloured people”—a majority of them children ages 4 to 14—for eleven years. An average of two hundred students had attended, but sometimes as many as four hundred. Oral instruction in the Protestant Episcopal catechism was provided, and a few “scholars” had become church members. As of this report, Barnwell counted thirty-three “coloured communicants” in the congregation.<sup>31</sup>

A few years later (April 1851) Memminger lectured at the Young Men's Library Association in Augusta, Georgia, on “Showing African Slavery to be Consistent with the Moral and Physical Progress of a Nation.” In twenty-five closely printed pages, he claimed (rather tediously, it turned out) “not only that the Institution of African Slavery, as it exists at the South, is not a National evil, but that it is positively favorable to the moral and physical progress both of the master and of the slave.”<sup>32</sup>

In 1859, Memminger chaired a committee charged by the South Carolina Diocese of the Protestant Episcopal Church to look into “under what circumstances a clergyman may unite slaves in marriage.” The committee's report found a conundrum in contradictions between their views on Christian marriage (ordained by God, inviolable) and their views that masters' authority over the enslaved must be absolute. Christian masters, they hoped, would respect marriages among slaves, but what to do in situations where masters ignored Christian principles and separated slave couples against their will (as the committee acknowledged it was their lawful right to do)?

Could enslaved people who endured separation remarry without running afoul of religious injunctions against adultery? The committee concluded that such a situation was analogous to that where a spouse had been absent seven years and was presumed dead. It

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<sup>30</sup> *Proceedings of the Meeting in Charleston, S. C., May 13–15, 1845, on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes, Together with the Report of the Committee, and the Address to the Public. Published by Order of the Meeting*, May 13, 1845, 50, <https://www.loc.gov/item/18003906/>, accessed June 1, 2019. The records of St. Peter's, including registers, minutes, and other items covering the period 1835–61, are at the South Carolina Historical Society, but not online. See “St. Peter's Episcopal Church Records, 1834–1967,” <https://researchworks.oclc.org/archivegrid/collection/data/70978478>, accessed May 14, 2019.

<sup>31</sup> *Proceedings of the Meeting ... on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes*, 50.

<sup>32</sup> C. G. Memminger, *Lecture Delivered Before the Young Men's Library Association, of Augusta, April 10th, 1851. Showing African Slavery to Be Consistent with the Moral and Physical Progress of a Nation* (Augusta GA: W. S. Jones, Printer, 1851), <http://hdl.handle.net/libproxy.lib.unc.edu/2027/loc.ark:/13960/t5z60nv8v>, accessed Feb. 5, 2018.

advised that clergy extend “sympathy and consideration” to individuals in this situation and allow them to marry again. While urging Christian masters to “so regulate the sale or disposal of a married slave, as not to infringe the Divine injunction forbidding the separation of husband and wife,” the committee recognized the master’s “mode of exercising” power over the slave is “left to the conscience of the master.” Masters who separated married slaves could answer to God in the hereafter, but were under no legal restriction in the here-and-now.<sup>33</sup>

## The Texture of Black and White Labor at Rock Hill

Beyond statistical and official representations and explorations of Memminger’s *ideas* about slavery and his involvement (based upon those ideas) in policy discussions, some additional personal and textured information about the actual lives of those (both Black and white) enslaved and/or employed by the Memmingers—both in Charleston and Flat Rock—is available in other documents if one reads them carefully and cross-references them when possible.

Some information on Memminger’s use of slave labor as well as the labor of others is available in a ledger he kept from 1838 to 1862 on the building, maintenance, and management of Rock Hill and his nearby Valley Farm (developed after 1844 a mile away, later to become part of son Edward’s “Tranquility” estate).<sup>34</sup> The ledger contains many names, and cross-referencing volume 1 (generally signed receipts from persons he paid for various expenditures, with some detail on what each expense was for) and volume 2 (summaries of expense by year or account) yields some additional detail concerning the story of Rock Hill.

Although Jones explored these records in 2005, some additional insights are possible. The earliest entries—and many later ones—refer to travel costs, the purchase and transport of building materials (lumber, stone, brick), tools, nails and screws, paint, food and supplies (bacon, oats, butter, coffee, corn, wine, hay), furniture and clothing, and the like. In April 1839, for instance, just before the Memmingers spent their first summer at the new Flat Rock house, the ledger records payment of transport of hardware, crushed sugar,

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<sup>33</sup> Episcopal Church, *Journal of the ... Annual Convention, Diocese of South Carolina.*, Journal of the Diocesan Convention of South-Carolina (South Carolina: The Diocese, 1859), <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/006802501>, accessed June 14, 2019, 30–35.

<sup>34</sup> C. G. Memminger Papers, 1803–1915, UNC Chapel Hill Library, <https://finding-aids.lib.unc.edu/00502>. The Papers include a transcription of the ledger by John Frost of NPS, but it contains some errors and misinterpretations, possibly because it was based on a poor copy of the original. The papers also include a fully digitized version of the original ledger, which should be consulted alongside the transcription. See also Jones’s discussion of some of this information in *Commemara Main House*, 17.

brown sugar, coffee, salt, china, glassware, rice, wine, flour, bedding, potatoes, five boxes of furniture (including a piano), and twenty-four chairs.<sup>35</sup> Purchases of various similar supplies, and receipts for work on the house continue into the 1850s.

Names of individuals providing supplies and services at many points between Charleston and Flat Rock appear (e.g., Parrott & Co., Hamburg, South Carolina). And many entries mention labor by and payments to Memminger's main building contractor, James B. Rosamond (of Greenville South Carolina), craftsmen brought from Charleston (e.g., pay and boarding costs for stonemasons John Kenney and Patrick Dugan), and local people hired to do everything from managing the property to "boarding hands" to hauling supplies, removing stumps, splitting rails, plastering walls (1841), and tuning the piano.

Specific tasks, however, are often summarized as "work and all demands to date." The individuals hired (including Enoch Capps, Peter Chadwick, N. P. Corn, John Dillinger, Nathan Drake, Thomas Drake, Jefferson Hammond, Martin Hammond, A. J. Heart, Joseph Kirkendall, Hosea Leach, Kinson Middleton, Robert Thompson, and Samuel Waldrop) are generally listed with first and last names, even if some signed with their marks.<sup>36</sup> In the summary volume, they are often listed under general headings (e.g., "time of hands 1852") with first and last names and days worked.

Since full names were given and these individuals were thus (presumably) white, many—probably most—of them can be found in the census, and a fuller picture of their lives assembled. Given the focus of this study, we have limited our efforts to individuals that Memminger engaged as full-time property managers: Kinson Middleton (first contracted in this role in October 1839 for a salary of \$250/year, but the next year at \$200); John McCarson, hired by Memminger for full-time work beginning in October 1845 (\$150/year) and, it appears, superseding Middleton as the main site overseer into the 1850s (though payments to Middleton for "wages" and work still appear as late as 1852, including a large annual payment in 1853).

By October 1855, brothers Andrew Heart and Alfred Heart (or Hart) had agreed to work a year for Memminger "to give our whole time and attention to the faithful management of his interests at both places [his farm and Residence at Flat Rock] . . . Andrew Heart

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<sup>35</sup> Jones, *Connemara Main House*, 16, says that these five boxes of furniture were imported from Germany. Evidence given for this is a *New York Times* obituary for William A. Banister (Nov. 2, 1890) that indicates that Banister went to Charleston in 1832 "and soon afterward became a member of the first importing dry goods firm of that city, of which the late Charles [sic] G. Memminger, subsequently Secretary of the Confederacy [sic], was the principal moneyed member." The article notes that Banister "made a business visit to Europe" in 1838 but does not say where he went. Meanwhile, the Rock Hill ledger entry for this shipment (April 23, 1839) says "Bill of Lading from S. B., David St. John sent Parrotts & Co. Hamburg, 5 Boxes Furniture, 12 Bundles Chairs - 2 in each. The Boxes contain 1 Piano, 1 Dressing Bureau, 1 Glass, 1 Chair, 1 Tea Table." The only possible connection to Germany we can discern here is the mention of "Hamburg," but a search of Newspapers.com reveals that Parrotts & Co. (George Parrott) was a merchant in Hamburg, SOUTH CAROLINA. See, for instance, "Fire in Hamburg," *The Camden Weekly Journal*, Sept. 22, 1841, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/352040512/?terms=parrott%2Bhamburg>, accessed June 20, 2019.

<sup>36</sup> Jones, *Connemara Main House*, summarizes this information in more detail.

to live at the Residence and Alfred at the farm, but both under the supervision of Andrew Heart.” For each, payment was initially \$175 for the year (raised to \$200/yr. for Andrew Heart in 1857-58; and for Alfred alone to do all of this work at the farm “at Rock Hill” for 1862–63, \$300). Edward Memminger says that Andrew—later a local storekeeper—also continued to serve C. G. Memminger in this way during the Civil War.<sup>37</sup>

Kinson Middleton (b. February 9, 1818, in Charleston; d. December 12, 1885, in Henderson County) has perhaps the most interesting personal story. Middleton appears to have been Memminger's first year-round property manager in Flat Rock, hired full-time in 1839 and possibly living on the Rock Hill property into the 1840s. He was perhaps replaced for full-time duties in 1845 with John W. McCarson, but continued to do paid work for Memminger until at least 1855.<sup>38</sup> His name appears in the 1840, 1850, and 1880 censuses. In 1840, when the census lists only the name of the head of household, he is shown living in Henderson County, age twenty–thirty, with a white woman (unnamed, his mother?), age thirty–forty and one enslaved woman aged between ten and twenty-four. By 1850, at age thirty, he remains in Henderson County, now married to Narcissa (age twenty-five) with eight children under eight years old. Both he and Narcissa are listed as born in North Carolina, and his occupation is given as “farmer.” He is not found in the slave schedules as a slave owner that year.<sup>39</sup>

Middleton is difficult to locate in the census again until 1880, although a possible match shows up in 1870 in Grainger County, Tennessee, a mountain county northeast of Knoxville.<sup>40</sup> This may not be as strange as it seems. In an 1890 memoir, one of Middleton's daughters, Mary Middleton Orr, described her father's and their family's Civil War ordeal: Orr's husband Robert, briefly in the Confederate army (1862–63) deserted (as did large numbers of North Carolina troops), and he and Kinson Middleton joined a group of perhaps one hundred other men who left western North Carolina and “went to the ‘Yankees’” in Tennessee. Robert Orr joined the Union army, while Kinson Middleton farmed in the Knoxville area, leaving his wife and (by then) nine children at home in North Carolina. Eventually, both women and all of the children took a harrowing journey to follow their husbands to Tennessee, where the family remained until sometime in the

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<sup>37</sup> Memminger and Norment, *An Historical Sketch of Flat Rock*, 24.

<sup>38</sup> Memminger Ledger; Jones, *Connemara Main House*, 19.

<sup>39</sup> “Kinson Middleton (1818–1885) - Find A Grave Memorial,” 1885, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/35636061>. U.S. Federal Census, Henderson County, NC, 1840 and 1850, via *Ancestry.com*.

<sup>40</sup> U.S. Federal Census, Grainger County TN, 1870, via *Ancestry.com*.



1870s.<sup>41</sup> By 1880, in any case, Kinson and Narcissa Middleton were back in Henderson County, North Carolina, where he was once again farming. Whether he had any further dealings with C. G. Memminger or Rock Hill after the war is not known.<sup>42</sup>

Memminger's second farm manager, John McC Carson, remains more obscure. Designated as a native North Carolinian in the 1850 census, he is found listed adjacent to C.G. Memminger in Henderson County, with profession given as "overseer." A wife, Elizabeth, and nine children (ages one to seventeen) are listed in the household, along with two (white) male farmers, William Guise (age twenty-six) and Abner McCaul (age thirty). Neither of those men seem to appear in Memminger's ledger, however. McC Carson is not found among Henderson County's slave owners in either the 1850 or 1860 slave schedules.<sup>43</sup>

After McC Carson, brothers Andrew and Alfred Heart (or Hart) became Memminger's overseers or local managers in the mid-1850s. Both are listed in the 1860 Henderson County Census (Flat Rock post office) as "farm laborer," both married with two children, and neither indicated as slave owners in the slave schedule. At this point, Andrew was thirty-five and Alfred was twenty-eight. Edward Memminger recalled that after the Civil War, Andrew opened a store in Flat Rock, "which in time became a great nuisance to the community from the sale of whiskey."<sup>44</sup>

And what work did the overseers do? It is clear from the ledger that a key part of it was to engage, manage, and pay the numerous "hands" working at Rock Hill and the farm. It appears that most, if not all, of these people (all men, of course) were local whites, since one or the other volume of the ledger nearly always lists most of them either by full or recognizable last names, often with hours worked. None of the four overseers appear to have owned slaves during the time they were working for Memminger.

The ledger's language—typically something like "to pay hands" or "cash paid farm hands" or "wages due five hands"—further suggests that the working individuals were the ones being paid, and thus that these "hands" were not enslaved people rented from other whites. A full inventory of the ledger (beyond the scope of this study) might identify several dozen of these individuals who did work for Memminger from the 1830s to the 1850s. Most of them probably could be traced through the census and possibly other documents.

And what of the enslaved people who worked for Memminger either in Charleston or at Rock Hill (or most likely for many, in both places)?

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<sup>41</sup> Mary Middleton Orr's 18980 memoir was reprinted in Moss, "Tale of Two Brave Women. Orr's memoir was titled *The Experiences of a Soldier's Wife in the Civil War*.

<sup>42</sup> U.S. Federal Census, Henderson County, NC, 1880, via *Ancestry.com*.

<sup>43</sup> U.S. Federal Census, Henderson County, NC, 1850, via *Ancestry.com*; "Henderson County Slave Census" (1850 and 1860), Henderson County Genealogical & Historical Society.

<sup>44</sup> U.S. Federal Census, Henderson County, NC, 1860, via *Ancestry.com*; Memminger and Norment, *An Historical Sketch of Flat Rock*, 24.



The *servants*, as the Rock Hill ledger called them, are most visible in the record when their presence necessitated an expenditure: most frequently when they traveled back and forth between Charleston and Flat Rock with, or ahead of, the Memminger family. In this period, the trip involved taking the (new) railroad to Aiken, South Carolina, and then taking a slow carriage and wagon journey to Greenville, on through Saluda Gap, and into Flat Rock.<sup>45</sup> A ledger item for July 19, 1839, says “Passage Money of family & Servants to Aiken, \$67.50,” and in late October, there was another \$24.50 payment for “Servants [from Flat Rock] to Aiken.” An 1840 entry reflects just over \$400 spent for “expenses up to Rock Hill of Family & Servants . . . and back again.” In July 1841, a few weeks after everyone’s arrival, there were payments for “trunks for servants” and “bacon for servants.”

Payments for transport to and from Aiken continued for years: in July 1845, \$50 to George Johnson for “hauling servants & supplies from Aiken”; in 1849, \$62 to Mr. Drake for “hire of wagons to go to Aiken & hauling servants”; December 10, 1852, another to Nathan Drake for “hauling baggage and servants to Aiken.” Similar entries appear into the 1850s, ending with an 1855 expenditure for the railroad at Charleston for family and servants.

In his Historic Structure Report for the Swedish House, NPS historian Jones notes that the trip gradually became easier as the railroad extended to Columbia by 1853, then to Spartanburg by 1861, cutting down the portion of the trip covered by horse-drawn conveyance each time. The ledger, as a whole, ends in the fall of 1862. Completing the entire trip from Charleston to Flat Rock by rail was not possible until 1880.<sup>46</sup>

The ledger does reference a few individuals—identified by first name only and not otherwise appearing to sign receipts for transactions—who *may* have been enslaved: Alexander, “Carpenter Ben,” “Carpenter Peter,” Cupid, Robert, Mary Ann, Moro, Susan, Tom and William. For the most part, those breadcrumbs from the ledger do not lead to any further details.

But let’s try for Robert, who appears most often, from at least 1840 to 1852. Jones surmises that he may have been Memminger’s butler, although the ledger does not say that. In any case, it is clear that starting around May 5, 1840, Robert was regularly sent ahead of the family to Rock Hill—perhaps to get the house ready for the Memmingers, who that year arrived in North Carolina in early July. Robert’s railroad fare was \$10.00. About six weeks after Robert departed that year, on June 25, 1840, the same railroad costs for “sending . . . to Rock Hill” were recorded for “Moro and Cupid” (\$20.00) as well as for “William, Carriage, Wagon, & 3 horses” (\$65.00). Payment of the \$45 in railroad fare for “family & servants” followed on June 27. Assuming C. G. and Mary Memminger and children Ellen,

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<sup>45</sup> Jones, *Connemara Main House*, 16.

<sup>46</sup> Jones, *Swedish House*, 8.

Thomas, and Robert were traveling, this suggests that perhaps one or two “servants” accompanied them. In September, Memminger paid \$7 to (or for) Cupid (for *what* is not indicated, and there is no corresponding receipt) as well as \$7.00 to “Robert for Shoes.”<sup>47</sup>

The pattern repeated in 1841, with Robert going ahead to Rock Hill on April 28 (\$10); “servants on rail road” (\$24) on June 28; “trunks for servants” (\$11) on July 1 and the horses, carriage, and Memminger family following in mid-July. A September 15 payment to Kinson Middleton included \$6 “for Robert’s board,” and Robert was paid \$10 on November 5 for “expenses on road,” presumably on the fall return trip to Charleston. Transactions after that are not recorded in a way that illuminates whether Robert continued to go to Rock Hill in advance of the summer or not. In 1842, Robert was paid \$6 in November for “bringing down horses,” and an 1852 summary listed both “Robert’s fare” of \$14.25 and another payment to “Robert” for \$6 on November 12. After that, Robert’s trail goes cold.<sup>48</sup>

The carpenters Ben and Peter appear in 1840–41. In a listing of payments for “permanent improvements and furniture at Rock Hill,” a line shows \$5 paid to “Peter on a/c [account] Work” on October 14 and then \$71 for “Peter’s wages” on January 5, 1841. Three other small transactions—two to “Ben the carpenter” or “Carpenter Ben” and one to “Peter the carpenter” show in a list of “Rock Hill Summer Expenses” for 1841. And then Ben and Peter are shown receiving “wages” for a total of \$95 (\$90 to Ben, \$5 to Peter) on November 5.

NPS historian Jones surmises that these men may have built the structure (now called the Chicken House) that served as the original servants’ house—residence for Memminger’s cook, as well as perhaps the butler or nursemaid. Opperman generally concurs, although he admits that “Peter” could also refer to a white local contractor, Peter Corn. There is also a Peter Chadwick who signs receipts for work in 1837 and 1838. In sum, it is difficult to sort out what is happening in the ledger, especially regarding “Peter.”<sup>49</sup>

Meanwhile, Tom, Susan, and Mary Ann appear to have had expenses paid for them in summer and late fall of 1852, and Tom shows up again in July of 1855 boarding the railroad at Charleston with “servants” one day before the Memmingers did the same.

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<sup>47</sup> For many such entries (most of which are quite cryptic and frequently difficult to read), it is difficult (at times impossible) to discern—from either the name or the item being paid for—whether the person named is or is not enslaved. A few payments to named individuals may have been to reimburse expenses they themselves had paid en route, but others appear to have been actual wages. Careful reading can sometimes reduce the uncertainty, but ambiguity lurks everywhere.

<sup>48</sup> As will be noted later, there is a Black Robert Memminger, age 33, in the 1870 census, presumably the son of household head Glasgow Memminger, age 60. Both are listed as born in South Carolina and are living in the Saint Andrews Parish of Charleston County at this time. This Robert is almost certainly not the same person sent ahead to Flat Rock in 1840, when he would have been only 3 years old.

<sup>49</sup> Jones, *Swedish House*, 22; Oppermann, *Chicken House*, 1.A.3.

The necessary presence of enslaved workers at Rock Hill when the Memminger family was in residence is also reflected in the construction, around 1852, of the structure now called the Swedish House—built as living and sleep quarters for the enslaved and used into the Smyth period as a residence for Black workers.<sup>50</sup>

## Memminger: The Richmond Interval

It appears that Memminger lived in Richmond all or part of the time from 1861, when the Confederate capital moved there from Montgomery, until his resignation from the position of Treasurer of the Confederacy on June 15, 1864.

Descriptions of Memminger's home life in Richmond do not appear in available digitized newspapers, but the *Alexandria Gazette* did note in 1865 the sale at auction of the home he had lived in while there (owned by P. K. White, and located between Broad and Grace streets at the corner of Grace and 28th streets in the Church Hill neighborhood).

P. K. White owned a boot and shoe shop in Richmond and appears to have died sometime in 1865. For some reason, his “desirable residence” had initially been advertised for sale at auction in 1859, so perhaps Memminger rented it during his tenure in the Confederate capital. Built in “the very best manner, without any regard to expense,” the ten-room brick house originally cost \$20,000 without the lot, was surrounded by mature horse chestnut trees, and featured an attached “large brick kitchen with four rooms, a stable, carriage house, and other out-houses.” His biographer Capers observed that, during the Memmingers' time, the home was “a center of social attraction,” which must have required the labor of enslaved people.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Jones, *Swedish House*, 39.

<sup>51</sup> “Virginia Items (C. G. Memminger Residence),” *Alexandria Gazette*, Nov. 4, 1865, Virginia Chronicle: Digital Newspaper Archive; “Trustee's Sale Notice, P. K. White House,” *Richmond Dispatch*, April 18, 1859, *Newspapers.com*; “Desirable Residence for Sale [P. K. White Home],” *Richmond Dispatch*, May 13, 1859, *Newspapers.com*; Capers, 370.

## North Carolina's "Inner Civil War" on the Memminger Doorstep

St. John in the Wilderness church records show that on October 20, 1864, Memminger's *servant* Martin married Henry T. Farmer's *servant* Kate.<sup>52</sup> That marriage took place just a few months after Memminger resigned as Confederate treasury secretary and, according to Capers, "retired to his inviting country seat" at Flat Rock, where with the cheering presence of his loved family circle, the entertainment of his library, and in correspondence with friends, there was at Rock Hill enough to engage [*his*] mind . . . and to bring a sweet solace to the disappointed hopes of the patriot. When not engaged with the details of his farm he could always find about his hearthstone the superior joys of a noble, true life . . . .<sup>53</sup>

Capers was far too sanguine, however, about "the superior joys" of that "inviting country seat," which was at that moment sitting at the center of the local version of the "inner civil war" that wracked North Carolina as the conflict dragged on. Disaffection with the Confederacy grew as wartime policies (including conscription and impressment of property) took a toll upon a citizenry that had been lukewarm about secession from the outset. Desertion soared, class resentments flared, and food riots and other signs of social disorder spread after 1863.<sup>54</sup> We have addressed some of this conflict in previous chapters. Fortunately, a vivid snapshot of some of the inner war's local features has survived.

On November 2, 1864, Archibald Hamilton Seabrook wrote from Flat Rock to his brother-in-law Captain Thomas Pinckney about the "alarming accounts of the state of this country." The "insolent and dangerous . . . deserters and tories," he said, were running rampant through the area, pillaging and gutting house after elegant house, threatening servants and owners with death if they resisted. Using whatever horses and wagons remained to them, some owners packed families and belongings pell-mell down the mountain to Spartanburg or Greenville.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Pinckney, "Register of St. John-In-The-Wilderness, Flat Rock (Continued)," (July 1962): 180. Why the couple were still being referred to by the *servant* euphemism so many months after Emancipation (January 1, 1863) is not clear. The St. John Register for 1865, 181, lists two marriages—one couple with last names Trenholm (unarguably white) and Waties, and the other as "Charles to Clarinda" (no last names, no "colored" designation). Both members of two "Colored" couples married in 1880 had last names. In three "Colored" in 1866 marriages, five of six persons had both first and last names. We were unable to locate a couple named Martin and Kate in the 1870 census listing for Henderson County; they certainly were not then living and working in either the Memminger or Farmer households.

<sup>53</sup> Capers, *Life and Times of C. G. Memminger*, 377.

<sup>54</sup> For an account of the course of the inner war in the entire state, see Escott, *Many Excellent People*, 85–112.

<sup>55</sup> This account is from Seabrook's letter in Cuthbert, *Flat Rock of the Old Time*, 58–60. Five months earlier (June 10, 1864, just before Memminger resigned his position as Treasurer), bushwhackers had forced their way into Andrew Johnstone's home Beaumont on his 800-acre Flat Rock estate and shot and killed him. Griffith, *Flat Rock Historic Boundary Increase, Boundary Decrease*, 7/16. A fuller account of this incident, and of the Johnstone family's efforts to survive during the war, is in Silkenat, *Driven from Home*, 194–99 and 206–13.

On Crab and Clare creeks, Seabrook continued, “many robberies have been committed,” Mrs. Bryan and her two daughters were “shot . . . in their own house,” and a contingent of 60 Confederate soldiers were unlikely to be of much help against “villains [who] are too adroit and know everything that goes forward.”

Some “gentlemen of the neighborhood” who offered their services appointed Memminger “special messenger to proceed to Salisbury and lay our case before General Martin, asking for some permanent protection . . . [against these] outlaws.”<sup>56</sup>

It is not surprising, then, that at this exact juncture both a Confederate deserter and a Union soldier who had escaped from a Confederate prison in Columbia, South Carolina, may have been being harbored by some of Memminger's tenants, right at his doorstep on his Flat Rock property.

Indiana native John Vestal Hadley described the dramatic events in his 1898 memoir, *Seven Months a Prisoner*. Hadley had been imprisoned at several locations, ending in South Carolina's “Camp Sorghum,” from which he and three other men escaped under cover of night on November 4, 1864. Aided along the way by sympathetic blacks and whites, he and three compatriots eventually made their way north along a route similar to that long followed by the Flat Rock elite—through Greenville, up the Saluda mountain, and into North Carolina.<sup>57</sup>

There they breathed a sigh of relief, as they had been assured all along “of the loyalty of the people of the mountains, and that we would be safe when we got out of South Carolina.” This prediction proved too optimistic, as upon entry into North Carolina, they were spotted, and patrols went out to find them. A Black man, Reuben, who came to their aid at this point, advised them to avoid Flat Rock, “a military post,” he called it, “where a considerable force was kept for police duty throughout the mountain district.”

Not daring to brave walking on the road, they slipped through the woods, hoping to bypass Flat Rock and reach “the neighborhood of Hendersonville” where “Reuben had told us when should find some negroes and food.” Thinking they had passed Flat Rock, they emerged onto the road and were immediately confronted by four men. Rather than be recaptured, Hadley and his compatriots bolted into the woods, up what turned out to be

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<sup>56</sup> Headquartered in Asheville, Gen. James G. Martin was commander of all of western North Carolina's Confederate troops. Presumably at this juncture he was known to be in Salisbury, the location of a huge Confederate prison. See Paul Branch, “Martin, James Green,” in *NCpedia, via Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, 1991, <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/martin-james-green>, accessed June 23, 2019. The situation at the prison was desperate at this juncture; by October 1864, the death rate among prisoners reached 28 percent. See Louis A. Brown, “Confederate Prison (Salisbury),” in *NCpedia*, 2006, <https://www.ncpedia.org/confederate-prison-salisbury>, accessed June 23, 2019.

<sup>57</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the account below (and all quotations) is drawn from J. V. Hadley, *Seven Months a Prisoner* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044024054058;view=1up;seq=8>, accessed June 23, 2019. See also James I. Robertson and Jane Hadley Comer, “An Indiana Soldier in Love and War: The Civil War Letters of John V. Hadley,” *Indiana Magazine of History* 59, no. 3 (1963): 189–288. Silkenat, *Driven from Home*, 211–13, has a somewhat longer account of this situation.

Glassy Mountain, just southeast of Rock Hill. Starving, desperate, and lost, they were once again discovered while trying to steal cabbages—this time by three women who, it turned out, were exhausted by the war and the Confederate secessionists who had started it.

The women were Martha (24), Elizabeth (22), and Alice (16) Hollingsworth. Their “old and feeble” parents were Memminger’s tenants. “His palatial residence,” Hadley wrote, “stood but a mile from the Hollingsworth home” (which was probably at the Memminger’s Valley Farm), and Elizabeth worked for the Memmingers.

Indeed, Memminger’s ledger shows that at various points in the 1850s his overseer Andrew Hart paid the women’s father Josiah Hollingsworth for work as a “hand.” By 1864, Josiah would have been about fifty-eight years old, and his wife Elizabeth about fifty-six.<sup>58</sup> In Hadley’s telling, Josiah

was an old man and loved the Union, but he lived in a Rebel neighborhood, was tenant of a Rebel landlord, and had already been arrested a time or two upon suspicion of harboring deserters and refugees . . .

Confirming the earlier report, the women described 60 Confederate soldiers in Flat Rock who were “scouring the country for the arrest of deserters.”<sup>59</sup> Half of the local community, the women said, “were zealous Rebels.” They themselves, on the contrary, were “under suspicion of being in sympathy with Yankees, and were closely watched.” They had concealed their brother, a Confederate deserter, for eighteen months before he had surrendered, returned to the army, and was then in Petersburg.

The Hollingsworth women promised to help the Yankee escapees, but were eager that their efforts be concealed from their father, so he could not be implicated in the plans. Soon they snuck the four grateful men through a cleverly concealed “scuttle-hole” to the attic of the Hollingsworth house (apparently the one on the Memminger property, because the memoir notes that mother Elizabeth Hollingsworth welcomed the men to “her house”). The home was described as a story-and-a-half cottage in an enclosure with an old log building.

The women pledged to find Hadley and the others a guide to help them get through the mountains to Union lines in Knoxville. Making these arrangements took several days, during which the men remained in the house. The secret of their presence slipped out, and “every trusted friend in the vicinity had notice and was over to call on us.” After coming close to being discovered the final night, the men were turned over to their guides (local

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<sup>58</sup> Hollingsworth family, 1850 Census, Henderson County, NC; Hollingsworth [Holinsworth] family, 1860 Census, Henderson County, NC. See also Jones, *Swedish House*, 21.

<sup>59</sup> The presence of Confederate soldiers in Flat Rock is also described in the Hamilton letter discussed above. Citing Patton, Griffith says in *Flat Rock Historic District Boundary Increase, Boundary Decrease*, 8/398-90. That later, in the summer of 1865, “Captain B. T. Morris of the 64th North Carolina Regiment and his troops were dispatched to Flat Rock to disperse the bands of bushwhackers that were looting throughout the county. The troops established their headquarters at Farmer’s Hotel and camped on the front lawn. They remained stationed in Flat Rock for approximately six months to protect local citizens and their valuables.”



men who had been forced into Confederate service and deserted). Departure was delayed, however, when the guides paused to ransack the home of a local man, "Dr. H." in hopes of stealing his \$102 in silver. The men, Hadley remembered, had been among many disaffected local people who now "expressed inveterate hate for all Rebels, and . . . scrupulously regarded everyone a Rebel who had any valuables or lived in a painted house."

Unsuccessful in their quest and now sought by a search party, the guides returned and hustled Hadley and his party out of Flat Rock toward Knoxville. Eventually, the guides abandoned the group and turned back, but after more adventures Hadley and company made it to Knoxville and safety.

## Orphaned Black Children and Memminger's Quest for Pardon and Restitution

The Memmingers, meanwhile, remained at Rock Hill through the end of the war and into early 1867, their personal lives turned upside down by emancipation and Reconstruction. Capers, in true Lost Cause fashion, described this time as a period of suffering for the family. Under various wartime laws regarding the property of Confederate officials, their residence at the corner of Wentworth and Smith in Charleston was declared abandoned and seized by the Freedman's Bureau.<sup>60</sup> "As if to add insult to injury," Capers lamented,

a grim satire was perpetrated by the Commission of this Bureau in Charleston, who converted this elegant home into an 'Asylum for negro orphan children,' who were gathered there in troops irrespective of their claims to a legitimate orphanage, and made at home in a mansion that had known only the care and the presence of a family now ruthlessly denied its many comforts.

Rather than a clear injustice perpetrated by the Freedmen's Bureau, however, this lament requires context.

### *Memminger, His "Elegant Home," and Charleston's Orphans' Home: Two Sides of the Story*

In fact, in 1792, Charleston had laid the cornerstone for a large Orphans' Home (the first public orphanage in America), and then replaced it with another (larger) one around 1854. The original building occupied most of a large downtown square and housed

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<sup>60</sup> Officially the Bureau was called the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands. Capers, 372; Martin Abbott, *The Freedmen's Bureau in South Carolina, 1865-1872* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967), 53.

several dozen children.<sup>61</sup> By 1854 there were nearly two hundred. C. G. Memminger himself entered as an orphan in 1807 and remained for (depending upon the account) between four and seven years.<sup>62</sup>

In 1853, the 1790s building was renovated and enlarged to accommodate several hundred children. By the time of the 1890 centennial, about 360 (white, it is important to bear in mind) orphans were living there.<sup>63</sup>

And what effect(s) did the Civil War have on the city's (white) Orphans' House? Soon after the conflict started, one source says, the orphans were relocated to Orangeburg, and the city began using the building for office space. Another says it was used as a soldiers' hospital.

Within a very few months, in any case, the City Council—desperate for money—asked the orphanage and other public entities to reduce their budgets. After analyzing their records meticulously, the Commissioners reported that they were “unable to retrench.” With a staff of forty-seven (and more than one hundred female orphans sewing several thousand garments per year), they were housing, clothing, feeding and schooling 360 orphans for a few dollars each per year. Of that amount, 6 cents went for three meals per day, starting with breakfast of “hominy grist” [grits?], molasses, milk, and bread. Lunch included meat, rice, and vegetables, but the meager supper plate brought only bread, sugar, and milk.<sup>64</sup>

Much earlier, during the first decade of the nineteenth century, when Memminger was a resident orphan, the orphanage had offered a Spartan existence—but a crucially positive one, maintained Capers in his hagiographic account of Memminger's life. As a sixteen-year-old student, young Christopher had stood before the Legislature and the Clariosophic Society and spoken empathetically of “the moan of the widow and the orphan who knelt over the corpse of a husband and a father.”<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> John E. Murray, “Charleston Orphan House, 1790–1951,” *South Carolina Encyclopedia*, <http://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/charleston-orphan-house/>, accessed July 1, 2019. There are three related images in Capers, *Life and Times of C. G. Memminger* (1893), facing p. 15: the 1790 Charleston Orphan House, the 1850s replacement, and a small chapel.

<sup>62</sup> The Commissioners, *Circular of the City Council on Retrenchment, and Report of the Commissioners of the Orphan House*. (Charleston: Evans & Cogswell, 1861), <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/nc01.ark:/13960/t23b77699>, accessed June 30, 2019.

<sup>63</sup> Text on verso of stereograph card “No. 2 The Orphan House, Charleston, S. C.” (Charleston: Quinby & Co., n.d.)

<sup>64</sup> *Circular of the City Council on Retrenchment*, 1–14, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/nc01.ark:/13960/t23b77699>, accessed July 1, 2019. For a more complete and detailed analysis of the history of the orphanage, see Jamie Alistair Mansbridge, “‘More?! More?!’ Charleston's Poor, Charleston's Orphan House, and Charleston in the Nineteenth Century” (M.A. thesis, College of Charleston, 2017), <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1906683783/abstract/3A227BF832884B3FPQ/1>.

<sup>65</sup> “Eulogy on President Maxey” in Capers, *Life and Times of C. G. Memminger*, 504. President Maxey is not identified.

Indeed, Capers returned repeatedly to Memminger's orphan years as a touchstone for his unreproachable character. "It was at this Home," he wrote, that the orphan boy of Nayhingen [*Vaihingen?*] found a sweet solace . . . that the foundation was laid upon which the youth and the young man afterwards erected the splendid superstructure of his character.<sup>66</sup>

In a kind and modest moment early in his adult life, Capers reported, Memminger declared that he would not object "to hav[ing] any son of mine sit by the side of the poorest boy in the land, for I have not forgotten that I was once a poor boy myself." As if to drive that perspective home, Capers held forth at length:

not even when he had acquired fortune, when his fame as a great lawyer was well secured, and his name had become a household word with the people of the Southern States . . . did he ever boast of, or in any manner deny, the fact of his orphanage or the benefaction he had received in his childhood. . . . [*It was instead*] always with a manly frankness and a grateful [*sic*] sense of a kindness bestowed, that could but exalt him in the estimation of all right-thinking people. In after years, when as an alderman and a citizen of wealth and influence, he not only became a Commissioner to guard the institution that had been his childhood's home, but with a solicitude which could only have come from his experiences, he would . . . minister in the gentlest manner to the comfort of the children who were, as he had been, the wards of the city.<sup>67</sup>

Not many months following Memminger's death, the Rev. Dr. D. D. Vedder (quoting Montague Grimke) offered a valedictory gloss upon Memminger at the 1890 Orphans' House centennial, reminding his listeners that he was

one of those whose lineaments are . . . preserved in imperishable marble [*who*] was once an Orphan-House boy, rising by dint of his own industry, energy, and ability to exalted places in the State and in the Confederate Cabinet . . .<sup>68</sup>

Given all this, it is notable that when Memminger the "patriot" decided to evict Black (formerly enslaved, seems a likely guess) orphans from his "elegant home," he did not (or conveniently chose not to) recall his own years in an orphanage. Yes, those years had acquired a patina of nostalgia, but his situation and prospects actually took a major positive turn when he was adopted and liberated from the orphanage by South Carolina governor Bennett,

whose many graces of character were to infuse themselves into the plastic nature of a clever boy, while his ample fortune enabled him to secure for his protégé the best facilities that the country offered for securing an education.

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<sup>66</sup> Capers, *Life and Times of C. G. Memminger*, 18; See also Aaron W. Marrs, "Memminger, Christopher Gustavus," in *South Carolina Encyclopedia* (University of South Carolina Institute for Southern Studies, March 13, 2017), <https://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/memminger-christopher-gustavus>.

<sup>67</sup> Capers, *Life and Times of C. G. Memminger*, 17.

<sup>68</sup> Capers, *Life and Times of C. G. Memminger*, 111–12.

And how had Memminger's house (to his acute distress) actually come to be used as an orphanage? There is no evidence, in the first place, that Charleston had heretofore had an orphanage for Black children. But the (presumably) burgeoning postwar Black orphan population needed care, and public business (including the orphanage) was at least for a while being directed by Federal officials and volunteers more sympathetic to Black welfare than native white Charlestonians had been accustomed to being.

In any case, the Col. Shaw Orphan House for Black orphans opened in Charleston in 1865. It was named in honor of Col. Robert Gould Shaw of the Black 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment by antislavery activist James Redpath, who had come to Charleston after the war to develop schools for Black children. According to Redpath's biographer, a "persistent Black woman" pressed him to create an "orphanage" where Black women could leave children while working on farms away from Charleston. In April 1865, military authorities gave Redpath permission to start such a facility. Founded in May, it initially occupied two deserted buildings near Charleston's main railroad terminal.<sup>69</sup> It was later taken over as one of two Freedman's Bureau "orphan asylums," the other located in Fernandina, Florida.<sup>70</sup>

The asylum was founded shortly after Memminger's Charleston house was seized and appears initially to have moved around a bit. The *Freedman's Record* reported in October 1865 that for the three months prior, the orphans had been living "in the elegant mansion of a Mrs. Ross, on East Bay Street," but that when she took the loyalty oath (and presumably got her house back), they were forced to move.

That is when (perhaps as early as August 1865) they arrived at the "splendid and stately residence of the aristocratic Mr. Memminger, ex-Rebel Secretary of the Treasury." According to *The National Freedman*, the asylum remained in these "ample and elegant" surroundings—"one of the most princely estates in Charleston"—into June of 1866. By that summer, it had cared for more than 230 children, "many of whom, in the judgment of a gentleman recently from the South, must have perished, but for the kindly charities here bestowed."<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> "54th Regiment," Massachusetts Historical Society, <http://www.masshist.org/online/54thregiment/index.php>, accessed July 5, 2020; "54th Massachusetts Regiment (U.S. National Park Service)," National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/54th-massachusetts-regiment.htm>, accessed July 5, 2020; John McKivigan, *Forgotten Firebrand: James Redpath and the Making of Nineteenth-Century America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 108. This organization, McKivigan says, later became the Shaw Unit of the Boys and Girls Club; *The American Freedman* (American Freedmen's and Union Commission, 1866), 165.

<sup>70</sup> "Report of the Executive Committee," *The National Freedman: A Monthly Journal of the New York National Freedman's Relief Association*, vol. II, no. 6 (New York: National Freedman's Relief Association, 1866), 164–65.

<sup>71</sup> "Colored Orphan Asylum," *Daily Phoenix* (Columbia SC), August 2, 1865, reports the Asylum, with 175 residents, was then "settled in Memminger's extensive mansion and grounds, at the corner of Smith and Wentworth streets." "The Colonel-Shaw Orphan House," *The Freedmen's Record*, vol. 1, no 10, Oct. 1865; "Report of the Executive Committee," 164–65. A postwar stereograph (1870–1889) makes clear that the building was not destroyed during the war: South Caroliniana Library, Chibbaro Stereograph Collection, No. 24. Orphan Home, 187u–188u.

What became of these children after the Memmingers regained the house in January 1867 we have not discovered. In any case, the kindly gentleman referred to was not named C. G. Memminger, who was in no mood to bestow his property for this purpose—however charitable. Indeed, as a former Confederate official with property holdings exceeding \$20,000—and thus belonging to the South's economic elite “slavocracy”—Memminger was incensed that a man of his standing was excluded from President Johnson's May 1865 amnesty proclamation.

Among its other provisions, that proclamation provided for restoring nonslave property to former Confederates. To receive that benefit, Memminger was required to make special application to Johnson for a pardon and restoration of the Charleston house. He had signed an oath of loyalty to the United States and written to Johnson requesting the pardon in November of 1865, but a year later he had had no reply.<sup>72</sup> Thus he remained (by his telling) in Flat Rock in “a sort of exile . . . from my inability to recover my residence at Charleston . . .”<sup>73</sup>

In another communication to President Johnson in December, Memminger elaborated: though a resident of Charleston, he had since 1865 been with his large family (ten children mentioned) in his “summer retreat” in the North Carolina mountains, where he had for 20 years spent four months a year. During the war, he explained, part of the family had occupied each of his two houses, so that at and before the evacuation of Charleston in February 1865 and sometime thereafter, his house “was occupied by his servants and by a tenant placed there during the temporary absence of part of his family.” These “servants” and the tenant, he continued, “were removed by order of the military after the City was occupied by the forces of the U.S. and the House and Lot was taken possession of by the Freedmen's Bureau and made use of as an orphan asylum for negro children.”<sup>74</sup>

Memminger was trying to make the case that the house at 122 Wentworth St. in Charleston had not been “abandoned,” and therefore should not have been seized.<sup>75</sup> In January 1866, he had paid U.S. direct taxes on the property, then valued at \$18,000. But by November 12, 1866, he still did not have occupancy. He was by this point, however, back in

<sup>72</sup> Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877*, The New American Nation Series (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 183–84; C. G. Memminger to Andrew Johnson, Nov. 18, 1865, Memminger Papers #502, UNC Library. A document dated December 15, 1866 within Memminger's pardon file pegs his property holdings at over \$29,000. See *Confederate Applications for Presidential Pardons, 1865–1867* [database on-line].

<sup>73</sup> C. G. Memminger to William Seward, Nov. 5, 1866, C. G. Memminger Papers #502, UNC Library.

<sup>74</sup> C. G. Memminger to William Seward, Nov. 5, 1866, and Memminger Memorial (to Johnson), Dec. 15, 1866, C. G. Memminger Papers #502, UNC Library. See also Memminger notarized statement, Charleston SC, January 1867, and related documents, C. G. Memminger, “United States, Freedmen's Bureau, Land and Property Records, 1865–1872” (1867), Family Search database, <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:Q2Q1-RF8P:17> March 2018.

<sup>75</sup> On the 1863 law permitting Federal seizure of “Southern property abandoned by an owner who was ‘voluntarily absent’ in support of the Confederacy,” see Martin Abbott, *The Freedmen's Bureau in South Carolina, 1865–1872* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967), 53–56.



Charleston, residing nearby with W. J. Bennett; records indicate that by December 18, his sons had retaken possession of the Wentworth house. The pardon was granted on December 19. An official document from the Assistant Commissioner of the Freedman's Bureau dated January 4, 1867, ordered restoration of the property.<sup>76</sup>

As Memminger's biographer Capers told it, in short order "the liberal application of disinfectants with the painter's brush and the mechanic's skills" rendered "the dear old home again to look as in days of yore, and the happy family were once more gathered together at its fireside altars."<sup>77</sup> Profaned as it had briefly been by Black orphans, the message seems to have been, it had been resacralized by hired painters and mechanics.

## After Restitution: Old Views and New Work

Back in Charleston after the paint was dry, Memminger resumed his law career. How he fared in the near term is a bit unclear, especially since his pre-war and wartime legal services were no longer marketable in transferring enslaved people. As NPS historian Jones notes, however, he "must have had few real financial difficulties and appears even to have prospered," despite the loss of his slaves.<sup>78</sup>

A fresh look at census records suggests, however, that although he remained prosperous, his overall estate may have taken a hit. His 1860 census listing in Charleston showed \$25,000 in real estate and, it appears, \$150,000 in his personal estate (not \$50,000 as Jones read it). In 1870, in Charleston, Memminger was shown with \$20,000 in real estate and \$100,000 in personal property, a decline in both categories.<sup>79</sup>

In any case, Memminger continued his work on the Charleston Public School Board (which he had chaired since the early 1850s), while also branching out into other pursuits in the 1870s and 1880s, including a major push into the booming phosphate

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<sup>76</sup> Memminger to Johnson, Dec. 15, 1866 and footnotes 3 and 4 in Andrew Johnson, *The Papers of Andrew Johnson: August 1866–January 1867* (Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 1967), 540–41; W. J. Bennett to C. G. Memminger, Dec. 18, 1866, *Confederate Applications for Presidential Pardons, 1865–1867* [database on-line; Original data: Case Files of Applications From Former Confederates for Presidential Pardons ("Amnesty Papers") 1865–1867]; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1003, 73 rolls); Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's–1917, Record Group 94; National Archives, Washington, D.C.]; Scott, Order for restoration of Memminger house at corner of Wentworth and Smith St., Charleston, Jan. 4, 1867, C. G. Memminger Papers #502, Southern Historical Collection, UNC Chapel Hill Library.

<sup>77</sup> Capers, *Life and Times of C. G. Memminger*, 382. An image of the house appears on p. 383.

<sup>78</sup> Jones, *Connemara Main House HSR*, 23.

<sup>79</sup> Jones, *Swedish House*, 10. See "U.S. Federal Census 1860—C G Memminger, Charleston, SC" (1860), Family Search, <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MZTH-3LJ>, accessed Dec. 2, 2017; and "U.S. Federal Census 1870—Christopher Memminger," Charleston Ward 4, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M8R4-CY5>.



industry. In mid-1869, advertisements for Memminger's Sulphuric Acid and Super-Phosphate Company in Charleston began to appear in phosphate industry publications. One full-page advertisement touted the company to be

under the direction entirely of Southern men of high character . . . *[whose]* works are among the largest and most complete in the United States . . . *[producing]* an abundant supply of *[fertilizer made from]* . . . native Bone Phosphates . . . .

The company labeled their fertilizers Etiwan No. 1 (soluble phosphate at \$60/ton) and Etiwan No. 2 (Peruvian Super-Phosphate at \$70/ton).<sup>80</sup>

Another focus for Memminger in the post-war period was the effort to bring a long-imagined—and long-delayed—railroad connection up the formidable Saluda grade into Flat Rock and Asheville from Spartanburg. The first train passed through the steep (4.7 percent grade) and treacherous gap on July 4, 1878.<sup>81</sup>

Regarding slavery and emancipation, Memminger's postwar views remained much as they had been since the 1830s. In a lengthy missive to President Andrew Johnson in September of 1865, he wrote that blacks were inferior to whites, unfit for political participation, unable to understand or abide by "the obligation of contracts" and in need of white guidance (which he defined as an apprenticeship model) to participate with integrity in any work relationship. Being

ignorant and uneducated . . . peculiarly subject to the vices of an inferior race . . . wholly incapable of self government . . . in a state of minority . . . *[and]* subject to indolent habits, . . . *[the]* untrained and incapable African . . . *[should be placed]* under indentures of apprenticeship to his former master under such regulations as will secure both parties from wrong.

When the former enslaved "shall have obtained the habits and knowledge requisite for discharging the duties of a citizen," Memminger advised,

let him then be advanced from youth to manhood and be placed in the exercise of a citizen's rights, and the enjoyment of the privileges attending such a change.

States should be the ones to administer laws in this direction.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> For images of the advertisements, see full-page advertisement for the Memminger Sulphuric Acid and Super-phosphate Company, and a similar one, Sulphuric Acid and Super-Phosphate Company, Charleston, C. G. Memminger, President. Both 1869. University of South Carolina Digital Collections.

<sup>81</sup> On the Saluda Grade and the Asheville & Spartanburg Railroad, see *Historic Saluda*, [http://www.historicsaluda.org/?page\\_id=448](http://www.historicsaluda.org/?page_id=448), accessed March 13, 2017; Michael Hill, "Saluda Grade," *NCpedia*, <https://www.ncpedia.org/saluda-grade>, accessed March 18, 2017; and Jones, *Connemara Main House*, 23–24. Memminger lived to see the road completed into Asheville in 1886.

<sup>82</sup> Memminger to Johnson, Sept. 4, 1865, Memminger Papers #502, UNC Library.

Memminger's letter was essentially (and unapologetically) a defense of South Carolina white elites' approach to emancipation: reinscribing slavery through the restrictive Black Codes—which South Carolina passed in December of that year.<sup>83</sup>

Six years later, in 1871, Memminger wrote a long open letter to South Carolina Republican Governor Robert K. Scott, who had been elected in 1870 under the new 1868 South Carolina Reconstruction constitution (according to which all men could vote) with overwhelming Black support. Scott was also the former assistant commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau in South Carolina who had signed the 1867 order restoring Memminger's house to him. In the letter, Memminger criticized the black-dominated legislature (a source of "corrupt and heartless despotism"), took credit on behalf of the South for emancipation, and argued for curtailment of the franchise to include only those who could read and who paid taxes. Blacks, he advised, should be reminded of the "kindly feeling with which they have always been regarded by their former masters, before the heartless plunderers, who are now making use of them, had misled and embittered their feelings." He urged Scott to call a convention to amend the South Carolina constitution's voting parameters, in part to quell the "impatience of the white people" who might be tempted to violence.<sup>84</sup>

It is not surprising, then, that Memminger was re-elected to the South Carolina legislature in 1876, the same year former Confederates re-took control of the state in what biographer Capers lauded as a "bloodless revolution" that "restored the State government to those to whom it rightfully belonged, and who were worthy of the high trust." Capers reported that "the spirit of the Angle-Saxon race applauded the achievement even amid the snows of New England."<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Lowcountry Digital History Initiative, "South Carolina's 'Black Code' After Slavery: Educator Resources," [https://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/after\\_slavery\\_educator/unit\\_three\\_documents/document\\_eight](https://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/after_slavery_educator/unit_three_documents/document_eight), accessed June 20, 2019. For a succinct description of these codes, see *South Carolina Encyclopedia*, <http://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/black-codes/>, accessed June 25, 2019.

<sup>84</sup> Hyman S. III Rubin, "Reconstruction, 1865–1877," in *South Carolina Encyclopedia*, June 20, 2016, <http://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/reconstruction/>; ; "William C. Hine, "Scott, Robert Kingston," in *South Carolina Encyclopedia* (University of South Carolina Institute for Southern Studies, October 26, 2016), <https://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/scott-robert-kingston/>; Memminger Letter to Gov. Scott, March 24, 1871, *Anderson Intelligencer*, April 6, 1871. For context, see James M. McPherson, review of *After Slavery: The Negro in South Carolina During Reconstruction, 1861–1877*, by Joel Williamson, *Journal of Negro History* 50, no. 3 (1965): 210–12, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2716013>, accessed June 20, 2019.

<sup>85</sup> Capers, *Life and Times of C. G. Memminger*, 388.

## The Long View: Memminger as Slaveowner and Employer of Blacks, 1840–1888

Tracing the African Americans whom Memminger enslaved (or employed) before 1865 into post-emancipation life is more difficult than exploring his post-Civil War racial views. To start with, from slavery we only have a few first names. Thus, it seems better to start immediately after emancipation and look both backward and forward.

In addition to the Memminger family members (Christopher, Mary, Ellen, Willis, Mary, Allard, and Edward), five Black people (all born in South Carolina) were listed in Memminger's household in Charleston in the 1870 census: Cupid McLowed (male, age 30, "hostler"), Thomas Wilden (male, age 50, "laborer"), Grace Wilden (female, age 50, "washer"), Mary Bowser (female, age 30, "domestic servant"), and Martha Price (female, age 50, "domestic servant"). Interestingly, in the 1870 census, C. G. Memminger's family is the only white family listed on their Charleston census page. Everyone else on that page, thus living nearby, was either Black or mulatto: carpenters, domestic servants, washers, dress makers, fishermen and fish salesmen, and seven pastry cooks. Whether any of these people worked for the Memmingers is not readily discernible.<sup>86</sup>

Looking into slavery, it is notable that someone with the first name of "Cupid" was included among the possible slaves named in Memminger's Rock Hill ledger entries starting in 1840. But for this to have been the same "Cupid," the one mentioned in 1840 would have been an infant or small child—possible, since Memminger owned three males under age ten at the time. Moving to the Charleston listing for 1850, Memminger is listed as owning one ten-year-old enslaved child, but a girl, not a boy, and no males under age twenty appear. And in Charleston in 1860, there is one twenty-five-year-old male listed as enslaved by Memminger. Thus, it is impossible to be sure of much. Searches for Cupid McLowed (or McLoud, or anything similar) in post-1870 census records reveal nothing. Similarly, Martha Price and Mary Bowser seem invisible in records currently available through *Ancestry.com*.

Thomas and Grace Whilden, a married couple, left a bit more of a trace, at least looking forward after 1870. They were definitely formerly enslaved, as Grace Whilden appears in January of 1871 in a register of depositors in the Freedman's Savings and Trust Company, a bank for former slaves that existed from 1865–74. According to her deposit record, she was born in Sumterville, South Carolina, was not 50 but 44, and was living at the corner of Smith and Wentworth in Charleston (the location of Memminger's house)

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<sup>86</sup> "U.S. Federal Census 1870-- Christopher Memminger" (1870), Charleston, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M8R4-CY5>. Memminger is not found in 1870 in Henderson Country.

and working as washer for C. G. Memminger. She listed a husband, Thomas Whilden (who signed the deposit with his mark), and no children. Her parents, Henry and Phillis, were listed by first names only.<sup>87</sup>

Whether the Whildens ever went to Flat Rock is unknown. In any case, by 1879, they may no longer have been working for the Memmingers, though they remained in Charleston. The Charleston city directory for that year found them at 61 Smith St. (probably not far away), with Thomas listed as a fanmaker.<sup>88</sup> In 1880, Thomas (age 62) and Grace (age 64), along with a twenty-year-old son Daniel, were still living on Smith St. Thomas was a mattress maker, Grace still a washerwoman, and son Daniel was a carpenter.<sup>89</sup>

A final Charleston city directory entry for Thomas Whilden (1893) shows him as a fan maker, still on Smith St. A death certificate filed soon after shows that he died at age 75 on June 14, 1893. It gives his birthplace as Johns Island, South Carolina, but says he had resided in Charleston for fifty years (since approximately 1843).<sup>90</sup> With some slippage of birth dates, it is possible—but cannot be confirmed—that he was the person named Thomas whom Memminger purchased at age 25 in 1853.

In 1880, the Charleston census shows the Memminger household with two Black employees: Charlotte Ray (mulatto, age 60, a servant) and John Jenkins (black, age 50, also a servant). Both were listed as born in South Carolina. Whether either ever went to Flat Rock is unknown.<sup>91</sup> Charlotte Ray's trail leads nowhere, but John Jenkins's death from consumption at age 45 in July of 1883 at 122 Wentworth St. (Memminger's home, attended by Dr. Allard Memminger) is listed in Charleston death records. He was working as a gardener.<sup>92</sup>

Two other mysteries regarding C.G. Memminger and African American history are intriguing, but at present unresolvable. The first has to do with Susan Beaty (or Beatty). As noted above, Memminger's listing in the 1860 schedule of *free* inhabitants in Charleston's 4th Ward includes two "mulatto" women in their 40s: Caroline Carson and Susan Beaty, both born in South Carolina. Records available through both *Ancestry.com*, and Family

<sup>87</sup> Grace Whilden deposit record, Jan. 18, 1871, *Ancestry.com*. U.S., *Freedman's Bank Records, 1865–1871*, from *Registers of Signatures of Depositors in Branches of the Freedman's Savings and Trust Company, 1865–1874* (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration. Micropublication M816). On the Freedman's Bank, see "The Freedman's Savings and Trust Company and African American Genealogical Research," National Archives, <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1997/summer/freedmans-savings-and-trust.html>, accessed Aug. 15, 2016,

<sup>88</sup> Charleston, South Carolina, City Directory, 1879, *Ancestry.com*.

<sup>89</sup> U.S. Federal Census, 1880, Charleston, South Carolina; Roll: 1222; Page: 397D; Enumeration District: 071, Ward No. 6.

<sup>90</sup> Charleston, South Carolina, City Directory, 1893, *Ancestry.com*; Thomas Whilden Death Certificate, Charleston (*Ancestry.com*), June 14, 1893.

<sup>91</sup> "U.S. Federal Census 1880 -- Christopher Memminger," Roll: 1222; Page: 244D; Enumeration District: 064.

<sup>92</sup> "John Jenkins Death Certificate," February 16, 1883, South Carolina Department of Archives and History; *Ancestry.com*.

Search contain little else except a puzzling petition to the Freedmen's Bureau from 1865-66. It has to do with recovery of Susan Beatty's (spelled with two "t"'s) property in Charleston at 113 ½ Wentworth St.

This address places the property quite near the Memmingers. In a statement dated January 15, 1866, C.G. Memminger's son Thomas swore that he knew Susan Beatty and said that he had for "at least eight years" known the house under discussion (which he himself then occupied) as her property. He attested that she had not lived in it for several years before the war, but had held it as "an investment" while she lived outside Charleston. A second document in the bundle said that Beatty "has been for five years a resident of Flat Rock" North Carolina, and attested that the property was leased out before and during the war—never abandoned, as Thomas reported the Freedman's Bureau then to be listing it. Both documents stated that Beatty was not involved in the war, that she did not have property worth \$20,000, that she had taken the required loyalty oath to the United States (though the document could not be found), and that she should therefore benefit from the presidential amnesty and have her property restored. Apparently that happened in late January.<sup>93</sup>

Who exactly Susan Beatty was and how she related to the Memminger family remains murky. Could she have been the "Susan" of "Susan and Mary Ann" referenced in 1852 in the Ledger? Did she remain in Flat Rock after the war? If so, are there descendants, and have they identified as Black or white? By the 1910s, a Rev. J. W. Beatty was pastoring the Star of Bethel Missionary Baptist Church, a Black congregation in Henderson County, but whether he is related to Susan Beatty is unknown. He is listed in the 1920 census in Hendersonville as "mulatto," age 43, and born in South Carolina. His death certificate lists parents as Elias Beatty and D. K., of Spartanburg. Beyond that, the trail is again cold.<sup>94</sup>

The final intriguing line of inquiry about the Memmingers' specific relationships to African American individuals has to do with the post-Civil War emergence of numerous Black Memmingers in the South Carolina census. In the Swedish House HSR in 2005, NPS historian Jones first raised the possibility that Black Memminger households shown in the 1870 census at Walterboro, South Carolina, might have been people formerly enslaved by the Memmingers.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> B.J. Whaley and Thomas Memminger statements, January 15, 1866, "United States, Freedmen's Bureau, Records of the Assistant Commissioner, 1865-1872," Roll 25, Register of Applications for Restoration of Property, A-B, 1865-1866 > Image 686 of 741; NARA Microfilm Publications; Records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1861 - 1880, RG 105 (May 29, 1865), Family Search, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C9TZ-8QM5-2?i=685&cc=2427901>; "Beatty, Rev. John Wesley Death Certificate" (August 3, 1946), *AncestryInstitution.com* - North Carolina, Death Certificates, 1909-1976.

<sup>94</sup> U.S. Federal Census, 1920; Census Place: Hendersonville, Henderson, North Carolina; Roll: T625\_1305; 9B; Enumeration District: 95, *Ancestry.com*

<sup>95</sup> Jones, Swedish House HSR, 23.

But the possibilities seem more expansive than that, and a broader search of the census records is suggestive. In the 1860 Census on *Ancestry.com*, a broadly defined search for “Memminger” in South Carolina (which should pick up alternative spellings) finds that the only Memmingers are the twelve shown in C. G. Memminger’s household. No other Memmingers, Black or white, are listed in the state.

The same search parameters run on the 1870 census brings up thirty-six Memmingers in several areas. Other than those in C. G. Memminger’s household, all are listed as either Black or mulatto:

- Charleston Ward 4, Charleston, South Carolina: seven in the C. G. Memminger family, white.
- Saint Andrews Parish, Charleston County, South Carolina: thirteen in two different listings, all black: Glasgow Memminger family (eleven people) and Lorrie and David Meminger.
- Walterboro, Verdier Township, Colleton County, South Carolina: eight in two different listings, all black.
- Walterboro, Glover Township, Colleton County, South Carolina: one, Black (Hager Memminger)
- Georges Station, St. George’s Parish, Colleton County, South Carolina: four in two different listings, all Black (including two Isaac Memingers, both listed as age 21)
- Barnwell Ct. House, Red Oak Township, Barnwell County, South Carolina: two, both black, one (Aaron Meminger) listed as born in North Carolina (age 82)
- Winnsboro, Township 4, Fairfield County, South Carolina: one, mulatto (Caroline Memminger, age 61—possibly the “Caroline Carson,” age 45, seen in the Memminger household in 1860?)

Searching all Freedmen’s Bureau–related record collections in *FamilySearch* for “Memminger” or “Meminger” sheds a bit of light only on the Glasgow Memminger family: his application to the Freedmen’s Bureau “for provisions under the terms established by” [Freedmen’s Bureau assistant commissioner] R. K. Scott. “I have rented fifty acres of land in St. Andrews Parish and have contracted with nine hands, 5 men and 4 women. I will plant 35 acres corn and peas and 15 acres cotton.” The application was recommended granted. The record gives no information about Glasgow Memminger either before or after this moment.<sup>96</sup>

Looking for Memmingers in 1870 in North Carolina yields only one white family (Henry, Hattie, Mary, and Barbary, living in Raleigh and apparently unrelated to the Charleston/Flat Rock Memmingers).

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<sup>96</sup> “Memminger, Glasgow -- Application for Provisions” (Feb. 20, 1868), “United States, Freedmen’s Bureau Ration Records, 1865–1872,” database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:Q2QL-N4DD> : 16 March 2018), Glasgow Meminger, Feb. 20, 1868; citing Residence, South Carolina, United States, NARA microfilm publications M1910. Records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1861–1880, RG 105, roll 25; FHL microfilm 2,427,108.



Census pages for all of the South Carolina Memmingers are included in Appendix 9. It is possible that additional research into later census records and (especially) death records for any of these individuals might reveal whether they themselves traced their lineage backwards into the C. G. Memminger orbit, but this research lies beyond the parameters of the present study.

Notwithstanding this unavoidable limit, our examination of the record demonstrates that—contrary to the effectively dismissive prior inattention to his involvement in several aspects of the slave (and later Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction) culture and economy—C. G. Memminger *was* substantially involved for decades in both. He owned slaves. He acted as lawyer for others who were buying and selling enslaved people. He developed his home and family with enslaved (and later free) Black labor. He helped create and shape legislation to maintain, protect, and extend the subjugation and exploitation of Black people. As a legislator, he gave his energy and several years of his professional life to the Confederacy and the cause of slavery. And after the war, he clung to a worldview in which blacks were inferior to whites, and he benefitted from social processes during and after Reconstruction that restored white former slaveholding elites to their previous status at the top of southern society.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# RECONSTRUCTION AND POST-RECONSTRUCTION

Reconstruction was brief (1865–1877), turbulent, tremendously complicated—geographically, socially, legally—and contested continuously everywhere. As a result of many contextual factors, its array of presumptions, policies, programs, administration, and results differed from moment to moment and place to place.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter provides a brief treatment of some relevant events and actions—at the Federal level, among the Confederate States, in North Carolina and its western counties (most specifically Henderson County). As described in the previous chapter, however, for C. G. Memminger and his family—as well as for the Black people who labored for them—events in South Carolina often had more direct relevance.

At the federal level, key issues included how former Confederate states would be re-admitted to the Union, what would happen to former Confederates, and, most importantly, as Eric Foner has put it, “the adjustment of American society to the end of slavery.”<sup>2</sup> What political, economic, or civil rights would be extended to those formerly enslaved? Abraham Lincoln’s assassination, the ascendancy and impeachment of President Andrew Johnson, and eventually the growing power of “radical” Republicans in Congress meant that Reconstruction went through several phases and was different from place to place, with expanding promise for Black political participation facing near-constant (and often violent) backlash from resurgent white supremacy.

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<sup>1</sup> The historiography of Reconstruction is large and growing, and it is not within our scope here to review or characterize it all. We draw here upon the portion of it that either focuses upon, or illuminates in contextual ways, North Carolina, Henderson County and Flat Rock. The seminal synthetic work is Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), but there are many books, articles, digital projects, and documentaries that engage aspects of Reconstruction in particular areas, including North Carolina. Some of the fruits of that scholarship are explored in Paul D. Escott, ed., *North Carolinians in the Era of the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2008). For an engaging and provocative documentary, see Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *Reconstruction: America After the Civil War*, 2019, <https://www.pbs.org/weta/reconstruction>.

<sup>2</sup> Foner, *Reconstruction*, xxvii.

A thematic and sectoral sorting of major large-scale factors that led to policy, program, and political differences within Reconstruction from locality to locality, state to state, and state to federal sectors allows a reasonably informed approach to North Carolina and western North Carolina situations. Those factors are as follows:

### *Political and legal*

- State government structures and policies varied substantially—individually and comparatively.
- Relationships between federal government and individual states were varied and unstable.
- Internal conflict flared unpredictably at state, regional and federal levels.
- Voting and other rights were differentially disputed and contested.
- Political party alignments and electoral outcomes shifted several times.
- The federal government largely abandoned the South by 1877.

### *Economic*

- Infrastructure (roads, railroads, buildings, housing), agriculture, finance, industry to varying degrees in ruins.
- Land ownership laws and patterns varied.
- Contestation and realignment of sectoral economic reconfiguration varied due to types and levels of agricultural and industrial production, slaveholders' capital losses, wage requirements by freed blacks, market changes, and other factors.

### *Social and cultural*

- Alignments and agendas of former Confederates, Unionists, former slaves, and Republicans were incongruent.
- Wartime conservative elites regrouped and redeployed in different places, with different timing and distribution patterns.
- Large-scale demographic changes followed emancipation, freed population movements.
- Class relationships shifted and realigned.

### *Racial*

- The Ku Klux Klan and other white supremacist vigilante organizations emerged in the 1860s and thereafter to repress Black attempts to gain political and economic power.
- White domination continued following emancipation, 1866–68.
- Black equality and political participation surged, 1868–1870s.
- White backlash and attacks on Black rights, and on Republicans resurged post-1870s.

During the Reconstruction years, three critical amendments to the U.S. Constitution (13th, 14th, 15th) abolished slavery, enshrined equal protection before the law, and instituted universal male suffrage. But by 1877, white Democrats had returned to power across the south, and Black citizens were politically again marginalized until well into the twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> These back-and-forth dynamics played out on a statewide scale in North Carolina.

## North Carolina<sup>4</sup>

The Civil War ended slavery, but also brought “dangers and difficult choices in the uncertain new world of freedom,” Escott, Crowe, and Hatley conclude in their trenchant survey of the period.<sup>5</sup> When war broke out, some slaves were forced to accompany their masters (or masters’ sons) into battle as servants, or to build fortifications, but some 7,000 enslaved persons eventually fled and enlisted in the Union army.<sup>6</sup> In coastal North Carolina, enslaved watermen provided critical intelligence to Union troops preparing to take Roanoke Island in late 1861 and in April 1862 helped pilot federal troops into Beaufort, which was taken without firing a shot. Other Black pilots helped as Union forces took over Fort Macon, and at other points on the Outer Banks. Others commandeered an array of small and large vessels and staged a massive boatlift to carry slaves to federal territory. Similar operations, small and large, had collected some 10,000 contrabands on the coast by mid-1862.<sup>7</sup>

As they had at the war’s outbreak, some masters tried to block news of emancipation, but Black Carolinians moved quickly to assert their new freedom. In Carteret and Craven counties in eastern North Carolina, blacks began their struggle for autonomy very soon after General Burnside’s troops landed south of New Bern in March 1862.<sup>8</sup> By

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<sup>3</sup> “Reconstruction,” in the new online collaborative U. S. history text, *The American Yawp*, accessed July 12, 2020, <http://www.americanyawp.com/text/15-reconstruction>.

<sup>4</sup> Much of the text for this section originally appeared in David E. Whisnant and Anne Mitchell Whisnant, *Gateway to the Atlantic World: Cape Lookout National Seashore Historic Resource Study* (Atlanta: Cultural Resources Division, National Park Service, 2015). See also a useful overview in Pamela Grundy, *A Journey Through North Carolina* (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 2008), 232–42.

<sup>5</sup> Escott, Hatley, and Crow, *A History of African Americans in North Carolina*, 71. Unless otherwise indicated, our materials are drawn from 71–93 of this useful study.

<sup>6</sup> Contrary to popular (though late-arising) myth, however, blacks did not enlist or serve in the Confederate forces. See Levin, *Searching for Black Confederates: The Civil War’s Most Persistent Myth* (2019), 1–11.

<sup>7</sup> Cecelski, *The Waterman’s Song*, 157–58. Cecelski discusses the role of Black pilots in Civil War Beaufort at length, 153–77.

<sup>8</sup> This brief discussion of the situation in Carteret and Craven counties is based upon Judkin Browning, “Visions of Freedom and Civilization Opening before Thee: African Americans’ Search for Autonomy during Military Occupation in North Carolina,” in *North Carolinians in the Era of the Civil War and Reconstruction*, ed. Escott, 69–100.

January 1865, more than 11,000 freedmen had congregated in New Bern. Focusing on escape, employment, education, and (for some) enlistment in the Union army, they began to develop an informal economy and moved to rescue still-enslaved friends and family. Those who had skills hired themselves out (many to the Union army), and some established businesses. Northern teachers and freedmen's societies assisted with education, operating makeshift schools in churches, barns, and abandoned plantation buildings. Unfortunately, such moves provoked wrath and retaliation from whites (including racist unionists).

To accomplish the broad structural and other changes that were undeniable prerequisites to putting the country back together on some sustainable basis, the Freedmen's Bureau was created in March 1865. It became the act's key operating arm, and elite white opposition to it emerged from its very inception.

But blacks were undeterred. Excluded from the initial (1865) white-dominated state constitutional convention, in the fall of that year, they staged a major convention in Raleigh "to express the sentiments of Freedmen"—"with malice toward none, with charity for all," as one of their banners said. The North Carolina Freedmen's Convention was attended by 117 delegates from half the state's counties. A carefully worded address they sent across town to the white convention working to revise the state constitution was met with hostility. Hundreds of attacks on blacks followed; three New Hanover County officeholders were charged with beating and shooting blacks. But the Freedmen's Convention took on new life as the North Carolina Equal Rights League.<sup>9</sup>

To proclaim freedom was one thing, but to achieve it was another, as became increasingly clear. Emancipation did not eradicate generations-long class and race prejudice, as Escott reminds us. The South's "massive structure of white supremacy," with its own rituals, emotional attitudes, and prescribed behavioral patterns, proved stubbornly durable. A spate of court cases before and after the war made that abundantly clear. During journalist Whitelaw Reid's tour of the South in 1865–1866, Beaufort citizens told him that Black suffrage would be "very obnoxious to the prejudices of nearly the whole population." Each class of whites had their special set of reasons for fearing and resenting blacks.<sup>10</sup>

Such attitudes were soon written by the white-dominated legislature into North Carolina's 1866 "black code" laws, which did not allow blacks to testify against whites in trials, serve on juries, enter into contracts, or keep a gun without a permit. Many whites were determined, as Crow, Escott, and Hatley put it, to "restore as much of the slave regime

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<sup>9</sup> Grundy, *A Journey Through North Carolina*, 234–35; Escott, Hatley, and Crow, *A History of African Americans in North Carolina*, 76–79; Escott, *Many Excellent People*, 124.

<sup>10</sup> Escott, *Many Excellent People*, 113–18.

as possible.” In central North Carolina, Paul Cameron offered his nearly 1,000 former slaves a labor contract that amounted to slavery in all but name; when they rejected it, he decided to force them off his land.<sup>11</sup>

At the national level, President Johnson’s appeasement of the pre-war power structure over the objections of Congress—seen in the previous chapter as key to Memminger regaining ownership of his Charleston home—enraged northern Republicans, who came to power in national elections in 1866.<sup>12</sup> The subsequent takeover of Reconstruction (and eventual impeachment of Johnson) by Congressional Republicans seemed to hold promise for North Carolina blacks. Four Reconstruction Acts laying out a new plan for putting the country back together—and enfranchising Black men—passed Congress in 1867–1868.<sup>13</sup>

In North Carolina, a second state Constitutional Convention called in 1868 to meet the new, more stringent demands, had a 107 to 13 Republican majority and included 15 Black delegates. It brought an array of changes vital to blacks: direct election of judges, abolishment of property requirements for holding office, dismantling of the elite-dominated county courts, and tax-supported public schools (though separate for blacks and whites). Republicans swept the elections of 1868, bringing reformist William Holden in as governor and taking two-thirds of all seats in the legislature (including twenty blacks). One Black man was elected county commissioner in New Hanover County, and two out of five elected commissioners in Edgecombe County were black.<sup>14</sup>

From the perspective of the prewar white elite, the decade after 1868 brought even worse. “Prominent men of the old elite,” Escott observes, “saw their worst nightmare—an alliance among the lower classes of both races—materializing under the protection of the Federal government” as poor whites and blacks turned to the Republican party. Determined to regain their privileges, the elite focused on white supremacy as what a century later would have been called their “wedge issue.” Newspapers in eastern counties wrote alarmist articles about “Radicals . . . Stimulating the Negroes to Apply the Torch to our Homes and to take our Property by Force and Violence.” The *Wilmington Journal* warned about miscegenation and the integration of juries and schools. Such measures, they insisted, would force poor men and their children “to be demeaned, debased, demoralized

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<sup>11</sup> Milton Ready, *The Tar Heel State: A History of North Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2005), 252–53. For details on Paul Cameron’s views and stratagems for retaining antebellum levels of control after war’s end, see Escott, *Many Excellent People*, 120–22.

<sup>12</sup> Escott, Hatley, and Crow, *A History of African Americans in North Carolina*, 79–81.

<sup>13</sup> See Grundy, *A Journey Through North Carolina*, 236. The Reconstruction Acts (March 1867–March 1868) were: March 2, 1867, 14 Stat. 428–430, c.153; March 23, 1867, 15 Stat. 2–5, c.6; July 19, 1867, 15 Stat. 14–16, c.30; and March 11, 1868, 15 Stat. 41, c.25). Useful scholarly monographs include Paul Cimballa, *The Freedmen’s Bureau: Reconstructing the American South After the Civil War*, Original ed. (Malabar, Fla.: Krieger Publishers, 2005) and Mary Farmer-Kaiser, *Freedwomen and the Freedmen’s Bureau: Race, Gender, and Public Policy in the Age of Emancipation* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010).

<sup>14</sup> Escott, Hatley, and Crow, *A History of African Americans in North Carolina*, 84–87.



and degraded [by a] ruinous social equality . . . . [The] money, position and influence [of the rich] will keep the negro out of their houses, [but] IT IS IN THE POOR MAN'S HOUSE THAT THE NEGRO WILL ATTEMPT TO ENFORCE HIS EQUALITY."<sup>15</sup>

Clearly, conditions for reform were not auspicious in a state financially devastated by the war and still determinedly racist. Democrats resolved to fight reform every step of the way, launching attacks on Republican officeholders and fueling an upsurge in Ku Klux Klan activity.

In 1868–1870, Klan terror and violence (in the form of innumerable beatings, a number of hangings and other killings, burnings of blacks' houses and churches, voter intimidation) were in evidence mainly in the piedmont, but especially in counties with large numbers of Republican votes.<sup>16</sup>

Such developments showed clearly, as Escott observes, that “the sentiment of white leaders was virtually unanimous . . . against any significant improvement in the status of Black North Carolinians.” The social behaviors enforced upon blacks were essentially those of slavery days; those who did not observe them quickly became targets of violence. Blacks in Pender County in 1867 “had to submit,” Escott says, to an outlaw band who called themselves the Regulators (harkening back to the Revolution) or leave the county because “no redress was available.” When the national Congress forced the implementation of Black suffrage in 1867, white North Carolinians saw it as “the most appalling of all alternatives.” The Fourteenth Amendment (ratified in July 1868) was viewed as “an extreme measure designed to embarrass the white race.”<sup>17</sup>

Spurred partly by Klan violence, the tide turned against the Republican party and Democrats regained control of the state legislature in 1870. They immediately impeached Governor William W. Holden (elected with Black support in 1868), removed him from office, and passed a series of Constitutional amendments aimed at rolling back Reconstruction. By 1876, the amendments were in place, elite appointed county officials were back in power, and the state had been (as the Democrats claimed) “redeemed” from the horrors of Black rule. Only a dozen years after the war ended, the election of 1877 put an end to Reconstruction.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Escott, *Many Excellent People*, 151.

<sup>16</sup> Escott, *ibid.*, 155, points out that the KKK was but one of several terrorist organizations active in North Carolina, including the Constitutional Union Guard, the Invisible Empire, and the White Brotherhood. Escott is also careful to point out that KKK members were drawn mainly from the gentry and the middle class. See also Grundy, *A Journey Through North Carolina*, 240–41.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 126–134. Escott's reference (128) to Pender County in 1867 is puzzling; the county was not created until 1875. Presumably he was referring to the northern section of New Hanover County, from which Pender was later carved.

<sup>18</sup> Escott, Hatley, and Crow, *A History of African Americans in North Carolina*, 88–93; Grundy, 238–42; “Reconstruction,” in *The American Yawp*, accessed July 12, 2020, <http://www.americanyawp.com/text/15-reconstruction>.

## Western North Carolina

Within these larger thematic and chronological parameters, the focal question is what did Reconstruction amount to in western North Carolina and Henderson County? Nash's *Reconstruction's Ragged Edge* offers insights into this question. At the outset, Nash re-emphasizes that

Reconstruction was a national event with regional and local variations. . . . [T]he postwar situation in western North Carolina mixed war time loyalties, class and political rivalries between whites, African American aspirations, and economic development in a complex combination that defies neat characterization as 'Reconstruction'.<sup>19</sup>

Although recent scholars have disproved the old "Appalachian" stereotypes, our understanding of the period between the end of the Civil War and the 1880s has lagged. "The federal government's reach into mountain communities," Nash argues,

[informed] debates between different classes of whites, African Americans and their white neighbors, market-minded economic boosters and farmers, and an elite accustomed to local rule and federal agents. Questions of loyalty that previously focused on one's community, state, and section evolved to include one's race and class.<sup>20</sup>

Nash's twenty-two western North Carolina counties were far from homogeneous. In 1860, the area's 15,000 slaves (12.6 percent of the total population) were very unequally distributed: from under 4 percent in Madison and Watauga, to 28 percent in Burke. In the middle with 14 percent, Henderson was one of five counties to vote for John C. Breckinridge, a "Southern rights" Democrat in the presidential election of 1860.<sup>21</sup> And regardless of the percentages, Nash observed, "the consensus about Black inferiority among white mountaineers emboldened them to resist any change in African Americans'

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<sup>19</sup> Nash, *Reconstruction's Ragged Edge*, 3–4. This is the most recent, meticulously researched, and complete source available. As the western North Carolina portion of the southern mountains, Nash includes Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey counties. This is a smaller array of counties than the Western District of the Freedmen's Bureau, which Nash listed in his earlier article "Aiding the Southern Mountain Republicans," 8. That list includes 40 counties. The Western District included Alexander, Alleghany, Anson, Ashe, Buncombe, Burke, Cabarrus, Caldwell, Cherokee, Clay, Cleveland, Davidson, Davie, Forsyth, Gaston, Guilford, Haywood, Henderson, Iredell, Jackson, Lincoln, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mecklenburg, Mitchell, Montgomery, Polk, Randolph, Rowan, Rutherford, Stanly, Stokes, Surry, Transylvania, Union, Watauga, Wilkes, Yadkin, and Yancey. More relevant here was the Sub District of Asheville, which included, Nash points out, Buncombe, Haywood, Madison, and "all Counties west." Subsequent material quoted from Nash is in quotation marks within the text, but the structure and logic of the arguments draw heavily upon this source as well.

<sup>20</sup> Escott, *Many Excellent People*, 155, pointed out that the KKK was but one of several terrorist organizations active in North Carolina, including the Constitutional Union Guard, the Invisible Empire, and the White Brotherhood, and that KKK members were drawn mainly from the gentry and the middle class.

<sup>21</sup> Nash, *Reconstruction's Ragged Edge*, Table 1, 15, 21. Unless otherwise indicated, this section is based primarily upon Nash.

status” after the war. Former mountain slaveholders negotiated contracts with former slaves to work on their farms under slavery-like conditions and warned them not to seek work elsewhere.<sup>22</sup>

Nash examined the postwar experience of those “mountain masters [as his mentor John Insoe had called them] without slaves” who “watched incredulously as their world collapsed around them” at war’s end, and (for example) the “hundreds and hundreds of the freedmen and women and children who passed “in an almost interminable procession” through Asheville in late April 1865.<sup>23</sup>

Although those now slaveless masters were forcing as many freed slaves as they could to sign abusive labor contracts, most mountain freedmen sought what emancipated blacks elsewhere were seeking: an end to violence and brutality, reunited families, land, fairly paid work, and education.<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately, Nash observes,

opportunities for African Americans were truncated. A poor transportation network restricted mobility. Few towns of even a couple hundred people, the largest being Asheville . . . , offered less in the way of urban amenities . . . and there was little staple crop production to speak of in 1865.<sup>25</sup>

Clearly, as Nash and most other contemporary scholars of Reconstruction agree, however grand the masses of freed blacks leaving their masters and moving together in long processions singing “Glory!” as they sought land, lost loved ones, pay for their labor, education and (in effect) a new social contract was not—in and of itself as an epochal phenomenon—going to produce the long-denied and desperately needed results.

Among other topics, Nash analyzed the operation of the Freedmen’s Bureau in western North Carolina, and (to the limited extent it turns out to be possible) in Henderson County in particular.<sup>26</sup> Nearly a decade before Reconstruction’s *Ragged Edge* appeared, he had cautioned that “[n]ineteenth-century popular stereotypes of a predominantly Unionist and lily-white Appalachia obscure the Freedmen’s Bureau’s important role” in reconstructing the “mountain South.” To achieve the aims of Reconstruction, fundamental political and structural changes were required. The Freedmen’s Bureau’s agents, Nash argues, “represented the most tangible source of federal power in the mountain counties.”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Nash, 34–38.

<sup>23</sup> Nash, 29.

<sup>24</sup> Nash, 28.

<sup>25</sup> Nash, 28-29.

<sup>26</sup> Steven Nash, *Reconstruction’s Ragged Edge: The Politics of Postwar Life in the Southern Mountains* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016).

<sup>27</sup> Steven Nash, “Aiding the Southern Mountain Republicans: The Freedmen’s Bureau in Buncombe County,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 83 (2008): 1–30; Nash, *Reconstruction’s Ragged Edge: The Politics of Postwar Life in the Southern Mountains* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 90.

A major problem was to “expand the reach” of the bureau through maintaining a complement of reliable agents in the area’s subdistricts, which proved difficult. To the Caldwell and Henderson county subdistrict in the fall of 1867, Darin Waters says, it sent Oscar Eastmond, a New Yorker who served as lieutenant colonel in the First North Carolina Union Infantry in eastern North Carolina, to replace Lieutenant Murphy in Buncombe County. Along with Hannibal D. Norton, who remained on duty in Morganton, these officers gave the bureau a strong presence in western North Carolina. Each agent did his best to uphold the protections established for African American workers in the first two years after the war. In Asheville, Lieutenant Murphy’s successor proved particularly aggressive in his duties. When Black mountaineers forced issues like unpaid wages and child apprenticeships onto the political agenda, Oscar Eastmond wielded the bureau’s authority promptly in their favor.<sup>28</sup>

The bureau proved more effective in some respects than in others, but in a November 1867 referendum on whether to hold a state constitutional convention (which Conservatives resolutely opposed), Nash observes, its influence among potential Black voters (19 percent of registered voters) proved crucial in winning the vote to hold the convention, as well as boosting the standing of the Republican party both locally and statewide. Results were mixed the following year, however, when Henderson voters split almost evenly between the Conservative (Thomas Ashe) and Republican (William Holden) gubernatorial candidates but voted 2:1 for the new constitution. The Bureau also, Nash emphasizes, extended considerable aid to war refugees and hard-pressed (partly because of a sharp decline in corn production) white families in the county. Its efforts to augment education for blacks was more successful in Buncombe County (Asheville) than in Henderson, however.<sup>29</sup>

Running parallel to Reconstruction efforts (and achievements) both statewide and in the western counties was a pattern of virulent and brutal opposition focused by the Ku Klux Klan, founded in Tennessee shortly after the war’s end. “With the white elite’s control crumbling,” Nash observes, “the Conservatives employed a terrorist campaign that broke apart the biracial Republican Party in the mountain counties.” A primary mechanism of that campaign was the Klan.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> See Waters, “Life Beneath The Veneer,” 140–44, for a discussion of the child apprenticeship system, which allowed local officials to apprentice the children of indigent blacks to white businessmen, farmers, and others (including in some cases their former owners). For this quotation and an extended (and positive) account of Eastmond’s tenure as head of the local Freedmen’s Bureau after 1867, see Waters, “Life Beneath the Veneer,” 90–91, 188–93.

<sup>29</sup> Nash, 15, 103–4, 116.

<sup>30</sup> Nash, *Reconstruction’s Ragged Edge*, 8. The Klan has been written about extensively. Our limited point here is to remind that it operated for decades in western North Carolina.

Fortunately, the Klan was not as active in Henderson County as it was in Rutherford and Buncombe, both of which had had larger numbers of year-round slaves and slaveowners. Nevertheless, not all was well in Henderson.

By 1871, Rutherford County was estimated to have had upwards of 80 attacks against blacks, and white Republicans were also targeted. The county's ardently Unionist Aaron Biggerstaff and his extended family in particular experienced Klan threats and violence, including a midnight raid in April 1871 that left Biggerstaff severely beaten. On his way to Cleveland County days later, Klansmen waylaid and almost succeeded in hanging him. A congressional committee to investigate Klan violence convened in late April achieved little. A full-scale Klan attack on Rutherfordton that ended its role as a Republican stronghold followed in mid-June.<sup>31</sup>

The Klan appears not to have been as active in neighboring Buncombe County, but according to Asheville/Buncombe County historian Darin Waters, its presence was approved by Conservatives, who saw it as a necessary counterbalance—as the *Asheville News and Farmer* argued—to the radical (and biracial) Union League. “Three cheers for the Ku Klux Klan!” they said in early December 1868. After local white Conservatives had assaulted and nearly killed two of Asheville's Union League members the previous June, the Republican-leaning, Union League advocate Hendersonville Pioneer's editor Alexander H. Jones opined that the attackers were likely “in cahoots” with county leaders.<sup>32</sup>

In fact, Jones had been after the Confederates in Henderson County and elsewhere for years for their commitment to the “rich man's war and poor man's fight.” “During the war,” Nash observed, “Jones called attention to class differences in southern society. In 1863, he had denounced “these cotton lords of creation, who own fifty, one hundred, or perhaps five hundred slaves, [who] look upon a white man who has to labor for an honest living as no better than one of their negroes.” When Jones republished these comments in a pamphlet after the war, Nash judged, “he hoped they would resonate among the suffering yeomen and poor mountain whites.”<sup>33</sup>

Resonance or not, the end of Reconstruction, the rise of the Klan, and the return of local, county and state government to conservative, pro-Confederate whites defined the vector that would remain dominant until well after the turn of the century. In concluding his 2016 study, Nash emphasizes that

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<sup>31</sup> Nash, *Reconstruction's Ragged Edge*, 138–45.

<sup>32</sup> Waters, “Beneath the Veneer,” 185–86. In the 1920s, Asheville emerged as a major organizational center for the Klan.

<sup>33</sup> Nash cites Jones's pamphlet *Knocking at the Door: Alex. H. Jones, Member-Elect to Congress: His Course Before the War, During the War, and After the War: Adventures and Escapes* (Washington: McGill & Witherow, 1866) and Insoe and McKinney's “Political Dissent” chapter in *The Heart of Confederate Appalachia: Western North Carolina in the Civil War* (2000), 138–65.

Klansmen hoped to restore the Conservatives to power, but to do that they had to tear down the Republicans and sever the ties between that party's grassroots supporters and the national government. In the end, Klan violence and the Republicans' inability to stop it did just that.<sup>34</sup>

When the embattled Republican governor Holden called for help to defeat the Klan in 1870, Nash explains, "he found hundreds of volunteers from the mountain counties willing to come to his aid," but it was not sufficient defeat the Klan.<sup>35</sup>

This, then, was the complicated mix of sentiment and strategy during the distinctly unstable Reconstruction period.

## Post-Reconstruction: A "New Mountain South"— and the Resurgence of the Old One

The end of Reconstruction marked a major transition for North Carolina's mountain counties toward what Nash has called "A New Mountain South." Nash's *Reconstruction's Ragged Edge* (2016) catalogs its main aspects, some of which pervaded most of western North Carolina, albeit with some comparative differences county to county: fractured Republicans and resurgent Democrats; retreat from federal back to local control; reemergence of white elites; predominance of internal improvements (especially railroads), agricultural monoculture (tobacco), and prioritization of economic growth over civil rights and social betterment for blacks and lower-class whites.<sup>36</sup>

In and around Henderson County, local conditions and political perspectives gave some aspects of the ending of Reconstruction special configurations. For example, Nash points out, the Republicans "fumbled" the issue of the federal tax on liquor in the 1870s. Conservatives used the issue to stir up rural, lower-class voters who distilled fruit brandy to supplement farm income. Leading county Republican representative (and newspaper editor) Alexander H. Jones introduced a measure to exempt brandy from the tax, but to no avail; some blamed the issue for Republicans' losses in the elections of 1876. Cattle farmers in Henderson and nearby counties (Macon and Caldwell) also suffered when the market price of livestock declined sharply.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Nash, *Reconstruction's Ragged Edge*, 148.

<sup>35</sup> For Nash's discussion of the Governor's efforts, see *Reconstruction's Ragged Edge*, 130–33. Henderson County voted 2:1 against Holden in the 1868 election. Nash, *Reconstruction's Ragged Edge*, Table 3, 113.

<sup>36</sup> Nash, *Reconstruction's Ragged Edge*, 149ff. The title phrase for this section, and much of the analysis and language, are drawn from Nash's recent analysis of the topic.

<sup>37</sup> Nash, *Reconstruction's Ragged Edge*, 158–59.



The virtually simultaneous approach of two railroads—the Spartanburg and Asheville Railroad directly from the south through Pace’s Gap and then to Hendersonville in June 1879, and another indirectly from the east through the 1,800-ft Swannanoa Tunnel and Asheville in October 1880—was also especially important in the county.<sup>38</sup>

Additionally, Nash synthesizes several other important dynamics stretched across twenty years of postwar history (land and natural resource speculation, urbanization, and the emergence of tobacco as a major cash crop) to shape whatever change was in process. With regard to land speculation, for example, Nash observes,

The Philadelphia-based Western North Carolina Land Company advertised 128,000 acres of good land, well watered, heavily timbered, more accessible and cheaper than Western lands’ for sale in Caldwell, Henderson, McDowell, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey Counties. Wealthy landowners gobbled up thousands of acres with an eye on the future extraction of valuable mineral and timber resources. . . . Elites regained local control from the Republicans, which allowed them to chase after northern investors, settlers, and money. The region’s leading town, Asheville, grew larger and stronger. . . . *[Mountain]* farmers *[shifted]* from local production to market production. Tobacco became more important within the region’s economy, . . . *[bringing]* a new sense of hope.<sup>39</sup>

Such changes, whatever dangers and distortions lurked within some of them, could be—and were—sold to the public as harbingers of positive and promising economic, social and political movements.

Other concurrent post-Reconstruction movements, although marketed with similar urgency, produced widespread pain, violence, and dislocation. Focal events were the North Carolina elections of 1892 and 1894.

North Carolina blacks were justifiably discouraged by the vacillations of the Republican party at the end of Reconstruction, but with Democrats fully in control of the political apparatus, there was no viable alternative to the Republicans. When the Democratic Party failed to act on programs favored by the progressive, biracial 100,000-member Farmers’ Alliance, the Alliance’s candidates took votes from the Democrats in the election of 1892. Their efforts led by the staunch racist Furnifold Simmons (1854–1940), a native of coastal Jones County, Democrats won anyway.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Nash, *Reconstruction’s Ragged Edge*, 175–76.

<sup>39</sup> Nash, *Reconstruction’s Ragged Edge*, 160, 177.

<sup>40</sup> The ironies of Democratic / Farmers’ Alliance politics in the early 1890s are too complex to engage here. Suffice it to say that the Alliance was paradoxically dominated by white Democrats, estimated to comprise nearly two-thirds of the General Assembly in 1891. Whatever its complexion, the Alliance addressed serious problems faced by farmers (e.g., the crop-lien system and scarce credit).

## *Black Gains during Post-Reconstruction Years*

Especially in view of the stubborn durability of racial attitudes and racial violence in the state, Democratic social and electoral tactics, and new legal impediments introduced following the “separate but equal” *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling (1896), blacks still managed to make some gains during post-Reconstruction years.

Focusing their efforts around themes of building Black organizations, working for racial uplift, and increasing racial diversity, blacks formed many organizations for self-improvement and mutual support, some purely social, some service-oriented or benevolent.<sup>41</sup> Other Black organizations, especially the North Carolina Teachers Association and the North Carolina Industrial Association, worked for specific changes. The former focused on improving Black education. The latter promoted economic rather than political progress, establishing an Industrial Fair that became the most popular social event for North Carolina blacks in the mid-1880s.<sup>42</sup>

Another progressive dynamic was the rise of a Black middle class. Editor William C. Smith of the black-owned *Charlotte Messenger* was a strong voice for nonpolitical uplift efforts. Groups of Black businessmen emerged, especially in Raleigh, Durham and Asheville, but also in Henderson County, Hendersonville, and East Flat Rock.<sup>43</sup>

## *Fusion Politics*

Post-Reconstruction Fusion (a cross-racial linkage of political factions, parties, and movements), was a complicated, dynamic, many-faceted political, social, and cultural development that affected every North Carolina county to some degree. Its influence reached into many aspects of daily life.<sup>44</sup>

Fusionist roots lay in some salient aspects of Civil War-era politics: the secessionist vs. anti-secessionist split, the re-emergence of racist attitudes and divisions, intra-regional Unionist sentiment in some western counties, the politics of Reconstruction, and numerous related matters.

Post-Reconstruction Fusion politics shaped every North Carolina county to some degree, and its influence reached into many aspects of daily life. It is important to discuss here because it was a fundamental element of political life and discourse during the brief Gregg period and at the outset of the Smyths’.

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<sup>41</sup> For example: the Royal Knights of King David, the United Order of True Reformers, the Household of Ruth for women, the Masons, the Odd Fellows, the Good Templars, the Sons of Ham.

<sup>42</sup> Escott, Hatley and Crow, *A History of African-Americans in North Carolina*, 96–101.

<sup>43</sup> On Asheville, see Waters, “Life Beneath the Veneer.” On the latter locations, see Black History Research Committee of Henderson County and Gary Franklin Greene, *A Brief History of the Black Presence in Henderson County* (Henderson County, N.C.: The Committee, 1996), 37–44.

<sup>44</sup> Fusionist politics are important to discuss here because they were a key element of political life and discourse during the brief Gregg period and at the outset of the Smyths’ at the CARL site.

The Fusion movement has been written about for decades by many scholars, especially since Helen Edmonds's seminal *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina: 1894–1901* (1951).<sup>45</sup> That scholarship bulk is too large to synopsise here, but a succinct extract from James L. Hunt's article of 2006 is useful:

The origin of the so-called Fusion was the rise of the People's Party, or Populist Party, after years of economic depression and hardship had motivated small farmers, who suffered the most, to take political action. . . . During the 1892 election . . . some Republicans and Populists agreed to support joint local candidates . . . [*drawing about*] 17 percent of North Carolina voters. . . .

Between 1894 and 1900 the North Carolina Republican [*formed 1867*] and Populist Parties cooperated in state elections and in state government. . . . [*By*] the middle and late 1890s [*their*] cooperation resulted in newly configured [*North Carolina Congressional*] delegations [*including significant numbers of African Americans*] . . . Populist-Republican control of the General Assembly, Republicans and Populists in state executive offices, and a non-Democratic state supreme court. . . . Fusion produced the only departure from Democratic Party hegemony [*domination*] after Reconstruction.

. . . [*T*]here were deep cultural differences between the [*Fusionist*] parties' rank and file. Populism was overwhelmingly a coalition of white commercial farmers of modest means from the east and the Piedmont. Republicans were primarily white Mountain anti-Confederates and eastern blacks with a sprinkling of high-tariff manufacturers and urban professionals.

Nonetheless, in 1894 the parties agreed on the need to eliminate laws giving Democrats control of the election process. . . . which had resulted in a range of fraudulent practices, from ballot box stuffing to false counting of votes.<sup>46</sup>

The election of 1894 turned on the pivotal dynamic of fusion politics. Fusionists seated seventy-four delegates in the General Assembly to the Democrats' forty-six. Two years later, they elected progressive Daniel L. Russell as governor. He called for a major increase in taxes on the railroads and declared that people were not "the serfs and slaves of the bond-holding and gold-hoarding classes." Russell placed himself on the side of "the producer and the toiler," not the "coupon-clipper."<sup>47</sup> Fusionist victory brought substantial improvements for blacks in education, local electoral procedures, and taxation.

Clearly, Fusionists had made major gains. They controlled 62 percent of the legislative seats in 1894 and 78 percent in 1896 (with over 85 percent voter participation). These outcomes constituted, as Escott says, "a fundamental and severe threat to the traditional [racial and class] order."

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<sup>45</sup> Helen Edmonds, *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina: 1894–1901* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1951).

<sup>46</sup> James L. Hunt, "Fusion of Republicans and Populists," in *NCpedia*, 2006, <https://www.ncpedia.org/fusion-republicans-and-populists>, accessed May 9, 2019.

<sup>47</sup> Escott, *Many Excellent People*, 249.

Josephus Daniels's *Raleigh News and Observer* (joined by other major newspapers) called it lawmaking by “low-born scum and quondam slaves”—worse than Reconstruction because it came from within the state.<sup>48</sup>

The vote in these elections reflected both the rise of fusionist politics and (subsequently) a return to Democratic rule as the racist campaign's effects solidified. In the 1895 General Assembly, were sixty Populists, fifty-six Republicans (thus a total of 116 Fusionists), and fifty-four Democrats. In the 1896 election, the Fusionists won 56 percent of the vote statewide, and the Populists by themselves got almost 10 percent.<sup>49</sup> The schisms were complex and deep, and suspicions numerous and varied. The *Raleigh News and Observer* published scores of virulently racist cartoons between 1898 and 1900.

Despite these Fusionist gains, their politics lasted a relatively short time. Inter- and intra-party conflicts eroded electoral solidarity on both sides, and national politics supplied additional divisive pressures. Democrats moved aggressively—using white supremacy as a fulcrum—to repeal Fusionist gains, and Fusionists soon disappeared as a political organization and force. Fusion politics, despite their real and important gains, were a short-term phenomenon.

## Lynching

In post-Reconstruction America, one of the most pervasive means by which whites pushed back against Black gains and frightened blacks into submission was through the extralegal violence of lynching.<sup>50</sup>

As nearly as we have been able to tell from available records and recent analyses, no lynchings occurred within Henderson County. But that fact in no way removes the widespread post-Reconstruction *presence* of the lynching phenomenon, or its threatening, fearful and corrosive impact upon the consciousness and lives of Black people everywhere—including in Henderson County.

Documentation on the national disgrace of lynching has been updated and conceptually expanded recently by Bryan Stevenson's widely celebrated Equal Justice Initiative.<sup>51</sup>

Several bracketing details are crucial: Between 1870 and 1950, more than 4,000 lynchings took place in the United States, scattered among 19 states, including all 13 of the former Confederate states. The six non-Confederate ones were Indiana, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Missouri, and Oklahoma. So, lynching was a *predominantly* but not *exclusively*

<sup>48</sup> Escott, *Many Excellent People*, 249–53.

<sup>49</sup> Powell (ed.), *Encyclopedia of North Carolina*, 898.

<sup>50</sup> Environmental Justice Initiative, “Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror,” 2015, <https://eji.org/reports/lynching-in-america>.

<sup>51</sup> Equal Justice Initiative, *Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror*, <https://eji.org>, accessed April 26, 2018.

southern phenomenon, and news of lynchings was carried regularly by newspapers *throughout* the United States. No one, Black or white, living anywhere, could have been unaware of or unaffected by it.

This is especially true for western North Carolina residents, given that forty-eight bordering (or second- or third-tier) counties (all within any reasonably-defined domain called “Appalachia”) in South Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee, and Georgia *did* have lynchings—some as few as one, some numbering well into the double digits:<sup>52</sup>

As a measure of the pervasive public *awareness* of lynching, in seven Asheville newspapers for the years 1870–1945 (i.e., to the end of the Smyth period at Connemara) one finds more than 6,500 articles, referencing lynchings in many counties and states. Additionally, The *Red Record* source includes locations of newspapers that carried news of a particular lynching—sometimes a few local ones, sometimes dozens, stretching from coast to coast.<sup>53</sup>

An excellent concise source for context and analysis of this matter for western North Carolina is historian Fitzhugh Brundage’s trenchant essay, “Racial Violence, Lynchings, and Modernization in the Mountain South.”<sup>54</sup> Drawing examples from multiple states, Brundage demonstrates that “The ebb and flow of mob violence between 1880 and 1940 was consistent throughout the Appalachian South.” Before 1900, whites were executed about as often as blacks, but thereafter, “lynching in Appalachia . . . became almost exclusively a form of anti-black violence.” If the intended victim was black, the penalty (frequently administered by mobs numbering into the hundreds) was much more dramatic, severe, and gruesome.

Alleged offenses for murders and violent attacks were twice as frequent as sexual ones. And mountain lynchings, Brundage is careful to point out, “were neither spontaneous . . . nor substitutes for distant or absent legal institutions.” Instead they were premeditated and organized public affairs.

Among explanations for the flaring of such barbarity in the mountains, Brundage includes the very urbanization, railroads, growth of market economies, industrialization (especially, but by means entirely, within coal mining areas), and consequently high levels

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<sup>52</sup> For a detailed list, see Appendix 6: Lynchings in Mountain Counties: North Carolina and Bordering States. Additional data and analysis drawn from Bruce E. Baker, “Lynching” in *NCpedia* (2006), <https://www.ncpedia.org/lynching>, accessed April 25, 2018; and Eric J. Olson, “Race Relations in Asheville, North Carolina: Three Incidents, 1868–1906,” in Barry M. Buxton (ed.), *The Appalachian Experience: Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Appalachian Studies Conference* (Boone NC: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1983), 162ff.

<sup>53</sup> Ida B. Wells-Barnett, *The Red Record: Tabulated Statistics and Alleged Causes of Lynching in the United States*, 1895, <http://archive.org/details/theredrecord14977gut>, accessed April 26, 2018. See also “A Red Record – Revealing Lynching Sites in North Carolina and South Carolina,” <http://lynching.web.unc.edu/>, accessed July 7, 2019.

<sup>54</sup> W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *Under Sentence of Death: Lynching in the South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), <http://search.lib.unc.edu/search?R=UNCb3023930>, accessed April 24, 2018. All quotations are from this source. For more recent and complete national framing and statistics, see Equal Justice Initiative, *Lynching in America*, cited above.

of demographic change advocated by the elite modernizers.<sup>55</sup> Of particular importance was the increased racial tension paralleling the increase in Black population—in both urban and industrializing rural areas—from 160,000 in 1860 to 274,000 in 1900.

Paradoxically, however, Brundage observes that lynching was not correspondingly more prominent in rapidly industrializing areas receiving large influxes of Black laborers, but rather in “transportation, financial, and administrative centers for the surrounding countryside” (e.g., in Virginia: Clifton Forge, Bluefield, Richlands, and Roanoke, the last of which had a lynch riot in 1893). And although wholesale purges of blacks sometimes followed, the predominant intent seems to have been to mark the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable conduct (including failure to acknowledge white supremacy).

The year 1898 ended with the tragic Wilmington “Race Riot”—actually a coup in which whites violently overthrew a duly elected black-majority local government. The event’s sources throughout state politics and culture were everywhere evident, and its results brought national shame to the state.<sup>56</sup>

Prior to 1900, Brundage points out, these events proceeded mainly from local situations and informal, shared local mores. But by the turn of the century, “racial etiquette . . . was codified in law and practice.” And in the final analysis, he maintains, “If mob violence in the mountain South was not a unique phenomenon rooted in a peculiar mountain culture, it still was inextricably bound up in the dislocations produced by the rapid and profound change there.”

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<sup>55</sup> In this regard, Brundage draws appropriately upon Altina Waller’s earlier *Feud: Hatfields, McCoys, and Social Change in Appalachia, 1860–1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), a thorough re-examination, grounded in the documentary record, of the decades-long Kentucky-West Virginia Hatfield-McCoy conflict. Waller demonstrated that the popular narrative of the conflict differed in almost every important respect from the nearly universally popular regional-cultural narrative. Rather than arising from region-wide cultural traits and behaviors, as that argument held, the conflict arose from large economic and political changes, within which many individuals’ and families’ lives became entrapped and distorted. For a brief statement of the Waller analysis, see Altina L. Waller, “Feuding in Appalachia: Evolution of a Cultural Stereotype” in Mary Beth Pudup et al., eds., *Appalachia in the Making: The Mountain South in the Nineteenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 347–76.

<sup>56</sup> Although long neglected in subsequent journalism and scholarship, the Wilmington Race Riot began to receive due attention surrounding and following the 1998 centenary. An excellent detailed and extensively illustrated online resource is UNC Libraries, *The Election of 1898 in North Carolina*, <https://exhibits.lib.unc.edu/exhibits/show/1898/history>, accessed May 2, 2019. This source offers extensive documentary sources (editorials, photographs, cartoons, and biographical statements on key participants). For a full history and analysis of the riot, see Timothy B. Tyson and David S. Cecelski, eds., *Democracy Betrayed: The Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), and LeRae Umfleet, North Carolina African American Heritage Commission, and North Carolina Office of Archives and History, *A Day of Blood: The 1898 Wilmington Race Riot* (Raleigh: North Carolina Office of Archives and History, 2009).



## *White Supremacy and Red Shirt Violence*

True to form, Democrats responded to Fusionist political developments with racist scare tactics. “North Carolina is a WHITE MAN’S STATE,” thundered the state’s Sen. Furnifold Simmons (1854–1940), “and WHITE MEN will rule it.”<sup>57</sup> Democratic fraud, intimidation, vote stealing, beatings of prominent Republicans, and white supremacy clubs and Red Shirt violence followed.<sup>58</sup>

### *White Supremacy*

The White Supremacy clubs that proliferated state-wide after 1898 were unabashedly straightforward about their aims and strategies. “The purpose of the organization,” their constitution said, “shall be to fully restore and to make permanent in North Carolina the SUPREMACY of the WHITE RACE.”<sup>59</sup> By February 1900, a *Washington Post* headline screamed that two thousand of them were being planned for North Carolina. They multiplied rapidly throughout the state, including the western counties.

No notice of such a club in Henderson County has come to light, but the county was nevertheless surrounded by them. In March 1900, a club appeared in Morganton, and in June the *Asheville Citizen-Times* carried a front-page announcement that one would be formed there in “a great political mass meeting” at the opera house (with speeches by “prominent and able speakers”). Others were also being formed in outlying Biltmore, Beaver, and Hazel.

By September, the *Morganton Herald* carried a glowing report on a White Supremacy Club banquet and reunion, at which the first order of business was (for reasons no explained) to disband and “pass out of existence.” Before guests left, however, it was reincarnated as a “Bryan and Stevenson Club,” with “the same old true, trusted and tried mariners at the helm.” The new body, readers were assured, “has lost none of its vigor and will be heard from during the pending fray.”<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Jeffrey Crow, Paul D. Escott, and Flora J. Hatley, *A History of African Americans in North Carolina* (Raleigh: N. C. Dept. of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, 1992), 255. Simmons entered politics in 1886, held a variety state, federal and Democratic party positions in succeeding years, backed the disfranchising amendment, and appealed consistently to “men of Anglo-Saxon blood” to prevent “negro domination.” For a concise biographical statement, see Richard L. Watson, “Simmons, Furnifold McLendel,” in *NCpedia* (1994), <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/simmons-furnifold>, accessed May 31, 2019.

<sup>58</sup> Crow, Escott, and Hatley, *A History of African Americans in North Carolina*, 108, 113–115. See one of many virulently racist cartoons from the *Raleigh News and Observer*, Sept. 27, 1898: “The Vampire That Hovers Over North Carolina.”

<sup>59</sup> E. M. Uzzell, *Constitution and By-laws of White Supremacy Club* (Charlotte, NC: E. M. Uzzell, 1900), 3.

<sup>60</sup> *Morganton Herald*, March 29, 1900, 3; *Asheville Citizen-Times*, June 11, 1900, 1; *Morganton Herald*, Sept. 13, 1900, 3. We have encountered no such notices for Henderson County. Since it was heavily Republican, that is not surprising.

But in fact, the White Supremacy clubs were but one mechanism for pushing an agenda of white supremacy. The same issue of the *News and Observer* that announced the Morganton meeting also carried an article about a “negro brute” who risked (should be, was the clear implication) being lynched.<sup>61</sup> Two days later, the newspaper’s Norman Jennett, who drew a long series of racist cartoons during the period, presented one designed to humiliate a Republican representative who had had the poor judgment to try at a public meeting to evoke concern for the future disenfranchisement of a Black child.<sup>62</sup>

Pushing for a constitutional amendment in 1900 that would deny blacks the vote, white supremacy clubs and Red Shirts threatened and intimidated voters. Democratic gubernatorial candidate Charles B. Aycock led a statewide propaganda campaign that denounced whites who opposed the amendment as “public enemies . . . [who deserve] the contempt of all mankind.”<sup>63</sup>

### *The Red Shirts*

As James L. Hunt’s usefully synoptic article outlines the movement, the Red Shirts were “armed gangs of white men acting as a terrorist and intimidation wing of the Democratic Party in the state elections of 1898 and 1900.”<sup>64</sup> Modeled upon the earlier (1870s) organization in South Carolina, the groups focused upon African American Republican office holders.<sup>65</sup>

Given that Ellison Adger Smyth, who bought Rock Hill (and renamed it Connemara) at the height of these events, had had important roles in the earlier South Carolina versions of the Red Shirts (including the Hampton Red Shirts, who supported the blatantly racist Hampton in the gubernatorial campaign of 1876), it is important to bear in mind that this movement was a central component of turn-of-the-century politics in North Carolina.<sup>66</sup>

### *Josephus Daniels’s Anti-Black Media Campaign*

A cacophony of voices rang across the state through the years surrounding the election of 1898, urging that the state’s thoroughly racist Democratic party mount a campaign against what they considered to be the distortions of Reconstruction and its

<sup>61</sup> “Fiendish Crime of Negro Brute,” *Raleigh News and Observer*, June 17, 1900, p. 13.

<sup>62</sup> *Raleigh News & Observer*, June 19, 1900, p. 1. On Jennett and his work leading up to the 1898 election, see *The 1898 Election in North Carolina: Norman Jennett*, <https://exhibits.lib.unc.edu/exhibits/show/1898/bios/jennett>, accessed July 8, 2019.

<sup>63</sup> Escott, *Many Excellent People*, 260.

<sup>64</sup> James L. Hunt, “Red Shirts,” *NCpedia* (2006), <https://www.ncpedia.org/red-shirts>, accessed May 1, 2017.

<sup>65</sup> A photograph of a Red Shirt worn by the North Carolina group ca. 1898–1900 may be seen in James L. Hunt, “Red Shirts,” *NCpedia* (2006).

<sup>66</sup> We return to Smyth and his role later in this study.

aftermath. Tobacco manufacturer and banker Julian S. Carr (1845–1924), state Democratic operative (and future senator) Furnifold Simmons (1854–1940), Governor Charles B. Aycock (1859–1912), and a bevy of like-minded others traveled, spoke, wrote, and organized for those aims.

Among them was lifelong Democrat and newspaper owner/editor Josephus Daniels (1862–1948), who started writing editorials for the *Raleigh News and Observer* in 1894 and gained control of the newspaper the next year. Between then and 1898, the paper became a key organ in the Democratic drive to regain power.<sup>67</sup>

Daniels has been written about so extensively that there is no need to present even a précis here, but some extended comments he made after a two-week trip to Flat Rock, Hendersonville, and Henderson County in mid-July 1887 are revealing in this context.<sup>68</sup>

Talking to and observing some Hendersonville people reassured Daniels that the transplanted Lowcountry elites (“descendants of the immortal Calhoun . . .”) had remained in touch with their Old South values. “I have found them,” he said,

of genuine refinement and high culture. Descended . . . through a long line of wealthy and educated ancestry, they possess the innate virtues of the highest type of our cultured population.

They had, Daniels observed,

a certain dignity of carriage and bearing about the old-time Southern planters and their wives and daughters, that challenges the profound admiration the world. There was a cultivation about them, a disregard for money and its powers, a belief in the established forms and a practice of the Christian religion, that lifted them up to a high plane, and made our Southern civilization the best and truest and purest the world has seen.

Homing in on Flat Rock (“the most beautiful country settlement in the mountains”), Daniels visited the houses and roamed the gardens of those who had come to the area and built their lavish and imposing estates decades earlier,

situated in beautiful groves, on commanding hillsides, by gurgling streams . . . in forest parks, . . . lakes . . . *[upon whose]* placid bosoms the young men and maidens spend many . . . hours.

The Rev. Mr. Drayton’s estate he pronounced “an Eden, a Paradise of beauty.”

Underneath Daniels’s rhapsodizing, however, lay unease, apprehension about Henderson County, which was under Republican (i.e., pro-black) control, and likely to remain so unless the Democrats could get control “by hard and aggressive fighting.” “Take out the negro vote,” he predicted, “and Henderson would be a Democratic county,” free of

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<sup>67</sup> On the election of 1898, see UNC Library, *The 1898 Election in North Carolina*, <https://exhibits.lib.unc.edu/exhibits/show/1898/>, accessed July 8, 2019, which contains many documents, biographies of related persons, and discussions of organizations and activities.

<sup>68</sup> J[osephus] D[aniels], “On the Oclawaha,” *Weekly State Chronicle*, Aug. 4, 1887, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn91090200/1887-08-04/ed-1/seq-2/>, accessed July 9, 2019. All quotations are from this source.

its current “domination by negroes and [Republican] demagogues.” But for the Black vote (“ignorant negro majorities”), Daniels said, “the present system would never have been adopted.” Blacks in Henderson County, he said reassuringly, “are not impudent or obtrusive here. They are more docile and well behaved, as a rule, than in large negro counties.”

### *Black Disfranchisement*

Assessing these various dynamics in Henderson County from a current perspective is difficult because the county was—regarding most measures—not as central to the larger story as were other nearby ones (e.g., Buncombe, Burke, McDowell, and Rutherford). Comparative slave/free and black/white population figures from 1860 to 1900 are available and useful, however.

In 1860, there had been 1,382 slaves in the county (9 percent of the total in eighteen WNC counties, and 13 percent of the county’s total population, compared to Burke’s 28 percent and neighboring Buncombe’s 16 percent).<sup>69</sup> By 1870, during Reconstruction, Henderson’s total Black population had risen to 16 percent, while its total population had declined from 10,448 to 7,706 (slightly over 25 percent). Meanwhile, the total eighteen-county population had risen by nearly 15 percent and Black population had remained approximately steady at around 12 percent.

Between 1870 and 1880 (three years after Reconstruction ended), the eighteen-county Black population had risen from nearly 19,000 to slightly above 24,000 (almost 26 percent), but Henderson’s had grown by only 15 percent. During the same interval, its Black population had dropped from 16 percent to 13.5 percent and its total population had risen from 7,706 to 10,271 (33 percent), betokening both dramatic population growth and a simultaneous “whitening” of the county.

During the next two decades (1880–1900), Henderson County’s total population moved rapidly upward (no doubt partly because of the arrival of the railroad and the growth of tourism), from just over 10,000 to slightly above 14,000 (40 percent), while its Black population rose more slowly—from just below 1,400 to 1,759 (26 percent increase). Thus the 1870–1880 “whitening” continued. During these four decades, the total eighteen-county population had risen from about 140,000 to 337,000—a rise of 240 percent, but western North Carolina’s Black population had dropped from about 12.5 percent to 10.3 percent (an 18.4 percent decrease).<sup>70</sup>

The blatantly racist move at the turn of the century to approve a constitutional amendment effectively disenfranchising Black voters—following as it did on the heels of the Wilmington coup—was especially revealing. “Democrats Will Win,” the *Raleigh News*

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<sup>69</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, these and the following figures are taken from Waters’s tabulations in “Life Beneath the Veneer,” 233–37.

<sup>70</sup> County-level election results—indicative of shifting views on policy issues—are more difficult to come by for the final two postwar decades (earlier ones have been discussed above).

*and Observer*'s headline trumpeted on Sunday morning, June 17, "Eliminating Negro Voters . . . [and] Giving the State White Rule." Two and a half pages of county-by-county report/admonition/prediction statements by county representatives followed.<sup>71</sup>

Mountain and near-mountain counties were well represented in the *News and Observer*'s poll (only of Democrats, it appears): Alleghany (Sen. Field: "outlook is good"), Ashe (Rep. B. E. Reeves: "we mean to carry the county"), Cleveland (Rep. Clyde R. Hoey: "supporting the amendment with singular unanimity"), Iredell (Sen. Butler), Lincoln (Sen. Lowe: "we expect to carry Lincoln and Catawba"), McDowell (Rep. Justice: majority "favor the elimination of the negro from politics"), Rutherford (Sen. Justice: "outlook is full of hope"), Union (Rep. J. Frank Ray: "will receive a majority of fifteen hundred white votes"). Henderson County's Rep. M. S. Justice was not polled, probably because he was a Republican.

The Democrats did in fact win, in both houses of the General Assembly, as they had in 1898, and they continued to dominate politics in the state for more than seventy years thereafter. As the century turned, the Republicans collapsed in the election of 1900, although Henderson County had a Republican representative, as did neighboring Polk and several other mountain counties (Graham, Madison, Stokes, Surry, two in Wilkes, and Yadkin). But there were only ten others in the House—in the Piedmont (Caswell, two in Chatham, Davie, Forsyth, Vance, Warren) and the east (Hertford, Northampton, Perquimans), along with two Populists in Sampson.

Centrally important for the future of blacks, the General Assembly had approved in 1899 a constitutional amendment restricting the right to vote. It was approved in a special election the following year. Edging around federal Constitutional prohibitions against such restrictions, it instituted a poll tax and a literacy test, and put voting registration in Democratic hands—all of which severely restricted voting by blacks and poor whites. A so-called "grandfather clause" technically allowed illiterate citizens to vote but shut out blacks. Continued pressure by white supremacists and the Red Shirts eliminated virtually all Black voters and reduced white ones dramatically.

Subsequently, mountain blacks (like all others in the state) were in effect on their own, as racist opposition continually morphed into ever new forms, both legal and de facto, into the Jim Crow era.

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<sup>71</sup> *Raleigh News and Observer*, June 17, 1900, Sec. One, 1, 2, 11.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# FAMILY, FACTORIES AND FLAT ROCK: THE GREGG FAMILY CONUNDRUM

All versions of the CARL narrative agree that C. G. Memminger owned Rock Hill from the time he built it in the late 1830s until his death in 1888. Hence a considerable amount is known about his years there, especially until shortly after the Civil War.

They also agree that Ellison Adger Smyth bought Rock Hill in 1900, renamed it Connemara, developed an elaborate and meticulously maintained estate there, moved there permanently in 1924, and sold it to the Sanburgs in 1945.<sup>1</sup>

But these certainties surround an uncertainty of just over a decade between the Memminger sale and the Smyth purchase. Names attached to the property during that period—owning, but maybe or maybe not living in, seasonally or year-round, making changes to it or not, and/or possibly leasing or renting it—include “William Gregg Sr.,” “William Gregg Jr.,” “William Gregg” (neither Sr. nor Jr., variously referring to one or the other, with life narratives sometimes confused), and (infrequently) William Gregg Jr.’s wife Mary Fleming Gregg.<sup>2</sup> This blurring of identities, as well as the frequent exclusion of Mary Fleming Gregg as an actor/agent in the narrative, require clarification.<sup>3</sup>

Both Memminger and Smyth used Black labor (both enslaved and free for Memminger, and free for Smyth), but the question of who might have staffed the seven-room mansion and its grounds during what turns out to be the Gregg Jr. and Mary Fleming Gregg period also passes almost without comment.

The purpose of this study—to discover, document, and analyze Black history at the CARL site—is complicated and compromised by these *lacunae* and uncertainties. Some of them are not resolvable, but careful research can illuminate and/or eliminate others. In the

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<sup>1</sup> McCleary and Butler, *Administrative History*, 3.

<sup>2</sup> An example of the confusion is in Grimshawe, *Connemara, Formerly Called Rock Hill* (1970), 12. Grimshawe says “William Gregg” occupied Rock Hill “for a short time after Memminger’s death,” and then goes on to talk about “Mr. Gregg” who built the Graniteville mill. Since Gregg Sr. (who built the mill) died in 1867, and the William Gregg who “occupied Rock Hill” did not acquire it until after Memminger died in 1888, it is crucial to understand which Gregg was which.

<sup>3</sup> An exception to these confusions and conflation is Jones’s *Connemara Main House* (2005), 26-28, which distinguishes clearly between Gregg Jr. and Sr., pays some attention to Mary Fleming Gregg, and explores the relationship between Gregg Sr. and C. G. Memminger.



process, one also gains useful additional perspective on several decades in the social, cultural, and economic lives of Lowcountry elites, and more specifically upon William Gregg Jr. (1834–1895) before he turned up in Flat Rock at the end of his life.

## William Gregg Sr.

William Gregg Sr. was C. G. Memminger's contemporary. He was born in 1800 (Memminger was born in 1803) in frontier Monongalia County, West Virginia. And like Memminger, he was orphaned young. After his mother died when he was four years old, Gregg was raised first by a kind neighbor lady and later by his Uncle Jacob. Jacob, a successful watchmaker and builder of textile machinery, established (at an uncertain date) a textile factory on the Little River in Georgia, as well as several others. All were ruined shortly after the War of 1812.<sup>4</sup>

Burned by the vicissitudes of the textile business, Jacob sought other options for his nephew, settling upon watchmaking and silversmithing. He apprenticed William to an old friend in Kentucky, where he stayed until he turned twenty-one, when he moved on to Petersburg, Virginia, to work with another silversmith. In 1824, William (by then a master craftsman) moved again to Columbia, South Carolina and set up his own business, selling in both the local market and in Europe.

Five years later, William married Marina Jones of the Edgefield District. A few years afterward, he sold his by then very profitable business and moved his family out of Columbia (perhaps to Edgefield or Aiken), and then (it seems likely, although the date is uncertain) to Charleston, where the family was to remain for sixteen years. There he went back to being a jeweler and silversmith—hence again in touch with a wealthy clientele.

Beyond jewelry making and silversmithing, Gregg was also restless to find a more expansive field, which he found (almost accidentally) in textile manufacture.

### *Vaucluse and Graniteville Mills: The Grand Vision*

Wandering through the countryside, Gregg came across a recently established (1828) cotton textile plant in a small (65 x 37-foot), four-story building. But a few hundred spindles, ten carding machines, and seven looms that were turning out coarse cotton fabrics were not enough to keep the operation out of debt, so owner Christian Breithaupt sold it to a group in Massachusetts. In 1833, Breithaupt secured a charter of incorporation

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<sup>4</sup> Broadus Mitchell, *William Gregg, Factory Master of the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1928), 1–9, 123–26.

for the Vaucluse Manufacturing Company from the South Carolina General Assembly, built a much larger (1800-spindle) mill and hired about fifty workers (thirty white, twenty blacks—most likely slaves).<sup>5</sup>

When Breithaupt died two years later, the larger mill was seriously in debt, and the company directors turned operations over to William Gregg, Sr., who lacked experience with such an operation, but managed to erase the debt. Nevertheless, toward the end of 1837 the directors sold the mill to an Edgefield District planter. The new owner expanded the mill again, and after running it for about a decade, sold his interest to Gregg.

The mill had been so badly managed that Gregg saw it as an example of how *not* to run such an enterprise. By 1843, he had bought enough stock in it to gain control. Within a year, he increased production, paid off the debt and turned a profit. His three years of experience with the mill after that broadened his objectives. The capital subscription list for the mill included investments by J[ames] J. Gregg (William Sr.'s younger son), Mrs. M. Gregg (likely William Sr.'s wife), C. A. Chisolm, and C. G. Memminger. That these names turn up repeatedly in various shared business transactions reinforces the tightness of personal and family relationships in Charleston.<sup>6</sup>

Convinced by his Vaucluse experience (positive and negative) that the South needed to “cling to its old creed of cotton culture” and develop cotton manufacturing, Gregg visited “textile districts” in the Middle States and New England. In 1845, he bought nearly 8,000 acres on Horse Creek near Aiken, South Carolina and applied for a state charter. That document in hand, he began to build his own cotton mill in Graniteville, near Aiken.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Current maps show Gregg Avenue running NE between U.S. highway 76 and Vaucluse Road, which stretches NW to the village of Vaucluse at Vaucluse Pond (perhaps behind the dam of the early Vaucluse Manufacturing Company).

<sup>6</sup> This brief account of the Vaucluse Mill is based upon the mill's listing as a National Historic District in 1996, <http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/aiken/S10817702029/index.htm>, accessed May 14, 2019. Prepared by Thomas More Downey, this document (May 4, 1995) is extraordinarily thorough, detailed, and grounded in extensive primary sources. Downey's 39 photographs are listed (3) but not included in this document. They may be seen in South Carolina Department of Archives and History, *National Register Properties in South Carolina: Vaucluse Mill Village Historic*, 7/7–8/19, <http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/aiken/S10817702029/index.htm>, accessed May 15, 2019. Downey's broader-gauged “Planting a Capitalist South: The Transformation of Western South Carolina, 1790–1860” (Ph.D. diss., University of South Carolina, 2000), 145–78, focuses upon Vaucluse, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/275893369/abstract/5BC2E12123D840EEPQ/1>, accessed May 5, 2019. The Capital subscription list for Vaucluse Manufacturing Company, undated, but probably ca. 1843. Is available as document 6464 in the South Caroliniana Library.

<sup>7</sup> Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 12–14; Svejda, *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Historical Data on the Main House, Garage, and Swedish House* (Washington DC: National Park Service, 1972), 13–15. The National Register nomination for Graniteville Historic District is available at [https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/NHLS/78002491\\_text](https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/NHLS/78002491_text), accessed July 5, 2019. A considerable portion of the historic narrative in the nomination is drawn from Mitchell.

Gregg's Graniteville Mill—appropriately built of “hammered blue granite,” he was proud to point out—was grand enough to match his grand vision.<sup>8</sup>

In a December 1849 letter to a mining journal, Gregg touted his quick success with the mill, presenting “the history of the rise and progress of our Graniteville manufacturing village” as a sure-fire model for industry throughout the South.

The mill employed 325 workers who operated 8,400 spindles and 300 looms that turned out 12,000 yards of cloth per day on wages that were 20 percent lower than those in Massachusetts. Also, unlike Massachusetts mills, “female help is all taken from resident families . . . [which] gives us an advantage over those who have to rely on the boarding-house system.” “We have in South Carolina,” Gregg said,

A large class of white people who are not slave holders, and who are compelled to work for a livelihood. The good lands are generally owned by the wealthy, and cultivated by negroes, affording but little employment to the poor, who readily come into factory service. They are frugal and economical in their habits; our mild climate, cheap breadstuffs, fuel, and other substantial of life, render living much cheaper here than in colder countries.<sup>9</sup>

This combination of “a superabundance of labor” and local supplies of cotton at good prices assured “profitable results” for textile mills.<sup>10</sup>

Profits were also guaranteed by the social control of workers in the company-owned 150-acre village for “nine hundred white people . . . all [of whom are] South Carolinians.” The village, Gregg said proudly,

contains two handsome Gothic churches, an academy, hotel, ten or twelve stores, and about one hundred cottages belonging to the company . . . [They] vary in size from three to nine rooms each, nearly all built after the Gothic cottage order.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The mill stood the test of time well enough to be photographed a century and a half later (1996) by the Historic American Engineering Record. See Library of Congress HAER photo: Photo26\_HAER SC,2-GRANV,1-364730cu. The Historic American Engineering Record's (HAER) extensive documentary and photographic study of the mill (1996) is available at <https://www.loc.gov/search/?fa=segmentof:hhs.sc0931.photos/&sb=shelf-id&st=gallery>, accessed May 14, 2019. Another significant collection may be found at the Gregg-Graniteville Library, University of South Carolina at Aiken (GGAVII121).

<sup>9</sup> William Gregg letter of Oct. 22, 1849, quoted in Gregg, William. “The Graniteville (S. C.) Cotton Manufactory,” *The Merchants' Magazine and Commercial Review (1839–1870)* 21, no. 6 (Dec. 1, 1849): 671–72 (unpaged, but quotation is from 672).

<sup>10</sup> David C. Ward, “Industrial Workers in the Mid-Nineteenth Century South: Family and Labor in the Graniteville (SC) Textile Mill, 1845–1880,” *Labor History* 28, no. 3 (June 1, 1987), 328–48, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00236568700890191>, accessed May 3, 2019. Ward confirms, 334–35, that this promise was not without grounds: numbers of workers and mill village residents grew steadily, yards of cloth produced increased dramatically, and profits to shareholders ran from 12% to 15.5% annually.

<sup>11</sup> The mill was listed in the National Register of Historic Places and became a National Historic Landmark in June 1978, <http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/aiken/S10817702011/>, accessed May 15, 2019. A photograph of a Gothic style Graniteville mill worker house (GGAXVIII021), is available in the Gregg-Graniteville Archives, University of South Carolina Aiken.

Alcohol was not permitted, and “maintenance of moral character” was a central concern. Children between the ages of six and twelve had to attend school, with teachers and books “furnished by the company, free of charge.” The village was, Gregg assured, “one of the most moral, quiet, orderly, and busy places to be found anywhere.”<sup>12</sup>

Gregg’s claims about his mill were numerous and positive: workers were plentiful, local, white, highly productive at modest wages, housed and fed well, schooled and churched at management expense, “moral” and orderly, and contented with their lot. And handsome profits were virtually guaranteed. It was a beguiling narrative, destined to spread throughout an industrializing New South that still lay some decades in the future.

But beyond Gregg’s optimistic narrative lay some problems.<sup>13</sup> A key one was his claim that since “lower class whites, not slaves” would make up a rural-based textile workforce, industrialization could proceed in the South without competition with (thus opposition from) slave-owning planters. In Gregg’s view, the *Charleston Courier* observed,

The order and institutions of the mill village would reform the workers’ private lives . . . reinforce the habits learned from industrial labor . . . and uphold the slaveholders’ regime.

Meanwhile, the pleasant conditions of millwork would assure whites that “their labor in the factory would not “degrade them to the level of slaves . . . [thus reinforcing] textile workers’ sense of their social and racial superiority.” A correlative outcome, in Gregg’s view, was that southern manufacturing would provide “vital support . . . for an aggressive southern nationalism.”

As a slaveholder himself, Gregg wanted to protect and mollify others of his kind. The 1850 Slave Inhabitants census for South Carolina’s Edgefield District listed three enslaved persons owned by William Gregg: a sixty-year-old female and two male children (six and eight years old). Additionally, the 1850 Slave Inhabitants census for the Parishes of St. Philip and St. Michaels in Charleston (where the Gregg family was living at the time) listed seventeen enslaved persons that he owned: one sixty-year-old female, six (males and females) in their thirties, and ten children ranging from one to twelve years old. The 1860

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<sup>12</sup> Quotations from a Dec. 1, 1849 letter from William Gregg, published under the title “The Graniteville (S. C.) Cotton Manufactory” in *The Merchants’ Magazine and Commercial Review (1839–1870)* 21, no. 6 (Dec. 1, 1849): 671–72, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/127974419/abstract/82A73AB74374969PQ/1>, accessed May 5, 2019. The Gothic cottage style, popular from the 1830s to the 1870s, featured multiple steeply pitched gable roofs, ornate barge- or verge-boards, and ornate decorative chimneys. See Sarah E. Mitchell, “Characteristics of Pointed Gothic Cottage Architecture,” <https://www.vintagedesigns.com/architecture/gothic/pointed/char/index.htm>, accessed May 8, 2019. A photo (ca. 1900) of the Graniteville Academy [1845–1920] Building, which still stands, is in the Gregg-Graniteville Library at Aiken (GGAXVIII097).

<sup>13</sup> The following discussion is based upon Ward, “Industrial Workers,” 328–48, from which all quotations are taken.

enumeration listed Gregg Sr. only in the Edgefield District (Graniteville), with fourteen slaves: six females and eight males (including six children sixteen years old or younger, one of whom was three, and two were one).<sup>14</sup>

Thus, at the time Gregg made this argument about the harmonious synergy between slave-based agriculture and emerging industrial development, he himself was the owner of twenty enslaved persons. Moreover, in 1856 he won the first of two terms in the state legislature, in which his pro-slavery views were much in evidence. In December 1860, he—along with his legislative colleague C. G. Memminger—signed the state’s Ordinance of Secession.<sup>15</sup>

Dramatic postwar changes proved not to support a number of Gregg’s claims, especially the long-term ones, such as that millwork under controlled mill village conditions would “elevate the ‘poor whites’ both economically and morally” and further reify and entrench the slave system.<sup>16</sup> Writing to a friend in 1849, Gregg insisted that the South was beneficially “situated with the african race to cultivate our swamps, inhale the poisonous miasma of the same, to indure the scorching sun necessary to the growth of cotton and other southern production” which allowed the “Anglo Saxon race now amongst us” to become “the freest, the hapiest [sic], and most independent people in the world.”<sup>17</sup>

In Gregg’s design, the mill village would appeal to white workers because it would “dissolve . . . exploitation in the solvent of . . . equal relations between people at opposite ends of the economic scale . . . [echoing] northern [arguments that] the commonality of interest between industrialist and worker and their shared stake in economic progress . . . allowed all classes to share in the ownership of companies . . . [erasing] the immense gulf which would otherwise separate the owner and operative . . . .”<sup>18</sup>

Of particular interest in this present study is a letter of April 28, 1849, from Christopher G. Memminger, who opposed the sanguine argument of “our friend Gregg of Graniteville” on two bases: that “slave labor must be resorted to” if rice and cotton

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<sup>14</sup> U.S. Federal Census, Slave Inhabitants in Edgefield District, SC, Nov. [?] 6, 1850, William Gregg; and U.S. Federal Census, Slave Inhabitants, Parishes of St. Philip and St. Michaels, Charleston, SC, Nov. 21, 1850, William Gregg. Since Gregg was not a planter, it seems fair to assume that these people were working in the family household, or were being hired out, or perhaps both. And since the Kalmia house began to be constructed around 1846 and was occupied seasonally at first, there may have been enslaved people working both there and in Charleston from then until 1854, when Kalmia became the family’s sole and permanent residence.

<sup>15</sup> Gregg’s will administration letter does not include an inventory. “Will Administration Letter, William Gregg, Sr. -- South Carolina, Wills and Probate Records, 1670–1980” (Sept. 19, 1867).

<sup>16</sup> *Charleston Courier*, Jan. 21, 1860; Ward, “Industrial Workers,” 330.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted in Ward, “Industrial Workers,” 332.

<sup>18</sup> Ward, “Industrial Workers,” 332.

(necessarily grown “where the white man cannot labor on account of malaria”) were to remain viable crops; and that resorting to white industrial labor would inevitably attract white, “hot abolitionist . . . Loweller” workers from the north.<sup>19</sup>

### *Gregg’s Graniteville Mill: Devils in the Details*

Whatever the character of larger arguments about agriculture and industry, from the outset at Graniteville, William Gregg, Sr. faced repeated struggles in developing and operating his mill. On the eve of the Civil War, when the mill was hardly a decade old, his business-oriented directors—apparently not very knowledgeable about manufacturing processes—distrusted his emphasis upon diversifying production and direct (rather than brokered or commissioned) sales.<sup>20</sup>

Once war broke out, Union pressures rose, social and economic distortions multiplied, and policy edicts from both South Carolina and the Confederacy added one burden and impediment after another. New machinery fell into Union hands in the blockade, workers were impressed, prices rose, and raw materials became scarce. And in December 1861, Gregg’s own son John, a Lieutenant in the South Carolina Volunteers, died at Charlottesville.

Many months later (February 1864), Union forces moved on Aiken, did “great damage to Graniteville” and ripped up the railroad between Aiken and Blackville (thirty-five miles or so to the southeast, toward Charleston), making it necessary to haul the factory’s products out by six-mule teams. When the “saddened little group” of directors met in April 1865, the mill was still operating, but Lee had surrendered and “Confederate hopes had flickered and gone out.”

Soon after the war ended, Gregg ventured to New England to try to buy new machinery, but none was to be had. A trip to the Continent was similarly unproductive. A third try in England yielded some looms and a few trained operators to bring back to Graniteville.

The mill itself, however, Gregg found in a “disordered plight.” He had to remove old machinery, re-floor and re-roof much of it, and repair dams and watercourses before installing the new machines and a more powerful turbine wheel.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Memminger’s letter to James H. Hammond is quoted in full in Thomas P. Martin, “The Advent of William Gregg and the Graniteville Company,” *The Journal of Southern History* 11, no. 3 (1945): 389–423, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2197814>, accessed May 3, 2019.

<sup>20</sup> The much-condensed narrative that follows draws substantially upon Mitchell’s *William Gregg*, 118–254. Unless otherwise attributed, quotations are from this source.

<sup>21</sup> Details are lacking on the new turbine, but it might have been the improved Francis turbine, recently developed by James B. Francis and installed at Lowell MA in 1848, “Francis Turbine,” in *Wikipedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis\\_turbine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_turbine), accessed June 27, 2019.



Mill workers were also beginning to question Gregg's sanguine attitude on industrialization—agitating for increased pay, straining against the regimentation and social control of the mill village, and demanding that they—rather than the mill owner—have control over their children's education, and seeking outside employment for heads of households as artisans and small farmers.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, Gregg saw not only his mill, but also his social, economic, and political experiment in disrepair. "During the war," he said, "our property dilapidated quickly and our people became demoralized and ungovernable." The output of four stills operating near Graniteville was being sold to workers, "mostly by women and negroes," he said; "the firing of pistols and drunken rows were common . . . fences were being torn down, gates unhinged," and a house was burned.<sup>23</sup>

Judging that such a state of affairs "was entirely incompatible with successfully prosecuting our works," he broke it all up, indicted many, including skilled workers, "and brought the population back to order and steady work." "This establishment," he insisted in one of his last statements about the mill, "while it assists in the education of the laborers' children, and encourages temperance, and well directed industry, is a mine of wealth within itself, if its resources be not thrown away, or its affairs be not lamentably misdirected."

And indeed, the post-war mill was—under his son James's superintendency, greatly improved. Although the economic situation was still problematic, the new machinery increased and diversified output, focused on direct sales rather than working through intermediaries. But Gregg, Sr.'s days at Graniteville were done. After working in waist-deep water to help repair a dam, he died in September 1867.

Through his several decades of work at Vacluse and Graniteville, Gregg's views had gained a life of their own. At the next annual stockholders' meeting, the company's treasurer declared that "a great and good man has fallen." The millworkers' emerging demands notwithstanding, meeting attendees officially resolved

That his kindness to the poor of the town, his fatherly care of its children, his deep interest in its schools and churches, his earnest efforts for the advancement in morality of its inhabitants have left us a bright example of the fact, that the interests of capital are perfectly consistent with the best welfare of labor, and that gain may be earnestly pursued at the same time that the better ends of life are not forgotten.

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<sup>22</sup> Ward, "Industrial Workers," 332-343.

<sup>23</sup> Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 243.

Thus for all his ahead-of-his-time views on industrialization and (as it was later called) corporate paternalism, Gregg Sr.'s social, cultural (and as was also the case) racial views remained congruent with those of the long-established Charleston elite—which he in fact was in another sector working (contemporaneously with the Graniteville experiment) to replicate next door to Graniteville, in his Kalmia development.

Kalmia (located in Aiken County) turned out to have a significant connection to the long-wave Charleston to western North Carolina movement, and (thus) the few years Gregg's son William Jr. spent in Flat Rock at the end of his life.

### *The Family Seat at Kalmia*

In a prior chapter, we drew upon Brewster's study of the decades-long "summer migrations" of Lowcountry people, in which he treated Gregg's Kalmia (which lay just outside Aiken, in the "middle country" of South Carolina, roughly mid-way between the Lowcountry and Flat Rock) in some detail.<sup>24</sup> Kalmia (like some other along-the-way stops for refugee Lowcountry planters), can usefully be viewed as one of several earlier versions of Flat Rock's "Little Charleston," although we know of no evidence that it was called that at the time.<sup>25</sup>

As he was doing at Graniteville, William Gregg Sr. (at the time still living in Charleston) projected his Kalmia estate on a fairly grand scale, buying about five thousand acres. And indeed, the Kalmia Village summer colony soon began to develop around it, partly owing to Gregg's having given fifty-acre parcels to friends.<sup>26</sup>

Begun in 1846 or 1847, Brewster said, Gregg's house was a large, nearly square frame structure, the round columns of its front portico reaching to the top of the second story. Without and within, it was decorated and embellished by the handiwork of ironworkers, painters, and woodcarvers from abroad. As was true of all these estates, the grounds were elaborately landscaped with broad terraces and great trees—live oak, cedar, and holly. Here the Greggs spent the summers until 1854, when Kalmia became their permanent home.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Brewster, *Summer Migrations*, 50–51.

<sup>25</sup> Brewster, *Summer Migrations*, 64, 68, 69, explicitly connects these proto-versions of Flat Rock developments, by (for example) discussing the Flat Rock estates of Charles Baring, Judge Mitchell King, and the Blakes, Rutledges, Heywards, and Alexander Robertson, all early arrivals and estate builders in the area, as well as early sojourners from the Lowcountry to Flat Rock. Some of this Flat Rock activity preceded Gregg's Kalmia, but some was occurring simultaneously as well. In a later chapter, we engage with C. G. Memminger's practice, during the construction of his house at Flat Rock in the late 1830s, of using Aiken (where the railroad from Charleston ended until years later) as a trans-shipment point for goods and (generally enslaved) family servants.

<sup>26</sup> Smith, *Life and Sport in Aiken*, 2; *South Carolina Guide*, 162, 345; Brewster, *Summer Migrations*, 50–52; Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 86–87. A current map shows the Kalmia area lying about 5 miles west of Aiken, on both the north and south sides of U.S. highway 76.

<sup>27</sup> Brewster found at least part of this description in Smith, *Life and Sport in Aiken*, 2.

It was, in other words, a grand, Charleston-scaled house, with the addition of a surrounding plantation-scaled estate not possible within the confines of Charleston itself. In any case, it signaled Gregg Sr.'s growing prosperity.<sup>28</sup>

The 1850 census (when he was living primarily in Charleston, in the same parish as C. G. Memminger) listed his holdings in real estate at \$20,000. But by 1860, Gregg's holdings had soared to \$40,000 in real estate and \$250,000 in his personal estate. A tax assessment in 1864 showed income of nearly \$5000 and taxes on a carriage, gold watch, piano, and silver plate. But his wealth by this point exceeded that of Memminger, who that year held \$25,000 in real estate and \$150,000 in personal property.<sup>29</sup>

In developing the area near Kalmia, Brewster observed, "the low-country planters not only discovered healthful summer retreats near their plantations, but also began to penetrate into the back country and to leave their mark upon it. They ended by making much of the "middle country" their own . . . ."<sup>30</sup>

Brewster documented the connections between these intermediate sites along the route, and some of those farther mid- and upcountry and far western North Carolina destinations: Flat Rock, Fletcher, Cashiers Valley, Sapphire, and of course Asheville.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> A photo of the rear of Kalmia is in the Gregg-Graniteville Library (GGAXVIII030), University of South Carolina at Aiken.

<sup>29</sup> William Gregg and James J. Gregg Tax Assessment, 1864, U.S. IRS Tax Assessment Lists, 1862–1918, *Ancestry.com*. Original data from *Records of the Internal Revenue Service*, Record Group 58. National Archives. U.S. Federal Census, 1850, Parish of St. Philip and St. Michael's, Charleston SC, entries for Gregg, Sr. and Memminger. U.S. Federal Census, 1860, Edgefield District SC, entry for Gregg, Sr. U.S. Federal Census, 1860, 4th Ward, Charleston SC, entry for G. Memminger.

<sup>30</sup> Brewster, *Summer Migrations*, 51–52. These are the only details Brewster provides upon either Gregg or Kalmia. He does not comment upon the probable staffing of these houses and estates by enslaved servants or free blacks, although their size and settings upon estate-sized grounds makes it likely that they were. Brewster does refer (45-49, 91), to slaves in other Kalmia-linked locations: building houses for Lowcountry owners and providing numerous services for guests at hotels and inns. There are National Register entries for at least four of these intermediate locations: Mount Pleasant, Moultrieville, Rockville, and Secessionville.

<sup>31</sup> See for example Brewster, *Summer Migrations*, 114, where he notes the local benefits of bringing Lowcountry money to the area, as well as its costs (e.g., the buying up of the most desirable land, and the elites' consuming concern for "their own well-being." A much later *Atlanta Constitution* article ("The Summerland of America Where Tourists Are Rushing," July 20, 1899) links and discusses Flat Rock, the Sapphire Country (with one estate of 26,000 acres); Asheville; Haywood County's White Sulphur Springs, Buncombe County's Hot Springs on the French Broad River; and many others throughout western North Carolina, some established decades earlier than Flat Rock. The key point here is that the later and long-favored "Little Charleston" single-leap formulation for process (discussed in an earlier chapter here) is simplistic and misleading, as Brewster's analysis amply demonstrates. An advertisement for the "Beautiful Sapphire Country" appeared in the *Atlanta Constitution* on July 2, 1905.

## William Gregg Jr.

### *Family and Early Experience at Graniteville Mill*

Born about 1834 or 1835 (some say a year or so earlier or later), William Gregg Jr. would have been about eleven years old when his family's Kalmia estate came into being, thirteen when the Graniteville mill opened in 1848, and nineteen when Kalmia became their permanent home in 1854.<sup>32</sup>

And what kind of family and life would he have had there? A wealthy slave-owning one, for certain, as has been established above. Fortunately, Broadus Mitchell's biography of William Gregg Sr. offered additional details about Gregg Jr.'s early life, including his association with the Graniteville mill.

After William Jr. came home from college (not named), his father placed him in "a mercantile house . . . [for] two years of business training." He then was "brought home to Graniteville and placed in charge of the outdoor department," where he "learned office routine, bookkeeping . . . [and] manufacturing operations."<sup>33</sup> When he was still only twenty-three (about 1858), he became treasurer of the company, where he remained until he became a director in April 1860 (a year before the war started), a post he retained until at least 1867. His tax assessment the prior year (when he lived in Aiken) listed his income as \$350, with taxes on a buggy, two carriages, a watch, a piano, and eighty ounces of silver. The 1870 federal census for Barnwell County's Aiken Township listed the household as including three Black workers: a coachman, a teamster and a "cook woman." When Gregg Jr. severed his connection with the mill is not clear.<sup>34</sup>

And what about brother James (who will soon enter the family story importantly)?<sup>35</sup> He was born in 1836 and was thus a bit younger than William. He spent some time in a university (not named by Mitchell), then two years working in the Graniteville mill's machine shop, and another year or more traveling in Europe and England to study the textile industry. Upon his return around 1856, he and his father reworked and expanded the then-idle Vacluse Mill, and in June 1859, his father put him in charge of it. Shortly

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<sup>32</sup> The 1850, 1870, and 1880 Federal census schedules do not agree on Gregg Jr.'s birth date. He may have been born as early as 1829 or as late as 1835 (which is the date shown on his tombstone in "William Gregg (1835–1895) - Find A Grave Memorial," <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/13651691/william-gregg>, accessed May 3, 2019.

<sup>33</sup> Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 162, says Gregg Jr. joined the company on May 9, 1857.

<sup>34</sup> Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 113–15, 128–29, 131, 252.

<sup>35</sup> The following brief synopsis is based on Mitchell, *William Gregg*, from which virtually all the available information comes. Quotations are from this source.

thereafter he became treasurer of the Graniteville mill, and then superintendent. When the war came, he enlisted as a Lieutenant in the Edgefield Rangers while (apparently) remaining in his position at the mill.<sup>36</sup>

In May 1866, Gregg Sr. announced his intent to retire the following year. In his leave-taking statement to the stockholders, he advised that, should they have occasion to consider who would be named as superintendent, James was “as skillful a manufacturer and as able a manager of such a concern as this country affords.” James was still in that position when his father died in September 1867 and continued to “[throw] his energy into making good his father’s expectations.”<sup>37</sup>

### *Entrepreneurial Efforts and Financial and Legal Challenges*

For James’s older brother William, however, the next few years brought serious financial and legal problems marked by uncertainty, instability, and conflict.

On December 5, 1869, a notice from the *Charleston News* entitled “Lynch Law in South Carolina” was reprinted in Columbia’s *Daily Phoenix*.<sup>38</sup> The incident had happened, the article said, “on the plantation of William Gregg.” Whatever other details lay behind the incident, it revealed that Gregg Jr. was hiring Black laborers, laid bare some complicated post-war racial and intra-racial dynamics, and perhaps offered a glimpse of both established and emerging cultural norms.

Moreover, since Gregg was by then about thirty-four years old, and no prior mention of a plantation had turned up, this episode and its setting were puzzling. *What* plantation? Where was it? How long had Gregg owned it?

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<sup>36</sup> Downey, Vaucluse Mill Village Historic District, 8/18–19.

<sup>37</sup> We have encountered no information about when the Gregg family liquidated their holdings in the Graniteville mill. It continued to operate for more than another century. It was purchased in 2005 by Avondale Mills, but was closed after a disastrous railroad accident released chlorine gas that killed 9 people and displaced thousands. An excellent web site with photographs that include the original blue granite mill building, the canal that supplied power, may be found at South Carolina Picture Project, *Graniteville Mill--Graniteville, South Carolina*, <https://www.scpictureproject.org/aiken-county/graniteville-millhtml/>, accessed May 14, 2019.

<sup>38</sup> “Lynch Law in South Carolina, *Columbia Daily Phoenix*, Dec. 5, 1869, p. 1.

It turns out that it was on Seabrook Island, which lay about thirty miles southeast of Charleston, between Kiawah and Edisto islands. The Seabrooks (after whom the island was named, and perhaps the original owners of the plantation) had been a locally prominent family since the late eighteenth century.<sup>39</sup>

The plantation was, as a December 1871 inventory showed, “a first-class” place. There were nearly four hundred breeding and draft animals and sheep, a hundred or so hogs, as well as turkeys “of large and fancy breed.” Equipment included a grist mill and three gins, a mower and reaper, a ten-hp engine, power transmission pulleys and belts, a four-horse wagon, and “tools of all sorts.”<sup>40</sup>

Gregg had owned the plantation only since late 1868, it appears, but apparently lacked skill in managing it. In any case, it soon fell on hard times, and in mid-December of 1871 its animals, equipment, and machinery were sold at auction. Two months later the land (perhaps as large as 4200 acres, the notice of sale said) was auctioned off in a court-ordered “referee’s sale” to settle a legal case brought by James Gregg and an associate against William. Another sale in August dealt with about 1400 acres (whether part of the earlier 4200 acres is unclear). A December 1872 notice declared that William was bankrupt.<sup>41</sup> It had been a quick fall from being treasurer and a director of the Graniteville mill.

And there was more of the sort to come. After William Gregg Sr. died in 1867, his widow decided to return to Charleston, which she did in 1870. Soon after that, the “Kalmia Residence and Lands” were put up for sale. And a fairly grand place it still was: fifteen

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<sup>39</sup> The brick John Seabrook Bridge (ca. 1782; also known as the Admiral George Palmer’s Bridge) was one of only two in the area that predated the Civil War. Seabrook also owned a ferry and an inn at the site. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974; <http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/charleston/S10817710087/index.htm>. W. B. Seabrook was a trustee—along with many others of the planter elite—of South Carolina College in 1854. The family also turned out to have a long-standing connection to Flat Rock and western North Carolina. As early as 1847, an enslaved couple, “servants” to A. H. Seabrook of Beaufort, South Carolina, were baptized at Flat Rock’s St. John in the Wilderness church. See Elise Pinckney, “Register of St. John-In-The-Wilderness, Flat Rock (Continued),” *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, 63, no. 2 (April 1962), 107. Judith T. Bainbridge recently wrote in “Caesar’s Head Hotel,” *Magazine of Greenville*, accessed July 30, 2018, that E. M. Seabrook of Charleston bought the old nearby Caesar’s Head Hotel in 1880, <http://www.caesarsheadshowcase.com/history.php>, accessed July 30, 2018.

<sup>40</sup> Inventory from “Plantation Stock, Machinery,” *Charleston Daily News*, Dec. 19, 1871, p. 1, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/76782138/?terms=%22william%2Bgregg%22>, accessed May 5, 2019. It was also curious that on December 22, 1870, Gregg had agreed to pay a court judgment brought against him by D. H. Baldwin for \$2,600.75. *Charleston Daily News*, Jan. 8, 1872. This could not have helped his financial condition. William Gregg’s 1870 census record (listing him in Aiken Township, SC) shows \$10,000 in real estate in his possession; it is not known if this included Seabrook.

<sup>41</sup> The Referee’s sale was announced in the *Charleston Daily News*, Feb. 19, 1872, 1, the second land sale on August 5, 1872, p. 3, and William’s bankruptcy on December 10, p. 3. Another *Daily News* Full and Final Discharge in Bankruptcy notice appeared on January 29, 1873, inviting “all Creditors” to show cause (if any) why the Discharge should not be granted, “Notices in Bankruptcy,” *Charleston Daily News*, Jan. 29, 1873, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/46331497/?terms=%22william%2Bgregg%22>, accessed May 15, 2019.



rooms, five hundred acres, with greenhouse, orchards, and “large accommodations for servants and horses.” Since the house and outbuildings dated from the 1840s, the “servants” would have been enslaved prior to 1861.<sup>42</sup>

Presumably the estate was sold, but that was not the end of the story. It seems that both William and James Gregg may have shared ownership (or other) roles in the disposition of their father’s (and perhaps other) property, and that those relationships became (and remained) conflicted for years.

A clue to some of the conflict may lie in a letter of December 30, 1871 (perhaps after Kalmia was put on the market but before it was sold) from William Gregg Jr.’s father-in-law Daniel Fleming to James Gregg in Augusta, Georgia. In it Fleming addressed James’s account of “a conversation with you in regard to what disposition would be made of the money that is to be realized from the sale of the Aiken property”—presumably Kalmia. Fleming rather testily denied that such a conversation had occurred, adding that “as regards being perfectly able to maintain my own daughter [Mary Fleming Gregg], that is my business and not yours.” He tells James that he himself is able to support her and her two children, who “bear the name of Gregg,” and will do so “as long as I have a dollar, if their father [William Gregg, Jr.] is not able to do so.” “With the large debt that you are determined to hold over him,” Fleming continued, “he cannot make a living for them, and . . . [given that] he is my daughter’s husband . . . I will maintain him also, and I never will ask you or the Gregg family to contribute anything.”<sup>43</sup>

There was, it appears, some bad blood between the two families over money—and perhaps related matters besides. Several things seem clear from the letter itself—most importantly, that Gregg Jr. probably had not benefited from any Graniteville mill proceeds

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<sup>42</sup> “Auctioneers’ Private Sales: By J. Fraser Mathewes,” *Charleston Daily News*, Nov. 4, 1872, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/76781974/?terms=%22william%2Bgregg%22>, and “Kalmia Residence and Lands, Near Aiken, at Private Sale,” *Charleston Daily News*, Nov. 6, 1872, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/76782021/?terms=%22william%2Bgregg%22>, both accessed May 16, 2019.

<sup>43</sup> Bob Turbyfill shared this letter on *Ancestry.com* on June 22, 2017, but without providing provenance information; per email to Anne Mitchell Whisnant on May 14, 2019, he stated: “I purchased this letter from an auction in 2017. This letter, along with thousands of other letters, documents, deeds, billheads, wills, originally were in the law office of S.C. General James Simons in Charleston. They were given to a university in North Carolina. The university kept what they wanted and donated the rest to the Charleston Historical Society.” Daniel Frost Fleming’s death certificate says he died of “the decay of vital power” consequent upon “old age” at his 19 Rutledge Avenue in Charleston on March 25, 1884, and was buried in Magnolia Cemetery (the final resting place of most Charleston elites).

(if there were any, so heavy was it in debt at war's end), and almost certainly had not from any disposition of property (or bequests from his father), but was also being accused by James as having a debt (to him?) he could not and would not pay.<sup>44</sup>

For months after this acrimonious exchange, Gregg Jr. (sometimes with D. F. Fleming) appears to have been scrambling to find new sources of income. In March 1872, the Legislature passed an act authorizing the two and five others to establish the Sullivan's Island Ferry Company with capital stock of \$30,000.<sup>45</sup>

Gregg Jr.'s whereabouts or activities for the next several years or so after his bankruptcy are not clear, but he and his wife Mary Fleming Gregg (married in late 1856) turn up in the 1877 Charleston city directory living (boarding, it actually says) with her father (D. F. Fleming) at 19 Rutledge Avenue.<sup>46</sup> Gregg's occupation is given as "planter," although in the next year's directory he is associated with D. F. Fleming & Company ("Wholesale Boots and Shoes" in the 1859 directory).<sup>47</sup>

On September 5, 1878, trouble emerged again when an Aiken County grand jury reported possible fraud in relation to the county's purchase of the Gregg mansion at Kalmia. A few days later the *Abbeville Press* told its readers "How Aiken County was Robbed of \$5,000" in a scheme concocted by Gregg, Jr. and D. F. Fleming.<sup>48</sup> By the time the report appeared, the situation had already been a matter of concern for at least five years.

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<sup>44</sup> William Gregg Sr.'s Will Administration Letter, (Sept. 19, 1867) in the South Carolina Wills and Probate Records names James J. Gregg (instead of his older brother William) as Executor, but the *Ancestry.com* search did not turn up the will itself. William Gregg, Sr. also owned a house (built 1845) in Graniteville. In any case the mill was deeply in debt at the end of the war. Jones, *Connemara Main House Historic Structure Report*, 26–28 says that Gregg Jr. "apparently remained active in the textile industry throughout his life ... [and presumably] inherited at least a portion of his father's Graniteville Manufacturing Company when the elder Gregg died in 1867, although the nature of any continuing role that he might have had in the company has not been documented."

<sup>45</sup> *Charleston Daily News*, April 10, 1872, p. 1, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/76776498/?terms=%22william%2Bgregg%22>, accessed May 15, 2019. A duplicate notice appeared on April 25 in the *Beaufort Republican*, 3.

<sup>46</sup> As others have noted, numerous elite families lived in the Rutledge Avenue area of Charleston. Dusinger's *Them Dark Days: Slavery in the American Rice Swamps*, 419 lists the Rutledge family among those who owned 500 or more slaves. It was also a prominent name in Flat Rock. Members of the Rutledge family built an estate there, which also developed its own Rutledge Drive. Cuthbert's *Flat Rock in the Old Time*, 1–12 is replete with references to various members of the family. James Fain discusses the family briefly in connection with "the Low Country Influence" in his *Partial History of Henderson County* (New York: Arno Press, 1980), 21–23. Griffith, *Flat Rock Historic Boundary Increase*, 7/94, 7/128–132, 7/322, 8/379, 8/385 lists several Rutledge Drive locations, as well as several early Lowcountry buyers of Flat Rock property such as Frederick Rutledge, Judge Mitchell King (Rutledge Cottage), Arthur Huger, Charles Baring (the Mountain Lodge estate at 486 Rutledge Drive) and others. Many photographs of the still extant early houses remain in the CARL archives.

<sup>47</sup> Charleston, South Carolina, City Directory, 1877, and Charleston, South Carolina, City Directory, 1859, both from *Ancestry.com*. U.S. City Directories, 1822–1995 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: *Ancestry.com* Operations, Inc., 2011. The 1880 U.S. Census for Charleston City shows the Gregg family living in the Fleming household on Rutledge with Fleming a "merchant" and William Gregg listed as a "planter."

<sup>48</sup> *Abbeville Press*, Sept. 11, 1878, p. 2. <http://www.newspapers.com/image/171186103/?terms=%22william%2Bgregg%22>, accessed May 15, 2019.

The story was complicated and a bit murky, but essentially it went as follows: In March 1871 the state legislature had approved the purchase of “the Gregg mansion” as a courthouse for Aiken County, and appointed a group of special commissioners to handle the purchase. The group was headed by a Black former legislator, S. J. Lee.<sup>49</sup> The real estate agent (also on the Commission) had it priced (perhaps overpriced) at \$10,000. In March 1872, James Gregg—as trustee of William’s wife Mary—conveyed the property to the county for \$15,000. About a month beforehand, however, William had met several of the commissioners at a hotel in Aiken and “entered into a conspiracy” to pay them the \$15,000, of which \$3,000 was to pass under the table “as their . . . share of the spoils to be obtained out of the county” to divide amongst themselves, and \$2,000 was to revert to William.

But there was a hitch: father-in-law D. F. Fleming, then trustee of the property, decided to keep the \$3,000 rather than give it to the commissioners, one or two of whom (not parties to the transaction) knew about the deal and had it entered into the minutes of the special commissioners, from which it passed to the County Commissioners. Hearing their account read in court, a county judge “told the Sheriff not to let the grass grow under his horse’s hoofs until every man was arrested.” Special deputies were dispatched to Charleston to arrest Gregg, Fleming and the two implicated special commissioners.

The trial, the *Abbeville Press* reporter observed drily, “will doubtless be quite interesting.”<sup>50</sup> S. J. Lee, the Black member of the special commission, was tried separately and immediately for “breach of trust and fraudulent intention,” and sentenced to the penitentiary for two years, but appealed and went to the county jail instead. What happened to Gregg and Fleming at this point, we do not know.<sup>51</sup>

When the 1883 Charleston directory appeared five years later, William and Mary Gregg were still with Fleming at 19 Rutledge, but William was working as a “phosphate miner.” So sometime between the 1878 fraud charge and 1883, he apparently decided the then-booming phosphates industry was a better bet for income than wholesale shoes, or shady real estate deals, but not so much better that the family had ceased to board with his father-in-law.<sup>52</sup>

In the 2005 *Connemara HSR*, Jones says that the later 1888–1890 city directories list the Greggs at 27 (instead of 19) Rutledge Avenue, “just a few doors away from his widowed mother, Mariana Gregg, at 16 Rutledge and just a block and a half from Christopher Memminger’s widow on Council Street.” Importantly, Jones also notes that “Gregg’s occupation was listed in the directory as ‘phosphates,’ in which he, like Memminger and

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<sup>49</sup> This brief account is taken from “How Aiken County Was Robbed of \$5,000,” *Abbeville Press and Banner*, Sept. 11, 1878, p. 2 and the *Yorkville Enquirer*, Sept. 19, 1878, p. 2.

<sup>50</sup> Presumably those trial records exist but finding and examining them lies beyond the scope of this study.

<sup>51</sup> The trials of Fleming and Gregg were put off until November, but in June 1879 had been moved to Orangeburg. *Yorkville Enquirer*, June 12, 1879, p. 2.

<sup>52</sup> The phosphate boom is discussed in Jones, *Connemara HSR*, 23–24.

other wealthy Charlestonians, had invested heavily after the Civil War.”<sup>53</sup> Actually, the 1886 directory had listed “Gregg as “prop[rietor]” of Gregg’s Phos[phate] works, and as r[esident] of 27 Rutledge. He was also listed as “supt Gregg’s wharf and ag[en]t tugs Weymouth and Stono.”<sup>54</sup> Within a decade after the Kalmia fraud disaster, in any case, his financial situation appears to have improved markedly.

These facts (and others like them, too numerous to list here) point unmistakably to Gregg, Jr.’s early and mid-life experience and acculturation within the very cradle of the Charleston white slaveholding elites who, even before he was born (at whatever date), were buying land and establishing the Flat Rock refugee planter/elite enclave in western North Carolina. His involvement in “phosphates” may have proven more successful than plantations or ferries, since somehow the family was able to move from boarding with her father to their (presumably) own home at 27 Rutledge.

Gregg Jr. (or perhaps actually Mary) did not buy the Memminger house in Flat Rock until six years later (1889). Specifically how that transaction came to happen is not known, but it is clear that the Greggs and the Memmingers moved in the same circles in and around Charleston. The deed for the sale of Rock Hill hints at a possible point of connection through one Casper A. Chisolm, listed in the deed as the Trustee who actually paid Edward R. Memminger the \$10,000 for the property.

Chisolm (1833–1910), a Charleston businessman listed in the 1877 Charleston city directory as working in “rice,” had married William Gregg Jr.’s sister, Mary Bellinger Gregg, in 1866.<sup>55</sup> Chisolm and James Gregg “as Trustees” were engaged in legal action against William Gregg, Jr. that had led to the sale of the Seabrook property in 1872.<sup>56</sup> By 1877, Chisolm lived at 10 Rutledge Avenue in Charleston, just a few doors from William Gregg Jr.<sup>57</sup> By 1880, he remained there with Mary and son William Gregg Chisolm. He was by then also working in phosphates.<sup>58</sup> When C. G. Memminger died in 1888, Chisolm was a pallbearer at his elaborate Charleston funeral.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Jones, *Swedish House*, 12–13.

<sup>54</sup> Charleston, South Carolina, City Directory, 1886, *Ancestry.com*, U.S. City Directories, 1822–1995 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: *Ancestry.com* Operations, Inc., 2011.

<sup>55</sup> Louis Palmer Towles, *A World Turned Upside Down: The Palmers of South Santee, 1818–1881* (Univ of South Carolina Press, 1996), 951.

<sup>56</sup> “Referee’s Sale [of Seabrook; J. J. Gregg & Caspar A. Chisholm v. William Gregg, Jr.],” *Charleston Daily News*, Feb. 19, 1872, *Newspapers.com*.

<sup>57</sup> Charleston, South Carolina, City Directory, 1877, *Ancestry.com*. U.S. City Directories, 1822–1995 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: *Ancestry.com* Operations, Inc., 2011.

<sup>58</sup> U.S. Federal Census 1880, Charleston, SC, Casper A. Chisolm, via *Ancestry.com*

<sup>59</sup> Capers, 403.

The deed records for the sale of Rock Hill to the Greggs are confusing but include references to this whole cast of characters: Casper Chisolm, listed as “Trustee” (for whom is not stated) paid Edward Memminger the \$10,000 for the property. Terms of use of the property were later said to be contained in “a deed executed and delivered by D. F. Fleming to James Jones Gregg bearing the date of the 15th day of December 1865” in Barnwell County (formerly district), South Carolina. That deed, in turn, was said to have been referenced in yet another deed filed in June of 1884 in Charleston “executed and delivered by William Gregg and Mary A. F. Gregg to Casper A. Chisolm, appointing him trustee.”<sup>60</sup>

It seems reasonable to guess—given Gregg Jr.’s recent twenty years of financial involvement with D. F. Fleming, and the fact that the sale was handled not directly but through a trustee for William and Mary Fleming Gregg—that at least some of D. F. Fleming’s money went into the purchase. In any case, when the purchase occurred, the Greggs were riding a by then sixty-year-old wave.<sup>61</sup>

### *The Greggs and Rock Hill*

Several questions regarding the William Gregg Jr./Mary Fleming Gregg era at Rock Hill are important for this study: When and how much did they actually occupy the property while they owned it? Did anyone else lease or rent it during this era, and if so, when and for what purpose(s)? Were blacks employed by anyone, in any capacity, during any of those times?<sup>62</sup>

With regard to these questions, the scraps of available public information are not congruent, and the post-1967 CARL record itself is mixed and inconclusive. One would have hoped that when CARL researchers and writers began to lay out the history of the site nearly seven decades after the Greggs sold the house and estate, they would have found themselves in agreement with these details about its occupancy and uses during the Gregg period. But their accounts turned out to be both sparse and conflicted.

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<sup>60</sup> Deed records, Henderson County, North Carolina, 1889.

<sup>61</sup> George J. Svejda, “Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Historic Structure Report,” April 28, 1972, 13–15. Svejda said the September 19, 1889, deed is recorded in the Office of the Henderson County Register of Deeds, Bk. 25, 469. If any of D. F. Fleming’s money went into the house, it was money bequeathed somehow to Mary, since his death certificate establishes that he died March 18, 1884.

<sup>62</sup> Pence, *Archeological Overview* (1998), 47 says that there is no historical documentation for the 1889 to 1900 period during which the Gregg family owned the property. “It is assumed that this was the Greggs’ summer residence since during the same period they also maintained a home in Charleston, South Carolina.” Her secondary (and by no means always reliable) source is Bailey, *From Rock Hill to Connemara*, 32. Jones, *Connemara Main House Historic Structure Report*, 1, 26–28 was less certain that that was the case. Opperman, *Barn Complex Historic Structure Report*, 5–6 does not mention an intermediary trustee. The related question of what, if anything, the Greggs did to the Rock Hill house and its grounds while they owned it is not within the purview of this study. The CARL studies have spoken variously on that matter.



The CARL Cultural Landscape Report of 1993 said simply that “Colonel William Gregg . . . apparently never occupied the house.”<sup>63</sup>

Pence’s *Archeological Overview* (1998) says that Gregg “apparently briefly owned” Rock Hill “for approximately ten years,” but “apparently used the property only as a summer retreat.” “There is no historical documentation for the . . . period during which the Gregg family owned the property,” she concluded—nothing “that indicate[s] that he or his family ever occupied the house or made any changes to the property or structures.”<sup>64</sup>

A few years later, however, Tommy Jones’s historic resource study of the Connemara Main House called Bailey’s and Pence’s conclusions into question, noting that since the Greggs bought Rock Hill fully furnished and, like the Memmings, employed an overseer . . . who of course lived on the property year- round, . . . [it] seems improbable that William and Mary Gregg would not have spent some time in the house, at least prior to his death in February 1895. In addition . . . in the late nineteenth century, a series of changes and additions to the house was executed that was almost certainly a product of the Gregg era.<sup>65</sup>

A decade later, the National Register boundary revision document said simply that “like the Memmings” the Greggs “occupied the house for only about four months out of the year.” A year before, however, Oppermann’s Barn Complex study had said (without details) that “the Greggs helped shape Rock Hill.”<sup>66</sup>

That the confusion about when, how much, and with what effect(s) the Greggs owned and occupied the house pre-dated CARL itself, however, is evident in newspapers of the time.

In its Saturday evening “Around Town” column of August 16, 1890, the *Asheville Daily Citizen* announced that the new and grand Battery Park Hotel (1886) “had among its arrivals yesterday, William Gregg and wife, Flat Rock, N.C.” By this time, the Greggs had

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<sup>63</sup> Hart, *Cultural Landscape Report*, 7. We have not been able to corroborate a basis for the “Colonel” designation.

<sup>64</sup> Pence, *Archeological Overview and Assessment*, 31, 47. Pence cites Bailey’s *From Rock Hill to Connemara*, 32 and Judy Helmich’s archeological data from *Cultural Resource Management Plan for Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site* (Tallahassee: Southeast Archeological Center, National Park Service, 1982).

<sup>65</sup> Jones, *Connemara Main House Historic Structure Report*, 26–28.

<sup>66</sup> Griffith, *Flat Rock Historic District Boundary Increase, Boundary Decrease*, 7/56, and Joseph K. Oppermann, “Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Buck House Phase 1 Historic Structure Report” (National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office, 2014), <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2225184>. 5–6. Like the Gregg purchase, the Smyth purchase was—according the Svejda, who examined the deed—a bit murky legally. Svejda says in his 1972 *Historic Structure Report*, 15–16 that according to the Henderson County deed (Book 40, 567-572) Mary Gregg “joined in a conveyance with Casper A. Chisholm [Chisolm, her brother-in-law] to deed the Rock Hill property” not directly to Ellison Adger Smyth, but rather to his brothers J. Adger and Augustine T. Smyth, and stipulated that Ellison A. and his wife Julia G. (and their children after them) “were to have use [of and occupy] and enjoy said premises for and during the term of their natural lives.”



owned Rock Hill for almost a year.<sup>67</sup> They were enough of a presence in the village that Flat Rock resident Isabella Cheves commented on them several times in the summer of 1891. Writing her son Langdon in Charleston in June, for instance, she reported that “Dr. King told me that Mr. Gregg said he got all his vegetables and beautiful ones from Vanderbilt’s hot houses. Also he showed him the most beautiful Irish potatoes he had ever seen from Charles Pinckney’s phosphate works.” Cheves continued to muse on the Greggs in July, as they were part of an influx of new people into Flat Rock, many of whom were making what she thought were ill-advised “improvements” to their properties. “Louise says she hears that the Siegling house [formerly Saluda Cottages, which General Rudolph Siegling was enclosing within an “elaborate French mansion”] is not near finished. Harry [Harrison, Mrs. Cheves’s Black servant, a Charleston native] says the additions are very large and the family live in a few of the old rooms upstairs. Louise understands that there is to be a brick tunnel underground from kitchen to dining room. I wonder if the Greggs have one too.”<sup>68</sup> Though she does not say so, this suggests the Greggs may have been doing work to better accommodate the servant labor they must also have employed at Rock Hill.

It appears that fairly soon after the Greggs arrived in Flat Rock, Gregg had been interested and engaged (and one would think present) enough in Flat Rock to try early on to establish a small herd of registered dual-purpose (meat and milk) cattle at Rock Hill. Perhaps this effort explains why Isabella Cheves wrote her son Langdon later in July of 1891 that “There has been very heavy blasting for the last week. Harry says the Greggs are blasting their third pond, or rather the rock in it, for the three ponds are made already he says. Harry says the blasting yesterday was in the meadow.”<sup>69</sup> But the cattle farming effort did not last very long, since on October 7, 1892 the *Asheville Citizen Times* carried a FOR SALE ad for the “Holstein-Triesion” (Holstein-Friesian, it would have been) herd.<sup>70</sup> Presumably such an effort would have required daily feeding and supervision—by Gregg himself or someone hired for the purpose (Smyth caretaker William Slattery, who will be discussed later, has been mentioned), but no new information has emerged on that topic.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> A serious lack in chronicling the Greggs’ early days at Rock Hill is the often-lamented disappearance of the Federal census of 1890, almost all of which was irreparably damaged in a federal building fire in 1921. See “1890 United States Census,” in *Wikipedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=1890\\_United\\_States\\_Census&oldid=958573088](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=1890_United_States_Census&oldid=958573088), May 26, 2019.

<sup>68</sup> Cuthbert, *Flat Rock of the Old Time*, 97, 132; and Cheves, quoted in Cuthbert, *Flat Rock of the Old Time*, 140-41.

<sup>69</sup> Quoted in Cuthbert, *Flat Rock of the Old Time*, 143.

<sup>70</sup> The dual-purpose (milk and beef) breed was ancient and recognized as the “world’s highest production dairy animals,” “Holstein Friesian Cattle,” in *Wikipedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Holstein\\_Friesian\\_cattle&oldid=963123029](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Holstein_Friesian_cattle&oldid=963123029), accessed May 20, 2019. For his nearby Biltmore Dairy Farm in 1897, George Vanderbilt chose the Jersey breed.

<sup>71</sup> Jones, *Connemara HSR*, 27.

Simultaneously, in any case, the 1892 Charleston city directory lists both a William M. Gregg and William M. Gregg Jr. still living at 27 Rutledge Avenue. In 1894, the middle initial, “Jr.” and the double listing disappear, but a William Gregg is still at that address. In both, the occupation is given as “phos[phates].” Hence at least as of the latter date, Gregg Jr. was still officially a Charleston resident and working in phosphates.<sup>72</sup>

## *Disposing of Rock Hill*

After her husband’s death in 1895, Mary Fleming Gregg seems to have begun trying to lease, rent, or sell Rock Hill. Quoting the *Hendersonville Times* on April 18, 1895, the *Asheville Daily Citizen* reported in its “Around Town” social column that “Mr. W. H. Baldwin, third vice-president of the Southern railroad, has purchased the Col. Gregg residence at Flat Rock, and it is expected that he will make this his home.” About six weeks later, the newspaper followed up by reporting that the Baldwin family had “removed to their lately purchased summer home at Flat Rock,” and more than a year after that added that Baldwin “passed through the city today and his way to Washington from his summer home at Flat Rock.”<sup>73</sup>

Despite the earlier statement that Baldwin had bought the house, in October 1897 “Around Town” again informed readers that “Mrs. Chas. M. Platt has closed the *Gregg house*, which she has conducted at Flat Rock during the past summer.”<sup>74</sup>

Still, it seems, although Mary Fleming Gregg was a more than willing seller, she had found no willing buyers, and was leasing and/or renting the house as she found takers. A social item in the *Atlanta Constitution*’s “Woman and Society” section on July 20, 1899 (four years after her husband’s death), said that “Mrs. Frank Weldon is at the old Memminger home, now Miss Kerr’s, Flat Rock, N. C. . . . A few years ago Former Vice President Baldwin of the Southern [Railway], leased the estate for a summer residence.”<sup>75</sup> A little over a week later, the *Constitution* noted under a Flat Rock dateline that “Colonel William Haldeman, business manager of The Louisville Courier-Journal . . . is spending a month here at the picturesque and famous Memminger home.”<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Middle initials for William Gregg (both father and son) are given variously (but usually not at all).

<sup>73</sup> *Asheville Daily Citizen*, April 18, 1895, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/73501552/?terms=gregg%2BFlat%2BRock>, and <http://www.newspapers.com/image/195616526/?terms=%22Flat%2BRock%22%2BBaldwin%2BSouthern%2Bsummer%2Bhome&match=2>, both accessed May 2, 2019.

<sup>74</sup> *Asheville Daily Citizen*, Oct. 21, 1897, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/0168/?terms=gregg%2BFlat%2BRock>, accessed April 29, 2019.

<sup>75</sup> *Atlanta Constitution*, July 20, 1899, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/26863056/?terms=%22Flat%2BRock%22&match=4>, accessed May 2, 2019.

<sup>76</sup> *Atlanta Constitution*, Aug. 1, 1899, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/26953633/?terms=%22Flat%2BRock%22>, accessed May 6, 2019. Presumably Haldeman was renting the house, but from whom is not specified. Nor is it clear why it was referred to as the *Memminger* rather than the *Gregg* house. In any case, this notice makes clear that the house was open and occupied during the summer of 1899.

The months continued to pass until in early February 1900 a small but enticing FOR SALE OR TO RENT advertisement from a Charleston broker appeared in the *Constitution* and the *Asheville Daily Citizen*, where it continued to run for two months or more.<sup>77</sup>

The details were tantalizing, but a buyer was not found until Ellison Adger Smyth purchased the property 10 months later. Meanwhile, scattered newspaper reports show that Mary Fleming Gregg and her daughter continued to visit Asheville from time to time until 1911. Mary died in August 1912.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> *Atlanta Constitution*, Feb. 3, 1900, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/34101188/?terms=gregg%2B-Flat%2BRock> and *Asheville Daily Citizen*, February 10, 1900, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/195426119/?terms=William%2Bgregg%2BFlat%2BRock>, both accessed May 6, 2019. By this time, Mary Fleming Gregg appeared in the Federal census as past 60 years old and living in Charleston (still on Rutledge Avenue) with her daughter, son-in-law and two teenage grandchildren.

<sup>78</sup> “Mrs. Gregg and Miss Kolluck Arrive,” *Asheville Gazette-News*, Sept. 5, 1911; “Mary Abigail Fleming Gregg Death Certificate—South Carolina, Death Records, 1821–1965” (Aug. 4, 1912), *Ancestry.com*.

## CHAPTER NINE

# THE GOLDEN HAZE OF MEMORY AND “LITTLE CHARLESTON OF THE MOUNTAINS”

*Charleston is the best portal to the antebellum South. It is where the Old South reached its apotheosis and met its demise . . . The entire city is a living history museum . . . No place in America has spent as much time and energy selling memories—most whitewashed, others unvarnished—of its past. . . Charleston, too, offers an unusually clear window into the genealogy of social memory. It reveals how personal memories of the past coalesced into collective, social memory . . . And no American city better illustrates the brutal realities of human bondage, realities that belie the whitewashed image of the peculiar institution crafted by its Old South and latter-day apologists.*

—ETHAN KYTLE AND BLAIN ROBERTS, *DENMARK VESEY’S GARDEN*<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

**W**e know of no evidence that anyone has previously tried to seriously and systematically interrogate the phrase “Little Charleston of the Mountains,” which is applied ubiquitously to Flat Rock. All uses of it we have encountered have treated “Little Charleston” as a win-win for everyone: a picturesque, publicly appealing, benign phrase, trailing Charleston’s unquestioned clouds of cultural glory behind it from the Lowcountry to the mountains, casting Lowcountry people as culture bearers and preservers, uplifting local mountain people in the process, and mostly ignoring African American experiences altogether.

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<sup>1</sup> Ethan Kytte and Blain Roberts, *Denmark Vesey’s Garden: Slavery and Memory in the Cradle of the Confederacy* (New York: The New Press, 2018 [Kindle edition]): Introduction, locations 198, 202, 225; and Prelude: Slavery’s Capital, location 279.

But such an understanding is naive and ungrounded, historically unsupportable, inadequate as a name for such a complex historical process, and especially unfair to those for whom the process resulted primarily in losses rather than gains.<sup>2</sup>

As one attempts to evaluate and parse out the long-term costs and benefits of the elites’ Charleston-to-Flat Rock meanderings (as in some senses it seems fair to call them), and especially the “Little Charleston” formulation of the latter, it is important to observe that that formulation, once introduced, proved very durable. Increasingly through now about seven decades, that version of Flat Rock’s history and status have become widely accepted as historical and cultural fact.

A full inventory of evidence would far outstrip the space available here. An unconstrained 2019 Google search for “Little Charleston” brings more than six thousand results, reaching from Historic Flat Rock’s Facebook page, to *Wikipedia*’s Henderson County entry, to countless newspaper articles of every variety stretching across decades, to realty companies still employing the phrase to market land and houses in Flat Rock, to indeed almost any type of reference and use one could imagine.

The centrally important implication of this process for CARL is that by the time the Carl Sandburg Home became a unit of the NPS in 1968, the “Little Charleston of the Mountains” formulation was predominant in popular discourse and thus easily and tantalizingly available as a rationale (whether named or not) for the site’s establishment and development and a shorthand way to describe its setting and context. As previous (and subsequent) chapters of this study make clear, however, it was neither the only nor the most defensible formulation available.

## Emergence of the “Little Charleston” Name

It is both important and possible to think more carefully than anyone has before about the “Little Charleston of the Mountains” phrase, the romanticized history (of both Charleston itself and Flat Rock) that coheres around it, and the use of both to designate and promote the Flat Rock community that emerged as nineteenth-century Lowcountry elites (and their slaves—or “servants,” as they were euphemistically called) trekked toward the mountains.

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<sup>2</sup> Two important scholarly books that directly take on key aspects of what a fully developed argument about the “Little Charleston of the Mountains” phrase might encompass are Maurie D. McInnis, *The Politics of Taste in Antebellum Charleston* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), and Ethan Kytle and Blain Roberts, *Denmark Vesey’s Garden: Slavery and Memory in the Cradle of the Confederacy* (New York: The New Press, 2018). For a concise precis of key arguments in the former, see a review by Catherine W. Bishir, *Buildings & Landscapes: Journal of the Vernacular Architecture Forum*, 14 (Fall, 2007), 126–29. It is fair to say here that virtually the entire corpus of the past several decades of fully grounded historical and cultural analysis of the romantic myth of Charleston supports the argument we make here.

When and how did this complex originate, and out of what components? How has it been passed along, and by what means? What have its resonances been? How has it been diffused within popular and commercial culture? What about its costs and benefits to diverse groups, constituencies and institutions? How has its persistent repetition closed out other histories?

These questions are complicated but must be addressed because the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site has been located in the middle of the area for a half-century. At a point now of trying to explore the site’s racial and class dimensions and relationships to African American history, it is clear that the predominance of a whites-only romantic “Little Charleston” formulation for Flat Rock obscures our view of Black lives, and of the hard truths of slavery, exploitation, and white supremacy upon which the elite Flat Rock community rested.

The phrase itself was, it appears, initially invented by Sadie Patton herself, but she did not make it up out of whole cloth. Elements of the Charleston myth had been being assembled (in brick and stone, in lived culture, in literature and art) for more than a century before the Sandburgs arrived in 1946 and Sadie Smathers Patton’s *The Story of Henderson County* appeared the following year.<sup>3</sup>

Some generative elements of this romantic version of Charleston history, as well as of the intertwined Charleston and Flat Rock story, can be located in early published historical narratives of Charleston history and early accounts of actual visits to Flat Rock many decades prior to its designation as “Little Charleston-of-the-Mountains.” Whether Patton read or used a particular source in preparing her book is frequently difficult to determine, but of the fact that she researched and wrote the book at a certain knowable stage in the development and promulgation of the myths there is no doubt.

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<sup>3</sup> In early 2019, on a visit to the Woodburn Plantation site near Clemson SC, Jackie Reynolds of the Pendleton [SC] Historic Foundation mentioned that the “Little Charleston” designation had in the past been applied to Pendleton, which lies on the main Charleston to Flat Rock route, in the historic Pendleton District. See Hurley E. Badders, “Pendleton,” in *South Carolina Encyclopedia* (University of South Carolina Institute for Southern Studies, June 10, 2019), <https://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/pendleton/>; “Pendleton Historic District, Anderson County (Pendleton),” National Register Properties in South Carolina, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, accessed July 5, 2020, <http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/anderson/S10817704013/index.htm>; and “Pendleton Historic District, SC (National Register Nomination),” Aug. 25, 1970, <https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/AssetDetail?assetID=df7d44ec-869d-42cc-b6a2-24ecf29cb8d7>. We have encountered no corroborating evidence for Ms. Reynolds’s statement, but it seems plausible. Brewer does not mention the phrase in his *Summer Migrations*, but his section on the Pendleton District (53-56) includes the names of some Charleston planters who summered in (or relocated to) the area from 1790 onward (Cheves, Huger, Ravenel, Pinckney) and later established themselves in Flat Rock. A major source for Brewer was R. W. Simpson, *History of Old Pendleton District, with a Genealogy of the Leading Families of the District*, (Anderson, SC: Oulla Printing & Binding Company, 1913), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=yale.39002005855003&view=1up&seq=7>, accessed June 17, 2019. Simpson did not use the “Little Charleston” phrase, but did refer (119, 145, 170) to several Charlestonians who relocated to Pendleton and from there to Flat Rock.



## The City, the Haze, and the Name

What happened—crucially for the Flat Rock / Little Charleston narrative—was that viewed through the “golden haze of memory,” as historian Stephanie Yuhl called it, the Little Charleston aspirational pattern looked little like historical Charleston.<sup>4</sup>

For nearly a century following its founding as Charles Town in 1670, Charleston’s population and economy (based on rice, indigo, cotton and enslaved labor) grew and prospered. Elites concentrated and proclaimed their power in imposing public buildings, churches, plantations, lavish private residences and cultural institutions. By its mid-eighteenth-century “golden age,” the city was “a booming crossroads of culture and trade.” Alongside such auspicious development, however, it was also plagued and destabilized by pirate raids, wars against Indian tribes, and slave resistance (especially the Stono Rebellion of 1739 and the Denmark Vesey plot of 1822).<sup>5</sup>

By the 1830s (when, one notes, the first lowlanders ventured into western North Carolina), the gold had begun to fade. Cotton (hence slavery) was moving toward Mobile and New Orleans. The Charleston planter/professional aristocracy, somewhat marooned in a “leisure capital,” saw the coming of railroads (and potentially, industry) mostly as a threat instead of an opportunity. Political and ideological conflicts over nullification, constitutionalism, and states’ rights also began to divide the aristocracy. “By the time the first shot was fired on Fort Sumter,” Yuhl emphasized, “the ‘golden age’ for elite whites had drawn to a close.”

At the same time, at least one contemporary commentator on the western North Carolina mountains expressed some doubts about Flat Rock as a destination. In his widely distributed *Mountain Scenery: The Scenery of Western North Carolina and Northwestern South Carolina* (1859), Henry Colton observed that the road from Greenville through Saluda Gap and into Flat Rock

cannot be said to be very remarkable for its romantic scenery. Its chief attractions are the displays of artificial taste which adorn the summer residences of many wealthy South Carolinians. The region around Flat Rock is particularly noted for this. Farm joins farm in rapid succession; and, looking over a vast

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<sup>4</sup> Stephanie Yuhl, *A Golden Haze of Memory: The Making of Historic Charleston* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005). The details and much of the language of the brief, compressed account that follows are drawn from Yuhl, *Golden Haze*, 1–5.

<sup>5</sup> On the Stono Rebellion (1730), see “Peter Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 Through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Norton, 1996); Mark M. Smith (ed.), *Stono: Documenting and Interpreting a Southern Slave Revolt* (Columbia SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2005); Charles Hoffler, *Cry Liberty: The Great Stono River Slave Rebellion of 1739* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); and “Today in History - September 9 -The Stono Rebellion,” *Library of Congress*, accessed July 5, 2020, <https://www.loc.gov/item/today-in-history/september-09>. On the Denmark Vesey plot, see: Ethan Kytte and Blain Roberts, *Denmark Vesey’s Garden: Slavery and Memory in the Cradle of the Confederacy* (New York: The New Press, 2018); and “Denmark Vesey,” U.S. National Park Service, accessed July 5, 2020, <https://www.nps.gov/people/denmark-vesey.htm>.

array of artificial shrubbery, intermingled with a natural growth of oaks, the eye rests upon the handsome residence of some wealthy planter or retired merchant.<sup>6</sup>

Given that the completely positive (even mesmerizing) discourse about Little Charleston that was to emerge later, Colton’s cautionary observation merits attention.

Meanwhile, during and after the war, things got much worse in Charleston itself, driving even more Lowcountry planters up through the Saluda Gap and into Flat Rock. Yuhl quotes a northern reporter who came through the city just after the Confederate surrender and found Charleston

a city of ruins, of desolation, of vacant houses, of widowed women, of rotting wharves, of deserted warehouses, of weedwild gardens, of miles of grass-grown streets, of acres of barrenness.

Natural and war-related disasters (sustained Union bombardment, fires, hurricanes, and boll weevils) brought further devastation until World War I.

The city, meanwhile, remained indifferent while the cotton industry moved up-country, the port foundered, markets disappeared, entrepreneurs and professionals sought opportunities elsewhere—and the old-line aristocracy held onto power, deploying bands of red-shirted vigilantes to help elect Charleston planter/Confederate General Wade Hampton governor in 1876. By 1880, Yuhl says, Charleston was “a minor seaport of little more than local economic and social significance.”

Hence by the 1920s, Charleston’s history resembled no upward arch, but a many times reversed and broken graph. The city had in fact become a stagnant backwater. At that juncture, Yuhl argues,

a group of elite white Charlestonians transformed [their] historical memories of loss and disintegration into a revitalized civic identity that rebuked the chaos of modern America and reasserted Charleston’s relevance in national dialogues about race, politics, economics, and the social order.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Henry E. Colton, *Mountain Scenery. The Scenery of the Mountains of Western North Carolina and Northwestern South Carolina*. (Philadelphia: Hayes & Zell, 1859), 36–37, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/colton/colton.html>, accessed Aug. 31, 2017.

<sup>7</sup> Yuhl, *Golden Haze*, 1–2.

## Assembling and Deploying the Elements, 1840–1947

However long it took for the core elements of the Little Charleston rubric to coalesce into a popular consensus image (slightly more than a century, it appears), many of its elements had long been in evidence within western North Carolina.

### *A “Mountain Home” Christmas Party, 1840*

An early newspaper account of a lavish Christmastime birthday party at the Barings’ Mountain Lodge in Flat Rock more than confirms that the social ostentation of elite in-migrants from Charleston became a subject of local commentary only a few years after they began to arrive and settle in Henderson County.

In late December 1840, the editor of *The Carolina Planter* found himself (after a visit to Asheville) in Flat Rock, which he viewed not as “Little Charleston of the Mountains” (as the phrase was not yet in use), but as “a summer resort for invalids, especially those who suffer from nervous affections, or such cases as are attended with languor, debility and enfeebled action.”<sup>8</sup> “We returned to Flat Rock on Tuesday,” he reported,

and found an invitation to the birthday Ball of the lady of the Mountain Lodge. Here we were agreeably surprised to find a large assembly of fair Mountain ladies. The gentlemen were quite attentive, and the spirited exertions of the old fiddler soon set in motion the life of the party. The cotillion, the reel, the country dance and the waltz, having been enjoyed to a late hour, “a change came over the spirit of the dream,” and a sumptuous entertainment at the supper table gave a zest to the pleasures of the evening, which was quite refreshing. The proud tenant of the park had furnished his contribution to the feast, and the pheasants of the mountain branches were conspicuous on the board. The enjoyments of the evening were appreciated by all and our company retired from this most sociable meeting delighted with the elegant hospitality of the mountains.

The circumspect editor named neither the owner of the house nor any of the guests, but his identifying phrases would have been recognizable to his likely readers. The “Mountain Lodge” was the sumptuous and elegant home (set in the midst of an English-style landscape) of Charles Baring (“proud tenant of the park”) and his imperious and flamboyant “lady” Susan, who had built it soon after arriving from Charleston in 1827. The unnamed fiddler was likely black, and may have been enslaved, since Baring was a slave owner who (like C.G. Memminger and others of his neighbors) brought enslaved servants

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<sup>8</sup> *Highland Messenger*, Dece. 25, 1840, 1. All quotations are from this source. We do not say “Christmastime” because the regularization of December 25 as Christmas in the U.S. still lay in the future.

with him to Flat Rock to staff the household and provide services at such elegant gatherings. The named dances were those popular at the time.<sup>9</sup> Equally revealing were the cryptic descriptors the writer applied to several guests:

the representative of England’s Queen [E. Molyneaux, British Consul at Savannah], the Consul of the Citizen king [Charles de Choiseul, French consul at Charleston], the President of the Rail Road Company [James Gadsden], one of our favorite Judges [Mitchell King, of Flat Rock], with a number of gentlemen from the mountains, and lastly, the Editor [R. W. Gibbs] of the Carolina Planter.<sup>10</sup>

## *Mary Chesnut’s Diary, 1862*

Twenty years after the birthday party narrative appeared in the *Highland Messenger*, Mary Boykin Chesnut wrote of an August 1862 visit she made to the area. The daughter of a South Carolina governor, Chesnut had grown up on Mulberry Plantation (1679) near Camden, South Carolina. Later, as the wife of a U.S. Senator (and Confederate general), she gained broader knowledge of Lowcountry life.<sup>11</sup>

Chesnut’s August 2, 1862, diary entry mentions the Farmer Hotel and two mansions in Flat Rock.<sup>12</sup> At the hotel she encountered “Burnet Rhett, with his steed, . . . at the door; horse and man were caparisoned with as much red and gold artillery uniform as they

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<sup>9</sup> For descriptions and discussions of Black musicians, dancers, and dance styles in the region at the time, see Phil Jamison, *Hoedowns, Reels, and Frolics: Roots and Branches of Southern Appalachian Dance* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015). “A change came over the spirit of the dream” was from Lady Charlotte Campbell Bury’s recently published popular anthology, *Love* (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea and Blanchard, 1838), II, 151.

<sup>10</sup> Molyneaux had his own large estate (Brooklands) nearby, as did de Choiseul. Since the North Carolina Railroad was not chartered until 1849, the Rail Road Company referred to probably was the South Carolina Rail Road Company, chartered in 1827. James Gadsden (a Florida planter and Territorial legislator who had helped expel the Seminoles in Florida and Georgia) was president 1840–1850. By 1833 the South Carolina Rail Road had completed 136 miles of track, most of it built by enslaved African Americans leased from plantation owners. The company itself eventually bought 89 slaves. See Tommy Jones, *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Swedish House - Historic Structure Report* (Cultural Resources Division, National Park Service, 2005), <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2191744>. 5.

<sup>11</sup> See <https://south-carolina-plantations.com/berkeley/mulberry.html>, accessed Aug. 22, 2018. Chesnut’s *A Diary from Dixie*, not published until 1905, includes a brief chapter on her August 1862 visit to Flat Rock and a few other scattered references. Further confirmation of Chesnut’s visits to several elegant Flat Rock homes is a September 25, 1862 letter Cuthbert included in *Flat Rock of the Old Time*, 29, from Harriott Middleton of Flat Rock to Susan Middleton of Columbia South Carolina, which mentions “a little war of words” between “Mrs. Chesnut,” her sister Kate Williams, and Mrs. Henry King (apparently related to Judge Mitchell King, in whose home the encounter occurred). September 25 was about 7 weeks after Chesnut’s August 2 visit to Flat Rock. Elisabeth Muhlenfeld, and C. Vann Woodward, *The Private Mary Chesnut: The Unpublished Civil War Diaries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984) contains entries from Febr. 18, 1861 to June 26, 1865. An entry of June 5–7, 1861 mentions Flat Rock but does not make clear whether she had visited it by then. She apparently made another visit or two to Flat Rock (including one in June 1863), but that section of her diary no longer exists.

<sup>12</sup> The Farmer’s Hotel is pictured in Trenholm’s *Flat Rock, North Carolina* (908), 30.

could bear . . . The stirrups were Mexican, I believe.” She also spent several days at the “hospitable mansion” (The Meadows) of Daniel Blake, and Blake drove her to the elegant home (Dunroy) of her sister Catherine (“Kate”) Boykin Miller Williams.<sup>13</sup>

One wishes Chesnut had stayed longer in—and said more about—Flat Rock, but more broadly, it is important to note that in her nearly 150 mentions of blacks (“negroes,” of course, in the usage of her time) in Charleston and on the plantations, she characterized them in terms of familiar racial binaries: lazy, shiftless, canny, deceitful, untrustworthy and inept, or loyal, faithful, affectionate, grateful toward their masters, and generally happy in their condition of servitude. The planters, meanwhile, were models of moral rectitude, ethical behavior toward their chattel, and generous in their dealings with them. General James Chesnut, to take an example from her own family, Mary Chesnut characterized as “a typical Southern planter”:

From the beginning he has . . . [taken] a personal interest in them, attending the mission church and worshipping with his own people. . . [At] his death General Chesnut, statesman and soldier, was surrounded by faithful friends, born in slavery on his own plantation . . . [The] last prayer he ever heard came from the lips of a negro man, old Scipio, his father’s body-servant; and . . . he was borne to his grave amid the tears and lamentations of those whom no Emancipation Proclamation could sever from him, and who cried aloud: “O my master! my master! he was so good to me! He was all to us! We have lost our best friend!”

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<sup>13</sup> Chesnut, *A Diary from Dixie* (1905), 486f., 544. Muhlenfeld and Woodward’s later edition of the diary mentions that between June and November, 1863, Chesnut “visited” Flat Rock, but provides no details. Later references in her diary suggest that Chesnut stayed in touch with her Flat Rock sister Kate at least until the early weeks of 1865, when she was preparing to take refuge there. Whether she arrived or not, or how long she may have stayed, is not clear. A few of the tight social and economic connections among Flat Rock’s Charleston elites can be teased out from Chesnut’s fragments. Daniel Blake, Combahee River SC planter and owner of The Meadows (ca. 1829), became the 15th largest slaveholder in western North Carolina by 1860, and the largest in Henderson County, with 59 slaves. Adding this number to those he owned in South Carolina finds Blake enslaving a total of 586 individuals in 1860, making him one of the largest slaveholders in the US at the time. See list of the 50 largest slaveholders in western North Carolina in 1860, in Inscoc, *Mountain Masters*, 265, and discussion of slave ownership among the Flat Rock part-year residents in chapter 6.

Dunroy had recently (1862) been built by Henry Farmer, owner of the Farmer Hotel, for Florida cotton planter David R. Williams (from Society Hill, South Carolina). Williams’s family spent summers at the hotel during the war while he was in the Confederate army. After the war ended, the family lived in Dunroy until 1868, when they sold it. Cuthbert, *Flat Rock of the Old Time*, 97–100 shows Dunroy (#5) on Old State (later Rutledge) Road, and The Meadows (#6) on the French Broad Properties and Owners map and list between Hendersonville and Mills Gap roads (near Fletcher). Griffith, *Flat Rock Historic District Boundary Increase, Boundary Decrease*, 1-71, uses “Little Charleston of the Mountains” several times, but does not source it beyond Patton’s book. Unfortunately, it also does not include interior details for Dunroy (a “Greek Revival and Italianate style” house), which might or might not match some of those Patton used to characterize elegant Flat Rock houses. For more recent detail on Dunroy, see 7/71–7/73. John Dills’s “*Flat Rock Still Boasts Splendor*,” *Asheville Citizen-Times*, Feb. 17, 1963, *DI*, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/196900755>, accessed July, 28, 2018, focuses mainly upon Dunroy.

## *Ravenel’s Romanticized Charleston (1906)*

A year after Chesnut’s diary (and Thomas Dixon’s *The Clansman*) appeared in print, Harriott Horry (Mrs. St. Julien) Ravenel (married into a rice-planter family) published *Charleston: The Place and the People*.<sup>14</sup> Ravenel’s 554-page book appeared in the midst of the reactionary Redeemer movement in the south, the proliferation of Jim Crow laws, and the United Daughters of the Confederacy’s placement of scores of monuments to “the Lost Cause.”<sup>15</sup>

Informed by all of those currents, Ravenel’s book catalogued the glories that would be evoked by the Little Charleston-of-the-Mountains formulation four decades later: romantically drawn cityscapes, extensive treatments of elite families (Alston, Blake, Brewton, Drayton, Heyward, Huger, Izard, Lowndes, Manigault, Middleton, Pinckney, Poinsett, Pringle, Ravenel, Rhett, Rutledge); lavish balls in elegant houses; stately churches; elegantly landscaped English gardens; loyal and respectful Black servants staffing houses and working the fields; rice planters of learning, elegant taste and refined, high-minded judgment who “ruled their little dominions well and generously” and served selflessly as “statesmen.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Harriott Horry (Mrs. St. Julien) Ravenel, *Charleston: The Place and the People* (New York: Macmillan, 1906). Ravenel’s book was later reprinted several times. A full-text version of the 1906 edition is available at <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uva.x000395529;view=1up;seq=9>, accessed August 2, 2018. Its extensive index allows access to many examples of her consistently and unreservedly laudatory treatment of Charleston. For a full-text version of Dixon’s *The Clansman, An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan* (1905) (see <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/26240/26240-h/26240-h.htm>, accessed Feb. 17, 2020). It was the basis for his motion picture *Birth of a Nation* (1915), see “The Birth of a Nation (1915),” Virginia Center for Civil War Studies, accessed July 5, 2020, <https://civilwar.vt.edu/the-birth-of-a-nation-1915>.

<sup>15</sup> On the Redeemer movement, see Robert F. Durden, “Redeemer Democrats,” *Ncpedia* (2006), from Encyclopedia of North Carolina, <https://www.ncpedia.org/redeemer-democrats>, accessed November 15, 2019.

<sup>16</sup> In *A Golden Haze of Memory*, 102–3, Yuhl refers to Ravenel’s several times republished book as “filiopietistic local history” based upon “inherited conceptions of place and past” and rooted in “the historical commitments of her class” and “a notion of the region as . . . beautiful with the past.” Ravenel’s married name belonged to lowcountry cotton- and rice-planters. In her Preface, Ravenel listed a number of prominent planter families as sources of information (e.g., Heyward, Huger, Middleton, Pinckney, Pringle, Ravenel). For several relevant images, see Broad and Church Streets Corner, 186; Drawing Room Pringle House, 460; One end of drawing room in the Pringle house (1774; 70 Tradd Street), 460; and St. Michael’s Church From Broad Street, 98.



It is important to note that Ravenel’s book appeared close upon the opening of the United Daughters of the Confederacy’s campaign to place memorials to heroes of the “War Between the States” throughout the South. The UDC, formed in 1894, became a major actor in the region-wide memorialization of their chosen heroes in what they preferred to call the War Between the States, or the Lost Cause.<sup>17</sup>

The central role played by women in the memorialization of the Lost Cause began long before the UDC appeared upon the scene. Twenty years before the UDC appeared, a group of Charleston women had inaugurated an annual memorial event at Charleston’s Magnolia Cemetery, the preferred resting place of the city’s elite.<sup>18</sup>

### *Trenholm’s Sketch of the Flat Rock Past (1908)*

Two years after Ravenel’s book appeared, Flat Rock resident and daughter of the Lowcountry Alicia Middleton Trenholm brought the emerging Charleston narrative to western North Carolina in a thirty-six-page souvenir booklet, *Flat Rock: A Sketch of the Past*.<sup>19</sup>

Trenholm’s sketch of “The Pioneers” of Flat Rock included “quite a colony of Charlestonians . . . among them many [of the] most distinguished . . . of their native State . . . Rutledge, Drayton, Lowndes, Elliott, Pinckney, Middleton . . .” The old State road brought, Trenholm wrote,

many a merry party on their annual exodus to their summer homes!: . . . [The] lumbering, clumsy stage-coach, creaking and groaning, swinging from side to side as the poor, tired horses . . . crept slowly up the steep grades.

The regular residents, however, drove up in their own carriages, . . . followed by a train of wagons, bearing luggage, groceries, and the servants, quite a retinue to each family.

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<sup>17</sup> For a general overview of the UDC, see Caroline E. Janney, “United Daughters of the Confederacy,” in *Encyclopedia Virginia* (Virginia Humanities in partnership with Library of Virginia, Jan. 11, 2019), [https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/United\\_Daughters\\_of\\_the\\_Confederacy](https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/United_Daughters_of_the_Confederacy). For the UDC’s statement of current policies concerning such monuments, see its own website, <https://www.hqudc.org>, accessed Aug. 20, 2018. For a full-scale analysis of the multifaceted UDC campaign, see Karen Cox, *Dixie’s Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003). One of the grandest of the UDC’s monuments was the Confederate Defenders of Charleston Monument (1932). See “Confederate Defenders of Charleston Historical Marker,” *Historical Marker Database*, accessed July 5, 2020, <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=120742>.

<sup>18</sup> See Ladies Memorial Association, “Memorial Day At Magnolia Cemetery,” May 10, 1875, University of South Carolina Libraries Digital Collection, <https://digital.tcl.sc.edu/digital/collection/bro/id/790/rec/767>, accessed June 30, 2019.

<sup>19</sup> Trenholm was a descendent of Edward Trenholm, who purchased the Barings’ home, The Lodge, in 1854. The family still owned it in 1908, and Trenholm lived there. Much of Trenholm’s language could have been taken directly from Ravenel, but whether any of it was or not is impossible to know—as is whether she had read Ravenel’s then-recent book.

At the top of the mountain they encountered “deeply blue sky . . . sparkling streams” and lush vegetation” that “painted the earth with colors most rare.” Among them was the “very handsome, bright and amusing” Mrs. Charles Baring, who, despite her somewhat scandalous past, had “plenty of strength of character” and enough flamboyance even while suffering in her last illness, [to give] orders that her coachman should train her horses to be driven around the house—up and down her avenue—so that, when her spirit passed on to another life, her bodily remains should be taken to her grave in a dignified and befitting manner.<sup>20</sup>

Some of Flat Rock’s lowcountry people, Trenholm pointed out, could claim European credentials. The Count de Choiseul was “at that time French Consul” at Charleston. “Does it not seem quite remarkable,” Trenholm asked rhetorically, “that one, bearing the name of one of the oldest and most illustrious families of France, should have drifted into such a very remote corner of the world?” And Mitchell C. King, “the beloved physician of this locality for over 60 years,” had been

a fellow-student (at the University of Goettingen) of Otto Von Bismarck. These friends kept up a regular correspondence for years, and letters and photographs of Bismarck, are highly prized by Dr. King’s descendants.<sup>21</sup>

The Civil War (a time of “The Lawless,” Trenholm called it), interrupted the Charleston-like social scene, but before that

the social life must have been, truly, most delightful, for people came up early and remained until quite late in the autumn, and entertained continually. Letters in the possession of residents here, tell of costume balls, dinner parties, and various amusements.<sup>22</sup>

### ***Gayly Dressed Cavaliers and Ebony Children of the Sun: Morley’s The Carolina Mountains (1913)***

Following close upon Chesnut’s, Ravenel’s, and Trenholm’s brief accounts of the period 1905–1908 was Margaret Morley’s popular illustrated book, *The Carolina Mountains* (1913). Born and raised in Brooklyn, graduate of SUNY, trained as a biologist (including at Woods Hole marine laboratory), but best known for her work as a nature illustrator, photographer, and writer, Morley had ventured into the mountains by 1890, fallen in love with them, and soon bought a house in Tryon, North Carolina, where she remained for many years.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Trenholm, *Flat Rock*, 11, 13, 15, 21.

<sup>21</sup> Trenholm, *Flat Rock*, 27.

<sup>22</sup> Trenholm, *Flat Rock*, 27–29. The letters are neither cited nor quoted.

<sup>23</sup> Morley, *Carolina Mountains*. Oddly, *NCpedia* does not include Morley. A number of her books are available, full-text, online.

*The Carolina Mountains* was her fourteenth book, and it quickly gained (and retained for decades) a wide audience. It presented what was then the fullest (albeit romantic) discussion of the Lowcountry-to-Flat Rock phenomenon, including several components of the emerging “Little Charleston” fantasy.

Running to almost five hundred pages, *The Carolina Mountains* narrative was framed within a synoptic view of the western North Carolina mountains: the Cherokees, white settlement, iconic mountain peaks and ranges (the Blue Ridge, the Great Smokies, Grandfather Mountain), vegetation and mineralogy, developed and developing tourist areas (Caesar’s Head, Chimney Rock, Highlands, the Sapphire Country, Blowing Rock), and ethnographic factors such as folkways and speech.

A key to Morley’s racial and cultural perspective emerged in the book’s opening pages, when she mentioned “the negro” as “that true child of the sun . . . not so often seen in the higher mountains except in the larger villages.” Slaves in the mountains, she said, are “descended from slaves brought up on the plantations in the immediate neighborhood . . . [and] really proud of their slavery and that they learned how to work and how to behave.”<sup>24</sup>

Later on, Morley elaborated this image and combined it with one of Lowcountry elites to evoke unconflicted racial and cultural harmony. “Long before the train had surmounted the . . . Blue Ridge,” she said,

the beauty, and salubrity of the high mountains had called up from the eastern lowlands people of wealth and refinement to make here and there their summer homes.

Morley’s Lowcountry people trekked for two weeks in coaches and wagons reminiscent of traveling “queens and princesses . . . [of] far-away times.” We may be sure, she said,

that no lovelier faces looked out from the gorgeous retinue on its way across the hills of the past than could be seen in the carriages where sat the ladies of the New World, with their patrician beauty and their gracious manners. And although the escort of the New World travelers did not number a thousand gayly dressed cavaliers, it consisted of a retinue of those ebony children of the sun, who loved the pleasant journey, and loved their gentle lords and ladies, — for all this happened in those halcyon days “before the war” when the angel of wrath had not yet righted the wrong of holding even a Black man in subjection to the will of another, and when the real “quality” cherished their slaves and were greatly loved by them. It must have been like coming to Arcadia, up from the heated plains . . .<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Morley, *Carolina Mountains*, 11–13. The volume is indexed but includes neither source notes nor bibliography. There are many other references to slaves and slavery (21, 78, 114, 139, 140–43). All quotations from this source.

<sup>25</sup> Morley, *Carolina Mountains*, 114.

As Morley presented it, the coming of the summer visitors “did not to any extent influence the lives of the natives.”<sup>26</sup> At the same time, unfortunately, the book was also rife with confused, ambivalent, and wistful characterizations of local mountaineers, lowcountry sojourners, enslaved people and their interactions in Henderson County and Flat Rock. Her mountaineers follow models deployed by local color writers for more than forty years: rusticity, guilelessness, isolation, quaintness, poverty, cultural backwardness, and similar attributes. Sketching the pre-railroad travels of lowcountry people through the Saluda Gap to Flat Rock, in a chapter entitled “Flat Rock Community: An Ideal of the Past,” Morley rhapsodized that

The first and most important of these patrician settlements was at Flat Rock, the people coming from Charleston, the centre of civilization in the Far South . . . Into the great, sweet wilderness . . . [*they brought*] their servants and their laborers . . .

Morley’s characterization of “the old days . . . at Flat Rock” told of the Little River Road “thronged with carriage and riders . . . exchanging greetings and making a gay scene in the midst of the wild nature that surrounded them.” Later, the two-engine train rolled up the formidable Saluda grade, stopped at “cool and breezy” Saluda, and continued on through Saluda Gap and into Flat Rock, the “favorite summer resort,” she said, for the “wealthy and refined” Southerners of the Lowcountry—many from Charleston, “the centre of civilization in the Far South”—developing their “beautiful estates . . . [and] pleasure roads through the primeval forest.”<sup>27</sup>

Into this “little corner of the great wilderness . . . [came] “the ‘quality’ . . . [as] pioneers in the forest of Arcadia,” whose names Morley dropped like crumbs for anyone who might have wanted to follow them into a more grounded narrative of the Flat Rock community than had so far been available: Pinckney, Rutledge, Lowndes, Elliott, Middleton, Molyneux (“British Consul at Savannah”), and the Count de Choiseul (“French Consul at the same place”).

Among this group were the illustrious founders: Charles Baring (“the English Barings, of banking fame”), C. G. Memminger (“loved for his generosity and public spirit”), and Judge Mitchell King (whom she appears to confuse with his physician son Mitchell). The Barings’ home “The Lodge” echoes Shakespeare and Stratford-on-Avon, and St. John in the Wilderness is “set apart and beautified by the ‘quality’ of a past generation.” The whole, Morely concluded, gives “promise of a renaissance . . . let us hope, to the future development of all [this] beautiful region.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Morley, *Carolina Mountains*, 143.

<sup>27</sup> Morley, *Carolina Mountains*, 111–19.

<sup>28</sup> Morley, *The Carolina Mountains*, 111–18.

A year later, Arthur’s *Western North Carolina* fleshed out the scene at The Lodge with a colorful sketch of Baring’s flamboyant wife Susan:

a dramatic writer, and amateur actress . . . [who] entertained extensively and brilliantly at Flat Rock, . . . invariably [dressed in] a remarkable costume of purple velvet, with headpiece of purple plumes, and many diamonds . . . [and sleeping in a bedroom with] “curious old wall paper with . . . designs of the Crusaders.”<sup>29</sup>

For Morley, the coming of Lowcountry gentlefolk was an unproblematic aspect of a romanticized narrative. The Civil War, the end of slavery, and the turbulence of Reconstruction passed unmentioned, but Flat Rock

grew into a good-sized community of delightful homes, [where] there is still an air of elegance and seclusion about its old estates, with their mansions . . . set back behind the trees, and . . . life was a joyous round of visits and merrymakings . . . costume balls for the young people, and dinner-parties for their elders . . .<sup>30</sup>

One of Morley’s more substantive additions to the Flat Rock discussion, it turns out, was her attention to other western North Carolina tourist areas that were developing at the same time. Her predecessor commentators had focused mostly upon the early roads and turnpikes up the mountains from South Carolina and into Flat Rock, but in fact Flat Rock was but one node in the development of tourism, drawing travelers from many distant areas, over several major routes, to a number of such developmental nodes in western North Carolina, decade after decade.<sup>31</sup>

## *Little Charleston and the “Land of the Sky”*: Competing Discourses

The “Little Charleston of the Mountains” phrase can be traced to a single source: Sadie Patton’s *The Story of Henderson County*. But it emerged within a related (and broader) characterization of the western North Carolina mountains (and especially Asheville) as the “Land of the Sky”—a phrase that gained popularity earlier emerging from Christian

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<sup>29</sup> Arthur, *Western North Carolina*, 492–96, <https://archive.org/details/westernnorthcar00arthgoog>, accessed December 26, 2017. Arthur said his discussion was based upon “that storehouse of information, “Asheville’s Centenary,” of fellow historian F. A. Sondley’s 4-page article in the *Asheville Daily Citizen* of Feb. 5, 1898. Curiously, that article contains no reference to Flat Rock. Arthur also cites (493) “the history of Henderson (town and county) by Mrs. Mattie S. Chandler, written expressly for this work.” Arthur’s note 12, p. 511, identifies “Mattie S.” as “Mrs. Mattie Smathers Chandler’s history of Henderson county” as a source, but we have not been able to identify this item. It seems likely that Mattie was Sadie’s sister, raising the possibility that Arthur and Sadie Smathers Patton may have been acquainted.

<sup>30</sup> Morley, *Carolina Mountains*, 115.

<sup>31</sup> See for example, John Parris’s “Roaming the Mountains” articles in the *Asheville Citizen-Times* during the 1950’s: “Toxaway Lake Inn Once Was the Millionaires’ Paradise,” *Asheville Citizen*, March 7, 1955, 16; “Heroism of Old Man Ended War Between Highlands and Moccasin,” <https://www.newspapers.com/image/195386362/?terms=%22John%2BParris%22%2BAsheville>, accessed August 9, 2018.

Reid’s local color novel *The Land of the Sky, or, Adventures in Mountain By-Ways* (1875). The motives, means, and results by which “Land of the Sky” was transmitted and adopted are more identifiable than those for “Little Charleston.”<sup>32</sup>

Although the histories of the two phrases differ somewhat, both were examples of what would now be called “branding,” and both became a collecting point for broad-scaled promotional (hence economic and social as well as cultural) efforts by railroads, hotels, parks and resorts, summer camps, religious assemblies, realtors and developers, and analogous entities.

Some promotional mechanisms and formats were similar, but they seem to have been more varied and numerous in Asheville than in Flat Rock/Hendersonville: postcards, photographs, souvenir booklets and merchandise, newspaper articles and advertisements, real estate brochures and marketing events, and (from the later 1920s) commercial radio.

As early as 1894, C. G. Memminger’s son, Allard Memminger, borrowed the term “Land of the Sky” as title for an article in the *North Carolina Medical Journal*. It focused not upon Asheville, but upon Hendersonville and Flat Rock, “situated on the Asheville and Spartanburg Railroad”—close enough, he insisted to share in the salubrious climate.<sup>33</sup> Twenty-five years later, the Hendersonville Board of Trade also tried to piggyback on “Land of the Sky” in its *Hendersonville, North Carolina, in the “Land of the Sky”* (1918). But the phrase still did not take root in Henderson County as it had in Buncombe, and it was to be almost another thirty years before Patton’s alternative appeared.

## *Mythicizing and Preserving Charleston (1917–1939)*

The prior romantic characterizations of Charleston were further fleshed out (although not linked specifically to Flat Rock) in Charleston artist Alice Ravenel Huger Smith’s *The Dwelling Houses of Charleston, South Carolina* and *Twenty Drawings of the Pringle House* (both 1917).

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<sup>32</sup> Although “Land of the Sky” started to be widely disseminated with regard to Asheville following the appearance of Reid’s novel, it appeared first three years earlier than that in F. G. De Fontaine’s article “The French Broad” in Oliver Wendell Holmes, *Picturesque America; or, the Land We Live In* (New York: D. Appleton, 1872). For this earlier reference I am grateful to my colleague Kevin E. O’Donnell. The most extensive available analysis of the “Land of the Sky” phrase and image is in three component posts in David E. Whisnant, *Asheville Junction* (<https://ashevillejunction.com/>): “Asheville as ‘The Land of the Sky’: The Novel, and a Phrase That Stuck,” <https://ashevillejunction.com/asheville-as-the-land-of-the-sky-a-novel-and-a-phrase-that-stuck/>, accessed August 3, 2018; “‘The Land of the Sky’: A Brief Guide to the Novel and Its Moment,” <http://ashevillejunction.com/the-land-of-the-sky-brief-guide-to-the-novel-and-its-moment/>, accessed August 3, 2018; and “‘The Land of the Sky’: How a Phrase Went So Far, So Fast, and Lasted So Long,” <http://ashevillejunction.com/the-land-of-the-sky-how-did-it-go-so-far-so-fast-and-why-has-it-lasted-so-long/>, accessed Aug. 3, 2018. Also useful is Richard D. Starnes, *Creating the Land of the Sky: Tourism and Society in Western North Carolina* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005), 37–42 and *passim*. For the Hendersonville use, see Hendersonville Board of Trade, *Hendersonville, North Carolina, in the “Land of the Sky”* (Hendersonville: Board of Trade, 1918). Patton comments briefly upon the “Land of the Sky” phrase in *The Story of Henderson County*, 229.

<sup>33</sup> Allard Memminger, “The Land of the Sky: Flat Rock and Hendersonville, North Carolina as Health Resorts,” *North Carolina Medical Journal* 33 (June 1894), 237–41, <https://archive.org/details/northcarolinamed-33341894jack/page/442>, accessed May 1, 2019.



As Charleston historian Stephanie Yuhl has argued, Smith “absorbed the values and beliefs of [the antebellum] generation . . . loyal to its own selective memory of antebellum culture.”<sup>34</sup> Tutored by her Confederate veteran father on walks through historic Charleston (most memorably for her, the Middleton rice plantation on the Ashley River), and proud of her English and Huguenot blood and breeding, Smith took it as her life’s work to represent the city’s and area’s “praiseworthy past” in art—drawing and sketching the homes of the old elite families. Smith’s *The Dwelling Houses of Charleston*, Yuhl observes, later “served as an inspirational text for the city’s historic preservation movement.”<sup>35</sup> Both *Dwelling Houses* and a few images from her *Twenty Drawings of the Pringle House* are fortunately available online.<sup>36</sup>

Smith’s later book, *A Carolina Rice Plantation of the Fifties—30 Paintings in Water-Colour* (1936) carried her project forward. It is a series of “memory sketches” in which white figures are individualized while Black ones are anonymized. It was intended, she said, “to be a laurel wreath for that great civilization, of the rice-planting era in South Carolina.” “Landscapes of longing,” Yuhl quotes one critic as calling them, “images that merge objective, natural observation with moral intention.”<sup>37</sup> Yuhl devotes many pages to Alice Smith and her work of literally reimagining Lowcountry Charleston and normalizing and marketing her romantic version of it to mostly “wealthy, predominantly urban, non-Southern whites” through “virtual history clinic” sessions for visitors to her gallery and traveling national and international exhibits

As Yuhl explains, the rather ragtag Charleston that was holding (barely) to its grand past by the end of World War I did not leave rejuvenation only to its writers, painters, and garden clubs, important as they were.

A group of white Charlestonians (mostly women) “launched a preservation movement shaped by a highly selective historical memory that is best described as personal, romantic, and heroic.”<sup>38</sup> Most of the “old dwellings” they focused on were the grand ones of Charleston’s elite families (rice planters and others such as the Manigaults, Heywards, Hugers, Ravenels, Lees, Pinckneys, and others). Beginning with the Society for the

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<sup>34</sup> Yuhl, *A Golden Haze of Memory: The Making of Historic Charleston* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 60. Ravenel Huger Smith and Huger Smith, *The Dwelling Houses of Charleston, South Carolina*. Ravenel Huger Smith’s name itself foregrounded her family connection to rice plantation history, in which both Ravenels and Hugers had long been major players.

<sup>35</sup> Yuhl, *Golden Haze*, 64.

<sup>36</sup> See Alice R. Huger Smith and D. E. Huger Smith, *Dwelling Houses of Charleston, South Carolina, The* (Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott, 1917), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=ncs1.ark:/13960/t1tf0d71k;view=1up;seq=9>, accessed Feb. 2, 2016; Georgetown County Public Library, *Twenty Drawings of the Pringle House* (1917), <https://cdm16016.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15077coll18/id/1>, accessed July 5, 2019.

<sup>37</sup> Yuhl, *Golden Haze*, 69. Smith, *A Carolina Rice Plantation of the Fifties*.

<sup>38</sup> Yuhl, *Golden Haze*, 21. A more recent narrative and analysis of these activities is available in Kytte and Roberts, *Denmark Vesey’s Garden*, 2018.

Preservation of Old Dwellings (1920), the Society for the Preservation of Negro Spirituals (1922), the city’s Board of Architectural Review (1931), and the Chamber of Commerce, the effort synergized numerous institutions, especially with regard to tourism.<sup>39</sup>

Charleston’s architectural preservation movement grew to include artistic, musical (*Porgy and Bess*), theatrical, historical, advertising, public education, and literary sectors as well.

By the mid-1930s, these efforts were bearing fruit. In early 1939, Charleston native playwright Dubose Heyward (whose novel *Porgy* and musical *Porgy and Bess* were hits in 1927 and 1935), brought the story to a mass audience in the pages of *National Geographic*, celebrating the city’s architecture, gardens, “aristocratic traditions and grand manners,” progressive currents, and industrial development. Charlestonians still live in their “noble mansions,” Heyward reported, “clinging to modes of life and thought . . . and a code of manners and morals of an earlier day,” continuing to stage “seasonal balls . . . [that] are examples of social decorum and formal elegance.” The Civil War and Reconstruction lie decades in the past, but one can still round a corner and find “music of an outlandish but gaily negroid character . . . [performed by] a dozen negro boys . . . [directed by the] antics of a [teenage] maestro . . . [while] other Black urchins . . . solicit a nickel to dance and sing.”<sup>40</sup>

The final photograph in the Heyward article showed two elderly Black men (one a minister) posing side-by-side in dress suits: “Before the War between the States,” the caption explained,

the graybeard at left was romping around a plantation. Now he and the minister live on an island . . . where the latter still heads a negro orphans’ home. The boys and girls operate a farm. Friendly white folk supply seed and other essentials.”

Heyward’s article, aimed at the slightly upscale *National Geographic* audience during the brief post-Depression pre-World War II interval, caught the spirit of the new moment in which Charleston’s historical elite and newly emerging trend setters joined efforts to relaunch the city.

It was a beguiling story of permanence and change, sliding noiselessly over the top of ubiquitous Jim Crow America that itself still had several decades to run.

How the selective memory of Mary Chesnut’s successor chroniclers Ravenel and Huger Smith came to be planted in Henderson County, North Carolina, is complicated and only partly determinable. Alicia Middleton Trenholm and Margaret Morley transmitted parts of it, but institutional (and market) processes were operating as well.

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<sup>39</sup> Yuhl, *Golden Haze*, 24, 127. The Chamber of Commerce and its predecessor entities had been in existence since the 1770s.

<sup>40</sup> Dubose Heyward and Stewart B. Anthony, “Charleston: Where Mellow Past and Present Meet,” *National Geographic* 75 (March 1939), 273–98. Photographs in this article are useful in depicting Charleston in 1939 but are prohibitively costly to reprint. How Heyward’s (and his wife’s) activities in the promotion of a resurgent and romanticized Charleston emerged in this period is treated at length in Kytte and Roberts, *Denmark Vesey’s Garden* (2018).

## *Perpetuating the “Lost Cause” in Flat Rock: Fletcher’s “Little Charleston” Memoria*

About a dozen years before the phrase itself appeared in the Flat Rock community—by then already a century-old reservoir of “noted” Lowcountry people, their family lines, and their preferred historical narratives—an elaborate public shrine to the Lost Cause began to be installed in what had long been the Fletcher extension of Flat Rock.<sup>41</sup>

The shrine was the brainchild not of a Lowcountry-born Flat Rock/Fletcher resident, but of Clarence Stuart McClellan, who became rector of Calvary Episcopal Church in 1920. He fancied a collection of granite memorials—which he grandly called “Westminster Abbey of the South”—that would shun war heroes in favor of “statesmen, writers and poets” who represented “the great ideals of the South: its songs, its poetry, its . . . writers [and] statesmen.”<sup>42</sup>

McClellan died (in 1958) before his dream (including a focal monument to Robert E. Lee—“not Lee the fighter but Lee the educator”) was finished. But local newspaper columnist John Parris ventured that the already standing monuments honored “the noble men and women of the South [who after the War came] into their own.” Exactly how Jefferson Davis, minstrel composer Dan Emmett, and several others “came into their own” is left unexplained.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Recent recontextualizing scholarly and cultural critiques of the Lost Cause notion have forced a broad reconsideration of the monuments associated with it. See for example Karen Cox, *Dixie’s Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), and Ethan Kytte and Blain Roberts, *Denmark Vesey’s Garden: Slavery and Memory in the Cradle of the Confederacy* (New York: The New Press, 2018), 114–40.

<sup>42</sup> John Parris, “Dream Transformed into A Unique Shrine,” *Asheville Citizen-Times*, Sept. 18, 1955, p. D1.

<sup>43</sup> Parris, “Dream Transformed.” During his long association with the *Asheville Citizen-Times*, John Parris published many dozens of his columns about life and culture in western North Carolina. Many were collected in volumes: John Parris and Dorothy Luxton Parris, *Roaming the Mountains with John Parris* (1955); *My Mountains, My People*. (1957); *Mountain Bred* (1967); and *These Storied Mountains* (1972). A subsequent chapter chronicles Parris’s career. Composer and entertainer Emmett (1815–1904) founded the blackface Virginia Minstrels performing group. He composed more than four dozen songs, some of which (perhaps including “Dixie”) are still current in vernacular and poplar repertoire and have been many times recorded. See “Dan Emmett,” *Wikipedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Dan\\_Emmett&oldid=960548000](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Dan_Emmett&oldid=960548000), accessed June 3, 2019. One of those statesmen, a bronze tablet in whose honor was placed in the church in 1928, was North Carolina Civil War governor (and slaveholder) Zebulon B. Vance. McClellan spoke at the dedication. See Gordon B. McKinney, *Zeb Vance: North Carolina’s Civil War Governor and Gilded Age Political Leader* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 410. Paradoxically, McClellan was related to the controversial northern Civil War Gen. George B. McClellan. See “George B. McClellan,” *Wikipedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=George\\_B.\\_McClellan&oldid=965870970](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=George_B._McClellan&oldid=965870970), accessed Aug. 20, 2018.

One item in McClellan’s plan for memorializing “the great ideals of the South” compressed Trenholm’s, Huger Smith’s, Morley’s, and Patton’s renderings of “faithful old mammies” struggling up the mountain behind fancifully dressed lowlanders in their carriages. It was “a bronze life-sized statue of the Southern Negro Mammy.”<sup>44</sup> “I want to see her,” Parris quoted McClellan saying,

with her big, wide, white, well-starched apron, her turban, her calico dress, and I wish to see her seated in an old-timey rocking chair as if before some great open fireplace . . . I want to see her hand hard with toil and her face . . . recalling some of those exquisite spirituals of her race.<sup>45</sup>

Perhaps, Parris mused, “someday someone will come along who will pick up the threads of the dream.”<sup>46</sup>

Actually, the first “someone” to pick up some threads was Parris himself, in his column the following day.<sup>47</sup> It tells how Gen. George Stoneman (he of Stoneman’s Raiders) spared the church (used earlier as a Confederate barracks), from whose grounds, if one listened quietly, one might hear on the winds that blew through the pines “the carriages of the people from the low country who organized the parish almost a century ago”: rice planters (hence, slaveholders) Edmund Molyneux, Alexander Robertson, and Alexander Blake.

At an 1857 dinner party at Blake’s home (The Meadows), Parris continues, the three organizers subscribed \$5,000 to build the church. With it they hired a Charleston architect who built it on four acres Blake donated.<sup>48</sup> “Sometimes,” Parris confided,

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<sup>44</sup> The trope of the Black mammy was widespread in proslavery- and Lost Cause-linked iconography and discourse. For extensive discussion of this and other such images, see Kytte and Roberts, *Denmark Vesey’s Garden*.

<sup>45</sup> McClellan’s fascination with the spirituals came in the midst of the revival, interpretation and public performance of that body of music by Charleston’s all-white Society for the Preservation of Spirituals (SPS). See Kytte and Roberts, *Denmark Vesey’s Garden*, chapter 7, “The Sounds of Slavery,” which details the Society’s reinterpretation of the insurgent Black spirituals as nostalgic celebrations of white Christianity and picturesque, compliant Lost Cause stereotype, thus crafting “a commemorative landscape for Jim Crow Charleston.” On Mammy monuments, see also Alison M. Parker, “When White Women Wanted a Monument to Black ‘Mammies.’” *The New York Times*, Feb. 6, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/06/opinion/sunday/confederate-monuments-mammy.html>.

<sup>46</sup> Parris gave no source for this quotation, and did not refer explicitly to Flat Rock, of which Fletcher was a recognized extension and the home of slaveholding rice planters such as Walter and Daniel Blake, William R. Heyward, Alexander Robertson and Joshua Ward. See Cuthbert, *Flat Rock of the Old Time*, map and list following p. 96, and *Asheville Sunday Citizen*, Oct. 14, 1928, p. D5. Calvary Episcopal Church was formed in the home of Daniel Blake in 1857. That “someone” has not turned out to be the church itself, whose online history page mentions neither Rector McClellan’s tenure nor his Westminster Abbey of the South. *Calvary Episcopal Church, Fletcher, NC: Our History*, [http://www.calvaryfletcher.org/?page\\_id=259](http://www.calvaryfletcher.org/?page_id=259), accessed Aug. 16, 2018. For full information on all 23 Civil War-era monuments eventually included at the Calvary Episcopal site, see *Historical Marker Database*, <https://www.hmdb.org/results.asp?Town=Fletcher&State=North%20Carolina>, accessed Aug. 24, 2018.

<sup>47</sup> John Parris, “Stoneman Spared Calvary Church,” *Asheville Citizen-Times*, Sept. 23, 1955, p. 1.

<sup>48</sup> Where or from whom Parris managed to get these rather precise details is not clear.

[when] the wind is high and keen . . . there is a sound like a stagecoach bugle echoing along the old Buncombe Turnpike in the days when events flowed and ebbed around Calvary Church . . . and voices in the wind that plays through the tall pines . . . . [R]iding it are sounds that tease the imagination.

So attractive, pertinacious and (as here) institutionalized has the “Little Charleston” formulation proven to be (whether explicitly attached to the actual phrase or not) that it has by now been anachronistically “read back” into the past as having arisen not in Sadie Patton’s county history in 1947, but contemporaneously with the appearance of Fletcher’s Calvary Episcopal Church in the 1850s and the earliest Lowcountry Flat Rock residents in the 1830s.

A striking instance of this anachronism lies in the interpretive essay attached to the official North Carolina highway historical marker for Flat Rock’s St. John in the Wilderness church (marker P-31, cast in 1951), which says unambiguously that “During the antebellum period, Flat Rock became known as the ‘Little Charleston of the Mountains,’ due to the large number of Charlestonians who summered there.”<sup>49</sup>

A better phrase than Yuhl’s “landscape of longing” could hardly have been chosen for Flat Rock’s transplanted colony of Charlestonians, although one might well modify it slightly to “landscape of longing and aspiration,” to capture more of the valences of “Little Charleston of the Mountains,” which at length proved to be preferred. In any case, the pivotal moment arrived three decades after Chesnut (1905), Ravenel (1906), Morley (1913) and Huger Smith (1917) made their contributions, a half-dozen years after Dubose Heyward’s glowing article, and the year after the Sandburgs purchased and moved into Connemara, when local Flat Rock historian Sadie Smathers Patton published *The Story of Henderson County* (1947), in which the “Little Charleston of the Mountains” phrase seems to have first appeared, and from which it took root and grew.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> State marker P-31, <https://www.ncmarkers.com/Markers.aspx?MarkerId=P-31>, accessed Oct. 10, 2018. One source cited in the essay is the authoritative Catherine Bishir, Jennifer F. Martin, and Michael T. Southern, *Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), which employs the phrase (316-317, item HN 13-27), but does not locate its date or period of origin. Nearly 40 years earlier, Kenneth and Blanche Marsh’s *Historic Flat Rock: Where the Old South Lingers* (Asheville: Biltmore Press, 1961), 5, commenting upon the Barings and other “rich planters who followed them [to Flat Rock] from the low country,” said that Flat Rock “became known as The Little Charleston of the Mountains.” Helen C. Smith’s “Little Charleston of the Mountains,” *Atlanta Constitution*, Sept. 10, 1978, p. 220, said Flat Rock was “sometimes known” as Little Charleston, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/398636889/?terms=%22little%2Bcharleston%2Bof%2Bthe%2Bmountains%2>, accessed Aug. 15, 2018. Thirty years after the CARL national historic site was created in 1968, its official *Archeological Overview and Assessment* (1998) said vaguely that Flat Rock “became known as” Little Charleston. As a source, the report cited Louise Bailey, *From Rock Hill to Connemara: The Story Before Carl Sandburg* (Flat Rock NC: Published for Carl Sandburg Home NHS, National Park Service, 1980), 10, which unambiguously said that the “planters and statesmen . . . from . . . established Charleston families . . . spoke of Flat Rock as their ‘Little Charleston of the Mountains.’” Bailey herself provided no source for this assertion.

<sup>50</sup> Patton, *Story of Henderson County*, 97, and its “Little Charleston-of-the-Mountains” chapter, 199–218. A brief biographical entry on Patton (1886–1975) may be found in NCpedia, <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/patton-sadie>. For her obituary see *Asheville Citizen*, Jan. 3, 1975, p. 5, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/198568608/?terms=%22little%2Bcharleston%2Bof%2Bthe%2Bmountains%2>.



## *Sadie Smathers Patton’s The Story of Henderson County (1947)*

Patton’s use of the “Little Charleston of the Mountains” phrase is seminal, with regard to its origin, to the sources and nature of the underlying image, and to her own presentation of Flat Rock at that historical moment.

Lacking documentation, one cannot say whether Patton was aware of the romantic redefinition and reconstruction of Charleston, knew and talked or corresponded with some of those who were guiding it, or visited the city to see the process for herself. What is evident, in any case, is that she researched and wrote her book during some of those efforts, and that there is a strong congruence between them and her presentation of “Little Charleston-of-the-Mountains.”

The “Little Charleston of the Mountains” phrase could have occurred to Patton as much as a decade or more earlier, however, since the book had been in process for a decade or more.<sup>51</sup>

The Foreword, written by two of her local Woman’s Club colleagues, says that her idea of writing it “dates vaguely from . . . her early womanhood” (she was born in 1886, so perhaps as early as 1910–1920), also possibly with “added impetus” from the DAR’s Revolutionary soldier monuments (the earliest of which date from the early 1890s), and other historically oriented groups and activities.<sup>52</sup> Other likely ones might have been the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) and its own monuments program, the North Carolina Highway Historical Marker Program (begun in 1935), the Henderson County centennial of 1938, her work after 1941 with the North Carolina Department of Archives and History, and other factors.<sup>53</sup> It is important to recognize, in any case, that by the time the phrase first appeared in print, it was already freighted with multiple somewhat ambiguous but unmistakable overtones.

The Foreword (dated March 1946 and written by the President and Vice-Chairman of the Hendersonville Woman’s Club, of which Patton was a charter member) surfaces an important but never before (to our knowledge) mentioned motive. “The aim” of her work, Patton’s associates said, “has been to the end that, during a period of fast growing and

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<sup>51</sup> We do not attempt to prove that the phrase did *not* exist before 1947, but it did not appear in (for example) the Hendersonville city directories of 1915 or 1937–1938.

<sup>52</sup> Foreword, ix–x, written by Mrs. John S. Forrest and Mrs. George F. Wing, Jr. In her own Introduction to the volume, xi–xiii, Patton referred “hours of precious fellowship” with long-time residents, local church records, cemeteries and family bibles, and “an occasional note in some time-stained book or letter.” She did not refer to the abundant evidence in the book that she (as a seasoned legal assistant and court reporter) had found in court records and other public documents, some of which could have urged her toward an altered narrative.

<sup>53</sup> North Carolina Highway Historical Marker Program, <https://www.ncmarkers.com/Home.aspx>, accessed Oct. 9, 2018. Abbie B. Bonesteel’s “Sadie Patton Gathers Historical Materials,” *Asheville Citizen-Times*, Sept. 6, 1936, p. D6 says she was “an interested member [of] and contributor to . . . the U.D.C.” In 1929, Henderson County received a UDC monument to Herman Frank Arnold, who orchestrated “Dixie” for performance at the inauguration of Jefferson Davis; <https://www.hmdb.org/Marker.asp?Marker=81019>, accessed Oct. 6, 2018.



changing citizenry, both of county and town, the racial strains and characteristics of the earlier generations of settlers, which have given distinction to its present shape, should not be lost.”<sup>54</sup>

The two key phrases here (both syntactically and conceptually linked, it appears) are imprecise, but nevertheless suggestive: “period of fast growing and changing citizenry” and “racial strains and characteristics.” Some familiar resonances of these phrases recur frequently within Patton’s story of Henderson County history, but especially within the “Little Charleston” phrase and narrative, which is our concern here.

As sources, Patton referred only to “Writers who visited [Flat Rock] at that time” (during the 1850s and immediately after the Civil War). Who might they have been? What had they seen? And how had they characterized Flat Rock? Those writers (whomever they were) said that

during this Golden Age “it embraced about twenty estates, among others the country seats of Count de Choiseul, the French consul-general, and E. Molyneaux, the British consul-general, and that the Flat Rock community brought the highest development of American civilization into the heart of the most picturesque regions of the American continent.”

These estates . . . and the names associated with the “little Charleston of the mountains” during its first quarter of a century lend their romance to its story and song.

The buttressing details tumble out for twenty more pages: wealthy people, the air of an English countryside, a tumble-down style patterned after one near Stratford-on-the-Avon, wallpaper showing scenes from the Crusades, . . . rooms panel[ed] with rosewood, historic antiques, grand houses with romantic, European names (Glenroy, Heidelberg), built by bankers, planters, and lawyers. “It was on a stage thus set,” Patton lyricized,

that these people from the Lowlands entered upon their role creating here in the Mountains the pastoral whose memory will never dim,—the romantic and leisurely Tidewater country life transplanted into a woodland setting. . .

[The] little colony at Flat Rock brought to a still primitive region an era of luxury, ease and brilliant social activities patterned closely on the splendor of life in the Old Country. . . The Little River road . . . was thronged with carriages and riders, plumes, laces and ruffles of the gay ladies accented by resplendent colors in the livery of footmen and drivers . . . and the jingle of silver-mounted trappings. . .

Balls, theatricals, teas, dinners, the charming and gracious intercourse of this congenial group, with their attending servants, coachmen, footmen, maids and the faithful old mammies, was not long in attracting other pleasure seekers to this section of the mountains.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Sadie Smathers Patton, *The Story of Henderson County* (1947), ix, 199–218.

<sup>55</sup> Patton, *Story of Henderson County* (1947), 199–213.

Within the chapter and elsewhere, Patton characterizes some of the lowcountry families and their Flat Rock homes and estates, frequently emphasizing European origins and connections, wealth, elegant tastes in interior decoration and landscape design, and high social and cultural standing. Many examples pepper her story: Andrew Johnstone’s Beaumont was “known throughout the south for . . . [its] gardens”; Judge King’s furniture for Argyle was made by a Charleston cabinetmaker brought in for the purpose; the Count de Choiseul built a French chateau on top of a hill, and a later stone castle with “gothic lines, Tudor chimneys, and scrollwork trim”; Molyneux’s Brooklands was “laid out . . . much after the pattern of an English country place.”<sup>56</sup>

Patton’s 1947 discussion of Flat Rock was colorful, and her “Little Charleston-of-the-Mountains” phrase resonated with readers, among whom it was to remain and flourish for decades. But how and by whom did the phrase get passed along, disseminated, and normalized? Who picked it up and passed it along? And how were its nuances and resonances shaped by the process?<sup>57</sup>

First to pick it up was the Asheville *Citizen-Times* review of Patton’s book that appeared immediately after it was published. Western North Carolina, the reviewer asserted (with a passing nod to early Buncombe County historian Forster A. Sondley), has had “few genuine historians with sufficient interest and zeal to labor in an almost virgin field and record for posterity the fascinating story of . . . white civilization and of its advance and development in this hill country.” Patton’s book, by contrast, reaches “from the days of the Cherokees to the present stage of its steady march toward progress and betterment,” including “the story of Flat Rock, the little Charleston of the mountains.” The reviewer offered no comments on, or supportive of, either the admiring reference to the advance of “white civilization” or the “little Charleston” phrase.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Patton, *Story of Henderson County*, 11–12, 203, 208, 210, 211. For an excellent discussion and analysis of these and other Flat Rock and Henderson County historic structures, see Bishir, Southern, and Martin, *Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina*, 310–24.

<sup>57</sup> A search of digitized newspapers for “Little Charleston of the Mountains” (unconstrained by location, newspaper title, or date) returns about 50 items, beginning with the *Asheville Citizen-Times* review of Patton’s book. A search for the years 1947–2016 returns about the same number of items, the most recent being writer Rob Neufeld’s Oct. 9, 2016 article, “The Sandburg House Harbors Two Past Worlds,” <http://www.citizen-times.com/story/news/local/2016/10/09/visiting-past-sandburg-house-harbors-two-past-worlds/91802592/>, accessed August 3, 2018. A constrained search on Google yields 10,300 results.

<sup>58</sup> The writer was designated only as “G. W. M.” Sondley’s history of Asheville and Buncombe County had appeared in 1922.

## Appeal of a Whites-only Narrative

“Little Charleston of the Mountains” was, as the foregoing evidence indicates, the name of a *chosen* narrative, neither mandated nor supported by the historical evidence. Both name and narrative were defined and deployed at what turned out to be a historically pivotal moment: 1947, in the midst of the post–World War II boom in new families, burgeoning housing markets, automobile sales and tourism.

A brief historical reflection on that frame suggests at least a few reasons (which varied from one chooser/deployer to another) why such a choice was made:

It was congruent with the then-dominant romantic *Golden Haze* narrative of a *Charleston* that never was: white men, “leading families,” grand houses, cultured tastes, happy and loyal slaves, and a perennial “gay” social scene.

It presented Flat Rock as a monument to the Lost Cause interpretation of the Civil War and Reconstruction championed by various groups and institutions, among which the United Daughters of the Confederacy (in which Sadie Patton—agreed by consensus to be the major historian of Henderson County and Flat Rock—was active) was a central one.<sup>59</sup>

The Black people who were admitted to the narrative served to ratify its core features, and thus were presented as happy, well taken care of by their benevolent masters, and consequently loyal to them.

It allowed for narrative simplification that facilitated its deployment for a variety of purposes: reification and solidification of existing class and racial boundaries, perennial ritual celebration of an idealized past, and adaptation within the real estate marketing and local development discourses.

The complexities of Black history at the terminal end of the long road—in Flat Rock, East Flat Rock, Hendersonville and Henderson County—did not have to be engaged or included within the chosen narrative. Sadie Smathers Patton, widely acknowledged as the authoritative historian of Henderson County, was unlikely to see her perspectives questioned or challenged, even if, for example, the history of (significantly black) East Flat Rock was almost absent from her book.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> These and related themes are extensively documented and explored in Kytte and Roberts, *Denmark Vesey's Garden* (2018).

<sup>60</sup> As evidence of this exclusion, one might take the list of Pre-Publication Subscribers in Patton's book. From East Flat Rock there were two. From Flat Rock there were 20, including some from early slave-holding families (Alston, Blake, Cheves, King, Memminger), and from Hendersonville more than 100. The full history and development of East Flat Rock lie beyond the bounds of this current study, except to the extent that they figure in Linda Culpepper's “Black Charlestonians in the Mountains: African American Community Building in Post-Civil-War Flat Rock, North Carolina,” *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 2 (2002), 362–81, and some few documentary sources cited elsewhere.

In the few places in Patton’s history in which blacks did appear, they were subsumed within the Lost Cause narrative. During the war, she recounted, bushwhackers and other renegades were stealing the possessions of wealthy Flat Rock lowlanders. At one of the homes of the Count de Choiseul,

a slave . . . blindfolded . . . was led to the woods where he dug a cave, in which large sums of money were buried, and carefully covered. After the war, the place could never be located, by anyone.

Similarly,

The story of Watt Bryson and his faithful servant, George Mills, will always live in the annals of Confederate days in Henderson County . . . When [Bryson] left to join the army, his body guard and constant companion, a negro slave, accompanied him. After Watt had died of his wounds on a battlefield in Virginia, George kept watch over the body until he was able to . . . start on the long trip back home. Day and night, he drove and kept a vigil until . . . the body of the late soldier . . . [could be buried at his home] in Fletcher . . . George Mills [became] a respectable Negro who . . . [during] his long life won the friendship of all who had known of his love and faithful service to his young master . . .<sup>61</sup>

Despite the poor fit between the Golden Haze-y Charleston of the Huger Smiths and historic Slavery’s Capital/Cradle of the Lost Cause Charleston, the Charlestonian Golden Haze that Patton and her predecessors endeavored so persistently to cast over Flat Rock, the Golden Hazed Flat Rock acquired an appeal and faux validity that has never faded. In the following chapter we explore some key elements of the process through which that naturalization and reification has occurred during the nearly seventy-five years since Patton’s book appeared.

## Examining the Unexamined

Has “Little Charleston of the Mountains” in fact been—as it has always been described—merely a benign, free-floating and picturesquely evocative phrase, lovingly adopted by local citizens, officials, and Flat Rock promoters? And has “Little Charleston” as a physical entity had a wholly positive effect upon the Flat Rock area? These appear to have been the consensus positions since the phrase first appeared seven decades ago.

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<sup>61</sup> Patton, *Story of Henderson County*, 128, 132.

## *Challenging the Consensus: Brewster’s Summer Migrations*

At the same moment when Patton’s book appeared, historian Lawrence Brewster posed a compelling set of issues and questions about “the effects of these migrations.” They were, he observed “beneficial as well as detrimental both to the individual and to society.”

For example, travelers’ claims that such travel rendered them more “liberal and intelligent,” Brewster said, was “open to question.” To some it may have been; to others it clearly was not. And if it hadn’t, those who came stepwise through the pinelands, the sandhills, and the upcountry to western North Carolina would not necessarily have come bearing the superior culture almost universally attributed to them by “Little Charleston”-oriented chroniclers.

“There were,” Brewster learned from his meticulous reading of the record, many agreeable, intelligent, and informed planters among the travelers to offset the disagreeable, the unintelligent, and the uninformed. There were summer colonies whose society was of a . . . high order and others whose society was not. . . The people of other sections were affected, whether favorably or not, by the appearance and sojourn among them of these migratory planters. . . As individuals and as a group, the planters both contributed to and benefited from the establishment and the enhancement of resort communities.<sup>62</sup>

Low-country South Carolinians, Brewster concluded, were largely responsible for discovering and popularizing the mountain country of western North Carolina as a summer recreation land . . . : Flat Rock, the seat of Charles Baring, Mitchell King, and their associates; and Cashier’s Valley, the resort of the Hamptons and their friends.

But it was far from a win-win transaction, as at least several other commentators had concluded at the time. Noting Colton’s observation in his *Mountain Scenery* of 1859 that the Low-country people brought “much money” into the region, and that “[their] settlements have been of much benefit to the West generally,” Brewster also presented “another side to the picture” from O’Connell’s *Catholicity in the Carolinas* of 1879. O’Connell observed that Lowcountry people also bought up “many of the most desirable places in the country” and, having embellished them with landscaped gardens and spacious residences, transferred to them “their gorgeous and fashionable establishments” for the season.” Their concern seemed to be, O’Connell judged,

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<sup>62</sup> Brewster, *Summer Migration and Resorts*, 112–16.

with their own well-being. They contributed but little to the general improvement of the country. Their slaves furnished them labor, and store goods were furnished from abroad. The natives were kept at a great distance, and if they were employed at all, only for menial occupations at inadequate remuneration. A feeling of great bitterness sprung up between both classes.<sup>63</sup>

Taking a cue from O’Connell and Brewster, we would argue that some key aspects, forms and results of the “Little Charleston” phrase and the discourse that surrounds it call for more careful attention.

## *Silenced History: The Global Reach of the Barings (Family) Bank*

Some of what is left out of the Little Charleston story is as important as what was included within it. Two of those elements—cohering around Charles and Susan (Heyward) Baring—have often been mentioned but not in structural relationship to each other: Baring’s position in the Barings Bank and his status as an early, major broker of Flat Rock land to Charlestonians who came into the mountains at about the same time he did.

Baring had become “a planter on a large scale” partly because in 1796 (some say 1797) he had married widowed and wealthy Susan Cole Heyward. The “lifetime interest in her deceased husband James Heyward’s extensive land holdings and rice plantations” she brought with her allowed the couple to enjoy “the lavish lifestyle afforded to them by her inheritance.”<sup>64</sup> Charles Baring continued for many years to buy land and slaves. Deeds and other transactions show that Baring (hence, his wife as well) had been trading heavily in land and slaves at least since 1798. A Bartholomews [sic] Parish tax listing for February 1825 (two years before he turned up in Flat Rock) included 3,242 acres of land and 422 slaves. Other entries for slave sales show that the couple bought or sold dozens of people at a time.<sup>65</sup>

But what more of relevance to Flat Rock’s Barings couple needs to be said about the bank? A great deal, actually.

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<sup>63</sup> Brewster, *Summer Migration and Resorts*, 114. Brewster references Jeremiah Joseph O’Connell, *Catholicity in the Carolinas and Georgia: Leaves of Its History, 1820–1878* (New York, 1879), 443.

<sup>64</sup> Griffith, *Flat Rock Historic District Boundary Increase, Boundary Decrease*, 7/295. Generations of the fabulously wealthy rice-planting, slave-owning Heyward family figure importantly in Dusinberre, *Them Dark Days* (2000), especially 4686–9n14, but other references abound. Later generations of Heywards in Flat Rock appear frequently in Cuthbert, *Flat Rock in the Old Time* (2016). See also Robert T. Oliver, “Heyward, James and Nathaniel Heyward,” in *South Carolina Encyclopedia*, May 18, 2016, <http://www.sencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/heyward-james-and-nathaniel-heyward>.

<sup>65</sup> South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Series S126061, 1824 [sic], Item 01479, Record 8; <http://www.archivesindex.sc.gov/onlinearchives/SearchResults.aspx>, accessed February 13, 2018. The Barings sold slaves in the Charleston area at least as late as 1850, when they sold “63 slaves, including 4 children.” Series S213050, v. 006C, p. 67. Several early Buncombe County deeds (1831–1833, prior to the formation of Henderson County in 1838) record Baring slave purchases.



Even Sadie Patton, whose narrative frames usually did not range much beyond Flat Rock, said in her *Condensed History of Flat Rock* (1961) that when Baring came, he “was a planter on a large scale in South Carolina, though there is evidence that he had other important business in Charleston in connection with merchantmen and the export trade, as well as in banking circles.” More precisely, she said later, “at maturity he had associated himself” with “the Baring Brothers banking firm.”<sup>66</sup> Both of these statements are true but lack important detail. Charles Baring’s “other important business” reached far beyond Flat Rock.

Indeed, it is not too much to say that the marriage of Charles Baring and the recently widowed Susan Heyward was also an important instance of the “marriage” of the world-wide rice and cotton industries of the early nineteenth century through the Barings’ bank.

First the Bank: Whenever Baring’s name comes up in connection with Flat Rock, his “Baring Brothers banking firm” connection is almost always mentioned as one of his impressive credentials.<sup>67</sup> The family (hence the bank) were British (which always appealed to the Anglophile cultural preferences of Flat Rock’s lowcountry/Charleston-linked residents), but over the years the Bank in fact developed multinational reach, operations, and social/political influence.

Founded in 1762 by wool merchant John Baring as the John and Francis Baring Company, it was based in London. It soon expanded from buying and selling wool to buying and selling slaves, which enriched it and extended its range. Sven Beckert’s brilliant (and encyclopedic) *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (2014) synthesizes the bank’s growth in relation to cotton production and marketing.

The “spectacularly profitable” cotton trade of the early 19th century, Beckert says, offered the Barings and others—who had not been involved in trade—“a promising way to diversify.” By 1812, the Barings began investing in the cotton business by lending money to a New Orleans cotton broker. When the broker’s venture collapsed in 1826 (presumably leaving the Barings holding the loan), the Barings “added an American agent” and opened an office in Liverpool.<sup>68</sup> Meanwhile, cotton imports to Great Britain, 90 percent of which had come from the British West Indies and the Mediterranean before the nineteenth century opened, were increasing from the United States. Between 1790 and 1810, they had gone from virtually none to nearly 60 percent, headed for 80 percent in 1850.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Patton, *Condensed History of Flat Rock* (1961), 9.

<sup>67</sup> Another of the many examples: “Born in England to the Baring Brothers Bank family,” in Griffith, *Flat Rock Historic District Boundary Increase, Boundary Decrease* (2015), 8/383.

<sup>68</sup> Four years later, when John Barings retired, his brother Francis reorganized the bank as Baring and Hope & Company and brought in his son Thomas and son-in-law Charles Wall. This brief précis is drawn from the detailed “Barings Bank” *Wikipedia* entry, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barings\\_Bank](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barings_Bank), accessed Oct. 4, 2018; and from Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014).

<sup>69</sup> Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, 121.

Meanwhile, the Barings Bank, had begun doing business in the future United States in 1774, and following the Revolution had bought a million acres of land that became part of the state of Maine in 1796. In 1802, it handled the Louisiana Purchase for the United States, correctly predicting that it would help exterminate native populations, boost the importation of slaves, and (hence) the export of cotton to British mills. All would raise profits for the Bank. After helping to finance the War of 1812, it acquired a U.S.-based partner, opened a U.S.-focused office in Liverpool in 1832, and became “exclusive agent” to the U.S. government. A handful of Barings were incorporated into the British peerage beginning in 1835.

By 1833, Baring Brothers & Co. had become the fifth-largest importer of cotton to Great Britain’s major port of Liverpool and to “Europe’s other emerging cotton ports.” Even as late as 1863, Beckert observed, there was a brief “golden age” in cotton—a frenzy of “doctors, parsons, lawyers, wives and widows, and tradesmen speculating in it.” The Baring Brothers bank found that “the amount of money made and still [being made] in this article is almost fabulous.” Shipments “changed hands many times” on the way to factories, with each short-term “owner” (the Barings included) taking a small cut.<sup>70</sup>

Conversely, the war also began to introduce disturbing perturbations in the world-wide market. When the Civil War stopped southern cotton exports (due first to Confederate policy and then to Union blockades), a “cotton famine” emerged to shake the worldwide Cotton Empire. “Some European officials,” Beckert says, “advocated recognition of the Confederacy and breaking the Union blockade to secure . . . urgently needed cotton.”<sup>71</sup>

Meanwhile, closer to Flat Rock, the local “inner war” consumed the most attention from the refugee rice (and cotton) planters and other elites. Christopher Memminger was off in the Richmond, working (vainly, as it turned out) as treasurer of the Confederacy. Slave-holding Lowcountry people were self-exiled in the mountains, trying to figure out how to feed, house, and find work for their slaves in buildings not built for cold weather, and buy food for themselves and their families. Local mountain residents continued to work for the Charlestonians while undercutting and resisting a Confederacy with increasingly burdensome demands. Hence while the far-flung commodity markets continued to work in a mostly positive way for the Barings Bank and their ilk, the contrast was stark.

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<sup>70</sup> Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, 215, 249. Baring Brothers was also by this time banker of the United States in London. Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, 512n19.

<sup>71</sup> Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, 246—50.



## CHAPTER TEN

# INSCRIBING THE “LITTLE CHARLESTON” IDEA AND IMAGE ON THE LAND

*The neighborhood of Flat Rock is becoming more thickly settled every year, and beautiful residences are springing up on the adjacent mountains in all directions.*

—HIGHLAND MESSENGER  
(Asheville, North Carolina), Nov. 4, 1847, p. 2

## Boundaries, Landscapes, History, and Culture

**T**hrough much of the nineteenth century (beginning in Paris in the early 1820s), numerous historical events and processes were lifted out of the internal messiness of history as it happened, repackaged in grand (but also sometimes miniature) and elaborate “dioramas” whose purposes were to make money in early mass media venues, to entertain the sometimes gigantic crowds that paid to see them, and—by manipulating the inherent plasticity of images and narratives—to renarrate the chosen history in such a way as to glorify it, and thus shape the larger state, regional, and national discourses ] to reinforce existing class, racial, and cultural norms and positions.

Flat Rock was not technically a diorama, of course, but it shared many of the aims, assumptions, discourse, and tactics of them—even to the gaily outfitted coaches filled with elegant children, wives and in-laws, and dragged up the mountain to Henderson County by enslaved servants and horses with fine harness. Bringing up the rear were horse-drawn wagons loaded with wearable finery, food, and furnishings to be carried into fine houses prepared for their arrival by staffs of cooks, servants, gardeners and sundry other functionaries. And at the end, vast, sprawling mountainous landscapes dotted with luminously colorful gardens and grand houses.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> An extended article on the history, forms, operations, and designs of dioramas may be found in *Wikipedia*, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diorama>, accessed April 17, 2019.

## “Little Charleston” and Developed Flat Rock

Where (and what) was “Little Charleston”? Earlier we emphasized that what might be called the “core” of Little Charleston of the Mountains (Henderson County’s Flat Rock) was in fact only part of it.

Through the decades, other sections of Henderson and Polk Counties became involved to varying degrees in the change dynamics as well, as did (more obviously) Fletcher, adjacent to the Buncombe County line north of Flat Rock. Nor could older and larger Asheville be neatly bounded off from those dynamics, which also spilled over into Jackson County’s High Hampton.

Brewster documented a key element in the history of Flat Rock absent from most later accounts: its existence not as a single unique and compact community on the southern margin of Hendersonville in Henderson County (not carved out of Buncombe until 1838), but as a more dispersed, multicounty and bistate (Buncombe to the north, Jackson to the west, Greenville across the state line to the south) area in which some of its key markers were also evident.

In Brewster’s carefully documented account, “Beyond Flat Rock and Hendersonville . . . was Fletcher, around which developed another summer colony of low-country planters,” especially following the opening of the Buncombe Turnpike in 1827, which lowlanders shared with the drovers and vast numbers of cattle, sheep, hogs, and turkeys.

Foremost among the (Fletcher-centered, one might call them) lowlanders were the Blakes, the Rutledges, and the Heywards. Rice planter Daniel Blake built a summer house (The Meadows) with slave quarters and extensive gardens there around 1833, and a grander one to replace it about 1845. Charlestonian Alexander Robertson built his white-columned Struan in 1847, and planter Joseph Pyatt built Newington (1847–1850). An inn followed at about the same time, and Joseph Ward erected Rock Hall about 1853. Calvary Episcopal Church was consecrated in 1859, and by the early 1860s there were nearly a dozen grand houses in the area.<sup>2</sup>

Paralleling Flat Rock and Fletcher development was another South Carolina elite-linked node (lying roughly west and a bit south of Flat Rock) in Jackson County’s Cashiers Valley. High Hampton Resort’s self-description relies upon the continued currency of familiar (and celebrated) historic, demographic and cultural valences of the Little Charleston phrase:

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, High Hampton Resort boasts a rich history dating back to the early 1800s. The magnificent mountain estate served as a high-country retreat for many historical figures . . .

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<sup>2</sup> Brewster, *Summer Migrations*, 68–69; and Cuthbert, *Flat Rock of the Old Time*, 1–9, 97ff., including maps: Flat Rock Properties and Owners, and French Broad Properties and Owners.

In the 1830s General, and later South Carolina Governor, Wade Hampton III purchased the property. Like our guests today, his family came to escape the hot summers and enjoyed fishing in the crystal-clear mountain streams, riding horses through the lush green forests and sitting on the porch of Hampton Cottage sipping mint juleps and feasting on freshly cooked mountain fare.<sup>3</sup>

It was actually Wade Hampton II (1791–1858), owner of numerous plantations and thousands of slaves in several states, who purchased the Cashiers Valley property in the 1830s, and his son Wade Hampton III (1818–1902) who became South Carolina governor (in the brutal and violent racist election of 1876) with the assistance of South Carolina’s Red Shirts, including later Connemara owner Ellison Adger Smyth.<sup>4</sup>

Some Charleston people were also drawn some 15 miles north, beyond Fletcher, to Asheville, an older (1797), larger, and more socially and culturally developed town set in the French Broad River basin at the confluence of that river and the Swannanoa, and blessed by cool breezes wafting down from spectacular high mountains. By the late 1840s it had three hotels, Methodist and Presbyterian churches in addition to the usual Episcopalian one, many luxurious residences, a well-developed tourist industry, and regular passenger transport over branching turnpikes to other surrounding resorts.<sup>5</sup>

This dispersion both intensified and expanded geographically as the decades passed. Brewster’s brief survey of them included Table Rock, Paris Mountain, Caesar’s Head, Chimney Rock, and Cedar Mountain (1855).<sup>6</sup>

To elaborate a single example briefly: Caesar’s Head Hotel and cottages, built on the precipice soon after the Jones Gap Road was completed up the mountain from Greenville in 1848, offered “unsurpassed” views (Lowcountry visitors said), and “fried

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<sup>3</sup> *History of High Hampton Resort*, <https://www.highhamptonresort.com/about/history/>, accessed Sept. 16, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> See the site’s “National Register of Historic Places Registration form,” <http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov/nr/JK0006.pdf>, accessed Sept. 16, 2018.

<sup>5</sup> Brewster, *Summer Migrations*, 69–71. A useful contemporary treatment of the development of tourism in western North Carolina, including Hendersonville, Flat Rock and Asheville as well as other tourist areas (Cashiers Valley, Caesar’s Head, Table Rock, Blowing Rock, Deaver’s White Sulphur Springs near Asheville, and others) is Colton’s *Mountain Scenery* (1859). Brewster has an entire chapter, 74–108, on a parallel history of the relationship between lowcountry people’s travels to western North Carolina and to the mineral springs-based resorts (especially notably, Glenn Springs, in the Greenville-Spartanburg area) spread throughout the slightly inland sections of the lowcountry, and the middle- and upcountry routes, as well as into Virginia and New York. Space does not permit schematizing that pattern and process here.

For extensive documentation and discussion of Deaver’s White Sulphur Springs, see David E. Whisnant, “The Several Lives of West Asheville, Part I: Sulphur Springs as Proto-Land of the Sky, 1827–1861,” in *Asheville Junction: A Blog by David E. Whisnant* (2016), <https://ashevillejunction.com/the-several-lives-of-west-asheville-part-i-sulphur-springs-as-proto-land-of-the-sky-1827-1861/>, accessed July 30, 2018.

<sup>6</sup> Brewster, *Summer Migrations*, 71–73. On the non-Flat Rock centers of analogous development, see also Margaret Morley’s *Carolina Mountains*, on Caesar’s Head and Chimney Rock, 88–101, Broad River Valley with Mountain View Hotel and the Esmeralda Inn, 94–97, Asheville and Biltmore, 119–60, Great Smoky Mountains, 239–47, Highlands, 248–260, the Sapphire Country, 261–76, the Forks of the Pigeon River, 277–89, Pisgah and the Balsams, 290, the Forks of the River Toe, 315–24, Linville Falls, 338–48, Blowing Rock, 349–62, and Grandfather Mountain, 363–78.



chicken, delicious mutton and speckled trout from nearby streams,” prepared by builder Benjamin Hagood’s slaves. Closed after Hagood died in 1865, it was reopened a decade or so later by his daughter and her physician husband as a health resort that offered “all that could be desired— for all diseases of the Throat, Lungs, Hay Fever, [and] Malarial affectations.” A later owner from Charleston enlarged the hotel and added nine-pins and other attractions common to such resorts of the period.<sup>7</sup>

Similar stories abounded up and down the route for more than a century, as Brewster laid out the history in 1947: from Charleston through the pinelands, from there on into the middle-and upcountry, then on beyond Greenville, up Saluda Mountain and through the Gap into Flat Rock. It was elite Charleston and the Lowcountry cloning itself node-by-elegant-node through much of western North Carolina.

Thus, the most serviceable poetic figure one might choose for this longwave process anchored by Charleston and Flat Rock, but perhaps the track of a hopping (and easily distractible) rabbit, bound for no single, specified target, but making its way through the valleys, along the rivers, and up the mountain slopes, seeking its own kind.

## Renaming and Repurposing the Landscape

Important aspects of the Lowcountry/Local dichotomy played out in the repurposing and renaming of the landscape. Over more than a century, vast acreages in Henderson County (formed in 1838, a decade after Lowcountry people began to arrive) changed hands and were repurposed from farms and woodlands to estate building sites and landscaped gardens. The process transformed and renamed much of the landscape, betokening both altered ownership and the social and cultural position of the new owners.

Both within and surrounding the county, some older (and much older) Cherokee and local family names continued to mark and evoke prior periods: Pisgah, Crowders Creek and Mud Creek, Little River Road, Bat Cave, Wolf Ford, Edneyville; Etowah, Tuckasegee, and Indian Cove. After about 1825, however, names chosen by the new Lowcountry landowners, traders and estate developers proliferated rapidly. Three local mountain peaks became Trenholm, Rutledge and Teneriffe. Subdivision signs said Rutledge, Teneriffe and Chanteloup Country Estates. Some streets, roads and drives were named for Lowcountry planter families: Johnstone, Memminger, Middleton, Rhett, Rutledge and Trenholm. Other more romantic ones called up chic European watering places and tourist locales; Beaumont, Connemara, Dunroy, Glengary, Heidelberg House, Inverness, Newington, Rue De Choiseul, and Rugby Grange.

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<sup>7</sup> Judith Bainbridge, “Caesar’s Head Hotel,” *Magazine of Greenville* (n.d.), <http://www.caesarsheadshowcase.com/history.php>, accessed July 31, 2018.

And strung like ornaments throughout were the grand nineteenth-century estates with names evoking picturesque landscape features, exotic location, elite social status, refined taste, or familiarity with other languages: Argyle, Beaumont (1839), Chanteloup (1841), Dulce Far Niente, Far Away, Glen Roy, Orienta, Rutledge Cottage (1840), Teneriffe (ca. 1855), and Yonholme. A few borrowed from long-established local buildings (Rhett’s Mill) and a few others referenced local landforms and features, partly to provide romantic appeal, but also perhaps to mask *nouveau* status with presumed long familiarity with (and thus understanding of and appreciation for) the local area: Dawn Hill, Forest Hill, Hayfield, Hemlocks, Many Pines, Oak Knoll, Pine Crest, Rhododendron, Rock Hill, Tall Trees, The Meadows, and others.

From such a list, a surprising paradox emerges: The set of early and persistent naming conventions for what much later came to be called “Little Charleston of the Mountains” was a romantic replacement for the convention that had in fact predominated in Charleston itself. Among the ninety-seven historic sites in Charleston named in the National Register of Historic Places, one-third are houses, all but two of which simply carry the owning family’s name.

Thus, at one level, while such romantic, class-linked, and culturally bound naming is evident in many far-flung resort areas, it also served specifically in the Flat Rock case to buttress the choice and deployment of the “Little Charleston” phrase and its social, racial, and cultural valences, which (one might argue) included not only possession, but also entitlement and appropriate custodianship.<sup>8</sup>

## The Lowcountry-to-Mountains Exchange as Socioeconomic and Cultural Process: Costs and Benefits

To her credit, Sadie Patton briefly considered the cost/benefit question from the Lowcountry-to-mountains exchange in her history of Henderson County as early as 1947. She concluded, however, that it was a win-win process, economically and culturally. “The coastal planters” in South Carolina, she said,

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<sup>8</sup> A detailed list of such places in Charleston may be found in “National Register Sites in Charleston County,” *South Carolina Department of Archives & History State Historic Preservation Office*, <http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/charleston/nrcharleston.htm>, accessed July 5, 2020. The named valences are abundantly evident in journalistic and other writing related to Flat Rock, referenced frequently in this study. For a variety of reasons which limited space prevents discussing here, this convention did not (with a small number of exceptions such as the Biltmore House, IntheOaks in Black Mountain, and Belvedere and Zealandia in Asheville) come to prevail in Asheville and Buncombe County, although the area has focused on tourism and second home development since the early nineteenth century. See “Asheville, North Carolina: A National Register of Historic Places Travel Itinerary,” National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/asheville/sitelist.htm>, accessed July 5, 2020.

lived in luxury, enjoying a wealth produced by slave labor, with servants for every task and money to import from the Old World goods and wares to gratify every whim. With few exceptions, they probably had small interest in the welfare and ultimate development of a civilization they found just beginning when they reached the mountains.

Local people, Patton continued, were “interested but little outwardly swayed” by the coming of the lowlanders. Nevertheless, “forces were working deep, . . . [and] the upward-onward course” of the mountain area was accentuated by Lowland culture and lifeways. A “money market” replaced the old barter economy, and local “tastes and manners” were “almost imperceptibly improved by the contrast.” Farmers’ wagons hauling crops to down-country markets returned with “dishes, clocks, bonnets and mantles, books and perhaps . . . a piece of silverware.”

In “many a little house back in the mountains today,” Patton reported, one might even find

a few pieces of English china . . . a table fashioned true to lines of Hepplewhite or Chippendale. Many Terry clocks still tick on “fireboards” where they were placed three generations ago when wagoners came back from “down country.”

“With the passing of Time,” Patton assured her readers, whatever cultural or economic inequalities were involved had been resolved, and

Customs, manners and traditions of people in the old Cherokee hunting country have been molded and so strongly marked by the Low Country strain of colonization . . . that today the two have been welded into a whole.<sup>9</sup>

And what did local people contribute to this algorithm of harmonious interaction? More than thirty years later, Louise Bailey opened one small window on the exchange: “Flat Rock’s colony,” she observed, “grew in spite of the long and tiresome journey from the low-country. Land was plentiful and cheap, and mountain men built good houses at reasonable prices.”<sup>10</sup> So according to this précis, local people sold their land to wealthy Lowcountry buyers, and sold their knowledge, skills, and labor at bargain rates.<sup>11</sup>

But such a calculation was not part of John Parris’s treatment of Flat Rock in his *These Storied Mountains* of the same period. When he says that “The Low Country folks came in chariots of the powerful, their supplies following in wagons, driven by slaves,” it is not couched as a criticism, but as a lead-in to a cultural lament that ratifies the whole process. Flat Rock’s is “the story of life in the grand manner”:

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<sup>9</sup> Patton, *Story of Henderson County*, 99.

<sup>10</sup> Bailey, *From Rock Hill to Connemara*, 21. One wonders what percentage of the wills of local farmers and laborers included Hepplewhite chairs, silverware, and English china, what the ascending curve of land prices would look like, and how many potential local buyers found themselves priced out of the market.

<sup>11</sup> Patton listed about 15 of these sellers (but without details) in *Story of Henderson County*, 203–4. She does, however, record (205) that in late 1826 Charlestonian Daniel Blake bought 950 acres and an inn from William Murray for \$10,000 in gold coins brought on horseback by a courier from South Carolina for the purpose.

Cloistered estates and grand manor houses, wealthy rice planters and their handsomely dressed ladies, liveried footmen, red-coated hunters, cotillions and teas, afternoon promenades.

Unfortunately, however,

Old Flat Rock, with its picturesque and colorful pageantry, is long gone. But many of its mansions still stand as a testimonial to a fabulous past when it was The Little Charleston of the Mountains.

Long gone also, unfortunately, is even Sadie Patton’s rather equivocal calculation (from two decades earlier) of the costs and benefits of the complicated process. In Parris’s telling, the coming of wealthy Charles Baring and his six-times married wife Susan in 1827 simply “set off a boom” in Flat Rock, which “in no time at all became one of the most famous watering places in all the land.”<sup>12</sup>

But there were also other voices.

### *“Little Charleston”: Local White vs. Lowcountry Culture*

In November 1847, Asheville’s *Highland Messenger* reprinted a letter to the *Charleston Courier* from “a correspondent who visited this section last summer.” The *Courier* writer reported that

the white laboring class of Buncombe and Henderson are . . . [so] slothful or idle and unthrifty [that]. . . Nothing but . . . starvation . . . will compel them to labor. . . [Some years ago] a peasant and his family . . . came to the public house at Flat Rock to beg.

The proprietors offered the man a job taking care of inn visitors’ horses, which he kept for a while before giving notice that he was quitting because “blackberries are ripe and I will work for no man, when I can get food in the fields and woods for nothing.”

“They live in ill-constructed log cabins,” the writer continued, neither air-tight nor water-tight, with no partition between hall and chamber, the whole family often tumbling into one bed, and in their snowy and icy winters sit shivering over miserable embers, sooner than take the trouble to procure an adequate supply of firewood . . . Scant fare, scant clothing and scant housing, with little or no work, seem to constitute . . . their felicity.

The *Messenger*’s writer wasn’t having it. Anyone who actually knows local people, he said, knows that

Although they, in the main, are destitute of the luxuries and elegancies of life, they have an abundance of all the necessaries. Good food is too plenty and too easy of acquisition, for any to suffer for the want of it.

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<sup>12</sup> Parris, *These Storied Mountains*, 101–3.

As for the “blackberry anecdote,” perhaps some shrewd mountaineer furnished it from his imagination, to gratify the gentleman’s appetite for information concerning the “ill-constructed cabins” . . .

“Could not the gentleman find,” the *Messenger* writer suggested, among certain Districts in South Carolina, a wider scope for his pen, and materials to work upon which would require no assistance from his imagination to make the picture much worse than that he has drawn for Henderson and drawn for Henderson and Buncombe?<sup>13</sup>

For many decades, the Lowcountry continued to be cast (as in the *Mountain Messenger* article) as more culturally advanced than Henderson County (and by extension, western North Carolina), so that the arrival of Lowcountry folk was credited with having reformed and elevated local culture. One could cite many examples, but perhaps several will adequately serve the purpose.

In her 1908 volume *Flat Rock, North Carolina; a Sketch of the Past*, Alicia Middleton Trenholm named the usual advanced-culture-bearing Charlestonians who made a “gay scene” as they thronged the Little River Road bound for Flat Rock to resume the “ideal life” they led there in the summers.

In a nod to (suspect but nevertheless enticing) local culture, Trenholm also confided that

Many a drink of “Moonshine” has been quaffed in the dim retreats of the illicit distilleries located thereabouts in days gone by! . . . “Moonshine,” and “Quick Step,” were fondly familiar names to the denizens of these hills!<sup>14</sup>

In *The Story of Henderson County* (published a century later than the *Messenger* article and forty years after Trenholm’s), Patton asserted that, once in Flat Rock, these people from the Lowlands entered upon their role of creating here in the mountains the pastoral whose memory will never dim, the romantic and leisurely Tidewater country life transplanted into a woodland setting. Dominated by Mrs. Baring, the little colony at Flat Rock brought to a still primitive region an era of luxury, ease and brilliant social activities patterned closely on the splendor of life in the Old Country. . . Balls, theatricals, teas, dinners [enlivened] the charming and gracious intercourse of this congenial group.

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<sup>13</sup> “Sketches of North Carolina,” *Mountain Messenger*, Nov. 4, 1847, p. 1. This item is by no means an isolated example of the denigration of mountaineers by elites from (generally, but not always) Lowcountry areas. David C. Hsiung’s *Two Worlds in the Tennessee Mountains: Exploring the Origins of Appalachian Stereotypes* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997), esp. 20–54 and 162–82, dates the emergence and provenance of such denigrating stereotypes from at least the 1780s. More recently, Anthony Harkins’s wide-ranging *Hillbilly: A Cultural History of an American Icon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004) meticulously documents and anatomizes the long-familiar components of the myth from 1700 onward into twentieth-century popular culture.

<sup>14</sup> Trenholm, *Flat Rock, North Carolina*, 25, 27.

Hovering obsequiously but picturesquely and happily on the margins, making the whole scene possible, Patton observed, were “their attending servants, coachmen, footmen, maids and the faithful old mammies.”<sup>15</sup> In this case (familiar within popular culture for more than a century), Patton elevates obsequiousness to an honored personal and cultural trait, appropriate for Black people in general, but especially for “the faithful old mammies.”

In 2010, Louise and Joseph Bailey joined with Terry Ruscin to publish *Historic Henderson County: Tales from Along the Ridges*, which once again reinforced the cultural dichotomy between local people and the gaily reveling Lowcountry summer people. Short sections on Little Charleston of the Mountains, the Little River Road, and The Moonshine Still Next Door carried forward the contrasting image of benighted mountaineers: a photograph of “a typical pioneer family” featured a log cabin, well, buckboard, and a local couple with multiple children.<sup>16</sup>

The reality was quite different from this crude caricature, however. A more detailed and nuanced discussion of the crucial contributions of local people to the development and maintenance of “Little Charleston” emerged five years after the Bailey and Ruscin volume, in Clay Griffith’s 2015 update of the Flat Rock Historic District document of 1975.<sup>17</sup>

Of “critical importance to the development of Flat Rock, the contributions of its native and year-round citizens,” Griffith said, were

The mountain families that lived and farmed in the area in the early nineteenth century and those that moved into the community and worked within the resort settlement . . . . In addition to subsistence and small-scale farming, . . . [they] operated small businesses, mills, and the few stores that served the area . . . [They] contributed to constructing the summer estate buildings. Charles Barnett built the original Argyle around 1830 for Judge King. The Barnett family [did] quality plaster work and painting . . . [Stone masons] Robert Corn and . . . Leonard Capps . . . built the stone wall near Richard l’On Lowndes’ house . . .

[The] estates . . . [also] required a caretaker to look after the property and tend to farms and gardens during the family’s absence . . . [to open them] in the spring and close [them] up at the end of the summer . . . [R]enovations and improvements to the houses, construction of new outbuildings, and road work required the attention of the local caretaker, who also oversaw specific seasonal activities such as cutting ice for the icehouse or planting gardens.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Patton, *Story of Henderson County*, 213.

<sup>16</sup> Bailey, Bailey, and Ruscin, *Historic Henderson County*, 57, 59, 70, 104.

<sup>17</sup> Clay Griffith, *Flat Rock Historic District Boundary Increase, Boundary Decrease*.

<sup>18</sup> Griffith, *Flat Rock Historic District*, 8/392–93. Griffith’s meticulous study contained far more numerous examples of local workers and their work than can be included here.



## *Costs (and Benefits?) to Blacks*

Consistently, the increasingly fixed (in the popular arena, at least) paradigm dating from the early nineteenth century through Patton’s *Story of Henderson County* (1947) has held to the win-win reading of Flat Rock’s Lowcountry-inflected history: Lowcountry elite whites won (as they long had done when in contention with Lowcountry blacks, enslaved or free) with escape from disease, better weather, cheap land and labor, deference to the requirements of their lifestyle, and maintenance of their accustomed high social/cultural status. Local whites won through markets for farm products (and land), market for skilled and unskilled labor (even if much of it was seasonal and labor conditions and rates were set by elite employers), and the (putatively) culture-raising effects of elite Charleston white influence.

Most of the commentary available outside these romantic and fanciful accounts clashes strongly with such a reading. More than twenty years ago, Dusinberre’s *Them Dark Days* took a dim view of such a sanguine perspective. He noted, for example, that despite their elegant Charleston homes, gardens, and their glittering lifestyles, in no way were they transferring “culture” in any meaningful or whole sense to the upcountry and beyond. A dozen rice-growing families owned from 300–500 slaves, and nineteen families owned 40 percent of all the enslaved people working Lowcountry rice plantations. Nathaniel Heyward owned seventeen plantations worked by 2340 Black human beings. Hence to transport what one might necessarily have to call “Charleston culture” to the mountains in all its pertinent aspects would have been a social, economic, and cultural disaster.<sup>19</sup>

Other commentators (especially blacks) viewed the gain/loss calculation as showing a mixed effect at best—a view that public records and data confirm. Some blacks lost far more than they gained; only a few might plausibly be argued to have gained more than they lost.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> William Dusinberre, *Them Dark Days: Slavery in the American Rice Swamps* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 391–95, 531. A number of the families who owned hundreds of slaves became prominent in Flat Rock: Allston, Blake, Elliott, Heyward, Izard, Manigault, Middleton, Rutledge and Johnstone. Dusinberre’s analysis, 282–338, focuses on two plantations: the Manigaults’ Gowrie, 3-281, and the Allstons’ multiple ones.

<sup>20</sup> While it seems justified to make this general observation, we are unaware of any longitudinal statistical research (e.g., on changes in local Black or white wage rates over time, comparative black/white rates at any given time, changes in land prices or valuations) that would allow detailed confirmation or challenge.

Linda Culpepper has detailed key aspects of the mixing.<sup>21</sup> Some gains leaned positive, some negative. As early as 1838, the blurring of lines between races was evident in the rising incidence of blacks with local white surnames, especially Alston, Baring (such as the Black minister Simon Baring), and Memminger, but others as well.<sup>22</sup>

Culpepper says that a few Blacks who chose to attend white churches prior to the war (e.g., Hendersonville Baptist, 1844–1855) or for a longer time (Mud Creek Baptist, 1855–1884) were treated “relatively fairly.” But those who stayed closer to the Flat Rock estates (which they had to arrive early in the season to open, and stay late to close up), and attended St. John in the Wilderness (but lacked money to reserve pews in) were relegated to wooden benches in the rear, or the balcony. After the war ended, some blacks (including Israel Simmons, the first Black Charlestonian to buy land in Flat Rock, in 1871) were able to save enough money to buy their own land, but others passed seasonally up and down the old route, stopping in Greenville, Spartanburg and older towns that had old estates and old Episcopal churches.<sup>23</sup>

What seems clear at this juncture, then, is that some losses and gains among blacks were in evidence, that the former were probably more frequent and widespread than the latter, and that to document either in detail would require more statistical research than has thus far been undertaken.

## *Two Black Family Narratives*

Two short family narratives suggest some of the nuances of this multi-faceted and mixed exchange: the John and Sally Markley family and the George and Lavinia Potts family. Both are examples of blacks researching their own history and re-narrating it from their own perspective.

### *Markley Family*

In 1996, Henderson County’s Black History Committee wrote that John Markley . . . was a blacksmith, veterinarian, wheelwright, and an artisan of malleable metal. Markley, who moved to the East Flat Rock area, made many buggies and wagons for the people of Henderson County. If you needed your horse shod, it was most likely John Markley who did the job. He understood animals and could suggest remedies that would help an ailing creature. He created pots, pans and silverware out of metal. He was a storyteller with a gift

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<sup>21</sup> Linda Parramore Culpepper, “Black Charlestonians in the Mountains: African American Community Building in Post-Civil-War Flat Rock, North Carolina,” *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 8, no. 2 (2002), 362–81. To correlate the social status differences between Henderson County blacks who carried surnames derived from elite white masters and those who did not might be revealing but lies beyond the scope of this study.

<sup>22</sup> Culpepper, *Under Their Own Vine and Fig Tree*, xix; Culpepper “Black Charlestonians,” 373ff., provides substantial details on such patterns, sometimes including possibly miscegenation-linked cross-racial real estate transactions.

<sup>23</sup> Culpepper, “Black Charlestonians,” 364, 371–74.

for spellbinding his audience, often using stories to teach his younger audiences about the necessity of honesty. [His wife] Sallie . . . would relate stories about the [Kingdom of the] Happy Land to the children of the area, thus becoming the unofficial historian for the group.<sup>24</sup>

Even so elliptical a narrative suggests that, with regard to the issue of costs and benefits from the Lowcountry-to-Flat Rock exchange, the Markley family would merit more research and analysis. Fortunately, aspects of that have appeared in recent years.

Both born into slavery, John Markley (1848–1921) and his wife Sally Darity Markley (1854–1959; daughter of a Cherokee father and his enslaved African American wife) began life overshadowed with all of the limits and impediments of the era, shaped their postwar lives during Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction (their first child born in 1877, at the end of Reconstruction), and well into the Jim Crow era (John died in 1921 at age seventy-three, but Sally lived to be 104).<sup>25</sup>

Two decades after the Black History Committee report, Clay Griffith’s Flat Rock boundary study for the National Register added more details on the family. John and Sally may have moved into East Flat Rock from the Kingdom of the Happy Land, but records are lacking.<sup>26</sup> They had met working on a farm in Naples, north of Hendersonville, married and moved to Flat Rock. In 1877, at the intersection of what is now West Blue Ridge Road and Highland Park Road, John and Sally purchased substantial land along Blue Ridge Road and established a small farm complex of several buildings that was centered on a successful blacksmith shop, established after Farmer Hotel builder/owner Henry Farmer hired John as a craftsman at his furniture mill and as a blacksmith.<sup>27</sup> John also worked as a veterinarian and wheelwright, and Sally, known locally as Aunt Sally, was a midwife, was also renowned as a storyteller and historian. Their sons Garfield and Jim operated the shop until Jim’s retirement in the mid-1960s.<sup>28</sup> And as we will see in Chapter 12, Aunt Sally’s life intersected with Ellison Smyth’s.

In some surprising ways, then, the Markleys’ lives—together stretching across more than a century—seem to have bridged at least some of the shadows and allowed them a modicum of independence, stability, and security.

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<sup>24</sup> Black History Research Committee, *Brief History of the Black Presence*, 15.

<sup>25</sup> The Markley family is well represented in East Flat Rock entries in the Federal Census of 1910.

<sup>26</sup> Griffith, *Flat Rock Historic District Boundary Increase, Boundary Decrease*, Jim Markley House Site, 7/28–7/30. Jim Markley was John’s son.

<sup>27</sup> John was listed as a blacksmith in the 1880 Henderson County census. Census data on members of the Potts family are also available in the East Flat Rock entries in the Federal Census of 1910.

<sup>28</sup> Griffith, *Flat Rock Historic District Boundary Increase, Boundary Decrease*, 7/28–30, 8/393–395. In 1973, Jim’s son John sold 7.5 acres of the farm, which included three houses and a fine blacksmith shop to Bonclarken Assembly.

## *George and Lavinia Potts Family*

In 1990, John F. Potts, Sr. published *A History of the George and Lavinia Potts Family of Flat Rock, North Carolina*. Writing about his grandfather George Sr. (“born a slave in 1844”), he observed that George Sr. “drove wagon trains . . . between Augusta and western North Carolina.” Working on the Flat Rock estates, he and Lavinia saved enough money to buy eighty-two acres on Glassy Mountain and another fifty in Flat Rock.

George managed to rise above some of the limits of his life circumstances, building a house and “becoming an independent farmer and respected citizen,” trustee of Mud Creek Baptist Church and of Henry Simmons’s Society of Necessity. At his death in 1926 he was able to divide his land among six living children.<sup>29</sup>

Adding Lavinia’s story to the mix, John Potts surfaced the additional issue of miscegenation. “According to Aunt Mattie and Uncle Fred,” he said,

my grandmother was the daughter of Dr. Mitchell King, owner of Glenroy, and [enslaved woman] Charlotte Moultrie. Her father, Dr. King, was the son of Judge Mitchell King, one of the earliest settlers of western North Carolina and builder of Argyle.

Lavinia, born on the King family’s Red Knoll plantation, met and married George around 1870 on a trip from Augusta to Flat Rock.<sup>30</sup> She clearly became an accomplished and formidable woman, “earn[ing] more cash money than any other family member” as a midwife, seamstress, quilt maker, and baker with a steady clientele on the Flat Rock estates. She taught her children to read and found arranged educational opportunities for them.

George and Lavinia’s son George Jr. (“the farmer,” born at Dr. Mitchell King’s Glenroy in 1873) did not achieve a position equal to those of his parents. As was frequently the case when the older generation died, land was subdivided, and inequalities continued to multiply:

Except for a few trips to Charleston, [*George Jr.*] spent most of his life in the Flat Rock area. However, like most Black residents, he had a problem finding employment. Flat Rock’s population consisted of a few large estates owned by rich Charlestonians, and very poor farmers, Black and white. This made it difficult to obtain employment if you had no land or were not employed at one of the estates. When these estates were closed in September and reopened in the Spring that compounded the employment problem.<sup>31</sup>

When George Jr. died in 1936, cultivation of the farm ended, John Potts’s narrative says, going on to add a catalog of vicissitudes and challenges George and Lavinia’s descendants experienced: “no available employment” or low-paid employment as clerks, hotel

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<sup>29</sup> John F. Potts, Sr., *A History of the George and Lavinia Potts Family of Flat Rock, North Carolina* (n.p., Flat Rock NC, 1990), 3, 5.

<sup>30</sup> Potts, *A History*, 6.

<sup>31</sup> Potts, *A History*, 1, 13.

maids or janitors, chauffeurs; orphaned children placed out to relatives, looking for jobs in nearby towns like Asheville or Greenville, or becoming “part of that great migration of Negroes who were seeking a better life in the North and moved out of the South.”<sup>32</sup>

As many scholars have reported in detail during recent decades, these are some of the classic problems of seasonal (especially tourism or second home-related) economies: land availability and prices, seasonal employment, lack of options, a racial disadvantage, and the consequent creation of a black-white underclass.

As in many other locations, Henderson County / Flat Rock blacks were especially vulnerable to these disadvantages. Although we have not seen them mentioned anywhere else with regard to “Little Charleston of the Mountains,” John Potts, Sr. was keenly aware of them.

John Potts Sr. was part of the post-1900 generation (born in Hot Springs, Arkansas, to earlier Potts out-migrants in 1908). His life turned out to be less stable, in a few ways more fortunate, and less completely structured by factors of race and class than those of earlier family members had been.

John’s mother died when he was five years old, and he was moved to Flat Rock, where he entered Flat Rock School for Negroes (“located on the old Guerard Estate . . . later Bonclarken”). At thirteen he was sent away to Lincoln Academy in King’s Mountain, and later worked summers in Flat Rock and during the school year in Columbia to help pay his way to Benedict College in 1926. Graduate work at Cornell University followed, and led to a series of jobs in education, including secondary schools before becoming President of Voorhees College.<sup>33</sup>

## The Founders’ Long-term Impact Upon Flat Rock

As our foregoing chapters show, the white Flat Rock founders’ accustomed mode of operation was to buy as much land as you could, sell some at a profit (if you were of a mind to) to later arriving buyers, buy still more if you could find and afford it, build the most splendid house you could on the best of it, and live the grandest life circumstances would permit, supported by inexpensive local white and enslaved (later, freed) Black labor.

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<sup>32</sup> An interesting variant was Uncle Archie Potts (1889–1972). After serving in the army during World War I, he returned (“with leggings and shoes highly polished”) to Flat Rock and worked as chauffeur to the Middleton family, as well as in Charleston and Columbia. Meanwhile he raised dogs, hunted, and was “the musician of the family” (mandolin and guitar). Potts, *A History of the George and Lavinia Potts Family*, 17–18.

<sup>33</sup> Potts, *A History of the George and Lavinia Potts Family*, 21–23. Subsequent pages (of 40 in the book) detail the lives of younger family members, which differed too much from earlier ones to be useful here. Potts’s personal papers are available at “Inventory of the John F. Potts, Sr. Papers, 1885–2005,” [https://avery.cofc.edu/archives/Potts\\_John\\_F\\_Sr.html#d0e752](https://avery.cofc.edu/archives/Potts_John_F_Sr.html#d0e752), accessed April 5, 2019.

Fortunately, according to popular understanding—and later the pervasive “Little Charleston” myth—this process was held to be not only benign but also a model for the surrounding countryside and its historically uncultured populace.

The 2015 *Flat Rock District Boundary Increase, Boundary Decrease* document says that Charles Baring bought three hundred acres in Flat Rock in 1827, began building his “stately manor” Mountain Lodge (using “wood and brick brought from England as ballast on ships owned by the Baring Brothers banking firm”), and developing an estate “following English precedents with . . . formal gardens and a deer park.” Baring eventually acquired “more than 3,000 acres in Flat Rock, much of which he sold to his friends and acquaintances.”<sup>34</sup> Buncombe County land records are more explicit: between January 1830 and mid-April 1839, the Barings bought 3,126 acres in the county, including more than 1,000 acres on Mud Creek (in the Flat Rock area), nearly 900 on Green River, 1,000 at “Blue Ridge,” and smaller parcels elsewhere.

Several of these transactions are particularly interesting in the context of the present study. On June 23, 1835, Baring bought fifty acres on Mud Creek from Wade Hampton—presumably the father of Wade Hampton III, who about forty years later deployed Red Shirt violence in the election of 1876. In 1839, Baring sold twelve acres in the same location to several members of the De Choiseul family (also of Flat Rock). Several months later the same year he sold 143 acres on Crab Creek Road to C. G. Memminger.<sup>35</sup>

Charlestonians continued their Henderson County and Flat Rock land purchases—from local owners, and amongst themselves—for decades.<sup>36</sup> The structural effects of those early purchases—by no means all benign—were still strongly in evidence after 150 years, as

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<sup>34</sup> Griffith, *Flat Rock District Boundary Increase, Boundary Decrease*, 7/295–296, 8/383–384. The previous (1975) Flat Rock District study gave this figure for the entire district. After the 2015 boundary increase/decrease adjustments, the District included 4,000 acres. Various post-1975 CARL studies mention some of the Charleston buyers and sellers: Daniel Blake, Judge Mitchell King (who eventually owned some 4,000 acres), and Rock Hill builder/owner C. G. Memminger. See for example Oppermann, *Chicken House/Wash House - Historic Structure Report*, 1.A.1. An excellent short discussion of the pre-Memminger arrivals (and their land purchases) may be found in Jones, *Connemara Main House - Historic Structure Report*, 6–7, <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2191736>, accessed June 13, 2017. A similar discussion of Memminger’s land purchases (including an early one from Baring) is available in Pence, *Archeological Overview and Assessment*, 29–31.

<sup>35</sup> Buncombe County Register of Deeds, <https://registerofdeeds.buncombecounty.org/External/LandRecords/protected/v4/SrchName.aspx>, accessed August 6, 2018. That Hampton had earlier bought land on Mud Creek (as well as 50 acres on the French Broad River in 1835) may indicate that he intended to establish an estate in Buncombe or Henderson County prior to the one he did establish at what became High Hampton in Jackson County. Henderson County was formed December 15, 1838; the Barings’ last Buncombe County purchase was April 15, 1839. Unfortunately, Henderson County deeds for that period have not yet been digitized.

<sup>36</sup> See, for example, an extended account in Griffith, *Flat Rock District Boundary Increase, Boundary Decrease* (2015), 8/383–387.



was shown in a documentary and statistical study of land ownership undertaken by the federal Appalachian Regional Commission in the late 1970s.<sup>37</sup> Several of its key findings are useful:

After the land speculation period, during which some speculators bought tens to hundreds of thousands of acres, there were “very few large landowners” (4). Here, “early history” has to be taken to refer to the post-land speculation period. Early (1780s) land grants in what became Henderson County (1838) went to William Staton, John Davis, Samuel Edney, and Asa Edney (49).<sup>38</sup>

A grant to John Earle in 1790 in what became Flat Rock “allowed rapid development of the Flat Rock area by wealthy Charlestonians,” including early buyers Charles Baring and Judge Mitchell King (49–52).

Tourist and resort development was established early in the county “as a main component of . . . economic development,” which it remained for sixty to seventy years (49–50).

This general pattern persisted into the 1970s (almost 150 years after Baring bought his first acreage), concentrating jobs in construction of highways and vacation or retirement homes rather than manufacturing (52).

Over long periods, “Land speculation associated with second-home development . . . [drove] up the cost and value of the county’s land and, consequently, taxes [went] up. As a result, many local residents [found] themselves ‘land rich and pocket poor’ with increasing pressure to sell all or part of their land to developers” (37, 58).

Beginning as early as the 1940s, Henderson County and Hendersonville worked to attract industry, and with modest success, except that most upper-level management and engineering jobs went to employees brought in from outside, while local people had to settle for lower-skill positions (61).

These dynamics, and related others, created a “class bias in housing,” as contractors concentrated on building “fine, large homes for wealthy second-home buyers and retirees” (65).

The core theme here is that early patterns (social, geographic, economic, and cultural) continued to manifest themselves for long periods. “Any plan for development,” the *Land Ownership Study*’s personnel discovered when they interviewed local people,

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<sup>37</sup> *Appalachian Land Ownership Study: Vol. IV: North Carolina* (Washington DC: Appalachian Regional Commission, 1980), <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/coo.31924003789223>, accessed August 29, 2018. This county-by-county study included Henderson County (47–71). The study also noted in passing (78) that in the 1840s another mountain Charleston was established in what became Swain County in 1871, with Charleston as its county seat. Local residents changed the name to Bryson City in 1889. Much of the area was logged by the enormous William M. Ritter Lumber Company 1903–1925) before being incorporated into the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in 1926. Bryson City’s website confirms the Charleston/Bryson city renaming (1889). On the timber industry in this area, see Ronald D. Eller, *Miners, Millhands and Mountaineers: Industrialization of the Appalachian South, 1880–1930* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1982), 86,127.

<sup>38</sup> Page numbers from this study in parentheses.

must confront its potential role in cultural stability and conflict . . . between natives and newcomers . . . The most visible conflict between the two groups is over the use of the land. Newcomers [who] value the area’s beauty and want to keep it the same to protect their investment . . . advocate zoning throughout the county. Native Henderson residents would rather protect . . . their option to sell land for the highest price offered regardless of zoned use . . . [They also] resent the newcomer trying “to run things” by suggesting zoning (69).<sup>39</sup>

In view of the complex relationships between these few items and long-term development in Flat Rock and Henderson County, defensible generalizations about such patterns would be hazardous in the absence of statistically valid data sets that are not yet available.

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<sup>39</sup> Unfortunately, relationships between locations, racial divisions and development within the county were not pursued in this study.



## CHAPTER ELEVEN

# BLACK COMMUNITY: INSTITUTIONS, BUSINESSES AND JOBS, 1866–1939

As the National Register’s *Historic Flat Rock Boundary Increase/Boundary Decrease* study has recently noted, following the war

Flat Rock’s summer colony began to see the effects of financial devastation, especially for those who owned rice plantations. Emancipation meant the end of slave labor and without it many plantation owners suffered financial loss. Several of the Charleston families were forced to sell their Flat Rock estates, often at a loss to Northern speculators, and other places were abandoned. The local families also suffered tremendous hardships as it took many years for the state to recover from the effects of the war.<sup>1</sup>

Nearly a half-century before the National Register study, former postmaster and local historian Lenoir Ray had already pointed out the cultural and political construction the Lowcountry refugee planters placed upon these changes:

The principal landowners were people whose fortunes were built on slavery. With the culmination of the war their fortunes waned but they held onto Flat Rock with deep and abiding tenacity. Here they came each summer and participated in a charade. It was never given a name but could have been called “The War Never Happened.” If they had little left, the mountain men who worked on their estates had less, and their former household slaves, in the main, continued to work for them for whatever wage they could pay.<sup>2</sup>

In modulated structures, forms and practices, vestiges of slavery lasted for a long time after the Civil War. A striking Henderson County example that remained outside Sadie Patton’s mostly upbeat chronicle—but was close to her own experience—lay in a road-improvement project of 1904. As road supervisor, her future husband Preston F. Patton managed the project. Despite the availability of ample Black and white labor (much of it

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<sup>1</sup> Griffith, *Flat Rock Historic District Boundary Increase, Boundary Decrease, and Additional Documentation* (2015), 8/390-392. Space and time do not permit us to pursue the “northern speculators” reference, but detailed inquiry into land deeds could be revealing.

<sup>2</sup> Lenoir Ray, *Postmarks: A History of Henderson County, North Carolina, 1787–1968* (Chicago: Adams Press, 1970), 98–99.

seasonally unemployed because of the seasonal nature of the local vacation and second-home based economy), local historian Lenoir Ray reported, Preston “used convict labor, the chain-gang, and his only equipment in the beginning was shovels.”<sup>3</sup>

In another chapter we commented at length on post-Reconstruction institutional efforts (especially those of the United Daughters of the Confederacy) to reconstruct and memorialize the history of the Civil War and slavery in terms of a Lost Cause discourse.<sup>4</sup>

More recently, historian Stephen Nash’s study of the Reconstruction era in western North Carolina has highlighted some of the mechanisms this ideology engendered among former “mountain masters”:

Many planters attempted to keep their former chattel working in their fields—through persuasion, coercion, or misrepresentation—but they found that emancipation required them to be pragmatic. Former masters found that contract terms “often embodied expectations rooted in slavery but expressed in the incongruous idiom of the contract.” As such, white southern employers frequently included language harkening back to slavery such as “heretofore,” “as always done,” or other coded statements about freedpeople remaining in their “place.” Some ex-slaveholders included explicit means of control such as corporal punishment or multi-year terms intended to keep their former slaves working in their former owners’ fields.<sup>5</sup>

Importantly, one notes that in the Flat Rock case the employment available to blacks was not on plantations, but rather on the lavish estates of refugee Lowcountry planters. Whether wage and employment practices on those estates mirrored those Nash discusses for plantations has received no comment, but it seems reasonable to suppose that they did.<sup>6</sup> In any case, Flat Rock and other Henderson County blacks frequently contrived to push beyond such barriers to build their own community and institutions.

## Emergence of East Flat Rock

At least as early as January 8, 1908, the *French Broad Hustler* referred to “East Flat Rock” as an entity separate from Flat Rock.<sup>7</sup> The name continued to appear regularly in the *Hustler*, as well as sporadically elsewhere. On July 28, 1912, Hendersonville’s *Daily Herald*

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<sup>3</sup> Ray, *Postmarks*, 15. Sadie Smathers and Preston Patton married in 1913.

<sup>4</sup> For readily accessible and closely argued historical discussions, see James Oliver Horton, *Confronting Slavery and Revealing the “Lost Cause”* (Washington DC: National Park Service, n.d.), <https://www.nps.gov/articles/confronting-slavery-and-revealing-the-lost-cause.htm>, accessed Dec. 12, 2018.

<sup>5</sup> Nash, *Reconstruction’s Ragged Edge*, 40.

<sup>6</sup> We have encountered no data that would allow such computations or comparisons to be made.

<sup>7</sup> *French Broad Hustler*, May 7, 1908, p. 4.

announced a property auction in “the prosperous town of East Flat Rock and elsewhere. Around the same time, it appeared in a business name (East Flat Rock Lumber and Milling Co.).

East Flat Rock is mentioned so frequently in local commentary on Hendersonville and Henderson County that defining and drawing a reliable boundary is important. But the necessary details turn out to be scarce. It is as if everyone knows it is *there*, but finding a map of it—at whatever period, or on whatever basis—is difficult.<sup>8</sup>

The map of Flat Rock that appears in Griffith’s 2015 *Historic Flat Rock Boundary Increase/Decrease* study does not designate what part constitutes East Flat Rock. There are numerous references to it, however, as if everyone knows where it is.<sup>9</sup>

Otis McCall became the first postmaster of East Flat Rock in 1908, and the 1923 building still stands on Blue Ridge Road. Black banker Henry Simmons was from “an established East Flat Rock family.” East Flat Rock Free Will Baptist Church (also on W. Blue Ridge Road—formerly Depot Road) appeared ca. 1910. The much-noted blacksmith John Markley and his family bought and built upon land on West Blue Ridge, and his wife was buried in East Flat Rock. When the Civil War ended, blacks built their own church in the area. The Skyland Hosiery Mill was built there on “several hundred acres” purchased and laid out for houses, a mill site, and a post office by Perry Hoke Walker (1859–1920). Mud Creek Baptist Church (1873) was built on Mine Gap Road in East Flat Rock.<sup>10</sup>

East Flat Rock emerged, Griffith says synoptically, after the Asheville and Spartanburg Railroad arrived in 1879. The A&SRR, he says,

followed the route of the old Saluda Turnpike . . . [passing] one and a half miles east of Memminger’s Rock Hill estate . . . [to where] a station [was built and named] Flat Rock . . . [Near the station] Perry Hoke Walker (1859–1920) purchased several hundred acres . . . [and] laid out streets and lots . . . [in what] became East Flat Rock . . . The road between Flat Rock and East Flat Rock was known for many years as Depot Road (present-day West Blue Ridge Road).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *HendersonHeritage.com* says that East Flat Rock “is bordered on the west by Flat Rock. To the south is Zirconia and to the south and east is the Macedonia community. The community of Upward borders East Flat Rock on the east. The communities of Tracy Grove and Barker Heights border East Flat Rock on the north.”

<sup>9</sup> For the map, see Clay Griffith, Flat Rock Historic District Boundary Increase, Boundary Decrease, and Additional Documentation (National Register). National Register of Historic Places, 2015.

<sup>10</sup> Griffith, Flat Rock Historic District Boundary Increase, Boundary Decrease, 7/19, 7/22, 7/29, 7/95, 7/285, 8/391, 8/394.

<sup>11</sup> Griffith, Flat Rock Historic District Boundary Increase, Boundary Decrease, 8/390-392. Griffith’s main source for these details appears to be Frank L. Fitzsimons, *From the Banks of the Oklawaha*, Vol. 2 (Hendersonville, NC: Golden Glow Publishing Company, 1977), 41–42. Griffith’s reference to the Skyland Hosiery Mill appears to suggest that Perry Walker established it soon after the Flat Rock station opened in 1879, but the industry’s *Southern Textile Bulletin* says it was not founded until nearly 30 years later. See “Skyland Hosiery Company, East Flat Rock, N.C.,” *Southern Textile Bulletin* XVIII (no. 17), Dec. 25, 1919, p. 215, [https://archive.org/stream/southern textile b1919unse/southern textile b1919unse\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/southern textile b1919unse/southern textile b1919unse_djvu.txt), accessed Jan. 31, 2019.



On Henderson County's 2020 Comprehensive Plan's Community Planning Areas map (no. 25), East Flat Rock is named, but merged as Dana/East Flat Rock.<sup>12</sup> It does not appear in the county's map of National Historic Sites and Districts or its 2020 Comprehensive Land Use Plan map.<sup>13</sup>

Fortunately, in recent years a quite detailed map of this "unincorporated area" has become available on Google.<sup>14</sup> It shows an irregularly shaped area from the junction of Bat Fork and King Creek on the north, to somewhat west of current I-26 and U.S. 25 on the west, Oak Grove Road (NC1807) on the south and southwest, and King Creek (NC1823, 1780 and 1779) on the northwest.

What is clear in many references to East Flat Rock is that a substantial Black community grew up there, and that its origin was tied importantly to the coming (and growth) of the mill. In May 1913, the *Western North Carolina Times* carried a half-page article that conveyed the hoped-for trajectory: "East Flat Rock, N.C.: An Industrial Village, A Future City," illustrated with a photograph of "A typical cottage of the Skyland Hosiery Mills village."<sup>15</sup>

The article, saturated with the anti-labor rhetoric of southern textile mill owners of the time, said that the town had eight hundred people, and had "grown up almost overnight" because of the efforts of business men "who make a whole field of grass grow where none had grown before." The town's "one big industry" was Skyland Hosiery Company, whose happy, healthy, "well-paid and well satisfied" employees had "working conditions [that] are perfect," contrary to the rantings of the "long-haired he-agitators and the short-haired she-agitators who infest certain portions of these United States" (muck-raking labor organizers, readers were reminded).

The East Flat Rock village, the anonymous writer said, was nothing short of Arcadian, with "model cottages pleasantly situated amidst a grove of fine old trees," "every sanitary convenience," free garden plots, "different churches," a "model school," and the

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.hendersoncountync.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning/page/38571/map33.pdf>, accessed July 8, 2019.

<sup>13</sup> Henderson County 2020 Comprehensive Plan: Village of Flat Rock, <https://www.hendersoncountync.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning/page/38571/map25.pdf>; accessed July 7, 2019

<sup>14</sup> For the Google map, see <https://www.google.com/maps/place/East+Flat+Rock,+NC/@35.2847996,-82.420279,15z/data=!4m5!3m4!1s0x8859c2be6c477751:0x4a1611ddc8ce39d0!8m2!3d35.2801166!4d-82.4220631>. See also Henderson County Comprehensive Plan 2020: Historic Sites and Districts, <https://www.hendersoncountync.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning/page/38571/map14.pdf>, accessed July 7, 2019.

<sup>15</sup> P. H. Walker and L. E. Fisher [?], "East Flat Rock, N.C.: An Industrial Village, A Future City," *Western North Carolina Times*, May 9, 1913, 24. Griffith's much later reference to Walker's "small community that became East Flat Rock" is ambiguous, since no date is given. A few other details of the formation of East Flat Rock are available at HendersonHeritage.com: East Flat Rock, <http://hendersonheritage.com/east-flat-rock/>, accessed July 1, 2019. A more detailed history of Skyland Hosiery (and especially the racial makeup of its employees) is presented later in this chapter.

sort of “beneficial welfare work which characterizes the mill owners of the south.” The “prosperous and fast growing company,” the article promised, “means . . . increased prosperity for this county.”

The distribution of that prosperity was not addressed. A short side entry on P. H. Walker, telegraphed his role as (in effect) the village’s founder: buyer of the original parcel out of “a great estate,” arranger of Skyland Hosiery’s location, “real estate operator par excellence . . . [and] “wise and progressive citizen.” Another short section sketched the success of L. E. Fisher, a model small-scale entrepreneur who came from Salisbury to find prosperity and health through his store (“a credit in every way to a city ten times the size of East Flat Rock”).

At this juncture, in any case, the key issue is the relationship between blacks and East Flat Rock. Culpepper’s *Under Their Own Vine and Fig Tree* focuses briefly upon this relationship:

The Black settlement in East Flat Rock expanded in the late nineteenth century as South Carolinians moved in, married, and raised large families, who in turn married and raised large families in the neighborhood. Additional people created additional problems. Housing was cramped and garden space dear because most families could not afford to buy their own land or build homes right away. The delicate matter of where African Americans could bury their dead also became an issue with the passage of time and generations. . .

The remarkable Henry Shields Simmons, Culpepper notes, was motivated by these problems and related ones to create the Society of Necessity in 1885, which “offered the resident of East Flat Rock a variety of services.” Four years later Simmons secured a bit of land “for \$35 from a descendent of Charles Baring along the railroad tracks in East Flat Rock,” which became Oakland Cemetery. Thereafter, blacks could “lay loved ones to rest in marked, well-tended graves nearby rather than interring them anonymously in sites around Flat Rock.”<sup>16</sup>

## A Diverse Black Community

It is tempting to generalize about “the Black community” in East Flat Rock, Flat Rock and Hendersonville, and one might justifiably argue that such an aggregate did (and still does) exist. But to whatever extent such an approach is invoked, one must remember

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<sup>16</sup> Culpepper, *Under Their Own Vine and Fig Tree*, 375–77. In 1923, a new Rosenwald school for Black students opened in East Flat Rock. It operated until 1952. For a longer description of the cemetery, see Griffith. Nothing designated as East Flat Rock appears on the Flat Rock Historic District Map prepared by the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources for Griffith, *Flat Rock Historic District Boundary Increase, Boundary Decrease*, 156–57.

that aggregates blur internal differences. Hence disaggregating the area's Black population is analytically useful and can reveal important aspects of Black history not otherwise accessible.

Twenty-five years ago, historian Linda Culpepper demonstrated the usefulness of such an approach by examining a subset of blacks in the area: Black Charlestonians who were brought to, and remained, in the mountains.<sup>17</sup> By the time Henderson County was formed, Culpepper argues, drawing upon public and church records,

Lowcountry surnames were becoming as familiar along the Blue Ridge as they were in Charleston and the Sea Islands. . . A few Black and mulatto servants bore their masters' names [e.g., Alston, Baring, Memminger] . . . [but] most were known before and after liberation by surnames associated with free and enslaved Charlestonians . . . [e.g., Edwards, Jenkins, Moultrie, Shields, Simmons, Williams].<sup>18</sup>

The fact that during the early decades of the exchange, Black Charlestonians traveled back and forth seasonally between the Lowcountry and the mountains, and that after the war began, "Lowcountry whites poured in[to] western North Carolina . . . with family servants and field hands in tow" swelled the numbers of Charleston blacks and contributed to their maintaining—as individuals and extended families—an identification with Charleston.

After liberation, however, many decided to remain in Henderson County rather than return to the Lowcountry, where (not surprisingly) former Lowcountry divisions by nativity, class and status (elite vs. non-elite), occupation, family name, literacy, Black vs. mulatto, and other factors had long marked internal differences among blacks, as they continued to do in the mountains. Thus "extended families [of blacks] became progressively visible in through the 1870s and 1880s."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Linda Parramore Culpepper, "Black Charlestonians in the Mountains: African American Community Building in Post-Civil-War Flat Rock, North Carolina," *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 8, no. 2 (2002), 362–81. Unless another source is indicated and/or a quotation is otherwise attributed, the following discussion is based upon this article.

<sup>18</sup> Culpepper cites "black minister Simon Baring" as an example. She errs by saying (364), however, that "The Black presence at Flat Rock developed in tandem with the white village known since the 1830s as the Little Charleston of the Mountains," for which she cites Patton's *Condensed History of Flat Rock* (1961, not 1964, as she dates it). But as we have previously been at pains to show, the phrase appears to date only from Patton's *Story of Henderson County* (1947).

<sup>19</sup> These distinctions are examined closely in Bernard Powers, *Black Charlestonians: A Social History, 1822–1885* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1994). Quotation from p. 372. Surprisingly (and unfortunately), Powers's analysis focuses primarily upon Black *males*. The male to female ratio of enslaved people in Charleston in 1861, he says, was 77.7:100 (26), and various index entries refer to Black occupations often discussed in other sources as marked by gender distinctions (e.g., teachers, domestics, house servants, tailors). Some blacks took a middle course after the war, Culpepper is careful to point out, by working their way back and forth between Flat Rock and Charleston, sometimes in jobs in Greenville and Spartanburg.

Beyond the (too often undifferentiated) “black community” itself, these divisions and others between Flat Rock blacks and whites persisted and ramified during the post-war years. “Black and white Charlestonians,” Culpepper discovered from census and other records,

remained deeply, if not affectionately, attached to one another for decades after emancipation. Their relationships were generations in the making, very often through miscegenation. House servants and domestic staff were more likely to have light than dark skin well into the twentieth century, [and] their surnames and given names [were] a living legacy of the Old South. That particular names run in Black families is not merely coincidental.

Pursuing these factors further, Culpepper says that “although . . . [some] whites believe to this day that blood ties were the reason so many planters ‘gave’ land in historic Flat Rock to their former servants, . . . the key word in terms of biracial real estate transactions in the post-war period is not given but purchased.” Other financial transactions were labor-, rather than land-based: the lowcountry planters had “cheap, uncultivated land, and plenty of it,” and blacks had “reliable, experienced labor.”<sup>20</sup>

## Black Institutions in Flat Rock and Hendersonville

Beyond Culpepper’s broad community analysis, the history of particular institutions blacks formed among themselves for their personal and mutual benefit offers useful perspective: the Kingdom of the Happy Land, the Society of Necessity, Black churches (especially Mud Creek Colored Baptist), black-owned businesses and Black schools.

### *The Kingdom of the Happy Land (1866?–1918?)*

By the time (1957) local historian Sadie Patton wrote—“from a dim, tattered page,” she said—about what she called a “strange communal settlement,” not much was left of the Kingdom of the Happy Land, except “a few rotting logs here and there, an abandoned chimney, an occasional sunken pit.”<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, her narrative is still the most complete available.

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<sup>20</sup> Culpepper says in “Black Charlestonians in the Mountains” that “Israel Simmons was the first of the Black Charlestonians to convert saving into soil. Simmons agreed to pay ninety dollars for eighteen acres of land in December 1871,” a transaction that marked the beginning of the Black settlement along the eastern, back ‘wood fringes’ of several white estates, including King’s Argyle and Baring’s Mountain Lodge . . .,” 374. Culpepper provides other examples as well.

<sup>21</sup> Sadie Smathers Patton, *The Kingdom of the Happy Land* (Asheville: Stephens Press, 1957). Patton’s slim volume included no sources, documentary or otherwise. She notes, however, that after 1872, county records help to piece out the history.

With the advantage of being able to probe “recollections of Negroes whose forebears had known something of the first comers,” and ferreting out bits from county records (deeds, wills, death certificates), Patton was able to find and view the few remaining vestiges (house sites and plantings, rotting logs, cellar holes, a chimney or two, long-abandoned farm fields) of the Kingdom (established maybe in 1864, probably in the Green River Valley). She also located a few photographs and patched the whole together into a fairly fine-grained account of “a dim, tattered page of the history of Henderson County.”<sup>22</sup>

Patton’s narrative of the Kingdom includes fascinating details of settling, finding land, building homes, establishing farms and gardens, buying and breeding stock, fostering markets and other useful sources of income beyond the community, and the gradual movement of some members to lands, homes, and employment outside. She estimated that the community disbanded “about 1900.”<sup>23</sup>

From Patton’s narrative and scattered other fragments, one can piece together something approaching a serviceable narrative.

Sometime between as early as 1864, but probably by 1867, probably in Mississippi, perhaps fifty former slaves gathered and led by “a man of light color,” Patton guessed, began an eastward trek (perhaps with some vague awareness of the Drovers’ Road and the experiences of Lowcountry seasonal travelers) through Georgia, Alabama and South Carolina toward western North Carolina, hoping to establish a community grounded in a philosophy of “one for all, and all for one . . . [and] rooted in an ancestral tribal memory and sustained by the hope for a Promised Land.”<sup>24</sup> Their journey ended in Henderson County, where they were allowed to settle on (and eventually purchase in 1882) 180 acres near Oakland that stretched across the North Carolina/South Carolina border, on the hills above the Green River.

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<sup>22</sup> As was her practice, Patton did not cite any print sources. She does refer to “two old people” [unnamed] who lived in the community and one named informant, Ezel Couch [b. 1872], “now past eighty-five years old, [who] says he has always been told [by his parents, who were members of the community] that . . . he was named for a Black travelling evangelist” who advocated the forming of such communities. Internal evidence (9) suggests that Patton interviewed Ezel and his sister Mary at considerable length and in detail. Ezell [sic] Couch (marked \*=colored) appears in the 1937-38 Hendersonville city directory, 127, and again as late as 1954–1955, living at 1105 6th Avenue W, 342. Mary Couch appears in neither.

<sup>23</sup> For Patton’s map, supplied to her by Camp Arrowhead, see *Kingdom of the Happy Land* (1957).

<sup>24</sup> Black History Research Committee of Henderson County, *Brief History of the Black Presence*, 1–5. This account says that during its long journey (especially through South Carolina) the group may have grown to between 150 and 200 people. The Committee’s note on sources suggests that a key one was Patton’s 1957 account. Jon Elliston and Kent Priestley’s “The Kingdom of the Happy Land,” *MountainXpress*, Feb. 7, 2007 also appears to be based primarily on Patton’s. The Kingdom has been written about numerous times in recent years (in newspapers, on web sites, and elsewhere), but its history remains inadequately documented and suffused with conjecture. See a list of online links in the website *Kingdom of the Happy Land: A Dream Deferred in the Mountains of Western North Carolina*, <https://kingdomofthehappyland.wordpress.com/links>, accessed March 6, 2018. Our brief account here assembles only aspects of the story that seem reasonably verifiable. See also Danielle Dulken, “A Black Kingdom in Postbellum Appalachia,” *Scalawag*, Sept. 9, 2019. <https://www.scalawagmagazine.org/2019/09/black-appalachia-kingdom>.

There they cut timber and built houses, cleared fields, and grew crops and livestock. Others joined the community (which grew by some estimates to perhaps four hundred), including some men who were skilled carpenters and ironworkers, brick and stone masons, and women who were weavers and seamstresses. Some used their skills inside the community, and others outside, earning money to sustain and develop the project. The community seems to have lasted until shortly after the turn of the century, some recalled, but even that was uncertain. “The original members,” the Committee’s narrative says, were getting older and times were changing. New recruits were scarce and the necessity that had fueled the early dream had waned. People either died or moved away until finally there was only one person [Jerry Casey] left . . .

Some who moved away relocated elsewhere in the county. Blacksmith, veterinarian, and wheelwright John Markley and his wife Sallie moved into East Flat Rock, where he made buggies and wagons for local people. Perry and Amy Williams “opened a thriving business providing meals and lodging to people ‘wagoning’ down the Buncombe Turnpike.”<sup>25</sup>

However dim and tattered the bits of remaining history Patton found, and however noteworthy her effort to shed light upon its dimness, she unfortunately viewed the story through the United Daughters of the Confederacy’s distorting lens of the Lost Cause. At the war’s end, she judged, it was paradoxically the former plantation master who had the requisite understanding and vision to engage the problem. “Devastation and ruin faced the Negro,” she said,

as it also did his white father - his farm wasted and neglected, the value of the slaves he once owned not only wiped out, but the newly freed men and women had themselves become his liability. Without knowing which way to turn, these humble ones stood waiting, waiting for their former master to again assume charge and direct their future course.

The Emancipation Proclamation had freed the Negroes—they were no longer slaves to any man - but it left them to a worse fate, homeless, without property or training, ignorant of which way to turn, and in bondage to want and fear . . .

*[Was this]* dream of a communal village . . . born in the mind of *[their]* white father? . . . All these are questions for which the present offers no answer. But far off across now lifeless cotton fields, in a different country, the Negroes were told, there might be a place for them to start life as members of a newly independent race.

The onetime master and his former slaves, now a poverty-stricken man striving to measure up as captain of a great adventure, and his followers who asked only that their steps be directed from day to day, cast their lot together and left plantation scenes of their old Mississippi home.

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<sup>25</sup> This reference to wagons on the Turnpike suggests that changes stemming from the coming of the railroad in 1879 may have contributed to the demise of the Kingdom.



Following “the great main street” of Lowcountry people through Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina, Patton continues, “the plodding, shuffling Negroes . . . conjured up pictures of their dream land, . . . [perhaps moving in] a joyous rush as many who had made the trip with their white folks during slavery . . . to summer homes in Western North Carolina.”<sup>26</sup>

Fortunately, historian Bruce Baker later set Kingdom of the Happy Land in the larger (and more illuminating) context of communities formed by freed blacks during Reconstruction.<sup>27</sup> Drawing partly from some contemporary historians, he located three similar communities outside Charleston: Lincolnvill, Liberty Hill (north of the city), and Sandy Island between Waccamaw and Pee Dee River. The South Carolina Land Commission (1868; modeled on the federal Homestead Act of 1862) bought land from cash-pressed former planters, divided it up, and sold it to Black and white settlers. The largest undertaking was between Abbeville and Greenwood, where a 2,700-acre parcel was divided into fifty- to one-hundred-acre plots. It became the community of Promised Land, with its own school and churches, and lasted at least until 2016.<sup>28</sup>

More recently, scholar Danielle Dulken has revisited the history of the Kingdom, resetting it as a story of “Black worldmaking” in western North Carolina, where “freedpeople found sanctuary in their vision of a Emancipation era utopia.” In a bitter irony, she describes how in 2018, she found the site of the Kingdom unmarked and forgotten, its history blanketed by a private “marijuana cannabidiol (CBD) farm using The Kingdom’s namesake, Kingdom Harvest,” whose owners aggressively block visitor access.<sup>29</sup>

## *The Society of Necessity (1885–1975)*

Formed about twenty years later than Kingdom of the Happy Land, the Society of Necessity was a self-help society for Henderson County blacks. Although it had Charleston antecedents, locally it grew out of the efforts of Mud Creek Baptist Church member Henry

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<sup>26</sup> Patton, *Kingdom of the Happy Land*, 2–5.

<sup>27</sup> The most contextualized subsequent discussion of the Kingdom is in Bruce E. Baker, *Devastated by Passion and Belief: Remembering Reconstruction in the Twentieth-Century South* (PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2003, 29–32. Baker drew partly upon Elizabeth Rauh Bethel, *Promiseland: A Century of Life in a Negro Community* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981) and Carol K. Rothrock Bleser, *The Promised Land: The History of the South Carolina Land Commission, 1869–1890* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1969).

<sup>28</sup> Robert Ashton Cobb, “Promised Land, 1869–,” in *South Carolina Encyclopedia*, June 20, 2016, <http://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/promised-land/>, accessed Dec. 3, 2018, says that the community had 48 families in 1872, “provided independence for hundreds of African Americans,” and that “residents of Promised Land exerted a significant influence over the political, economic, and social life of rural Abbeville and Greenwood Counties.” A Promised Land Elementary School at Bradley South Carolina (SE of Abbeville) turned up in a Google Maps search on Dec. 3, 2018. The name may have been borrowed from the Reconstruction period, but the school was one of scores built to avoid compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

<sup>29</sup> Dulken, “A Black Kingdom.”

Simmons.<sup>30</sup> Beginning about 1885 under Simmons’s leadership and continuing until he died in 1949, it provided vital services—initially to Simmons’s neighbors along Mine Gap Road. Those services included legal counseling, facilitating land purchases, home construction, food preservation and distribution, short-term loans, health care (for a doctor’s fee of 50 cents or a dollar), and undertaking and burial.

The Society’s all-day “Annual,” the Black History Committee’s report said, drew great numbers of both Black and white community people. It was usually held at the local Rosenwald school in late August at the close of the long summer season. The event attracted people of both races to its day-long festivities. Engraved invitations were sent out adding a touch of formality to the occasion. There were speakers, singing, a parade, and the air would be filled with the smells, the sights and the sounds of a celebration.

One Society officer (likely John F. Potts Jr.) recalled that the annual “was the only time that I can remember my grandfather George Potts going anywhere at night. He rigidly followed an ‘early to bed, early to rise’ schedule. But he and my grandmother never missed [it].”<sup>31</sup>

The Society owned and operated Oakland Cemetery, where plots in the early 1890s could be had for one cent per square foot.<sup>32</sup> Any person of “good moral character” could join for an initial fee of \$1.00 and dues of 10 cents per month; payments went to build the Society’s service funds.

The 2015 National Register boundary study of Flat Rock says that the cemetery consists of more than 200 grave sites on a grassy hillside. The interred are predominantly African American, including members of the Potts, Simmons, Jenkins, and Markley families. The earliest marked grave appears to belong to Henry Markley, who was buried here in 1892. Interspersed with a few large trees, more than half of the grave sites are marked by simple fieldstone and engraved markers or by small crosses. The Society’s 1903 ledger said there were then 203 grave sites. In 1971, it reduced its mission to caring for the cemetery.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Culpepper, “Black Charlestonians,” 375, names Charleston’s Brown Fellowship Society and the Humane Brotherhood [or Society] of Free Dark Men as antecedents. Powers, *Black Charlestonians*, 51–52, also names other similar organizations.

<sup>31</sup> [John R. Potts Jr.?] “The History of the Society of Necessity of Flat Rock, North Carolina” (n.p., 1975?). provides considerable detail on the Society from its ledgers (1903–1975). It became affiliated with the United Fund in 1953, which supported it for about a dozen years thereafter. This document is a good source of members of the Black community: Alston, Brooks, Corley, Darity, Fields, Halback, Jenkins, Jordan, Logan, Markley, Mims, Potts, Shields, Washington, Williams, Wilson, Young. A list of members for 1903–1911 included in this document contains about 70 names, but almost half belonged to 4 families (Jenkins, Markley, Simmons, and Potts). A list of contributors (undated) includes names of two early white planter families (King and Middleton).

<sup>32</sup> Officers listed (7) included Simmons, President; J[ohn?] C. Markley, Vice-President; Robert B. Alston, Secretary; L. G. Young, Assistant Secretary; and George Potts, Treasurer. Lavinia Potts and J. H. Hallback were designated as Mother and Father. Markley may have been associated earlier with the Kingdom of the Happy Land.

<sup>33</sup> Griffith, *Flat Rock Historic District Boundary Increase, Boundary Decrease*, 7/156–7/157.

## *Black Churches*

In her brief sketch of Flat Rock's St. John in the Wilderness church (1836), Susan Allston wrote that the earliest church in Flat Rock was Mud Creek Church (1805) in "the early stronghold of the Baptists." A local Black woman told her that "In the early days it belonged to the Negroes, . . . [and] Whites and Negroes worshipped there together."

As has been recounted repeatedly, during what Allston called Flat Rock's Golden Age (1840–1860) some of the Lowcountry planters' Black "servants" were allowed to sit in the slave gallery at St. John, and some were laid to rest in a section of its cemetery,

But later, Allston continued somewhat vaguely, "the Negroes . . . established their own church . . . [where] the road that runs between Flat Rock and East Flat Rock turns off to go to the Colored Settlement."<sup>34</sup>

However reliable Allston's contention may be, there can be no doubt that Black churches were crucial to the Black experience in Flat Rock. Fortunately, several recent researchers have taken a closer look at that history.

In the mid-1990s, Henderson County's Black History Research Committee issued a report that included brief sketches of a number of Black churches.<sup>35</sup> Shaw's Creek A.M.E. Zion Church in Horse Shoe was formed in 1865 as Logan's Chapel and renamed in 1929. It was also progenitor to St. Paul Tabernacle in Hendersonville.<sup>36</sup> Mt. Zion Baptist was formed "a few years after the Civil War" in the "rather remote" area of Ritter Path (or Green Mountain) out of the efforts of Calvin Nesbitt and Henry McCoy. Star of Bethel Baptist was organized in 1873. St. Paul Tabernacle A.M.E. Zion was established in 1880 by members of Shaw's Creek A.M.E. Zion in Horseshoe who were working in Hendersonville and found it too difficult to make a twenty-mile round trip to attend services. Union Grove

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<sup>34</sup> Susan Lowndes Allston, *Early Sketch of St. John in the Wilderness and Flat Rock*, 5, 21. The experience of blacks (enslaved and freed) at St. John in the Wilderness—and the few surviving records of it—have been discussed in a prior chapter.

<sup>35</sup> Black History Committee, *Brief History of the Black Presence in Henderson County*. All of the brief church narratives include some names of specific individuals (founding/early members, ministers, deacons and others). Systematizing and cross-referencing these names lies beyond the scope of this present study.

<sup>36</sup> The 1915 Hendersonville city directory (the earliest we have been able to locate), 117–18, includes separate lists of white and "Colored" city churches: four white (Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian and Catholic) and two unnamed colored (Methodist at 500 N. Sixth Avenue and Baptist on S. Third Avenue). Since no Episcopal church (e.g., St. John) appears, it seems reasonable to conclude that the directory did not cover Flat Rock or other outlying areas where there may have been Black residences, communities and churches. Addresses in the listings do include 6 rural postal routes, however. Colored individuals are indicated by \*; some have city and some "Rt" addresses. These marked listings also include 7 colored ministers. Several \*'d individuals shared surnames with lowcountry planter families (e.g., King, Summey). The RFD directory, 94–112, of more than 600 individuals included only about a dozen blacks.

<sup>36</sup> In "Family Struggles to Maintain Neglected Graves at Historic Church," Hendersonville *Times News*, July 2013, Nancy Tanker referred to a 1976 history of the church by Hannah Logan Edwards, which we have not discovered.

Baptist (1909) became most active after completing its second building in 1955. Greater New Zion Baptist opened its doors in 1927. Stanford Chapel A.M.E. Zion was formed “in the early 1900s,” and erected its first building “in the early 1930s.”

Of all the churches in the area, Black or white (except for Flat Rock’s elite St. John in the Wilderness), several churches (black and white) that include “Mud Creek” in their names have commanded the most attention. Local lore, staunchly defended by the Black community, holds that the Black (or Colored) Mud Creek church was formed in May, 1867 by perhaps eight Black members who separated from the white Mud Creek Church (whose congregation had permitted them to use the building occasionally for their own services, but kept them separated from whites during regular services). Fortunately, the church (under a slightly different name) and its (somewhat disputed) history have been carefully examined by historian Linda Culpepper.<sup>37</sup>

Despite some initial doubts owing to insufficient “hard evidence,” Culpepper accepts the founding date of 1867 for an African American church called Mud Creek Colored Baptist Church. But it could have emerged either as local blacks insisted, or (equally possibly) from the Mud Creek Baptist Union (1867) or Association (1868)—the latter a group of African Americans from Asheville.<sup>38</sup> In any case, the Mud Creek Missionary Baptist Church (MCMBC) congregation consisted of

a group of men and women who lived in and around Flat Rock village and the town of Hendersonville. Most of these people had been slaves. Some had been enslaved locally. Many belonged to elite Charlestonians who kept seasonal homes in Flat Rock and Hooper’s Creek, now Fletcher.<sup>39</sup>

However—and exactly whenever—MCMBC was formed, it happened at a juncture when the ending of the war shifted both the ideology and the social/political role of the Black church. To be “truly free and independent,” blacks learned, they would need to have

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<sup>37</sup> Linda Culpepper, “Under Their Own Vine and Fig Tree: The History of Mud Creek Missionary Baptist Church, East Flat Rock, Henderson County, North Carolina, 1867–2002” (2002), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41446547>, accessed October 18, 2018. This study includes a 48-page narrative and 68 pages of documentary data. Church records include Mud Creek Missionary Baptist Church Ledgers in the Henderson County Genealogical & Historical Society; Mud Creek Missionary Baptist Church (East Flat Rock, N.C.) records, CRMF1044, Z. Smith Reynolds Library Special Collections and Archives, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC; and further records at Western Carolina University.

<sup>38</sup> Culpepper, “Under Their Own Vine,” 9, says that “Little is known about the Mud Creek Baptist Association, representing twelve churches in 1899 and eighteen churches in 1909.” But see fn. 60 also. In the early 1990s, Culpepper, 46, says the church became known as Mud Creek Missionary Baptist Church (MCMBC), by which acronym we will refer to it here.

<sup>39</sup> Culpepper, “Under Their Own Vine,” v-vi. All quotations not otherwise attributed are from this source. Black History Research Committee, *A Brief History of the Black Presence*, 26–28, emphasizes the long-lived productivity of the Association, which over a 130-year period came to include 20 (Culpepper says perhaps 36) churches with 6,346 members in Henderson, Buncombe, and Transylvania counties. In 1934 it purchased a 14-acre site next to Mud Creek Baptist Church for use by member churches. In 1942, the Baptist Assembly Improvement League, an auxiliary arm of the Association undertook to plan and direct activities and programming there. Eleven buildings, “social stands,” a baseball park and a grandstand, and an Assembly Hall (1955) were also constructed.

*their own* churches, even if some white churches were offering better terms for membership. Exuberant worship experiences and ministers “who stressed hope, not obedience” were powerfully appealing—however frightening a thought that was to whites, long vigilant about “uppity” and seditious Black ministers who hinted at emancipation or revolution.<sup>40</sup> And even within the postwar order, if Black Baptist churches wanted to be “deemed proper,” they had to pass through the gauntlet of a “covenanting ceremony” overseen by two white ministers (ix–x).<sup>41</sup> Southern clergy, Culpepper observed, helped to organize these “semi-independent churches in order to keep Black members docile and within the fold” (xiv).

Her own search through fragmentary documents suggested ever more persuasively to Culpepper that MCMBC had emerged neither from the white church of (nearly) the same name, nor from the Association, but much more probably from Hendersonville Colored Baptist (HCB). HCB had had significant Black membership in the 1840s, numbering 65 by 1865 (xiv–xv). To confuse the issue further, HCB shared quarters with numerous churches until it erected its own building in 1892. In 1868, about 50 HCB members were “formally dismissed” to form MCMBC, which apparently took its *name* from the Association.<sup>42</sup> Further unresolvable confusion derived from the prevalence of white slave-owning family names among Black church members (Alston, Baring, Jenkins, Simons, Memminger, Trenholm).<sup>43</sup>

MCMBC “continued to grow and thrive into the 1920s,” Culpepper says, engaging in spirited discussions periodically about alternative locations and buildings, dealing with post-1929 economic challenges, the deaths of some key older members. MCMBC’s relationship to and involvement with the emerging struggle for Black civil rights in the 1950s has not been systematically documented or studied, but Culpepper notes that while Black Flat Rock minister Simon Baring (carrying the surname of one of the area’s earliest white slave-owning Charlestonians) “is known to have been politically active in 1867 . . . there is

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<sup>40</sup> Culpepper comments extensively upon the divisions Charleston’s enslaved people, mulattos, house servants, field workers, and free blacks monitored and maintained between and amongst themselves with regard to church preferences and affiliations. This topic also receives extended (and due) attention in Bernard E. Powers Jr., *Black Charlestonians: A Social History, 1822–1885* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1994), 189–225.

<sup>The</sup> Black elite appears to have been small in Henderson County. We encountered significant detail on only businessman S. D. Dogan and professional nurse Alberta Jowers, both discussed below. It is worth noting, however, that “elite” is a problematic term, since (for example) ministers, physicians, funeral directors, and some others who had considerable standing in the Black community were not necessarily wealthy.

<sup>41</sup> Culpepper notes in “Under Their Own Vine,” xi, that there were two other Black Baptist churches in the area: Hendersonville Colored Baptist (prior to 1855) and Star of Bethel (1873). Both, as well as MCMBC, were served by white ministers for an extended period after Emancipation.

<sup>42</sup> There were many more bewildering congruences and contradictions, twists, turns and serendipitous discoveries in Culpepper’s research than there is need or space to detail here. We aim only to characterize the historical moment at which MCMBC appeared, and to emphasize that Black churches moved into permanently consequential roles in the Flat Rock and Hendersonville communities.

<sup>43</sup> Culpepper, “Under Their Own Vine,” 28–29, discusses marriage and naming practices as revealed within MCMBC membership rolls. For a brief but useful discussion of the relationship between MCMBC and the Society of Necessity, see 32.



no direct evidence of political activism at the church,” except that former pastor J. W. Neills and his wife “caused quite a stir back in 1921 when they registered and voted in a Hendersonville town election”—not so much because they *voted*, but because Mrs. Neills voted a straight Republican ticket.<sup>44</sup>

Recent years have brought major changes to the church as membership slacked off, older families died off and new populations arrived in the area. A severe building debt crisis threatened its existence in 2002, but members’ own efforts, an angel donor, and a crowd-funded campaign bridged beyond it.

## *Black Schools*

Significantly, county historian Sadie Patton’s chapter on schools in *The Story of Henderson County* (1947) was confined almost entirely to white schools. Despite that limitation, some aspects of Patton’s account help to sketch a backdrop for chronicling Black education.

Col. James Brittain’s “Old Field” school, established in 1797 in Mills River, led the Henderson County list. On a statewide basis, the rudiments of a state public school system emerged after 1838, but not until the Legislature authorized a “special charter school” in Hendersonville was there significant movement in Henderson County.

The Mills River Academy opened around 1852, and the Western North Carolina Female College (1858) was the first private institution in Hendersonville, established by the Western Baptist Convention. It did not survive the Civil War.

For our purpose here, a fuller account of *Black* education in Henderson County is necessary. Fortunately, in recent years a few useful sources have emerged that help to convey both the general post-war situation for blacks in the county and the earliest efforts to provide education for them.

The postwar climate in the county was not promising. Historian Steven Nash’s *Reconstruction’s Ragged Edge* offers a striking example of postwar racism. Late on an October night in 1866, Harvey Roberts and Elbert Gregg blacked their faces and abducted Hannah McElroy, a Black Flat Rock woman, by repeatedly hanging her by the neck, demanding money and information. Each time she refused, they hanged her again, and threats continued thereafter. People in the white Flat Rock community knew, but refused to do anything. McElroy escaped and fled to Yancey County.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Culpepper says in “Under Their Own Vine,” 36–37, that “Church records are sketchy from the mid-1930s to the present,” but that “continued to grow and to prosper through the 1940s.” The voting incident is discussed on 38–39.

<sup>45</sup> Nash, *Reconstruction’s Ragged Edge*, 18–19. Nash provides an extended, detailed account of the postwar period in the county.



It would be decades before local sentiment shifted and the county addressed the issue of education for blacks. In the meantime, what efforts there were derived from the Freedmen’s Bureau’s freedmen’s schools’ initiative.

The Freedmen’s Bureau (1865–1872) was widely hated among white southerners, who perceived it as misguided and meddlesome, and subjected to repeated legal and political challenge.<sup>46</sup> In North Carolina, although lacking (as it did everywhere) adequate staff and funds, it managed to provide some essential services to Black people, including food, medical care, employment, and a variety of work- and wage-related adjustments. Additionally, it tried to address Black education by disbursing funds from four northern missionary societies to locate sites, erecting buildings, providing living accommodations for teachers, and supervising curriculum.

In general, the state’s whites

displayed their opposition by drafting petitions and resolutions . . . attacking blacks and bureau agents, . . . burning schools and generally opposing education for blacks. Many bureau agents faced continual hostility and were ostracized from white society. Blacks, on the other hand, generally trusted the bureau and welcomed its assistance.<sup>47</sup>

Historian Darin Waters, who looked closely at the Bureau in neighboring Buncombe County, concluded that its presence in western North Carolina was tenuous at best. Opposition by whites hindered its representatives in the Asheville office from operating effective programs.<sup>48</sup>

At the state level, the Reconstruction era Constitutional Convention of 1868 contained provisions for public education. The Rev. Samuel S. Ashley, an American Missionary Association teacher from Massachusetts who had established schools for blacks in Wilmington, and served as a delegate to the 1868 convention, later became the state’s first superintendent of education. He tried to establish free schools for both blacks and whites,

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<sup>46</sup> For an excellent synopsis, see Roberta Sue Alexander, “Freedmen’s Bureau” (*NCpedia*, from *Encyclopedia of North Carolina*, 2006), <https://www.ncpedia.org/freedmens-bureau>, accessed December 14, 2018. Details and quotation here are from Alexander’s article.

<sup>47</sup> The American Freedmen Union Commission, the National Freedmen’s Relief Association, the American Missionary Association, and the Friends’ Freedmen’s Aid Association.

<sup>48</sup> Waters, “Life Beneath the Veneer,” 136–38, 188ff., <https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/record/uuid:3cb18a4b-3a75-419b-ba4b-d9f8a483af7f>, accessed June 20, 2017.

but lacked resources and faced strong opposition from whites, including denying space for schools, burning down Black schools, refusing to provide housing for teachers, and threatening and beating them.<sup>49</sup>

Unfortunately, specific data on pre-1900 efforts toward Black education in Henderson County before 1900 are difficult to find. A key source is Nash's *Reconstruction's Ragged Edge*, which points out that the federal Reconstruction Acts of 1867 strengthened and enlarged the Freedmen's Bureau, multiplied the number of agents, channeled more of them into the mountains, and acted as "a powerful ally [of blacks] and facilitator of interracial political cooperation" with regard to issues such as wages, working conditions, apprenticeships, electoral and judicial fairness, and related matters. Asheville Bureau chief Oscar Eastmond was particularly active in these matters, thus incurring the wrath of area Conservatives.<sup>50</sup>

With regard to Black education, Nash offered revealing details on Buncombe, Burke and Henderson counties:

About a month after Congress seized control over Reconstruction, a field report revealed four schools serving 127 Black students in bureau-supported schools in Buncombe, Burke, and Henderson Counties. These three counties, with their larger Black populations, experienced an influx of African Americans to their county seats, which invigorated education as well. In Asheville, two schools . . . served forty and forty-one students . . . In Morganton, Sarah E. Pearson taught sixteen students, . . . [and] Reverend John Tyler had thirty pupils attending his school in Hendersonville. The local Black community . . . financially supported each of these schools, a reflection of both the bureau's limited role in Black education during Presidential Reconstruction and the freedpeople's overwhelming desire for education.

Similarly encouraging situations obtained, Nash found, in Wilkes, Alexander, and numerous southwestern North Carolina counties, where blacks shouldered the financial burden of operating the schools, not infrequently with help from outside donors contacted

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<sup>49</sup> Alex Sandler and Berry Dishong Renfer, "Schools for Freed Peoples, 1860s," *NCpedia*, accessed December 8, 2018, <https://www.ncpedia.org/education/freed-peoples>. This article says a school for blacks was established on Roanoke Island in July 1863, and another soon afterward in New Bern, but does not mention others in the state. For an extended discussion of this opposition, see Ronald Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People: Teaching, Learning, and the Struggle for Black Freedom, 1861–1876* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2010), 154–79. Butchart does not present examples from Henderson County, Hendersonville, Flat Rock, bordering North Carolina counties, or indeed North Carolina as a whole. For a scholarly analysis of the Freedmen's schools for blacks, see Heather Williams, *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

<sup>50</sup> Nash, *Reconstruction's Ragged Edge*, 90–117. Further details and quotations within this brief discussion are from this source.

through the Bureau. But by mid-1868, Henderson County still lagged: along with Madison and Transylvania, it had no Freedmen’s school, despite the efforts of Asheville sub-regional Bureau director Oscar Eastmond to open one in Hendersonville.<sup>51</sup>

Regarding post–Civil War education for blacks in Henderson County, the Black History Committee observed that

There are very few records for the Henderson County schools relating to blacks, but [it] . . . has been going on in some form since the end of slavery . . . [By] the mid-1870’s blacks were actively engaged as the guardians for the approximately 483 Black students enrolled in the public schools, . . . [in] the 1880’s and 1890’s Luella Montgomery was said to have taught the children of the Happy Land to read and write by using biblical stories and simple songs. . . .

“At the Constitutional Convention of 1888,” the Committee continued, forces that were strongly opposed to the advances made by blacks during . . . Reconstruction (especially in education and voting rights) began to assert their political power . . . . What resulted was the evolution of . . . as “separate but equal.” Localities, . . . given the responsibility to educate . . . simply ignore[d] the educational needs of its Black citizens. . . . [This] marked a turning point in education . . . in Henderson County. The momentum to separate the races in education . . . became established policy [with] . . . establishment of the Henderson County School District by the . . . General Assembly. This district was authorized to establish schools for “both white and colored” and for the appointment of a Board of Trustees to have “entire and exclusive” control. . . . This mandate also directed the school district to have a classroom and a teacher for each grade. This was the beginning of the graded school system in Henderson County . . . .

Historian Linda Culpepper provides some detail on the Mud Creek School, built about 1905 on a half-acre site conveyed to the Board of Education by the Black Mud Creek Missionary Baptist Church. As a subscription school, it depended upon parents’ contributions, and the length of the school term varied from year to year, depending upon the size of those contributions. “Those who could afford to send their children to school did,” Culpepper says, and “those who could not, sent them to work.”<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Nash, *Reconstruction’s Ragged Edge*, 101–3, 116. Subsequently (118–48), Nash writes at length about the KKK in western North Carolina, whose wide-ranging violent attacks frequently targeted Black schools.

<sup>52</sup> Culpepper, *Under Their Own Vine and Fig Tree*, 9–10.

By 1912, a state school tax provided for a new building on Fourth Avenue to house both elementary and high school students. Several years later, Sadie Patton said, 596 white students in the county were being taught by 17 teachers (35 students each), while two colored teachers were responsible for 175 students (89 students each).<sup>53</sup>

For a school for Black students built on Sixth Avenue in 1916, the Black History Committee provided a short but detailed account. It had three teachers, rooms separated by curtains, and no central heating system. The principal (who was one of the teachers) had to come early to clean the rooms, and “fire up the pot-bellied stoves.” The school year lasted six months. Twenty years later, when New Deal funds provided a new stone gymnasium for (white) Hendersonville High School, part of the old wooden building was moved to Sixth Avenue to serve as classrooms, auditorium and gymnasium. But if Sixth Avenue students wanted to continue through high school, they had to leave the county to do so, possibly returning in the summer to work in tourist establishments (e.g., Bonclarken, Woodfield Inn, Skyland Hotel) to earn money for another year away.<sup>54</sup>

One important educational development in Henderson County during the early 1920s was the advent of a Rosenwald School in 1921—one of 5,300 built nationwide (one of 817 in North Carolina) for African American children, using funds supplied by Sears

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<sup>53</sup> Patton, *Story of Henderson County*, 167, comments briefly on a private school founded by the Northern Presbyterian Church on Ninth Avenue West, operation of which ceased “some time after 1900.” By the 1919–1920 school year (when a new high school building opened), the white teacher/student ratio was still 1:35, while for colored students it was 1:51. Patton’s figures, even allowing for the elapsed time, do not accord with those given in Helsley and Jones’s *Guide to Henderson County* for 1900. Patton’s rather disorganized chapter on schools (145–68) says that through a bond issue around 1923, the city bought a 14-acre site and built a modern 24-classroom school for 800 students. There were 20 other special-purpose rooms and a 750-seat auditorium. The library, Patton reported, had nearly 4,700 volumes, while “the negro school” (not named or described) had “several hundred.” By the time her book appeared in 1947, she said that the county’s nearly 6,000 students (about three-quarters of school-age children) were enrolled in 60 school districts, of which 55 were white. She did not comment on the other five.

A 1913 “manual of guidance” issued to all state legislators reported that there were normal schools for negro teachers at Fayetteville, Elizabeth City, and Winston-Salem, but not in the western end of the state. Several hundred Black students at the State Agricultural and Mechanical College for the Colored Race (1891) were making do with “equipment, which is the original, with very few additions, [and which] is wearing out and in some cases obsolete.”

<sup>54</sup> Black History Research Committee, *Brief History of the Black Presence*, 16–24. Ninth Avenue school followed in 1951. The Committee provided a detailed account of it, including the transformative work of Principal John Marable and several successors. Supposedly a “separate but equal facility,” it nevertheless operated with hand-me-down textbooks from the white schools. Prominent Black men were appointed to an Advisory Board in 1950 but had no vote. After protracted negotiations following *Brown v. Board*, Ninth Avenue graduated its last class in 1965.

Roebuck executive Julius Rosenwald and by local donations. The school was located on the east side of SR 1827 (Mine Gap Rd.), about ½ mile from SR 1807 (Roper Rd.) in East Flat Rock.<sup>55</sup>

A small window into the creation and operation of the Rosenwald Schools is available in a document produced in 1931 for North Carolina's 800+ schools in the annual Rosenwald Day Program.<sup>56</sup> A rather formal affair, Rosenwald Day included opening music and prayer ("by a minister"), a statement from the Principal, greeting statements from Gov. O Max Gardner and state schools Supt. Arch Turner Allen (educated in a one-room school and thrust into his position on the eve of the Depression, from which he campaigned vigorously for progressive school policy), a biographical statement on Julius Rosenwald, and a statement (speech?) on The Julius Rosenwald Fund in the South and in North Carolina.<sup>57</sup>

A second long session on Our Negro Schools presented summary data on elementary, high schools, libraries and "higher learning." In 1928–1929 there were almost 313,000 Black elementary students in the state, but only six accredited elementary schools for them (in Charlotte, Greensboro and High Point). Library collections were discouraging: 388 libraries held only about 92,000 volumes (about 235 each). An upcoming Rosenwald fund allocation of \$12,000 was scheduled to add nearly 15,000 to 91 (selected?) libraries (about 165 volumes each).

Other agencies listed as involved in the development of education for blacks included the Rockefeller Fund's General Education Board (GEB), which had funneled just over \$500,000 into the state, about half of it for buildings and equipment at predominantly Black normal schools and teachers' colleges, and much smaller amounts for scholarships, instructors' salaries and administrative expenses. A like amount went to Private Negro School Enterprises for new buildings and equipment at Livingston, St. Augustine's and Kittrell colleges, and Shaw and Johnson C. Smith universities.

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<sup>55</sup> This was the only Rosenwald school built in Henderson County. Buncombe and Transylvania counties also had only one, but Polk had five. Halifax had the most, with 46. K. Todd Johnson, "Rosenwald Fund," *NCpedia* (2006), <https://www.ncpedia.org/rosenwald-fund>, accessed December 30, 2018; North Carolina State Preservation Office, "Rosenwald Schools Documented in the Files of the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office," February 2017, [http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov/rosenwald/Rosenwald\\_Schools\\_in\\_NCHPO\\_Survey.pdf](http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov/rosenwald/Rosenwald_Schools_in_NCHPO_Survey.pdf), accessed December 30, 2018. An excellent scholarly article is Thomas Hanchett, "The Rosenwald Schools and Black Education in North Carolina" *North Carolina Historical Review* 65, no. 4 (Oct. 1988): 387–444.

See also Terry Ruscin, "Beyond the Banks: Golden Rule Days in Henderson County," *Hendersonville Times*, September 9, 2018, <https://www.blueridgenow.com/news/20180909/beyond-banks-golden-rule-days-in-henderson-county>, accessed Dec. 30, 2018. Ruscin reported that the school closed in 1952.

<sup>56</sup> North Carolina. Dept. of Public Instruction, *Rosenwald School Day Program. Negro School Improvement Day Program of Exercises, Friday, March 6th, 1931. The Julius Rosenwald Fund for "the Well-Being of Mankind"* (Raleigh NC: State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1931), <http://archive.org/details/rosenwaldschool-00nort>, accessed December 30, 2018. All information and data are from this source.

<sup>57</sup> Gov. Gardner, elected at the opening of the Great Depression despite heated opposition from longtime Sen. Furnifold Simmons, faced severe challenges. He engineered a major shift of power from county courthouses to Raleigh, assumed the total cost of secondary roads and public schools, reduced property taxes, approved workmen's compensation and the secret ballot, and abolished the chain gang system. See <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/governors/gardner>, accessed Dec. 30, 2018.

Besides the GEB, the “other” agencies included the Jeanes fund for traveling teachers which since 1908 had put \$200,000 into North Carolina. The Fund placed forty-one teachers in forty-three counties, who helped and supervised nearly 3,000 teachers in 1,440 schools, gave innumerable public talks, helped supervisors find teachers, and organized school support clubs and 1,116 parent-teacher organizations. In the process, they installed 234 libraries and helped to build 38 new schools (only one of which, unfortunately, was in Henderson County). It was nevertheless a record that would in time rival that of federal New Deal programs.

Since 1892, the John F. Slater Fund had provided a few thousand dollars per year for private and denominational schools in the state, and around 1915 the Phelps-Stokes Fund had completed a research report on Negro schools in the state.<sup>58</sup> A final brief statement on Our Own School was confined to the North Carolina Rosenwald Schools’ buildings and grounds.

In 2017, Norm Powers interviewed and wrote briefly about Hortense Potts, the Flat Rock Rosenwald School’s last surviving graduate, whose uncle John Potts, Sr. had once been Principal there. From there she went to the Ninth Street School and then into graduate training before returning to teach at West Henderson High School.<sup>59</sup>

## Blacks in Business and Black Businesses

While the state had been grappling (less than wholeheartedly, it seems fair to conclude, and within a white supremacy regime) with public education for blacks, individual blacks in Henderson County had since the end of the Civil War been working to improve their own economic circumstances. How successful they were—even amid an insistent racist system and overt white opposition is evident in the history of Black land ownership and Black businesses in the county.

### *Pre-1900 to 1910: Simpson Dogan and Others*

Henderson County’s Black History Research Committee reported that prior to 1900, only 8 blacks were “able to post financial gains” outside of farming: stonemasons Jackson Shipman and Henry King, blacksmiths Samuel Williams and Hall Pool, wagon maker Toney Green, skilled carpenter Columbus Dwinn, “railroad hand” W. W. Williams and gardener John Jackson. By 1910, however, 46 Black farmers had come to own thirty

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<sup>58</sup> We have not been able to find a copy of this report.

<sup>59</sup> Norm Powers, “Learning from the Past: Resident Recalls the Impact of Flat Rock’s Rosenwald School,” *Bold Life*, May 2017, from copy in Henderson County Genealogical & Historical Society. After an illustrious academic career and extensive service to public education, A. T. Allen became superintendent in 1923, and followed a progressive course.



acres or more, and three owned 100 or more: M. R. Anderson owned 230 acres in Mills River Township, and Martin Herrin and Washington Sillpman owned 100 acres each in Hendersonville Township.<sup>60</sup>

With regard to pre-1900 Black employment and blacks in business, the Committee discovered that the early Black middle-class included ten teachers, seven ministers, three barbers and blacksmiths, and a butler. The teachers were literate, received a guaranteed income and were respected members of the community. In the business sector, the Committee found that

Two members of the Happy Land colony, Perry and Sarah Williams, left the colony to open a restaurant close to the South Carolina line in southern Henderson County, catering to the needs of travelers ‘wagoning’ down the old state road. They gained a reputation of well-cooked food, cleanliness, and providing the comforts people wanted while making the hard journey.

Turn-of-the-century Black businessmen included Rev. Frank Brown, who owned and operated a livery stable, and Calvin Russell, a farmer who also was also a wood cutter and “a street grader and paver.”<sup>61</sup>

Besides farming and working in the fields of whites, several blacks managed to create and operate successful businesses: a confectionary, restaurants, barber shops, groceries, cleaning and pressing establishments, shoe repair shops, and mortuaries. As the committee observed, however, it was not an easy road:

The county’s earliest recorded Black commercial enterprise was . . . C. E. McKenzie’s [confectionery] shop [which] provided customers with groceries, sweets, candles, soap, tea, coffee and spices. . . . [But] small businesses like McKenzie’s had difficulty securing credit and had to rely on a high volume of customers who made their purchases in cash to make a profit. Many of them failed. Located near Black neighborhoods [because] more profitable locations were often barred to them . . . [they drew blacks as] their primary customers. They also had to compete with white businesses that routinely outdistanced them in merchandise selection, prices, and services. . . . [C]hosen for the relatively modest initial investment, [confectioneries] were the seventh most likely business chosen by blacks after restaurants, barber shops, grocery stores, cleaning and pressing establishments, shoe repair shops, and mortuaries.

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<sup>60</sup> Black History Research Committee, *Brief History of the Black Presence in Henderson County*, 37–39. Unless otherwise indicated, our data and discussion are drawn from this report, 37–42.

<sup>61</sup> Committee on Black History, *Brief History of the Black Presence*, 38ff. Some teachers’ names are supplied. Notwithstanding these gains, the Committee observed, “The overwhelming majority of people between 1865 and 1920 . . . labored in the hotels, houses, and fields of whites . . . .”

The Committee’s characterization of Simpson D. Dogan, a South Carolina native who moved to Hendersonville and became “the most propertied Black in Henderson County” contributes significantly to the racial and economic picture of the county after 1900. Dogan, they explain, was

a very capable businessman. He opened a textile and apparel “cleaning and dyeing” operation on the northern edge of downtown Hendersonville . . . .

Dogan was the first Black merchant to use advertising extensively and showed his humor in this 1902 teaser: “S. D. Dogan, who has been dyeing for some time, is still alive and can be found at the old stand, where you can get clothes cleaned and dyed at reasonable prices.” In 1903, Dogan opened a grocery store, and by 1905 he had become the most propertied Black in Henderson County. . . .<sup>62</sup>

Dogan’s business assets were valued at more than five times that of the next highest Black property owner . . . and the value of his cleaning and dyeing concern rose steadily each of the next four years. . . .<sup>63</sup>

A puzzling anomaly with regard to Dogan, not reported by the committee, is that on November 12, 1907, the *Raleigh News & Observer* presented a list of 6 persons that Gov. Glenn had pardoned for crimes, and 6 he refused to pardon. The latter included “Simpson Dogan, from Henderson County.” The circuitous language of the governor’s response suggests that as a Black person, Dogan may have received overly harsh punishment (for a “crime” he may not have actually committed?).

Other news items of the period raise the possibility that Dogan (and other Black property owners) may have been repeatedly targeted by threatened tax sales (a widely known and used form of pressure against poor whites and blacks) of lots he owned in town. A listing in the *French Broad Hustler* (Jan. 5, 1905, p. 4) of white- and black-owned town lots in Hendersonville that had been ordered sold by the sheriff for unpaid taxes included Dogan on the “colored” list. Eight “Colored” owners were losing one lot each for less than \$1.00 in unpaid taxes each, and all were going for less than \$5.00 each. Dogan was forfeiting “1 town lot and stock of goods” for \$31.62.<sup>64</sup>

A similar notice in the *Hustler* on March 26, 1908, showed that sixteen Dogan-owned town lots were about to pass beneath the sheriff’s gavel for unpaid taxes. The unpaid paid tax threshold forcing sale of a single lot was (not surprisingly) lower for

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<sup>62</sup> An advertisement in the *Western North Carolina Times*, June 15, 1904, p. 4, shows Dogan to be operating a “tayloring,” cleaning and dyeing business under the name Dogan and Reynolds. Presumably Reynolds was Black also; see <https://www.newspapers.com/image/63498196/?terms=%22Dogan%22%2B%22dyeing%22>

<sup>63</sup> For an advertisement of Dogan’s business, see *Western Carolina Times*, April 29, 1902, p. 4.

<sup>64</sup> Dogan’s name appears in “Tax Sale, Colored Owners,” *French Broad Hustler*, January 5, 1905, p. 4.

“Colored” owners than for whites. White-owned lots were sold for unpaid taxes \$1.00 to \$25.00 each, but Dogan was about to lose 16 lots for a total of \$16.54, and Emma Wingate (also Colored) was going to lose one for \$0.75.<sup>65</sup>

Despite these (and perhaps other) injustices, Dogan clearly survived and persevered. “Well-positioned within the city’s business circle and an unparalleled leader among blacks,” the Committee continued,

Dogan remained virtually unchallenged as the county’s Black business kingpin until the late 1910’s when Rosa and James E. Pilgrim established the 5th Avenue (West) Pressing Club near Main Street, which would eventually overshadow Dogan’s highly successful pioneering enterprise. . . . By 1915, Dogan refined his company’s specialty to include “French Dry Cleaning and Pressing,” added a telephone and moved his business to a more desirable location across from the courthouse. . . .<sup>66</sup>

### *Black Businesses and Occupations in 1915: A Snapshot*

In the Hendersonville city directory for 1915 (apparently the first one issued) one finds further corroborating details on blacks, their families, and their occupations. The directory shows Black workers confined to low-level jobs: bellmen, cooks (by far the greatest number), and many draymen, laborers, and porters, but only one plumber, one bookkeeper, and one watchman. Surprisingly, the Skyland Hosiery Mill does not appear, but Freeze-Bacon Hosiery Mills does.<sup>67</sup>

The directory did not include the remarkable craftsman and blacksmith John Markley, who before opening his own shop worked as a blacksmith for Dr. Mitchell C. King at Glen Roy, and neither was his wife, the midwife Sally, who assisted a series of four doctors in Flat Rock, or their blacksmith son Jim (d. 1965), both of whom were actively

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<sup>65</sup> See <https://www.newspapers.com/image/174312837/?terms=%22French%2BBroad%2BHustler%22%2BDogan>, accessed Dec. 7, 2018.

<sup>66</sup> *French Broad Hustler*, Jan. 28, 1915, p. 7.

<sup>67</sup> Hendersonville resident W. M. Bacon was President and J. F. Freeze was Vice President (3, 31). They also jointly owned Freeze-Bacon Grocery Co. Some mill employees were also listed, but all were white. An advertisement for Freeze-Bacon Hosiery Mills appears in the 1915 Hendersonville city directory, p. 123.

working for years thereafter. Jim operated his own shop until the mid-1960s.<sup>68</sup> The directory listed 11 Dogans (including S. D. Dogan and his wife Georgia) and the Dogan & Sons Pressing Club at 22 N. Main; all were living at 531 Flynn.<sup>69</sup>

Black families were of many sizes. They included five Ballards, Bridwells and Drummonds, seven Jacksons and Quinns, ten Dogans and Padens, twelve Johnsons, fourteen Davises, and no fewer than 30 Millses and 35 Greens. Family members appear to have stuck fairly close together, either in the same house or nearby. Eight members of the *white* Samples family (including a medical doctor) lived at 617 North Main, all 10 members of the *Black* Samples family lived at 639 Curry Street, all 9 members of the Black Sanders family (including Henrietta, who worked as a cook) lived at 810 1st Avenue, and there were 20 Black Summeys gathered at 3 locations (515 Flynn, 807 Buncombe, and 813 North 6th Avenue W).

Listings for almost fifty summer homes (so designated, all owned by whites) bespoke active seasonal visitation. Many of them were clustered on 4th, 5th, and 6th avenues, North and South Main, and on named drives (Canal Drive, Conner, Crystal Springs Drive, North Flemming, Willow Road), which included no colored (\*) residents.<sup>70</sup>

### ***Black Businesses and Occupations after 1915: Alberta Jowers and Others***

Beyond 1915, the business situation for blacks became more complicated, the Black History Research Committee found. “Good jobs” with steady wages, benefits, and some status were available only to railroad workers, but there were not many of them.

Some minor changes in the employment situation appeared in the early 1920s, the Committee reported, but only within strict limits. Blacks were allowed to stay at Patton Memorial Hospital, for example, but “they were relegated to a Black wing’ in the basement of the building.” Even long afterwards, blacks were reluctant to come to the hospital

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<sup>68</sup> *Hendersonville, N.C. City Directory, 1921–1922* (Asheville: Commercial Service Company, 1921–1922), <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/nc01.ark:/13960/t74t6sn5z>, accessed January 31, 2019. For more details on the Markley family, see Griffith, *Flat Rock Historic Boundary Increase, Boundary Decrease* (2015), 7/28–7/30 and 8/393–395.

<sup>69</sup> A display advertisement for S. D. Dogan & Co., French Dry Cleaning and Pressing, located at 206 N. Main Street, appeared in the 1915 city Directory, xiv. By the 1921–1922 directory, the Dogans had dwindled to 5. Simpson Dogan was not among them, but two (Georgia and Harold) were still associated with a pressing club on 206 N. Main, and the other 3 are laundresses—all on Flynn Street, suggesting that all might have been living and/or working together.

<sup>70</sup> Curiously, the map included (following p. 116) does not mark off either Flat Rock or East Flat Rock.

(where the only Black employees rotated in and out of custodial and landscaping jobs), came only for serious operations, and in general had their children with midwives at home.<sup>71</sup>

The first Black nurse to work at the hospital was Alberta Jowers, who by every measure was a dynamo of determination, energy and ability. Jowers “came to Hendersonville in the early 1920’s,” the Committee said,

with a nursing degree from the Savannah School of Nursing, [intending] to do private duty nursing but soon was employed by Patton Memorial Hospital. She was the first Black nurse at the old Patton Memorial Hospital and her responsibilities were extensive. She not only performed her nursing duties but she lived in the hospital as well, . . . called on day or night as the need arose. [Along with the other nurses], she wash[ed] dishes, attend[ed] to the needs of the patients, and assist[ed] the doctors with their medical duties.

In her “spare” time, Jowers started the *Mountain News* (for “the betterment of Colored People in Western North Carolina,” the first and only black-owned newspaper in county), the first Black baseball team and the first Black Girl Scout troop, the Alberta Jowers Mooney Beauty Shop, and for good measure owned an automobile when that was uncommon for women.<sup>72</sup>

At about the same time as Jowers was helping to reshape Black life in the area, James Pilgrim graduated from Asheville’s excellent Stephens Lee High School and returned to Hendersonville. He first worked for a cleaning business, in which he later bought an interest, and then moved into the funeral home business, establishing his own company in 1941.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Black History Research Committee, *Brief History of the Black Presence*, 40–41. Newspaper articles suggest that Jowers may have moved to Panama City FL sometime after August 1943; she was there at least by April 9, 1957. A photo of her in the June 29, 1972 *Orlando Sentinel*, 38, shows “Head Nurse Alberta Jowers” at a summer session of the Howey Academy. An October 20, 1976 article in the *Orlando Sentinel*, 10, has a photograph of “Nurse Alberta Jowers” at a program “sharing [health] ideas among [public] agencies.” The co-educational Howey Academy opened in 1956 and closed in 1979. See Rick Reed, “Howey Academy Grew Out of Man’s Dream for Quality Education,” *Orlando Sentinel*, August 8, 1993; [http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1993-08-08/news/9308070602\\_1\\_howey-academy-miller](http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1993-08-08/news/9308070602_1_howey-academy-miller), accessed Feb. 4, 2019.

<sup>72</sup> Black History Research Committee, *Brief History of the Black Presence*, 40–41.

<sup>73</sup> Black History Research Committee, *Brief History of the Black Presence*, 41–42. The 1926–1927 city directory lists a Chris Pilgrim (black), but not James. Some Pilgrim Funeral Home records (1941–1989) are available at the Henderson County Genealogical and Historical Society.

## Blacks, Whites, and Mills, 1907–1939

Between 1907 and 1939, it appears that at least three textile plants—Skyland Hosiery, Balfour Mills, and Chipman-Burrowes Hosiery Mills started operations in East Flat Rock.<sup>74</sup> Among the many issues that might be (and for decades have been) raised about such mills, Black employment is a key one in the Flat Rock context.

### *An East Flat Rock Example: Skyland Hosiery, 1907*

At about the same time that Simpson Dogan was maneuvering his way through numerous racial, economic and cultural challenges in Henderson County, the Skyland Hosiery Mill opened in East Flat Rock (1907). A celebratory account of the mill published a dozen years later in the *Southern Textile Bulletin* provided a unique window into its implications for blacks—and indeed for whites as well.<sup>75</sup>

Situated in two 60 x 160 (nearly twenty thousand square feet) brick buildings and a brick powerhouse next to the railway in East Flat Rock (“an ideal location”), the mill made mercerized cotton and silk “half hose” on 240 knitting machines “of the very best type.”<sup>76</sup> Two hundred workers, “a large percentage of which are young girls and women,” the account said, “found employment both pleasant and profitable” at Skyland while living in “nice frame houses” built by the company.

The narrative continued in a vein imbedded in the post-1880 discourse associated with the dramatic expansion of the cotton industry in the south. It was all for the best, the discourse insisted: progressive, visionary and paternalistic mill owners building mills;

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<sup>74</sup> Grey (later Freeze-Bacon, it seems) Hosiery Mill, organized in 1915, was located in Hendersonville rather than East Flat Rock. See Hendersonville City Directory, 1915 for display advertisement and names of several dozen employees. Only two were listed in 1926–1927, but by 1936–1937 there were 40 or more. The mill was expanded several times, and was generally considered progressive by its employees, but no Black employees were listed.

<sup>75</sup> “Skyland Hosiery Company,” *Southern Textile Bulletin* XVIII (17) Dec. 25, 1919, p. 215; [https://archive.org/stream/southern textile 1919 unse/southern textile 1919 unse\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/southern textile 1919 unse/southern textile 1919 unse_djvu.txt), accessed Feb. 4, 2019. All details and quotations in the following discussion are taken from this source.

<sup>76</sup> Mercerization of spun cotton yarns imparted a silk-like luster and smoothness, increased absorption of dye and water, and augmented strength and durability. Developed in the 1840s, it was adapted to cotton in the 1890s. See “Mercerised Cotton,” in Wikipedia, May 1, 2020, [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mercerised\\_cotton&oldid=954246121](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mercerised_cotton&oldid=954246121).



attracting benighted and impoverished white workers; housing, schooling, churching and policing them in company villages; inveighing against radicalism (i.e., union organizers), and augmenting the docility and patriotism of the workers in the process.<sup>77</sup>

Socially and culturally the mill was presented as a net gain—moving isolated, pre-modern, deprived folks into modernity:

Hosiery mill operatives are always people of just a little higher type than the ordinary cotton mill employee. Generally they are refined, intelligent and very apt, catch on quickly to the method of operating and soon become skilled employees.

Most of them come of fine old English stock who fled to the mountains during the Revolutionary war and have lived in the fastness of their mountain homes ever since. In these homes they had little of life's comforts and practically no educational advantages and ready money was a very scarce commodity with them.

Since coming into the mill community where they live comfortably and have splendid opportunities for educating their children and have more ready money than they had ever hoped to possess, these people could not be persuaded to return to their former manner of living.

Mill managers were “men of fine business judgment, with broad, liberal policies in their dealings with their operatives.” The results they produced were described as strikingly positive: steady, industrious and law-abiding workers working long shifts, meticulously kept gardens and homes, widespread civic pride, children in school, regular Sunday school and worship, Boy Scout troops and baseball teams proliferating, thriftiness and saving becoming a habit, a “high standard of morality” all around, “hearty cooperation” between labor and management, as a result of which “all questionable characters and all types (unspecified, but everyone understood the reference) of undesirable citizens are quickly asked to move on.” Hence “no labor troubles are to be found here. The mills appreciate their operatives and the employees realize that the management have their welfare at heart.”

So much for the wonders wrought for “old English stock”—whites mostly moved down from their “mountain fastnesses”—but what about blacks in East Flat Rock? No details were offered, but for the former, “mill managers do not find it necessary to do a great deal in the way of welfare work because their operatives enjoy all the advantages and privileges offered by the town.”

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<sup>77</sup> Scholarship and journalistic literature on the industry and the associated discourse arose early in the 20th century and is by now vast. Liston Pope's classic *Millhands & Preachers: A Study of Gastonia* (New Haven: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1942) explored the industry-church nexus, questions of class, the industry's modes of social control, social and cultural stresses, and textile strikes. Six decades later, *Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World* (2000), by Jacquelyn D. Hall and others, surveyed the by then century-long history.

Given the racist local culture so evident in other contemporary accounts, this most likely refers to *white* “operatives,” who—readers are assured—“mix and mingle freely with the people of East Flat Rock.” If those “people” were not black, one wonders, why comment approvingly upon the mixing and mingling?

Indeed, the 1910 federal census (taken three years after Skyland Hosiery opened) offers no evidence that there were any jobs for blacks in the mill. About 1,400 blacks lived in the county at the time, nearly 900 of them in the Flat Rock enumeration area. Many of those listed addresses in or near what was loosely bounded as East Flat Rock: King Street (or Road), “State Road,” or Flat Rock Depot Road. Not a single listed occupation was linked to the mill. Instead, they were laborers, washer women, cooks, servants, coachmen, and the like.<sup>78</sup>

### *Smyth’s Balfour Mills, 1925*

Balfour Mills was founded in 1925 by longtime industrialist Ellison Adger Smyth just after he moved permanently to Flat Rock, after having owned and used the Rock Hill estate (which he renamed Connemara) seasonally since 1900.

Scores of Balfour workers were listed in the 1926–1927 Hendersonville city directory. They held jobs that ranged down from supervisory (supervisor, overseer, foreman) through skilled technicians and operators (engineers, machinists, electricians), maintenance workers (loom fixer, carpenter), office workers (stenographer), process operators (drawer, doffer, carder, spooler, weaver), to low-level positions such as helper, oiler, sweeper or driver.

But none of the scores of Balfour workers in any job classification were marked (\*) as black, even in the lowest level jobs.<sup>79</sup>

Notwithstanding this widespread bias, the story of Balfour that local Flat Rock writer Leeming Grimshaw chose to tell in his *Connemara, Formerly called Rock Hill* (1970) was a sanitized and idealized construct. Noting that Balfour was the last mill that Smyth was to organize, Grimshaw reported that

Balfour village is a beautiful village, with attractive homes, occupied by an alert and happy people, in a healthy country, enjoying all the comforts and conveniences of modern life. One of the prides of Captain Smyth was the

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<sup>78</sup> Federal Census of Population (1910).

<sup>79</sup> As an industrialist, Smyth was often described by his peers as fairly progressive in his dealings with workers. Oppermann, in *Barn Complex Historic Structure Report* (2014), 7, says that Smyth “improved the conditions of mill workers, adding schools, churches, stores, a library, theater, and park at his Pelzer mill.” The village did in fact become a ‘model mill town,’ on which other cotton mill owners based their mill villages. Smyth set up a system to prevent child labor and encouraged his workers to send their children to school (to the age of 12, when they were expected to go to work in the mill; <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2225183>). Characterizations of the industrial presence in Henderson County do not agree. The 1926–1927 city directory says “Industries include cotton mills, hosiery mills, planing mills, brick plants, stone plant, ice cream plant, two ice plants, paper box factory, [and] bottling works . . . .”

exceptionally large library which he established for his working people. . . . When asked his views on the essentials of education as applicable to cotton manufacturing, the Captain said, “Realizing my own deficiency from an educational standpoint, having not been to school since I was sixteen when I entered the Confederate Army, I have given attention to school facilities in all mill villages I have managed, realizing that if a boy is given an opportunity to read and write intelligently, nothing can keep him back.”

Then came that day August 3, 1942, when “The Captain” passed on to his reward. His philosophy in life had always been as he expressed it: “To do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God.”<sup>80</sup>

In Grimshawe’s telling, Balfour village was started late in life by a boy soldier (“the Captain”) who, despite his unrepentant involvement in the violently racist Red Shirts, was a modest and idealistic public benefactor and builder of an Arcadian village that floated magically above the color line, who spent his life doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly.<sup>81</sup>

Operating at the same time as Balfour Mills was Chipman-Burrowes Mills, owned by Charles Chipman (who listed his address as New York City), C. P. Rogers, V. E. Burrowes, and presumed relative Mrs. Margery Burrowes.<sup>82</sup>

Beyond the scope of these mills, a broad search for Black jobs in the 1926–1927 directory produces results not substantially different from those of 1915: blacks in the area were employed as bell boys, chauffeurs, cooks (men and women), domestics, laborers (men and women), janitors, laundry workers and pressers, porters, waiters, and yard men. A few were skilled laborers (painters, plasterers, bricklayers), and a few others may have been self-employed (as barbers, shoe repairers).

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<sup>80</sup> Grimshawe, *Connemara, Formerly Called Rock Hill*, 20–21.

<sup>81</sup> Grimshawe’s perspective on the matter of race, and Smyth’s long involvement in the virulently racist Carolina Rifles (and similar organizations elsewhere in South Carolina), is starkly evident in his full two-page account, 15–17: white “radicals” inciting out-of-bounds blacks to abuse power, turbulent days filled with riots, defending white-owned property against “mobs” of armed blacks, “preserving order,” manipulating the jury system, curbing the power of a Black mayor and police force, and—the ultimate aim—getting Wade Hampton elected Governor.

<sup>82</sup> Hendersonville city directory, 1926–1927, 127–35. The Burroweses lived on Hyman Avenue in Hyman Heights. No information on Hyman Heights appears in the directory.

## Epilogue: Black Businesses as Social and Cultural Threat

The story of blacks, Black businesses and Black employment in East Flat Rock has its positive aspects, clearly, but as Jim Crow era norms and practices proliferated, its negative ones came to predominate: pervasive racism in its myriad forms, *de facto* segregation, ghettoization, and unequal facilities and services.

Historian Linda Culpepper has observed that black-owned businesses in the area boosted social cohesion and sometimes provided valued gathering places for neighbors. “It was nice,” one resident recalled about one Black business,

not having to walk so far to and from church. Folks had more time for leisure. All cooking had been done the day before so after clearing away dinner, there was time to enjoy friends and neighbors. At Marvels’ [Store] adults huddled together over Coca-Colas, discussing the morning sermon and Sunday School lesson, just passing the time of day. Young people horsed around enjoying penny candy and ice cream. Those were welcome respites, good times among the bad.

Unfortunately, Culpepper continues,

there were jealous, vengeful eyes round and about. Hoodlums destroyed the little oasis and it was never rebuilt. There was simply no way for owners Henry Marvels (born in Charleston in 1884) and his Flat Rock-born wife Emma Halback Marvels to repair the building or replace lost inventory in those days.<sup>83</sup>

This poignant vignette, much more sparse in detail than the possible harassment of Simpson Dogan presented previously in this chapter, suggests that the burning of Marvel’s Store may be an apt and evocative metaphor for the tangled mix of costs and benefits through which Henderson County blacks had to thread their way during the postwar, post-Reconstruction, Jim Crow eras. This possibility would merit more detailed and extensive analysis, but that lies beyond the limits of this study.

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<sup>83</sup> Culpepper, *Under Their Own Vine and Fig Tree*, 31. Henry Marvels died on February 9, 1935, a short time after the store was destroyed.



CHAPTER TWELVE

ELLISON ADGER SMYTH:  
CHARLESTON, RED SHIRTS, COTTON MILLS  
AND CONNEMARA

*High on the glowing page of Fame  
Truth yet shall write each treasured name;  
More constant yet—can aught efface  
From Southern hearts that story's grace? . . .*

*Heroes of our lost cause! we may  
No longer strive, in hapless way,  
With our sad destiny—and God  
To-day unfurls above this sod  
No other flag within our view  
But Heaven's glad banneret of blue.*

“MEMORIAL ODE,”

*Memorial Day, May 10, 1875, at Magnolia Cemetery,  
Under the Auspices of the Ladies Memorial Association, Charleston, South Carolina<sup>1</sup>*

**T**he public life of Ellison Adger Smyth began to emerge in 1867, when he helped organize (and became President of) the Carolina Rifle Club, an anti-black “Red Shirts” organization. By the time of the Charleston’s Memorial Day observance at Magnolia Cemetery in May 1875, he was President of the Washington Artillery rifle club, which about a year later joined the violent campaign to elect arch-racist Wade Hampton III governor of South Carolina. Before another year was out, Reconstruction ended, and the modest post-war gains of Black people came under constant and relentless attack.

It had been a tumultuous dozen postwar years for Smyth, but with regard to his public persona and reputation, much of it ultimately slipped into the background in favor of a story of Smyth as emerging industrialist and banker. That foreshortened frame was the part that was carried forward.

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<sup>1</sup> University of South Carolina Libraries Digital Collections, <https://digital.tcl.sc.edu/digital/collection/bro/id/790/rec/767>.



What became, in effect, the canonical account of Ellison Adger Smyth's relationship to and life at Flat Rock—repeated in CARL documents and on its website—echoes Susan Hart's cultural landscape report of 1993, which in turn echoed Louise Bailey's *From Rock Hill to Connemara* (1980):

In December 1900, Ellison Adger Smyth purchased Rock Hill from the Gregg estate. A wealthy man, Smyth was a leader in the textile industry and held various offices in national manufacturing and industrial associations. At the height of his career, he was director of thirty-six corporations and a dozen banks. Smyth renamed the estate Connemara for its resemblance to his ancestral Ireland . . . . For the next twenty-five years, he and his family retreated to their Flat Rock home in the summer and on weekends. In 1925, at the age of seventy-seven, he retired from Greenville, South Carolina, and moved to Connemara as his year-round residence.<sup>2</sup>

Much of this account is reasonably reliable (although, for example, we have never seen all thirty-six corporations actually named), but the relevant problems with it for the purposes of this present study are mainly problems of context, and of omission. We address some of the essential ones of those here.<sup>3</sup>

## Early Life

Ellison Adger Smyth's grandfather James Adger was, according to a profile in the South Carolina Encyclopedia, "one of the wealthiest and most influential merchants of antebellum Charleston."<sup>4</sup> He owned \$200,000 worth of real estate, the 1850 census enumerator judged, along with at least eighteen (possibly twenty) enslaved people. As of 1859, he joined Casper Chisolm, Mitchell King, and Christopher Memminger as one of the wealthiest taxpayers in Charleston.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Hart, *Cultural Landscape Report*, 19, Bailey citations at 12 and 36–37. <https://www.nps.gov/carl/learn/historyculture/upload/CARL-Cultural-Landscape-Report.pdf>, accessed June 13, 2019. It is important to bear in mind that Bailey's book had at least semi-official NPS status, having been (as the publication data page says) "Published for Carl Sandburg Home N.P.S., National Park Service, with funds provided by Eastern National Park & Monument Association." The changes Smyth made at Connemara (which lie outside the scope of the present study) are the subject of extensive and detailed commentary in a number of CARL studies.

<sup>3</sup> A partial list (the only one we have encountered) of about 20 of the mills and other business involvements may be found in "Capt. Ellison Smyth, Textile Manufacturer, Nears 90th Birthday," *Asheville Citizen-Times*, Oct. 21, 1937, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> "Adger, James," *South Carolina Encyclopedia* (blog), <http://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/adger-james/>, accessed June 27, 2019,

<sup>5</sup> Gregory Allen Greb, "Charleston, South Carolina, Merchants, 1815–1860: Urban Leadership in the Antebellum South." (Ph.D., University of California, San Diego, 1978), Appendix III <http://search.proquest.com/pqdtglobal/docview/302919465/citation/9D22FC6608974514PQ/1>, accessed June 27, 2019.

Ellison Smyth's father Thomas Smyth—an Irish-born Presbyterian minister called to Charleston in 1831 to pastor the Second Presbyterian Church—therefore may have “married up” when he wed James Adger's daughter Margaret in 1832.<sup>6</sup> By 1850, the couple was living next door to the Adgers, but lacked sufficient real estate holdings for the same enumerator to assign them a value.<sup>7</sup> Their son Joseph Ellison Adger Smyth was born October 26, 1847.<sup>8</sup>

By 1860, Thomas and Margaret's fortunes had improved markedly, with \$20,000 in real estate and \$6000 in personal property listed in the census. This turn of events may have derived from the generous provisions made for the couple in James Adger's will.<sup>9</sup> Adger died in New York in 1858 and left a sizeable estate that included well over \$130,000 in cash, stocks, his own house and possibly two others on Meeting St. in Charleston, land and stores on East Bay Street known as Adgers North and South Wharves, perhaps two other houses in Charleston, a lot and store near the Charleston Custom House, a twenty-seven-acre farm in Kinderhook, New York, furniture, carpets, horses, carriages, wines, liquors, and slaves both in his Charleston household and at the local wharves.

One of the houses, a newly purchased brick structure on the east side of Meeting Street, was specifically left to Thomas and Margaret Milligan Smyth. The Smyths may already have been living in this house, as Thomas Smyth's autobiography indicates that they moved into a new house at #12 Meeting Street in 1856.<sup>10</sup> And because Adger's wife had predeceased him, a generous \$10,000 was left for each grandchild, meaning this sum was invested for twelve-year-old Ellison. (An online inflation calculator estimates this sum as equivalent to over \$300,000 in 2019 dollars.) Along with some other monies, this investment would become available for him when he turned twenty-one.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Erskine Clarke, “Smyth, Thomas,” in *South Carolina Encyclopedia*, Oct. 27, 2016, <http://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/smyth-thomas/>; “Margaret Adger and Thomas Smyth Marriage Record” (July 14, 1832), South Carolina, Compiled Marriage Index, 1641–1965, Ancestry.com.

<sup>7</sup> “U.S. Federal Census, James Adger -- Charleston Parishes of St. Phillips & St. Michael's” (1850), <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-D1QQ-NW9?i=1&cc=1401638>.

<sup>8</sup> Barry Waugh, “Ellison A. Smyth, 1847–1942,” *Presbyterians of the Past* (blog), May 14, 2015, <https://www.presbyteriansofthepast.com/2015/05/14/e-smyth-1847-1942>.

<sup>9</sup> All details below are from the Will of James Adger, probated Nov. 30, 1858, *AncestryInstitution.com* - South Carolina, Wills and Probate Records, 1670–1980.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Smyth, *Autobiographical Notes, Letters and Reflections*, ed. Louisa Cheves Stoney (Charleston, SC: Walker, Evans & Cogswell Company, 1914), <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015013149508>, 502. Other records show them still at #12 Meeting Street after the Civil War. See, for instance, Restoration Order for Smyth Home, 12 Meeting St., Charleston, SC, United States, Freedmen's Bureau, Records of the Assistant Commissioner, 1865–1872,” images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C9TZ-8QCG-3?cc=2427901&wc=73QQ-X1N%3A1513619202%2C1513670097> : 23 March 2017), South Carolina > Roll 32, Register of restoration orders, 1865–1866 > image 39 of 49; citing multiple NARA microfilm publications; Records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1861 - 1880, RG 105; (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1969–1980).

<sup>11</sup> “\$10,000 in 1858 → 2019 | Inflation Calculator,” accessed June 29, 2019, <https://www.officialdata.org/us/inflation/1858?amount=10000>.

Rev. Thomas Smyth was a slaveowner as well. In 1850, the slave schedules in the census showed him owning one person, but by 1860, he owned ten people—six women ages sixteen to forty, and four men ages 25-40.<sup>12</sup>

The Smyth family home at 12 Meeting Street was a half block from the Battery, and thus close to Fort Sumter. Ellison Smyth was educated in private schools and at the Arsenal Academy (a component unit of the South Carolina Military Academy—The Citadel—that was located in Columbia). In 1864, he volunteered for Confederate service. Smyth first joined to the 44th Regiment of the South Carolina Militia, then transferred to the Arsenal Academy Cadets.<sup>13</sup>

Smyth set out for the war in the company of the family's slave, John Dent, described in a Smyth family history as his "body servant." Dent was said to be son of a free Black man named Francis, who served as sexton at Smyth's father's church (Second Presbyterian) and his wife Betsy, who was enslaved to one of the Adgers. When the war ended, Ellison Smyth returned to Charleston and worked several years as a clerk at his uncle J. E. Adger's wholesale hardware company before becoming a partner in 1869, where he remained for about a decade with his new wife, Julia Gambrill. John Dent, meanwhile, remained in the Smyth family's service as a butler for Thomas and Margaret Smyth, living behind 12 Meeting Street, into the 1880s.<sup>14</sup>

John Dent may not have been the only enslaved person to go with Smyth to war: In 1923, another man, Merriman Johnson, applied in Clarendon County, South Carolina, for a pension based on an attestation that he had "served the State of South Carolina" in the Civil War as a "servant" to Ellison Smyth in Company B of the 44th Regiment from November of 1864 until surrender. Smyth witnessed the document in Anderson County, stating that the applicant "remained faithful to the Confederacy" during the war and was

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<sup>12</sup> U.S. Federal Census 1850 and 1860—Slave Schedules, Charleston, SC, *AncestryInstitution.com*.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Smyth, *Autobiographical Notes, Letters and Reflections*, ed. Louisa Cheves Stoney (Charleston, SC: Walker, Evans & Cogswell Company, 1914), <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015013149508>, 670–71. Reports about the specifics of Smyth's Confederate service vary somewhat, and his name cannot be found in the NPS Soldiers and Sailors Database (<https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/soldiers-and-sailors-database.htm>). We have opted to adhere here to the account in Thomas Smyth's edited materials.

<sup>14</sup> Edward McCrady and Samuel A. Ashe, eds., *Cyclopedia of Eminent and Representative Men of the Carolinas of the Nineteenth Century, with a Brief Historical Introduction on South Carolina* (Madison WI: Brant & Fuller, 1892), I:468–70, <http://hdl.handle.net.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/2027/uva.x004443880>, accessed Nov. 5, 2017; Thomas Smyth, *Autobiographical Notes, Letters and Reflections*, ed. Louisa Cheves Stoney (Charleston, SC: Walker, Evans & Cogswell Company, 1914), <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015013149508>, 200, 325; Charleston, SC, City Directory, 1878 and 1886, *Ancestry.com*. U.S. City Directories, 1822–1995 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011; Jones, Connemara HSR, 2005, 31–32 has more details on Julia Gambrill's family.

entitled to a pension under 1923 state legislation recognizing Black service as “servants, cooks, or attendants.”<sup>15</sup> If the 1870 census entry for Merriman Johnson is correct that he was then twenty years old, he would, like Smyth, have been a teen during the war.<sup>16</sup>

For this present study, one of the most crucial aspects of Smyth’s life occurred during the 1870s, while he was still living and working in Charleston—hence before he embarked upon his oft-mentioned later career as an industrialist. The former has received almost no mention within the official CARL narrative, which has instead focused on the latter.

## The Red Shirts and the “Captain”

Contrary to what a reader in 1892 might reasonably have supposed, Smyth’s “Captain” title was not traceable to his Civil War years, but rather to his role thereafter in the postwar Carolina Rifle Club and the Washington Artillery.

In 1892, the generally stodgy *Cyclopedia of Eminent and Representative Men of the Carolinas* had been both succinct and direct:

In 1867, Capt. Smyth was one of the organizers of the Carolina Rifle club, of which he was made a vice-president. In 1875 he was elected president of the Washington Artillery rifle club, and bought for the club a battery of artillery . . . . During the riotous times of 1876 in Charleston, Capt. Smyth took a very active and notable part, being captain of the Washington artillery. He was a zealous defender of the position taken by the whites, and though not wounded in any of the tumultuous proceedings, his hat was pierced by a bullet from the rifle of one of the rioters, thus having a narrow escape from a serious, if not fatal, wound. He never shirked his duty but bravely stood at his post, scarcely ever taking time to visit his home for weeks during the prevalence of the disturbance. In December, 1877, he was appointed captain of the Washington artillery, his commission being the first issued by Gov. Hampton. He resigned the captaincy in 1880.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Merriman Johnson, “Johnson, Merriman Of St. Paul, Clarendon County Application for Pension For Service As A Servant Under Ellison A. Smyth In Company B, Forty-Fourth Militia Regiment,” April 16, 1923, Confederate Pension Applications (S126088), South Carolina Department of Archives & History; Alexia J. Helsley, “Notes and News from the Archives: Black Confederates,” *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 74, no. 3 (1973), 184.

<sup>16</sup> He also may have been a bit older: U.S. Federal Census 1870, Friendship, Clarendon, SC—Merriman Johnson, *AncestryInstitution.com*; “Merriman Johnson Death Certificate” (Aug. 4, 1926), *AncestryInstitution.com* - South Carolina, Death Records, 1821–1965.

<sup>17</sup> *Cyclopedia of Eminent and Representative Men of the Carolinas of the Nineteenth Century* I:468-470, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc2.ark:/13960/t86h4tw3k;view=1up;seq=204>, accessed February 11, 2019. *J. C. Hemphill, Men of Mark in South Carolina; Ideals of American Life; a Collection of Biographies of Leading Men of the State* (Washington, D.C.: Men of Mark Publishing Company, 1906–1909), III, 404–5 <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008637768>, accessed Sept. 1, 2017. Smyth’s brothers James Adger (b. 1838) and Augustine Thomas (b. 1842) Smyth are treated in III, 406–7 and III, 408–9, respectively. This source treats Ellison Adger Smyth’s early life in Charleston; his brief service in the State Militia (1864–1865); and his eminence as a leader in southern textile manufacturing, banking, phosphate manufacture, and insurance (1882ff.).

Key details emerge here: Smyth was involved in the virulently racist “Rifle Club” movement; he helped organize and served as an officer in at least two of its operating units; he participated in its “tumultuous proceedings”; and—despite resigning his captaincy in 1880—he proudly retained the title throughout the rest of his life.<sup>18</sup> Important as these details are, one is also aware that the *Cyclopedia* entry situated Smyth’s involvement within the Lost Cause narrative that glorified the Confederacy and Civil War. That interpretation obscured key elements of the movement that are available elsewhere.

A key source on the Carolina Rifle Club is C. Irvine Walker’s *Carolina Rifle Club*, published around 1904, which renders Smyth’s involvement uncontested.<sup>19</sup> Its 90+ pages include a list of all the Club’s members, including three Smyths (brothers, they were: Augustine, J. Adger, and Ellison A.). There were also many family names from among the Charleston planter elite that were also familiar in Flat Rock (Alston, Hanckel, Huger, Ravenel, Rhett, Rutledge, Trenholm). Ellison Adger Smyth is listed as Secretary/Treasurer, Vice President, Rifle Master and “Rallyer” of twelve members at the corner of Water and Meeting Streets.

With regard to what they called “the twelve dark years . . . of bitter humiliation” of Reconstruction, they railed against the emancipation of four million “African slaves wholly incapable of freedom . . . unrestrained by education or intelligence . . . [and] incapable of appreciating civilization and the duties of law and order,” who unleashed “the direful deeds of riot, rape, robbery, incendiarism and bloodshed.” By their logic, those dynamics justifiably led to “the dangers and troubles of 1876.”<sup>20</sup>

By 1876, rifle clubs around South Carolina had more formally organized into “Red Shirt” Clubs, brigades of armed men who rode around the state intimidating Black voters and committing various forms of fraud that helped Wade Hampton III and the Democratic Party re-establish white rule in that year’s election. After their success in South Carolina, similar organizations proliferated to push back the advances of Reconstruction in other former Confederate states, including North Carolina.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> See for example Fain, “Captain Smyth,” 1–2.

<sup>19</sup> C. Irvine Walker, *Carolina Rifle Club, Charleston, S. C., July 30th, 1869* (Charleston?, n.p., 1904), <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/wu.89072984933>, accessed May 16, 2019.

<sup>20</sup> Examples of such rhetoric and attitudes abound throughout the narrative’s 90+ pages.

<sup>21</sup> Hyman S. Rubin III, “Red Shirts,” in *South Carolina Encyclopedia*, Oct. 25, 2016, <http://www.sencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/red-shirts/>; James L. Hunt, “Red Shirts in North Carolina,” in *NCpedia*, 2006, <https://www.ncpedia.org/red-shirts>.



In their *Battle Plan of 1876*, the South Carolina Red Shirts were candid about their strategy and intentions. Every Democrat, they said, “must feel honor bound to control the vote of at least one Negro,” bear in mind as public speakers that “you are the superior race,” and that “if [a Negro] deserves to be threatened, the necessities of the times require that he should die.”<sup>22</sup>

In response to the Red Shirt threat, the all-black town of Hamburg, South Carolina formed its own eighty-four-man militia and asked the Governor to arm them as part of the state’s National Guard. He refused, and in what became known as the Massacre at Hamburg, a large armed group of Red Shirts surrounded and attacked the all-black militia, killing seven before rounding up and executing many others.<sup>23</sup>

Even up to his 87th year, Smyth either acquiesced to or told a reporter a glowing story of his own participation in this lamentable history. “During the trying days of Reconstruction,” *Greenville News* reporter James Fain wrote in 1935, “Captain Smyth distinguished himself on many occasions in the rifle clubs, which were organized in Charleston on the surface for the purpose of target practice but really for the defense of the white people.” The Washington Artillery, Fain continued,

had a battery of four guns, two of which are now mounted before the entrance to the Citadel. On one occasion [*Smyth*] led a party of his fellow clubmen in the seizure of 200 rifles and ammunition, designed for the use of negro militia. As captain of the club he participated in the big riot of 1876 . . . [*in which the rifle*] clubs were joined by Federal troops garrisoned in the old Citadel building.<sup>24</sup>

Into the 1980s, shortly after the Carl Sandburg Home site had been authorized and formed, and decades after the “Lost Cause” movement and its associated United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) monument placements had peaked, admiring popular accounts of Smyth’s anti-black “service” continued to have currency.<sup>25</sup> In his brief *Connemara, Formerly Called Rock Hill* (1970), Flat Rock resident Leeming Grimshawe wrote what amounted to an extended eulogy of Smyth and a justification and defense of his racial politics. Although Smyth and his life story and views had not been considered sufficiently important within the Sandburg site’s history to include him (or William Gregg, Jr. for that matter) within the established scope of the site, his status as industrialist, banker and

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<sup>22</sup> *Facing History and Ourselves*, “South Carolina ‘Red Shirts’ Battle Plan (1876),” <https://www.facinghistory.org/reconstruction-era/south-carolina-red-shirts-battle-plan-1876>, accessed Sept. 1, 2017.

<sup>23</sup> “The Hamburg Massacre (1876) • BlackPast,” *BlackPast*, April 7, 2011, <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/hamburg-massacre-1876/>, accessed May 15, 2019.

<sup>24</sup> Fain, “Captain Smyth,” 2.

<sup>25</sup> An early example of the approach to Smyth that carried forward is “Capt. Ellison Smyth, Textile Manufacturer, Nears 90th Birthday,” *Asheville Citizen-Times*, Oct. 24, 1937, p. 1, which has an extended and admiring account of his “rifle clubs” activities.



corporate executive were often mentioned in its publicity as part of the warrant for its importance. In 1980, Louise Bailey painted the rifle club involvement with a similar note of glory.<sup>26</sup>

Nevertheless, our mandate in this present study calls for more serious and detailed attention to Smyth. Hence, we focus more intently upon him than might have been called for otherwise. Grimshawe's account is helpful in that regard.<sup>27</sup>

Early on, in a compact and evocative verbal image, Grimshawe cued up a familiar element of the dominant perspective: Smyth went into the Confederate army, he said, accompanied by his "body servant . . . John Dent, a colored man who was well known and trusted by the family." *Servant* here is a euphemism for enslaved person, *body servant* connotes class position, and *colored* is a genteel substitute for Negro or black. Smyth's service during the war, Grimshawe assured his readers, was effective and heroic. When his brothers Adger and Augustine returned to Charleston, however,

they found the old home in a sad shape. . . . The whole city was swarming with negroes who were taking advantage of their new-found freedom and flocked into Charleston. They roamed the streets begging for food and stealing where they could. There were frequent clashes between the colored and the white. Already there was one rifle club in the city. It was a social club, called the German Rifle Club made, up of white citizens.

Ellison Smyth and his associates organized the Carolina Rifle Club, and soon there were ten of them. Under orders from military superiors, Smyth was detailed on several occasions to "take a gun" and show up at black-white political meetings. One such episode, which Smyth later referred to as "The Rape of the Guns," involved deploying his unit to intercept and divert a large arms shipment destined for a Black regiment — a task that they accomplished. "During these turbulent days," Grimshawe continued, "there were many riots in . . . Charleston," and Captain Smyth and his company "were active in preserving order, and in defending the white population of the city."<sup>28</sup>

"In the big riot of 1876," Grimshawe went on to explain, "Captain Smyth's groups had scattered a Negro mob, and had driven the Negro police back into their guard house." "These activities of Smyth's Washington Artillery Club in the year 1876," he said, "were the

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<sup>26</sup> Bailey, *From Rock Hill to Connemara*, 36.

<sup>27</sup> Leeming Grimshawe, *Connemara, Formerly Called Rock Hill, and a Brief Description of Those Who Lived There, 1836–1967* (S.l.: [L. Grimshawe], 1970), 13–21. All quotations in this section, unless otherwise indicated, are from this source. Grimshawe's laudatory account of Smyth's involvement in the rifle clubs is the most detailed we have found. His Author's Note (4) says that for his account of Smyth he "took notes from" William Jacobs, *The Pioneer* (Clinton, S.C.: Jacobs & Co., 1935), Thomas Smyth, *Autobiographical Notes, Letters and Reflections* (Charleston SC: n.p., 1914), edited by his granddaughter, Louisa Cheves Stoney, and Alfred B. Williams, *Hampton and His Red Shirts - South Carolina Deliverance in 1876* (Charleston: Walker, Evans and Cogswell, 1935). The latter is still in print, and enough sought after to drive up prices for used copies. Full text available at Hathi Trust: <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/inu.32000002647255>, accessed May 27, 2019.

<sup>28</sup> Grimshawe, *Connemara*, 13–16. Some text has been reordered to render the shortened version more comprehensible.

same as that of many other rifle clubs throughout the state.” For eleven years, “the Negroes, led by a few white radicals, had been in power. A Negro had been elected Mayor of Charleston and the police force was nearly all Negroes. Whites were in the minority and there seemed little hope of escaping from this desperate situation. This was election year and the one hope of the whites was to elect a ‘Straight-Out Democrat.’” Coded language, of course, for someone who would restore white rule.

Wade Hampton III (the state’s highest-ranking Confederate officer) emerged as the man of the hour. On July 23rd the *Columbia Register* published a letter from General Hampton—who was then (appropriately enough) at his western North Carolina retreat at Cashiers Valley—saying (cannily and with considered false modesty) he “stood ready to accept and obey the decision of the majority of the Democrats of the State.” Democrats voted accordingly, and as expected. “From that day,” Grimshawe concluded, “all other business and work . . . were little matters in South Carolina, compared with the election of Hampton.”<sup>29</sup> In a state in which eligible Black voters outnumbered white ones by 111,000 to 77,000, the election, as full historical documentation and analysis have long since established, was shaped by Red Shirt intimidation, violence, and fraud of many varieties.

Smyth’s “work with the Rifle Clubs and their aid in electing Wade Hampton as governor is well known,” Grimshawe observed, and his involvement as organizer and officer in them (especially as Captain of the Washington Artillery Rifle Club) made the name “Captain Ellison Adger Smyth . . . known and respected throughout the . . . Piedmont.”<sup>30</sup>

Grimshawe’s take on Smyth and his involvement in the Rifles persisted in Louise Bailey’s *From Rock Hill to Connemara* (1980), which presented a sanitized version of the significance of that involvement. Smyth, she said,

was a leader of the organization of rifle and saber clubs . . . formed for social contact and practice in the manly exercise of arms and for the protection of lives and property. Smyth, a young Confederate veteran, was commanding officer of one such organization—the Washington Artillery Rifle Club. He was a leader in the famous Hampton Red Shirts in the political campaign of 1876 when General Wade Hampton was elected Governor of South Carolina and primary positions in the state were restored to native-born sons.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Grimshawe, *Connemara*, 16–18.

<sup>30</sup> See *South Carolina Encyclopedia*, <http://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/election-of-1876/>, accessed May 27, 2019.

<sup>31</sup> Bailey, *From Rock Hill to Connemara* (1980), 34–36. Bailey included Grimshawe in her list of sources.

## The Cotton Mills

In some important respects, Smyth's life during the final two decades of the nineteenth century resembled (and was inspired by) William Gregg, Sr.'s at his Graniteville mill four decades earlier. Much has been written about Smyth and his mills (Pelzer, Belton, Balfour)—too much to even synopsise here.<sup>32</sup> One aspect of it needs attention here, however: how his racial views affected his business interests, and particularly his operation of the mills.

### *Pelzer: 1880–1887*

In 1880, when business prospects did not look good in Charleston, and Smyth's own family-based employer J. Adger and Company had gone out of business, Smyth and two partners organized the Pelzer Manufacturing Company in upstate Anderson County, near both water power and the railroad.<sup>33</sup> Smyth served as President. By 1892 he had built three mills that processed 25,000 bales of cotton per year, and a town of four hundred "cottages" to house three thousand workers. The whole was a marvel, the *Cyclopedia of Eminent and Representative Men of the Carolinas* declared in 1892. It included

a handsome and commodious church building . . . a lyceum building . . . a reading-room, a recreation-room and a library . . . a good hotel, . . . [*and*] the Chicora Savings bank . . . of which Mr. Smyth is the president. . . . In 1881 he removed his family from Charleston to Pelzer . . .<sup>34</sup>

"Many interesting stories are told," Grimshawe said, "about the experiences of Captain Smyth with his first workers . . . very few of [whom] had ever been in a cotton mill before." Some of those stories were revealing in racial terms—especially of white workers who came down from the mountains.<sup>35</sup> Credulously employing the "Anglo-Saxon stock" meme long associated with the Appalachian region, Grimshawe said those workers

proved to be most adaptable and valuable citizens . . . whose strong characteristics were their independence, strong personalities, their willingness to follow when clearly shown that it was to their best interest. Yet they were suspicious,

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<sup>32</sup> See Jones, Connemara HSR, 33–34.

<sup>33</sup> Grimshawe, *Connemara*, 18.

<sup>34</sup> *Cyclopedia of Eminent and Representative Men of the Carolinas*, I, 468–70. Oppermann's Barn Complex Historic Structure Report (2014), 6–7 emphasizes "model mill town" aspects of the Pelzer mill: prevention of child labor, emphasis upon schooling for children, and employees' freedom to shop where they wished, rather than at a company store. Numerous photographs of Pelzer Mill and Village may be found in Greenville Public Library's Pelzer Mills Digital Collection. See note 37 below for a partial list.

<sup>35</sup> Unfortunately, Grimshawe did not reveal his sources.

impossible to drive. It was difficult to force the parents to send their children to school, as they were without education themselves and did not value education so highly for their children. They did not know what it meant.<sup>36</sup>

Several photographs show Black workers in menial jobs (the “outside” gang, shoveling coal), but not as production workers or skilled craftsmen.<sup>37</sup> A 1914 photo of the Pelzer National Guard shows about fifty white men, and one of a summer school program for children (1940s?) shows white children only.<sup>38</sup>

One sign that “Captain” Smyth’s racial views had not changed since his early days in the Charleston-based anti-black rifle clubs is that the racial politics that defined such organizations were replicated in Pelzer’s own all-white National Guard unit, which named itself the Smyth Rifles.<sup>39</sup> Somewhat more broadly (and perhaps euphemistically, it would appear), the writer of the *Greenville News*’s February 1920 feature article noted that the company “persistently refused to allow any evil influences to gain a foothold in or around Pelzer . . . with the result that [it] is a clean town . . . [in which the Company] condemn[s] and refuse[s] to tolerate demoralizing or evil influences . . . .”<sup>40</sup>

## *Greenville, 1887–1925: Belton Mills and Greenville News*

In 1887, Smyth left Pelzer and built an imposing new house in Greenville.<sup>41</sup> His early activities there included (said local newspapers) serving as an officer of private companies, on various public bodies such as the Board of Trade, being President of the Chicora Bank in Pelzer, functioning as a member of corporate boards, going to Elks Lodge

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<sup>36</sup> Grimshawe, *Connemara*, 18–19.

<sup>37</sup> These photographs date from several decades after Smyth left Pelzer in 1887. We have found no photographs from his years there, although a number of those of the village and some of its community buildings (e.g., the Presbyterian church and the Lyceum) date from the Smyth phase.

<sup>38</sup> Pelzer Mills Digital Collection of the Greenville Public Library, via the Pelzer Heritage Commission, <http://encore.greenvillelibrary.org/iii/cpro/CollectionViewPage.external;jsessionid=113CAF5ED5B02252F9C63DF-02663DC87?lang=eng&sp=1000046&sp=1&sp=1&suite=def>, accessed May 28, 2019. Includes photographs of some Black employees (“Upper mill outside gang,” mixed Black and white, [gcls\\_pelzermill\\_026.jpg](#); “Pelzer National Guard” (1914), approximately 50 men, all white, [gcls\\_pelzermill\\_049](#); “Pelzer Summer [school] Program” (undated, 1940s?), approximately 30 white children; “[Black] Man Shoveling Coal,” [gcls\\_pelzermill\\_027.jpg](#); skilled craftsman brazing metal, [gcls\\_pelzermill\\_020.jpg](#); white production worker W. A. Clardy Jr., loom, [gcls\\_pelzermill\\_022.jpg](#); white production worker W. H. Dyar, carding room, [gcls\\_pelzermill\\_018.jpg](#) (all from Pelzer Heritage Commission).

<sup>39</sup> See “Smyth Rifles [of Pelzer] Inspected,” *Greenville News*, Dec. 18, 1901, p. 8. *Greenville News*, Feb. 29, 1920, p. 43. Two of the unit’s commanding officers were Robert Heyward (an old Charleston—and later Flat Rock—rice planter name) and E. Smyth Blake (family connection to “Captain” Smyth unknown).

<sup>40</sup> *Greenville News*, Feb. 29, 1920, p. 42.

<sup>41</sup> The move may have been a phased one, since the *Greenville News* was still referring to Smyth as being “of Pelzer” as late as 1900, when he was still trying to sell his house (“Dunean”) and 10-acre lot there.

meetings and maybe playing golf at the Sans Souci Country Club. What drew the most public attention, however, was his decision a dozen years later to organize Belton Mills (about ten miles south of Pelzer and thirty miles southwest of Greenville).<sup>42</sup>

As he had done at Pelzer, Smyth conceived of and developed a model mill village at Belton. It had a community building with a “community director,” a lyceum/library building, paved sidewalks, a steam laundry, water and sewer systems, a swimming pool, a school and several mainline Protestant churches. The whole was, said the *Greenville News* reporter, “very citified in appearance.” Workers were well-paid and prosperous. They had company-provided garden plots, low rents, and company-subsidized heating fuel. Some were saving their money and investing in nearby real estate.

What was not present in the multi-page, company-centric account of the Pelzer and Belton mills was information about the racial makeup of Belton’s workers or the surrounding county. Judging from the *Greenville News* article alone, race was simply not an issue at Belton. But judging from the low-level jobs offered to Pelzer’s Black workers (as discussed previously), it must in fact have been an issue. Indeed, the wholly positive cast of the article might have owed something to the fact that from 1899 to 1915, Smyth himself had owned controlling interest in the newspaper.<sup>43</sup>

### *Balfour Mills, 1925*

Another clue to whether Belton Mills employed Black workers was available at Smyth’s much later (1925) mill at Balfour, just north of Hendersonville.<sup>44</sup> A Federal Writers’ Project investigator who visited the mill village in 1938 described the scene as very bleak, economically and otherwise, but did not comment upon black-white relations, if indeed there were any. Nor did a much more recent account. As we have said elsewhere in this study in connection with the formation and development of East Flat Rock, Balfour Mills employed no Black workers, in any capacity, at any level. Lauren Stepp’s recent article

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<sup>42</sup> Smyth remained President of Pelzer Mills into the early 1920s.

<sup>43</sup> Jones, *Connemara Main House Historic Structure Report*, 34 says that Smyth acquired controlling interest in the newspaper around 1899 and was its President by 1903. He increased its circulation dramatically and built a new printing plant in 1914 but left the newspaper the next year. A brief *newspapers.com* survey of the paper for this period does not produce major evidence of racist bias but does confirm that the newspaper carried many articles about lynching, both in South Carolina and beyond. See our Appendix 6 for a tabulation of lynchings in 15 upcountry South Carolina counties between 1886 and 1930. Anderson County, in which both Pelzer and Belton were situated, had 5 between 1894 and 1903.

<sup>44</sup> Jones, *Connemara Main House Historic Structure Report* (2005), 37, says that Smyth sold Pelzer Mills to Lockwood, Green, & Co. of Boston in 1923, and used the proceeds to establish the Balfour Mill.

refers obliquely to “intangible boundaries [that] divided the village into the ‘front’ and the ‘back,’” (as did such widely recognized boundaries in many such villages), but she does not specify them as racial in character.<sup>45</sup>

Notwithstanding the Federal Writers’ Project account, as late as 1970 Grimshawe presented a much more conventional (hence, idealized) description of the Balfour Mills village. It was, he said, “a beautiful village, with attractive homes, occupied by an alert and happy people, in a healthy country, enjoying all the comforts and conveniences of modern life.” Race was not mentioned as a factor in mill or village life. Grimshawe went on to quote “Captain” Smyth on his own progressive efforts to establish libraries in his mill villages.<sup>46</sup>

## Black and White Labor in Smyth’s Homes

Whatever the case in his mills, it is clear that Smyth relied throughout his life upon Black and white labor employed in and around his grand homes, both in South Carolina and at Connemara. In his 2005 study, Jones quoted Smyth granddaughter Mary McKay recalling in her 1973 NPS interview that “there were always plenty of servants; you could get them for so little.”<sup>47</sup>

Some details about some of the African American and white workers whose lives were entwined with the Smyths’ have been known for quite a while, but recent advances in digital archives have made new sources available, more efficient ways of evaluating and searching them, and revealing possibilities of cross-checking them. As a result, some additional details, explored below, have come into view. Despite this progress, however, it is clear that the individuals named below represent only a fraction of those whose labor built and maintained Connemara.<sup>48</sup>

In the 1870 census, Ellison and Julia Smyth had an infant daughter and two Black employees living with them in Charleston. Lydia Perry (age 35) was a “nurse,” and Heyward Perry (age 20) was a “domestic servant.” Both were born in South Carolina, neither could read or write. By 1880, “Lidia” Perry (still said to be nurse, but age 55) remained with the Smyths (and now their four children) on Legare Street, joined by another

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<sup>45</sup> Library of Congress, “American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers’ Project, 1936 to 1940, Frank Massimino, writer. Balfour and the Deever Taylors,” Nov. 10, 1938. Deever Taylor and family. Balfour, North Carolina, Mill carder. For the recent (2016) account of the now almost completely vanished village, see Lauren Stepp, “Balfour: Remembering a Hendersonville Mill Town,” *Bold Life*, Feb. 3, 2016, <http://www.boldlife.com/balfour-mills/>, accessed May 29, 2019. This article contains very poor-quality photos of the mill itself and the village.

<sup>46</sup> Grimshawe, *Connemara*, 20–21.

<sup>47</sup> Jones, *Swedish House* HSR, 2005.

<sup>48</sup> NPS Interview with Frank Ballard, 1982. Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Archive. Ballard mentions various (mostly unnamed) laborers who boarded on the property while working on particular projects there.



Black “house servant,” Mary Ellis (44). Neither could read or write. By 1880, Heyward Perry had died (in 1877) of “consumption” (tuberculosis). His death certificate described him by then as “laboring” and living on King Street, so he may no longer have been with Ellison Smyth.<sup>49</sup> Efforts to follow Lydia Perry and Mary Ellis forward were unsuccessful, partly due to the unavailability of the 1890 census.

The Smyths and their “help” were in general not visible again until 1900. Although McGrady’s 1892 *Cyclopedia of Eminent and Representative Men of the Carolinas*, reports the Smyths to have built a “beautiful and attractive residence” in Greenville in 1887, their listing in the 1900 census (enumerated in June) shows them still on Libby St. in Williamston, South Carolina (Anderson County), near Pelzer. Three children remained at home. Ten “servants” were listed in the home as well—eight of them Black and two white.<sup>50</sup>

We were unable to trace life events for these servants either backwards or forwards in the census or in other records digitally available via *Ancestry.com* or FamilySearch. The white women were Mary Magrath, age twenty-five, and Kate [illegible], age sixty. The Black servants included John Singleton (60) and Sunny(?) Singleton (a woman, 20); Paul Thompson (25); and five members of a Golightly (spelled here Golitely) family: Rauch(?), a man age twenty-five, Lizzie (21), and children Lizzie (4), Austin (2), and Rubin (infant).<sup>51</sup>

By December of that year, in any case, the Smyths had purchased Rock Hill from Mary Fleming Gregg and soon renamed it “Connemara.” For more than two decades, the Flat Rock house was a summer getaway for Ellison Smyth’s family, children, and grandchildren.<sup>52</sup> As had been the case since the Memmingers’ day, Black and white servants, workers, and caretakers were essential to maintaining and developing the new property.

Unfortunately, the Smyths’ listings in the U.S. Census in South Carolina the years after they purchased Connemara are not very helpful, since it appears that most of their Black servants no longer lived in their household and thus are difficult to locate.

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<sup>49</sup> U.S. Federal Census, Charleston, South Carolina 1870 and 1880 (Ellison Smyth), *Ancestry.com*; Heyward Perry death certificate, Charleston, South Carolina, Feb. 28, 1877, South Carolina Department of Archives and History; Columbia, South Carolina; Year Range: 1875–1899; Death County or Certificate Range: *Charleston, Ancestry.com*.

<sup>50</sup> *Greenville News*, May 11, 1913, carried a photo of their “beautiful and attractive residence” in Greenville.

<sup>51</sup> U.S. Federal Census, 1900, Williamston, Anderson Co., SC, *Ancestry.com*. A check of the U.S. Census, 1900, for Broadus Avenue in Greenville, SC does not show the Smyths listed, although the neighbors shown next door to the Smyths there in 1910 (A. A. Bristow family) are found. As for the Golightlys, there are definitely people in subsequent records named “Lizzie Golightly,” we could not conclusively match either birth dates or other family members to confirm that we had identified the correct person/family.

<sup>52</sup> Jones, *Connemara HSR*, 33–35.

The 1910 census, which finds the Smyths on Broadus Avenue in Greenville, shows their household size there as small: no children at home and only one Black servant onsite, Lavonia Lawson, a single woman age fifty, listed as a “maid.”<sup>53</sup> Lavonia Lawson appears again in the 1917 Greenville City Directory, as a “domestic” at 239 Broadus Ave., but after that her trail also goes cold.<sup>54</sup>

In his 2005 HSR for the Swedish House, Jones discusses the longtime Smyth family butler Robert Marshall, who appears in family photographs and may have served from sometime in the late nineteenth century until around 1910 or 1911. Jones found him in the 1910 census, living on Thompson St. in Greenville, South, Carolina, with wife Eva and his elderly mother-in-law, and listed as a butler with an (unnamed) “private family.” By this time, he would have been around sixty years old.<sup>55</sup> Ellison and Julia Smyth’s 1920 listing on Broadus Avenue in Greenville includes only the couple themselves and one live-in servant, a twenty-year-old white man named Brown Williams.<sup>56</sup> So the census records for the Smyths for 1900–1920 do not prove to be very helpful.

In a 1975 interview, the Smyths’ longtime butler after 1911–1912, James Fisher, recalled that the Smyths had in fact employed *seven* servants in South Carolina in the years before they moved to Flat Rock full time in 1924. Fisher said that, with the exception of one chauffeur who would drive Mr. Smyth back and forth to South Carolina each week, all of the South Carolina-based servants would decamp to Flat Rock each year for the entire summer.<sup>57</sup>

Fisher recalled these servants’ first names and roles (a coachman, a cook, a butler, a laundress, a gardener—whom Fisher called “old man Robert the flower man”—possibly the previous butler?—a chauffeur, and one other person). Lacking their last names, matching them to census records is nearly impossible.<sup>58</sup> And yet, Smyth family photographs, photographs provided by Connemara caretaker’s son Frank Ballard, and park oral histories confirm the presence of Black servants at Connemara between 1910 and the 1930s. Opperman’s *Chicken House/Wash House* (2007) recounted family memories that nurses employed by the Smyths to watch the grandchildren there may have lived in this structure.

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<sup>53</sup> U.S. Federal Census, 1910, Greenville, SC, *Ancestry.com*.

<sup>54</sup> *Greenville, SC, City Directory, 1917*, *Ancestry.com*. U.S. City Directories, 1822–1995 [database online]. Provo, UT: *Ancestry.com*, 2011.

<sup>55</sup> Jones, *Swedish House*, 24; U.S. Federal Census, 1910, Greenville, SC. We have confirmed this information in the census but have been unable to uncover more information about him.

<sup>56</sup> U.S. Federal Census, 1920, Greenville SC, *Ancestry.com*.

<sup>57</sup> Interview by NPS staff with James Fisher, 1975. Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Archive.

<sup>58</sup> Fisher interview.

Jones's 2005 Swedish House HSR includes one photograph of a Black man whom Jones suggests may have been "Paul Thompson"—perhaps the same man listed with the Smyths in the 1900 census—shown with three children near the Connemara main house in 1910.<sup>59</sup>

Other records related to Connemara have, however, surfaced additional caretaker and employee names—people who are known to have spent at least part of their lives laboring on the Smyth Flat Rock estate, even if they (mostly) did not show on the census as living in the Smyth household. Building on park interviews and the HSRs done by NPS historian Jones in the mid-2000s, we have attempted to flesh out some life details for all of them below.

### *William Slattery Family*

Longtime white caretaker and farm manager William Slattery (Nov. 1, 1861–Sept. 5, 1943) straddled the Gregg and Smyth ownership of Rock Hill/Connemara and was probably living onsite during the Memminger years. He was one of many local men (white)—caretakers and "hands"—who kept Rock Hill's farm operations running throughout the year and opened and closed the house seasonally for the owning families who arrived in the summer. Slattery had been caretaker for the Greggs and remained for more than a decade after the Smyths bought the property.<sup>60</sup>

Slattery was born in Henderson County, the son of Nicholas Slattery (born ca. 1838 in County Cork, Ireland) and Mary Ann Hollingsworth of Henderson County. Mary Ann Hollingsworth was one of the five sisters in the Josiah and Elizabeth Hollingsworth family, discussed in Chapter 6 for their role in sheltering a group of Union soldiers who had escaped a Confederate prison in South Carolina in late 1864. Tenants and employees of C.G. Memminger, the Hollingsworths lived on the Memminger property about a mile from the main Rock Hill house. By the time of the dramatic 1864 events, Mary Ann was already married to Nicholas Slattery. But because he was away in the Confederate army, she had returned home to her parents—one assumes with her toddler son William—for the duration.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> For a photograph, see Opperman, *Chicken House/Wash House*, 1.A.3; Jones, *Swedish House*, 21.

<sup>60</sup> "William Allenn Slattery Death Certificate 1943," Sept. 5, 1943. *AncestryInstitution.com* - North Carolina, Death Certificates, 1909–1976; Joseph K. Oppermann, "Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Barn Complex Historic Structure Report." National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office, 2014, 6–7. <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2225183>; Jones, *Connemara Main House*, p. 35.

<sup>61</sup> "Nicholas Slattery Civil War Record." U.S., Civil War Soldier Records and Profiles, 1861–1865, *AncestryInstitution.com*, accessed Feb. 2, 2020; Hadley, J. V. *Seven Months a Prisoner* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898), 184–85. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044024054058;view=1up;seq=8>; "Mary Ann Slattery [Slattery] Death Certificate," June 3, 1924, *AncestryInstitution.com* - North Carolina, Death Certificates, 1909–1976. See full discussion in Chapter 6.

In census searches, William Slattery first appears in 1900, living in Hendersonville Township with his wife Martha Jane Stepp Slattery, whom he had married in Henderson County in 1882. In 1900, he is listed as a “carpenter,” who owned his home. Also listed in the household were wife Martha, four sons, a daughter, and his mother Mary Ann.<sup>62</sup> Previous CARL studies contain few other details about Slattery, noting only that he remained caretaker for the Smyths from the time they arrived until around 1912.<sup>63</sup>

But just before the Smyths bought the property in 1900, Slattery and A.B. Stepp—undoubtedly a relative of his wife’s—had been involved in the murder of a local Black man, Robert “Bob” Creasman. A few details of the situation made local papers. On September 9, 1899, the Asheville *Citizen* carried a report with tantalizing details, but little elaboration, reprinted from the Hendersonville *Hustler*:

In a quarrel at Flat Rock Saturday morning between “Bud” Stepp and Bob Creasman, colored, the later received a wound by a pistol shot in the hands of the former, from which he died Sunday afternoon. The cause of the trouble is traceable to a negro festival on the previous evening, during which a difficulty arose between Ben Stepp, who is a brother of Bud, and several colored men, among whom was the deceased negro, Bob Creasman. Ben Stepp is said to have received an unmerciful beating and Bob Creasman was singled out as the principal combatant in the affray.<sup>64</sup>

Shortly after the event, “Will” Slattery and Hamilton Brown were arrested and charged with being accessories to Stepp [“Bud” was here identified as “A. B. Stepp”], who was already in jail and charged with Creasman’s murder. After a trial in Hendersonville criminal court in October, however, Stepp and Slattery were acquitted of the charges.<sup>65</sup>

What the “negro festival” consisted of, where it was held, whether the verdict was just, and what the aftereffects were for Bob Creasman’s family are unknown. Whatever the rest of that story, the situation does not appear to have disrupted William Slattery’s employment as the Smyths’ caretaker. By 1910, Slattery’s family was living on Little River Road, identified as a farmer on what was identified as a rented farm.<sup>66</sup> That year, the

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<sup>62</sup> 1900 Census, Henderson County, NC; “William Slattery and Martha J. Stepp Marriage Record,” March 19, 1882, *AncestryInstitution.com* - North Carolina, Marriage Records, 1741–2011.

<sup>63</sup> See, for instance, Jones, *Connemara Main House*, 2005, p. 35.

<sup>64</sup> “Stepp-Creasman Shooting,” *Asheville Daily Citizen*, Sept. 9, 1899. Research to determine the relationship of A. B. Stepp and William Slattery proved inconclusive; however, A. B. Stepp was listed as a witness at Martha Jane Stepp and William Slattery’s marriage in 1882, so one might imagine that he was Martha Stepp’s brother. “William Slattery and Martha J. Stepp Marriage Record,” March 19, 1882, *AncestryInstitution.com* - North Carolina, Marriage Records, 1741–2011.

<sup>65</sup> “Two Men Arrested,” *Asheville Daily Gazette*, Sept. 8, 1899; “Verdict of Acquittal,” *Asheville Daily Citizen*, Oct. 12, 1899.

<sup>66</sup> “U.S. Federal Census 1910 -- William Slattery -- Hendersonville.” Hendersonville Township, NC, 1910. *AncestryInstitution.com* - 1910 United States Federal Census.

Slatterys lost their twenty-one-year-old son Rufus to complications of appendicitis.<sup>67</sup> Slattery, described in a local newspaper as someone who “knows how to keep the ball rolling,” continued to work at Connemara at least through the winter of 1911–1912, after which, previous studies say, he left or was fired and replaced by former assistant Ulysses Ballard (discussed below). In any case, by 1919, Slattery was managing Flat Rock’s two-hundred-acre “Baldwin Estate,” the former Charles Baring property, Mountain Lodge, by then owned by Savannah businessman George Johnson Baldwin.<sup>68</sup>

Martha Slattery died in 1932, and William Slattery in 1943. Their funerals were conducted at Mud Creek Baptist Church, and they were buried in the church’s cemetery. They were survived by a daughter and son, and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.<sup>69</sup>

## *Ulysses Ballard Family*

Ulysses Ballard followed Slattery as Smyth’s white caretaker and farm manager. Ballard was about twenty-five years younger than Slattery, having been born in 1886. By the 1910 census, Ballard and his wife Emily and infant son Frank were listed in Flat Rock, renting a home on Flat Rock Depot Road. Ulysses Ballard was then employed as a “salesman” in “retail groceries.”<sup>70</sup> By 1914, Ballard was working for the Smyths.<sup>71</sup> The 1920 census found Ballard listed as manager of the Smyth estate, and living with wife, Emily, son Frank, now three daughters, and a forty-five-year-old male boarder, McCall Pinkney (spelling unclear). In the interviews they did with NPS staff in 1975 and 1982, respectively, Emily Ballard and Frank Ballard remembered that there were several other men that worked with Ulysses Ballard on the estate, but they did not name them.<sup>72</sup>

The Ballards lived initially in a small tenant house on the property that Smyth eventually moved from a distant hollow closer to the main house. According to Frank Ballard, they eventually moved into the “new” caretaker’s house (also called the Farm

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<sup>67</sup> “Death of Rufus Slattery,” *French Broad Hustler*, Sept. 8, 1910.

<sup>68</sup> “The News of the Week from Henderson County: Old Flat Rock.” *Western North Carolina Times*, March 15, 1912, *Newspapers.com*; “U.S. Federal Census 1920 -- William Slattery / Ulysses Ballard.” Jones, *Connemara Main House*, 2005, p. 35; Hendersonville Township, NC, 1920, *AncestryInstitution.com* - 1920 United States Federal Census; “G. J. Baldwin Buys Fordson Tractor.” *Hendersonville News*, Sept. 11, 1919. See also “George Johnson Baldwin Papers, 1884–1936,” Accessed Feb. 2, 2020, <https://finding-aids.lib.unc.edu/00850>.

<sup>69</sup> “Martha Jane [Stepp] Slattery [Slattery] Death Certificate,” Sept. 5, 1932, *AncestryInstitution.com* - North Carolina, Death Certificates, 1909–1976; “Slattery Dies at Home,” *Asheville Citizen - Times*, Sept. 6, 1943.

<sup>70</sup> “U.S. Federal Census 1910—Ulysses Ballard.” Flat Rock, NC, 1910, *AncestryInstitution.com* - 1910 United States Federal Census.

<sup>71</sup> “Wants: For Sale,” *Western North Carolina Times*, July 17, 1914. Brief ad selling Tamworth pigs. “Apply to U.F. Ballard, Capt. Smyth place, Flat Rock, N.C.”

<sup>72</sup> NPS Interview with Emily Jane Ballard, 1975. Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Archive; NPS Interview with Frank Ballard, 1982. Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Archive.

Manager's House) built and initially occupied by William Slattery's family around 1912.<sup>73</sup> From that time until shortly after the property was sold to the Sandburgs in 1945, Ulysses Ballard led a team that cared for vegetable and flower gardens, livestock (including the Smyths' Guernsey cattle), and the house and the farm infrastructure.<sup>74</sup> Before the Smyths relocated permanently to Flat Rock, they also made weekly trips to the train depot in East Flat Rock to ship butter, eggs, and "anything in season" to the Smyths in Greenville.<sup>75</sup> Ulysses and Emily raised their large family at Connemara, and the home must have been a lively center. The couple were members of Mud Creek Baptist Church. In a rare snapshot of life there, the February 14, 1922, *Hendersonville News* carried word that "The young people of Flat Rock enjoyed a singing at the home of Mr. and Mrs. U.S. Ballard at 'Connemara,' Tuesday evening of last week."<sup>76</sup>

The Ballards moved from the property soon after the Sandburgs arrived. Ulysses Ballard died in January 1954 and was buried in Oakdale Cemetery in Hendersonville. Emily Ballard lived until 1988 (eventually relocating to Gadsden, Alabama) and was also buried in Oakdale.<sup>77</sup>

## *James Fisher Family*

Probably the best documented Black workers ever present at Rock Hill/Connemara are members of the family of longtime Smyth valet, chauffeur, and housekeeper's aide James Melvin Fisher. Fisher was born either in 1891 or 1894 (sources differ; his gravestone states 1894, but other records indicate 1891) and died in February 1978. A South Carolina native, he came to Connemara regularly with the Smyths each summer, relocated to Flat Rock with them in the 1920s, and remained in Henderson County until his death. He lived long enough to be interviewed by CARL staff in 1975, and thus is one of the only Black individuals connected with Rock Hill or Connemara to have left records of life and work there in his own words and voice. Fisher is buried in Oakdale (not to be confused with the important East Flat Rock Black cemetery, Oakland) Cemetery in Hendersonville.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Ballard interview; Pence, *Archaeological Overview and Assessment*, 1998, p. 60.

<sup>74</sup> Jones, *Connemara Main House*, 2005; Opperman, "Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site," 7, 15, *passim*.

<sup>75</sup> Frank Ballard interview.

<sup>76</sup> "Ulysses F. Ballard Obituary," *Asheville Citizen*, Jan. 7, 1954; "Singing at Flat Rock," *Hendersonville News*, Feb. 14, 1922, *Newspapers.com*.

<sup>77</sup> "Emily Ballard Obituary," *Asheville Citizen*, March 9, 1988, *Newspapers.com*.

<sup>78</sup> See "James Melvin Fisher (1894–1978) - Find A Grave.," accessed July 4, 2019, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/87276281/james-melvin-fisher>.



Fisher's life draws together many of the threads of the history of Rock Hill and Connemara: the importance of Black labor—always—to the site's owners, the persistent and long-wave linkages of blacks and whites to South Carolina, and the development of an independent Black community in Flat Rock.

In his interview, Fisher said that he met Ellison Smyth in 1911–1912 when his mother's employer—Smyth's oldest daughter, Margaret Adger Smyth McKissick, for whom Fisher's mother worked as a cook—sent him from their home in Greenwood, South Carolina, to work for her parents, the Smyths, in Greenville. Margaret McKissick's husband, mechanical engineer Anthony Foster McKissick, was by then—like his father-in-law—involved in the textile industry as president of Grendel Cotton Mills (Greenwood, South Carolina) and then Ninety-Six Cotton Mill.<sup>79</sup>

James Fisher was the son of Lloyd and Amanda Fisher, both born in South Carolina, perhaps into slavery, in 1848 and 1858, respectively. In 1900, the family was living in Greenwood, South Carolina, and Lloyd Fisher was working as a “day laborer.” Although neither parent could read or write, three of their four children were all listed as “at school” (the youngest, daughter Daisy, was only two). By 1910, they were still in Greenwood, with James listed as a “laborer,” like his father doing “odd jobs.”<sup>80</sup>

Soon after, Fisher must have gone to work for the Smyths, very likely living in the household. At some point before 1918, he married Carrie Goodwin, also a South Carolinian born in the late 1880s or early 1890s (again, records differ) in Taylors, South Carolina—but by 1900 living in the O'Neal Township of Greenville County, South Carolina doing farm labor. Carrie Goodwin's parents, Lee Goodwin and Lizzie Goodwin, were born in 1859 and 1864, respectively, and in 1900 Lee Goodwin was listed as a farmer renting his land—perhaps a tenant or sharecropper.<sup>81</sup>

How James Fisher met Carrie Goodwin is not known, but perhaps she had come to work for the Smyths. The 1910 census finds her working as a cook with an elderly white farm couple, the Gilreaths, still in the O'Neal Township of Greenville, South Carolina.<sup>82</sup> But by 1920, she and James were married, living together with an infant daughter Mary in a house they owned at 129 Glover St. (Jones, in *Connemara Main House*, says “Glenn St.”,

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<sup>79</sup> NPS interview with James Fisher, 1975, CARL Archives; “McKissick Family,” *South Carolina Encyclopedia*, <http://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/mckissick-family/>, accessed July 4, 2019.

<sup>80</sup> U.S. Federal Census, Greenwood, SC, 1900, 1910, *Ancestry.com*.

<sup>81</sup> Carry (Carrie) Fisher Death Certificate, Jan. 24, 1932, *Ancestry.com* indicates she was 39 at the time, but does not show a birth date; U.S. Federal Census 1900, Greenville County, SC. Marriage date not known, but James Fisher's World War I draft records in 1918 show him as married.

<sup>82</sup> U.S. Federal Census, 1910, Greenville County, SC.

but “Glover” is more likely) in Greenville Township, Greenville County, South Carolina. James Fisher was identified as working as a butler in a private home (the Smyths), but no occupation was given for Carrie Fisher.<sup>83</sup>

The Fishers’ early marriage was apparently interrupted briefly by James Fisher’s military service in World War I. Details are again elusive, but James Fisher’s gravestone indicates that he was a Private First Class in the U.S. Army. His World War I draft registration card (undated) shows him living at the Smyths’ address at 237 Broadus Avenue in Greenville, but employed as a butler for Captain E. A. Smyth, “Flat Rock, NC.” Fisher indicates that he is married and should be exempt from the draft due to “wife to support.” This rationale must not have been sufficient, however, because a military document dated September 25, 1918, lists James Fisher (a butler, with a serial number matching that of “our” James Fisher’s draft registration card) among a group of men inducted into military service and sent to Camp Sevier, a relatively new training installation for federalized National Guard soldiers four miles northeast of Greenville.<sup>84</sup>

We could not locate further military records for James Fisher, but an official report that fall suggests a depressing environment at Camp Sevier in which white military police abuse of Black soldiers—verbal and physical abuse, including being shot—was routine and tolerated. “The military police is accompanied by Lt. Howell who is a rank Southerner and all of the sergeants and privates connected therewith are also southerners,” the report stated. “I can safely say that a colored soldier in this city has no more show, so far as safety or justice is concerned than a jack rabbit. The military police make it their business to interfere with every colored soldier they see on the streets . . . ”<sup>85</sup>

By 1924, the Fishers had a second daughter, Bennie, born in 1922 in Greenville,<sup>86</sup> and the family had moved, with the Smyths, permanently to Flat Rock. As had generations of Black workers on the property going back into slavery, the family took up residence in what is now known as the “Swedish House”—slave quarters built in 1852 by the Memmingers.<sup>87</sup> By the time the 1930 census recorded the family again, they were all living

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<sup>83</sup> U.S. Federal Census, 1920, Greenville County, SC.

<sup>84</sup> “James Melvin Fisher (1894–1978) - Find A Grave Memorial,” accessed May 27, 2019, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/87276281>; James Fisher World War I Draft Registration Card, n.d. [1917], *AncestryInstitution.com* - U.S., World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917–1918; “U.S. Lists of Men Ordered to Report to Local Board for Military Duty, 1917–1918, South Carolina -- James Fisher,” Sept. 27, 1918, *AncestryInstitution.com* - U.S., Lists of Men Ordered to Report to Local Board for Military Duty, 1917–1918; Samuel K. Fore, “Camp Sevier,” in *South Carolina Encyclopedia* (University of South Carolina, Institute for Southern Studies, July 26, 2016), <http://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/camp-sevier>.

<sup>85</sup> Director, Military Intelligence to Intelligence Officer, Camp Sevier, “Conditions among Negro Troops in Camp Sevier,” November 19, 1918, Fold3, <http://www.fold3.com:9292/image/182732823?terms=camp%20sevier>. There is a collection of materials on Camp Sevier here: <https://greenvillelibrary.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p17168coll7/search>.

<sup>86</sup> Bennie Lee Fisher death certificate, Feb. 23, 1951, *Ancestry.com*.

<sup>87</sup> Jones, *Swedish House*, 24.

on the Smyth property—James as butler, Carrie as maid, daughter Mary (age ten) doing chores, and daughter Benny (8) listed as a servant. Julia Smyth had by then died (1927), and thirty-five-year-old single granddaughter Nancy Blake had moved in to help eighty-two-year-old Ellison A. Smyth.<sup>88</sup>

Carrie Fisher died in January of 1932 in Flat Rock. Four years later, James Fisher remarried—to Nellie L. Penson of Hendersonville. In the final census record for Ellison Smyth before his death, James and Nellie Fisher remain in the Smyth household, with James then listed as chauffeur and Nellie as cook. (James Fisher explained in his 1975 interview that Nellie and her first husband already had a house in Hendersonville, but that when James married Nellie, Smyth offered to pay her to work if she would come to Connemara to live with her husband, thus ensuring that Smyth retained James Fisher’s services. The census does show her earning \$260/year for her work, compared to James Fisher’s \$624.) Julia Pierce, a white, single thirty-two-year-old relative from Georgia had also moved in as housekeeper. James Fisher’s children were by this time no longer indicated as living onsite.<sup>89</sup>

In his 1975 interview, James Fisher explained that he remained at Captain Smyth’s side—serving at times as his personal nurse—until Smyth died in 1942.<sup>90</sup> Sometime after this, he moved off the Connemara property—presumably to wife Nellie’s home at 819 6th Avenue W. in Hendersonville.<sup>91</sup> James Fisher went on to work for several other employers around the region.<sup>92</sup> Meanwhile, his older daughter Mary Fisher married Charles Butler Greer of Taylors, South Carolina, in 1947. Younger daughter Bennie Lee Fisher died unmarried of breast cancer at age twenty-nine in February 1951.<sup>93</sup> Nellie L. Fisher died of a heart attack in church in 1953.<sup>94</sup> When James Fisher died in 1978, his funeral was held at the Star of Bethel Missionary Baptist Church, a Black congregation that had been organized in Hendersonville in 1873.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> U.S. Census 1930, Hendersonville Township, NC; Jones, *Connemara Main House*, 38.

<sup>89</sup> U.S. Census, 1940, Hendersonville Township, NC. Oddly, the Fishers are listed as “white” here. Jones, *Connemara Main House*, 38, discusses the unnamed cousin, who must be Julia Pierce; Fisher interview, 1975.

<sup>90</sup> Fisher interview, 1975.

<sup>91</sup> Bennie Fisher is found at this address in the Hendersonville City Directory of 1937-38; James and Nellie Fisher are found here in the Hendersonville City of 1950.

<sup>92</sup> Fisher interview, 1975, part 2.

<sup>93</sup> “Mary Fisher Marriage Record” (June 14, 1947), *AncestryInstitution.com* - North Carolina, Marriage Records, 1741–2011; “Bennie Lee Fisher Death Certificate” (February 23, 1951), *AncestryInstitution.com* - North Carolina, Death Certificates, 1909–1976.

<sup>94</sup> “Hendersonville Rites Set for Mrs. Fisher,” *Asheville Citizen*, Jan. 21, 1953, *Newspapers.com*.

<sup>95</sup> “Western North Carolina Deaths, Funerals (James Fisher),” *Asheville Citizen*, Feb. 3, 1978, *Newspapers.com*; Black History Research Committee of Henderson County; and Gary Franklin | Greene, *Brief History of the Black Presence in Henderson County, A* (Henderson County, N.C.: The Committee, 1996), 33–34;

## *James Robinson*

Also listed in the Smyth household in North Carolina in 1930 was another Black man who had come to Flat Rock from South Carolina with the Smyth family: fifty-five-year old James Robinson, their chauffeur.<sup>96</sup>

Previous CARL studies (two by Jones in 2005 and one by Opperman in 2007) have identified Robinson by name, included an image that they note *may* have shown him with Smyth grandchildren at Connemara around 1910, said that he was married but that his wife's name was not known, posited that he had no children of his own, and reported that he died in the 1930s.<sup>97</sup>

A new search of census documents, digitized newspapers, city directories, death and marriage records, and other documents available through *Ancestry.com* and *Newspapers.com* clarifies and revises a few of these assertions, reveals a few more specific details, and provides suggestive leads for future research. Thus, while a full picture of Robinson's life remains elusive, it is possible to begin to connect him with a wider community of family, neighbors, white employers, and Black institutions that created the context for his life. The new research shows that unlike James Fisher's, Robinson's life appears to have remained grounded in South Carolina even after he (apparently) moved to Flat Rock with the Smyths and was counted (with no other of his own family members) with their family in the 1930 census.<sup>98</sup>

Key to assembling more details is the 1924 Greenville, South Carolina city directory, which finds James Robinson listed as the chauffeur to "Capt. E. A. Smyth." Here Robinson's wife's name, Anna, appears, along with their home address at 127 Glover St. in Greenville.<sup>99</sup> This grouping of pertinent details provides the clues that allow identification of other documents that trace Robinson's life. Most importantly, it allows confirmation of Robinson's June 27, 1937 death certificate, which shows that he died at age sixty-two of a cerebral hemorrhage after what appears to have been several years of declining health related to hypertension that had started in 1930. The death certificate shows Robinson survived by wife Anna, and the couple's residence as 11A Glover St. in Greenville. With information supplied by Anna as the "informant," Robinson's occupation is listed as chauffeur, his birthplace as Towensville (possibly Gowensville?), South Carolina, his mother's name as Rebecca (last name unknown), with father's name unknown, and exact

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<sup>96</sup> 1930 Census, Henderson Co., NC.

<sup>97</sup> Jones, *Swedish House*, 2005; Jones, *Connemara Main House*, 2005; Opperman, *Chicken House*, 2007.

<sup>98</sup> 1930 Census, Henderson Co., North Carolina.

<sup>99</sup> *Greenville, SC, City Directory, 1924—James Robinson*, 1924.

birth date unknown. In death, his body was handled by African American undertaker S. C. Franks & Son, with burial at Hillcrest, a private Black cemetery in the Brutontown area—a thriving post–Civil War Black community of Greenville County.<sup>100</sup>

Although he was apparently born around 1875, we were unable to identify James Robinson in any census records besides 1930. He reported at that time that he had married at age twenty-five, around 1900. And indeed, in the earliest record of his life we have so far located, he appears in the 1905 Greenville city directory, married to the former Anna Townes, working as a butler (for whom, the book does not say), and living at 517 Nichols (present Dunbar St., Greenville).<sup>101</sup> Anna Townes Robinson was (her 1950 death certificate says) from Oconee County, South Carolina.<sup>102</sup>

By 1907, the couple had an infant son, Edward (born that year) and had moved to Washington St., where James Robinson worked as a laborer. In 1912, the couple remained on Washington St., and the directory for the first time listed him as a chauffeur, not for Ellison Adger Smyth but for L. W. Parker.<sup>103</sup>

L. W.—Lewis Wardlaw—Parker, like Smyth, was a “widely known man”—a lawyer and leader in the development of the South Carolina textile industry, recognized for his role in establishing Greenville’s Monaghan Mill in 1900 and later, the huge Parker Cotton Mills conglomerate of sixteen mills formed after 1910. Numerous newspaper articles from the 1910s indicate that Parker and Smyth served together on various boards and committees related to the textile industry and to railroad development. Parker had once been President of the American Cotton Manufacturers Association.<sup>104</sup> Despite his prominence, Parker’s industrial endeavors suffered from rickety finances and uncertain leadership, as well as labor unrest and war-related pressures, and Parker resigned his leadership of the troubled consolidated organization in 1914.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> James Robinson death certificate, 1937. On Franks & Son, see Robinson-Simpson, Leola Clement. *Greenville County, South Carolina (Black America Series)* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2007); on Hillcrest Cemetery, see “Richland Cemetery | Greenville, SC - Official Website,” accessed Jan. 19, 2020. <https://www.greenville-sc.gov/531/Richland-Cemetery>; on Brutontown, see “African American Cultural Sites | VisitGreenvilleSC,” accessed Jan. 19, 2020. <https://www.visitgreenville-sc.com/things-to-do/african-american-cultural-sites>.

<sup>101</sup> *Greenville, SC City Directory, 1905—James Robinson, 1905*.

<sup>102</sup> Anna Robinson death certificate, Greenville, South Carolina, 1950. This document lists her mother’s maiden name as Louise Towns, with father’s name and exact birth date unknown. Edward Robinson death certificate, Greenville, South Carolina, 1957, lists Anna’s maiden name as Anna Townes.

<sup>103</sup> *Greenville, SC, City Directory, 1907—James Robinson, 1907; Greenville, SC, City Directory, 1912—James Robinson, 1912*; Edward Robinson death certificate, 1957.

<sup>104</sup> Quotation: Lewis obit, *Greenville News*, April 12, 1916; “History - The Greenville Textile Heritage Society.” Accessed Feb. 1, 2020. <http://greenville-textile-heritage-society.org/mills/monaghan/history/>; “Monaghan Mill National Register Nomination,” 2005. <http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/greenville/S10817723059/S10817723059.pdf>; see *Greenville News*, May 23, 1914.

<sup>105</sup> Edwards, Pamela C. “Southern Industrialization and Northern Industrial Networks: The New South Textile Industry in Columbia and Lyman, South Carolina,” *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 105, no. 4 (2004), 282–305.



In 1904, however, things must have been going well for Parker and his wife, Margaret Smith Parker, as that year they built a grand home on Washington St. (or Road) in Greenville. The house, a photo of which was featured along with Smyth's and several other elegant residences in the *Greenville News* in May of 1914, became, in 1935, the home of Greenville's exclusive Poinsett Club.<sup>106</sup> Although they are not listed in the 1910 census with the Parker family, it seems likely that James and Anna Robinson from at least 1907 to 1916 lived and worked on or very near the Parker property at the corner of E. Washington and Williams St. (where the Parker home still stands).

Thus, while the textile mills that men like Parker and Smyth operated were in these years, "a white domain," the domestic spaces where these men lived were filled with the Black employees that were barred by South Carolina law after 1915 from working with whites in "machine-tending jobs" in the mills.<sup>107</sup> As domestic laborers, the Robinsons—like the Fishers—lived lives buffeted by the individual fortunes of their employers. Lewis W. Parker's death from cancer at age 50 in 1916 seems a turning point for the Robinsons; by 1917, they were back on Nichols St. (this time, at #511), where James Robinson remained a chauffeur, but with no employer listed.<sup>108</sup>

James and Anna Robinson do not appear in the 1920 census for Greenville, but according to the Greenville city directory, by 1921, they were living at 127 Glover St. with a Clifton Robinson (laborer, relationship to the couple unclear). James Robinson remained a chauffeur, but, again, his employer's name was not given.<sup>109</sup> The Robinsons' new home was, however, *right next door* to 129 Glover St., where Smyth butler James Fisher, his wife Carrie Fisher and their young daughter Mary were living when interviewed for the Greenville census the year before (1920).<sup>110</sup> Since James Fisher was already by that time working for the Smyths, it seems plausible that neighborhood, family, or other community ties may have introduced James Robinson to them as well. As noted above, by 1924, it is certain that James Robinson was working as a chauffeur for the Smyths.<sup>111</sup>

What James and Anna Robinson's lives were like after the Smyths moved to Flat Rock full time that same year is not known. Extant records suggest, however, that unlike the Fishers, they did not relocate their family to North Carolina. Instead, Anna Robinson

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<sup>106</sup> "Residence of Mr. Lewis W. Parker -- East Washington St." *Greenville News*, May 11, 1913; "Poinsett Club History - The Poinsett Club - Greenville, SC," accessed Jan. 26, 2020. [https://www.poinsettclub.org/Club\\_Heritage/Poinsett\\_Club\\_History](https://www.poinsettclub.org/Club_Heritage/Poinsett_Club_History); "New Poinsett Club Will Soon Open Washington Road Home." *Greenville News*, May 19, 1935, *Newspapers.com*.

<sup>107</sup> See Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 66.

<sup>108</sup> *Greenville, SC, City Directory* 1917.

<sup>109</sup> *Greenville, SC, City Directory, 1921*—James Robinson, 1921.

<sup>110</sup> 1920 Census, Greenville, SC. See also p. 16 of "Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Greenville, SC." 1920. <https://digital.tcl.sc.edu/digital/collection/SFMAPS/id/3258>.

<sup>111</sup> *Greenville, SC, City Directory* 1924.



remained in Greenville, on Glover St. By 1930, when James Robinson was counted in the Henderson County census living with the Smyths, sixty-year-old Anna resided with their twenty-one-year-old son Edward and her sixty-year-old widowed aunt Lizzie Sullivan in a home she owned at #11A Glover St. (rather than their earlier residence at 127). Glover St. was part of a post-Civil War Black neighborhood known as Little Texas that had featured a school for freemen (later the Allen School) and by the 1920s had about seventy-five homes.<sup>112</sup> As of 1931, Anna Robinson worked as a laundress. By 1933, perhaps in ill health, James Robinson had returned to join her at their home at 11A Glover St. in Greenville. The city directory that year listed him as a laborer, though by 1935, he was shown again as a chauffeur (employer not indicated). James Robinson died in 1937.<sup>113</sup> Anna Robinson remained in the 11A Glover St. home for the rest of her life. As of 1940, she continued to live with her aunt and worked from home as a laundress. She died of a cerebral hemorrhage in 1950. After funeral services at Greenville's Allen Temple African Methodist Episcopal Church (significant as the first AME church in Greenville, organized as a separate congregation in 1881, and in a church building constructed in 1929–1930), she was buried with her husband in the Black Hillcrest Cemetery.<sup>114</sup>

The Robinsons' son, Edward Robinson, lived until January of 1957. Employed for thirteen years at Greenville's Claussen's Bakery, he, like his mother, was memorialized in a funeral at Allen Temple AME Church. His wife, Rosa Robinson, along with three children and a grandchild, survived him.<sup>115</sup>

These details of the Robinsons' lives, though scattered and fragmentary, suggest how deeply embedded they were in Greenville-based Black institutions and communities that extended far beyond the reach of the Smyths. Their lives cannot be encompassed in a Smyth- or Connemara-centered history.

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<sup>112</sup> "U.S. Federal Census 1930 -- Anna Robinson -- Greenville, SC." "Little Texas Historical Marker - Little Texas - Greenville County Library System Digital Collections," accessed Jan. 19, 2020. <https://greenvillelibrary.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p17168coll25/id/0/rec/1>. Most of the community's homes were condemned in 1971 and later demolished as a part of several Greenville "urban renewal" projects downtown. See Anna Lee, "Remembering a Lost Community," *Greenville News*, Aug. 13, 2014, *Newspapers.com*. <https://www.greenville-online.com/story/news/local/greenville/downtown/2014/08/12/stories-remain-downtowns-little-texas-community/13977975>.

<sup>113</sup> Greenville, SC city directories, 1933, 1935; James Robinson death certificate, 1937.

<sup>114</sup> 1940 Census, Greenville, SC; Anna Robinson Death Certificate, 1950; Anna Robinson obituary, *Greenville News*, Sept. 21, 1950.

<sup>115</sup> Edward W. Robinson, obituary, *Greenville News*, Jan. 19, 1957, p. 9. Children: Dorothy Robinson (Allen University, Columbia); Walter Robinson (Springfield, MA), and James E. Robinson (Central State College, Wilberforce, OH).

## *Johnnie Simmons*

In his interview with NPS staff in 1975, James Fisher said that Johnnie Simmons was hired (possibly in the 1920s) after the Greenville-based cook (named “Plummer?”) went back home to South Carolina to take another job. Simmons may have worked for Smyth for more than a decade, perhaps until Smyth’s death.<sup>116</sup> The hiring of Johnnie Simmons seems to reflect Smyth’s transition to employing local Henderson County Black labor, rather than relying upon Black servants whose roots were in South Carolina.

According to his World War II draft registration card, Johnnie William Simmons was born June 16, 1900 in Henderson County.<sup>117</sup> In 1919, he married Hattie Thompson, herself formerly of Greenville, South Carolina.<sup>118</sup> The couple soon had a daughter, Marion, born about 1923.<sup>119</sup>

Hattie Simmons worked as a domestic laborer but died relatively young in 1955 of a cerebral hemorrhage after suffering for several years from diabetes and arteriosclerosis. Her burial in East Flat Rock’s Oakland Cemetery, was handled by Hendersonville’s Black funeral home, Pilgrim’s.<sup>120</sup> Johnnie Simmons lived until 1978 and was also buried in Oakland.<sup>121</sup>

A second-generation Henderson County resident who resided by 1930 in the Black community of East Flat Rock, Johnnie Simmons was the nephew of Society of Necessity founder Henry Simmons. Johnnie Simmons’s father Mack Simmons was Henry Simmons’s brother. At her death in 1908 at age forty-eight, his mother, Sarah Simmons, a member of the Baptist Church and Society of Necessity, was termed a “well known colored woman in the neighborhood,” whose internment at Oakland Cemetery was attended by “a large number of friends.”<sup>122</sup> Although further details about Johnnie Simmons’s life are thus far elusive in searches of online documents, it is clear that he was part of a large and important

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<sup>116</sup> Johnnie Simmons to Hattie Thompson, Marriage record, Buncombe Co., NC, 4/21/1919. In the 1920 census, Johnnie Simmons is listed as a laborer in a hotel; by 1930, he is a cook with a “private family.” In the 1940 Henderson County Census, he remains a cook in a “private home.”

<sup>117</sup> “Johnnie William Simmons (Johnny Simmons) World War II Draft Card,” n.d., *AncestryInstitution.com* - U.S. World War II Draft Cards Young Men, 1940–1947. Other documents (including his tombstone) give birth years of 1895 and 1901. See “Johnny Simmons Death Record in Death Index,” July 17, 1978, North Carolina, Death Indexes, 1908–2004 - *AncestryInstitution.com*; and “Johnnie W. Simmons (1895–1978) - Find A Grave...,” accessed July 5, 2019. [https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/111091767/johnnie-w\\_-simmons](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/111091767/johnnie-w_-simmons).

<sup>118</sup> Simmons-Thompson marriage record.

<sup>119</sup> Marion married James Franklyn Sams in 1937 and became Marion G. Sams. She died in 1987. “Marion Simmons / James Sams Marriage Certificate,” October 3, 1937, *AncestryInstitution.com* - North Carolina, Marriage Records, 1741–2011. See also: “Marion Geneva Sams Death Certificate,” May 24, 1987, North Carolina, Death Indexes, 1908–2004 - *AncestryInstitution.com*.

<sup>120</sup> Hattie Simmons death certificate, 1955.

<sup>121</sup> “Johnny Simmons Death Record in Death Index,” July 17, 1978, North Carolina, Death Indexes, 1908–2004—*AncestryInstitution.com*.

<sup>122</sup> “Local Notes (Sarah Simmons Obit),” *Western North Carolina Times*, July 10, 1908, *Newspapers.com*.

Henderson County family. It is possible that a search of the extensive Pilgrim Funeral Home records at the Henderson County Genealogical and Historical Society in Hendersonville would yield some additional details about this branch of the Simmons family.<sup>123</sup>

### *Aunt Sally Markley*

By the 1920s, as the Smyths began to rely more heavily upon local Black workers, at least one important connection appears to have been forged with the prominent Markley family.

“Every spring,” Frank Ballard recalled in 1982, “Capn’ would hire Aunt Sally Markley to come over and clean the house . . . .” Questioned further, he added, “Jim Markley’s mother, yes.” No other detail about “Aunt Sally’s” employment for the Smyths appears in previous CARL studies, but considerable information about Flat Rock’s Markley family is available. Some of this has been detailed in Chapter 11. Much more information is available in the 2015 Flat Rock Historic District National Register update, from which the summary below is drawn.

The Markley family—Sally Darity Markley (1859–1959) and her husband John Calhoun Markley (1848–1921), both born in slavery—moved to Flat Rock in 1877. Raised in a blacksmithing family, John Markley and son Jim Markley ran a Flat Rock blacksmith shop that for decades served generations of local and seasonal residents. The large Markley family complex on Blue Ridge Road consisted after 1900 of the shop and several houses. The one where Sally and John Markley lived—and raised their eleven surviving children—became known after John Markley’s death in 1921 as “Aunt Sally’s House.” After John Markley’s death, son Jim operated the blacksmith shop until the mid-1960s. “Aunt Sally,” meanwhile, worked seasonally for the Smyths (and perhaps others) and became well known in the area as a midwife who assisted four different Flat Rock physicians. Sally Markley lived in the family home in Flat Rock at least until she suffered a paralyzing stroke in 1953. She died in 1959 and was buried in Oakland Cemetery. Son Jim died in 1965.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> “Pilgrim Funeral Home Records [1948–1989],” 1989–1941. Henderson County Genealogical & Historical Society.

<sup>124</sup> Griffith, Clay. “Flat Rock Historic District Boundary Increase, Boundary Decrease, and Additional Documentation (National Register),” National Register of Historic Places, 2015, Section 7, pp. 28–29; Section 8, p. 393.

## *Other Names We Know*

The individuals profiled in this study are, without a doubt, only a fraction of those who at one moment or another labored at either Rock Hill or Connemara. Their stories—only just coming into view—await the elaboration that might be possible by finding descendants or mining additional paper records available in various institutions, either in Flat Rock or in South Carolina. But beyond these, there are others for whom we have names, but have been able to uncover only a few details.

Photographs left to the park by Frank Ballard include Mary Walker, a Black woman said to be a laundress for the Smyths in the 1920s. A quick search of the census finds a twenty-two-year-old single Black woman by that name listed in Hendersonville Township in 1920, employed as a “laundress” in “private homes.” Could this be Mary?<sup>125</sup>

Several of the informants interviewed by the NPS in the 1970s also mention a white housekeeper who lived in the home and cared for Ellison Smyth in the years after his wife’s death. Pauline Harley (not Harvey, as identified in previous studies) was a single woman, originally from Georgia. How she came to Flat Rock or met the Smyths is not clear. She died in 1933 at age seventy.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> “U.S. Federal Census 1920 -- Mary Walker -- Smyth Laundress -- Henderson County.” Hendersonville Township, NC, 1920, *AncestryInstitution.com* - 1920 United States Federal Census.

<sup>126</sup> “Pauline Harley Death Certificate,” Oct. 9, 1933, *AncestryInstitution.com* - North Carolina, Death Certificates, 1909–1976; see also “Pauline Harley Estate Settlement,” Nov. 30, 1934, *AncestryInstitution.com* - North Carolina, Wills and Probate Records, 1665–1998.



## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

# MAINSTREAMING AND NATURALIZING THE “LITTLE CHARLESTON” HAZE: 1955 AND BEYOND

### John Parris Roams the Mountains

Following the appearance of Sadie Smathers Patton’s *The Story of Henderson County* in 1947, Sylva-born journalist John Parris (1914–1999) became a (perhaps the major) long-term contributor to the spread and acceptance of the “Little Charleston” phrase among the general public.

After working for several years as a correspondent for Asheville newspapers, Parris joined the Associated Press in 1935 and went through World War II as a European correspondent before returning to the United States in April, 1945.<sup>1</sup>

Resigning from the AP in late 1947, Parris began to write a post-Reconstruction historical novel focused on some connections between post-Reconstruction Charleston and the life of a western North Carolina doctor. Given that this novel was to focus on a country doctor, and that Parris began to work on it soon after Patton’s *Story of Henderson County* appeared, its intended focal figure might have been longtime and much beloved Flat Rock doctor Mitchell C. King, son of Judge Mitchell King, one of Flat Rock’s early founders.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Gertrude Ramsey, “Former Newsmen of This Area Now Gather, Edit Foreign Correspondence,” *Asheville Citizen-Times*, Jan. 1948, B7.

<sup>2</sup> On the Kings, see Patton, *Story of Henderson County*, 97, 212ff. A definitive answer to the question of who the focal figure was no doubt lies in Parris’s papers, archived at the Western Carolina University’s Hunter Library. See *WCU Administrator*, July 12, 2002, “John and Dorothy Parris Professorship Established at Western Carolina,” <https://news-prod.wcu.edu/2002/07/john-and-dorothy-parris-professorship-established-at-western-carolina>, accessed April 15, 2019.



But Parris never wrote that novel, apparently. He was soon was drawn into publicity work with both the recently organized Cherokee Historical Association and Kermit Hunter’s Cherokee outdoor drama *Unto These Hills*. The Parris novel that appeared by mid-1950 (along with the first performance of Hunter’s drama), *The Cherokee Story*, had nothing to do with Charleston.<sup>3</sup>

Parris’s interests were broader than the Cherokees, however. As time passed, he turned to the history and folkways of the western North Carolina mountains. In his long-running “Roaming the Mountains” series in the *Asheville Citizen-Times*, he ventured repeatedly into Little Charleston-of-the-Mountains.<sup>4</sup>

His first (March 7, 1955) column, on the “millionaires’ paradise” of Lake Toxaway—built in 1903 by a northerner and christened with a Cherokee name—had no Charleston connection.<sup>5</sup> Highlighting cultural difference, his second (March 20, 1955) edged closer to aspects of Flat Rock/Little Charleston history. It focused on nearby Macon County’s Highlands, which, instead of being founded by wealthy and high-living (high drinking, too, some said) South Carolina lowlanders after 1830, was founded by northerners (“a very temperate folk . . . opposed to . . . liquor”) nearly a half-century later.

Within six months, however, Parris plunged into the middle of Little Charleston with a column on a “unique shrine” hidden behind a laurel hedge at Fletcher’s Calvary Episcopal Church, founded by several Little Charleston luminaries in 1857. We return to that story later in the chapter.

Somehow, in the process of beginning to mine these Flat Rock and Fletcher stories, Parris seems to have come to know Sadie Patton. His March 1956 column on a pioneer woman doctor refers to an herbal remedy for cancer “in the possession of . . . great-great-great granddaughter Mrs. Sadie Patton . . . [a] noted historian.”<sup>6</sup>

Two months later, in any case, key elements of the “Little Charleston of the Mountains” myth tumbled out in a single Parris column about the Farmer Hotel/Woodfield Inn. “A story-book structure,” he called it, “in a story-book setting.” It was built in the Golden Age of Flat Rock, he said, “the Little Charleston of the Mountains,” amidst about 20 estates, including those of the French consul-general Count de Choiseul and his British

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<sup>3</sup> John Parris, *The Cherokee Story* (Asheville: Stephens Press, 1950). The first projected novel was to be called *How Far the Stars*. See “Sylva Newsman Begins Research on New Book,” *Asheville Citizen*, Dec. 3, 1948, p. 28.

<sup>4</sup> Exactly when Parris wrote the first of his columns is not clear, but the first series-designated column appeared in March 1955.

<sup>5</sup> John Parris, “Toxaway Lake, Inn Once Was Millionaires’ Paradise,” *Asheville Citizen*, March 7, 1955, p. 16. Toxaway had a 150-room hotel with steam heat and private baths, a 540-acre lake, and long-distance telephones. Four trains of Pullman cars a day brought the well-heeled to the hotel, golf course, tennis courts, fishing, and deer hunting. But in August 1916 it all washed away in a flood, and “The millionaires got on the train the next day and went home.”

<sup>6</sup> John Parris, “Story of a Pioneer Doctor,” *Asheville Citizen*, March 26, 1956, pp. 1, 6. The second page of this column quotes extensively from Parris’s talk with Patton.

counterpart Edmund Molyneux. “The little colony,” Parris judged, “brought to a still primitive region an era of luxury, ease and brilliant social activities patterned closely on the splendor of life in the Old World.”<sup>7</sup>

At considerable length, in images and language borrowed from Trenholm, Morley, and especially Patton (whom he cites and quotes), Parris evoked the Little River Road processions: splendidly outfitted lowlanders, carriages behind beautifully harnessed horses, followed by “servants, coachmen, footmen, maids and the faithful old mammies.” A list of stockholders who “with the design of promoting the establishment of a good, commodious tavern on or near the main Saluda Road” put up funds and made plans for the hotel came verbatim from Patton. “Squire” Henry T. Farmer built the structure, using (a detail from an unnamed source) “timber cut by slave labor.” The community around it offered the constant fare of “Balls, theatricals, teas, and gracious intercourse of this congenial group.”

It seems likely that Parris had read Patton’s book, which appeared at about the time he returned from Europe. Indeed, an editorial headnote to an August 1956 Parris column (“about an old house, a fine old Southern family, and a white harbinger of death”) two months later acknowledged that he had received “material” for it from Patton, “who got the story first hand a long time ago.”<sup>8</sup>

The story as Parris told it referred to the Buncombe Turnpike, and stagecoaches making “lumbering journeys” from the Lowcountry of South Carolina to Asheville, a grand house with granite pillars and steps “chiseled and polished by Aunt Liza Corn, a mountain Amazon.” The house that faced “acres of its plantation” became the scene for “throng of merry-makers gathered in the great walnut-paneled ballroom for . . . Christmas parties.” Humorist Bill Nye “spun many a tale” by the hearth, and poet Sidney Lanier played “at the grand concert piano.” To top off the proceedings,

when supper was over and the last chores were done, the field hands would gather to croon lullabies or sing old spirituals or dance a jig.

And sometimes . . . the toothless one they called Blue-gum Bet gathered her disciples and chanted strange words in a stronge language, a mumbo-jumbo that had its birth in the Congo long before her ancestors were fetched to America over the Bloody Passage.

The servants of the big house and the field hands held her in awe . . . .

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<sup>7</sup> John Parris, “Old Inn Acquires Tradition of Own,” *Asheville Citizen*, June 7, 1956, pp. 1, 3.

<sup>8</sup> John Parris, “Death Rode a White Horse,” *Asheville Citizen*, Aug. 30, 1956, pp. 1, 11, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/201038396/>, accessed Aug. 8, 2018. The headnote also said that the family and house names had been changed, “but the story is true,” and “a few folks are still around” who know. Parris located it in “the valley of the French Broad,” which would likely mean the Fletcher extension of the Flat Rock Lowcountry-derived development area rather than Flat Rock proper. The story was to be continued the following day, but apparently never appeared.

Hence within less than a decade after Patton’s *The Story of Henderson County*, the Little Charleston narrative had acquired a life of its own. Parris’s columns were key to that development, but Patton herself returned to it in an *Asheville Citizen-Times* in May 1959.

## Sadie Patton’s “French Nobleman Lived at Flat Rock” (1959)

A dozen years after Patton’s county history, her four-column *Citizen-Times* article returned to Flat Rock’s French Count Joseph de Choiseul, to whom the United Daughters of the Confederacy had the previous week erected a monument at Flat Rock’s St. John in the Wilderness Episcopal church.<sup>9</sup>

As Patton presented de Choiseul (as she had in *The Story of Henderson County* a dozen years earlier, but not so lyrically), he was “among the first people from the Low Country who . . . developed an estate at Flat Rock,” brought “a trace of the glamour and colorful panoply of Old World nobility to society among the gay [Charleston] group,” helping to plant “the first seed of the long famous resort, the ‘Little Charleston of the Mountains.’” In their architecture, landscaping, and social and cultural sensibilities, visitors to Flat Rock “during its Golden Age [after] 1830” reported that “its residents . . . brought the highest development of American civilization into the heart of the most picturesque region of this continent.” At least that was true, Patton emphasized, “until wreck and ruin came with the War Between the States.”

Two years after her long de Choiseul column in the *Citizen-Times*, Patton elevated the Little Charleston phrase to a book subtitle in *A Condensed History of Flat Rock: (the Little Charleston of the Mountains)*. A modest volume of seventy-three pages, it appears to have circulated widely in at least three editions within the decade.<sup>10</sup>

Unlike Patton’s *Story of Henderson County* (1947), in Chapter 11 of which she first used the Little Charleston phrase, the third edition of her *Condensed History* reveals a key source: Ravenel’s *Charleston: The Place, The People* (1905), itself a major source for the

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<sup>9</sup> Sadie Patton, “French Nobleman Lived at Flat Rock: The Story of De Choiseul,” *Asheville Citizen-Times*, May 17, 1959, p. D1. Patton had written of de Choiseul earlier in *The Story of Henderson County*, but not in as focused, extended and lyrical manner.

<sup>10</sup> The first edition (Asheville: Church Printing Co.) appeared in 1961. Quotations here are from the 3rd edition [undated, but probably in the late 1960s, since it was published “In collaboration with Historic Flat Rock, Inc. . . . [by] Hickory Printing Group, Inc., Hickory, North Carolina.” The *Condensed History* contains little that would likely have been of use to CARL planners or early staff, especially in comparison with her 1947 volume.

“golden haze” myth. There are only two references to Ravenel by name, but much other language is of a similar romantic character, suggesting the probability of the same (or a similar) origin.<sup>11</sup>

From both of Patton’s books (1947 and 1961), then, the phrase and the myth fanned out and was passed along. *Asheville Citizen-Times* writer John Dills’s long and detailed February 1963 column “Flat Rock Still Boasts Splendor” focused on a long roster of early 19th century Charlestonians who carved out “what Sadie Smathers Patton . . . called the heart of Little Charleston in [sic] the Mountains—Flat Rock”: their elite pedigrees and cultural backgrounds, lavish estates (lamentably, some now gone), elegant social lives and impeccable taste.<sup>12</sup> “While the rest of the world goes along,” Dills said,

tearing down old things, modernizing, destroying to build bigger, if not better, Flat Rock and her residents move along more serene et tenor spiced by gaiety. It is still a bit of the Old South in an old setting . . . .

Not only a treasure from the past, then, but also a bulwark against modernity.

During the 1970s, John Parris boosted Little Charleston several times, first in his column on the Farmer Hotel/Woodfield Inn (“a story-book inn in a story-book setting”), which used the inn as a point of departure for a celebration of a Flat Rock “patterned closely on the splendor of life in the Old World.”<sup>13</sup> Parris’s *These Storied Mountains*, the fourth best-selling collection of his “Roaming the Mountains” columns, included a short but intense piece on what “Nabobs of the Low Country” called Little Charleston.<sup>14</sup> It opened with a recital of the usual luminaries’ names and claims to notability (Baring, Farmer, Memminger, de Choiseul, Molyneaux), leavened with a few recognizable cultural/political references: origin of the lemon julep, the first Confederate flag to fly in North Carolina, Memminger’s appeal to move the Confederate capital to Flat Rock (rejected), and

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<sup>11</sup> Discussion of early Flat Rock founder Judge Mitchell King (“Of all the gentlemen here described, none was perhaps more remarkable”), and a multi-page account of the elite mansions and gardens. Patton, *Condensed History*, 16-17 and 21f. Marsh and Marsh, *Where the Old South Lingers*, 5 included a single use of the Little Charleston phrase: “. . . the Barings, living in high fashion, inspired the aristocratic social life of a new summer settlement of rich planters who followed them from the low country. Flat rock became known [at what juncture is not specified, though most probably in Patton’s *Story of Henderson County* as The Little Charleston of the Mountains.” The *Condensed History* also appeared in at least one more edition (Columbia SC: R. L. Ryan Co. 1972). The Marshes mentioned neither Trenholm’s *Flat Rock* (1908) nor Morley’s *Carolina Mountains* (1913).

<sup>12</sup> John C. Dills, “Flat Rock Still Boasts Splendor,” *Asheville Citizen-Times*, Feb. 17, 1963, pp. D1 and D5. Dills also referenced and quoted from the Marshes’ *Where the Old South Lingers*.

<sup>13</sup> John Parris, “Mountain Inn Is in a Story-Book Setting,” *Asheville Citizen*, Jan. 16, 1970, pp. 1 and 9. Parris appears to have been unfamiliar with the long-wave population movement patterns described by Brewster in *Summer Migrations and Resorts*, published the same year as Patton’s Henderson County history. As dealt with elsewhere in this study, Brewster’s account dealt with a whole series of intermediate pre-Flat Rock Flat Rock-style resorts, towns, and estates reaching from the Lowcountry to the foot of Saluda Mountain.

<sup>14</sup> Parris’s use of *nabob* here is odd, since it is not a term of honor. See “Nabob,” *Wikipedia*, April 12, 2020, <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Nabob&oldid=950504264>.

Flat Rock’s status as “the rocking chair capital of the Old South” (maybe uncontested). “Old Flat Rock,” Parris judged, “was a world unto itself—a gay social center in a frontier setting.” “There never has been,” he asserted nostalgically,

another community like it in these mountains, maybe in all the land. . . . Old Flat Rock, with its picturesque and colorful pageantry, is long gone. But many of its mansions still stand as a testimonial to a fabulous past when it was The Little Charleston of the Mountains.<sup>15</sup>

Patton’s death several years later moved Parris to expand his 1972 piece as an effusive valedictory on her *Condensed History*, which he called “the real story” of Flat Rock in a “rare . . . [and] hard to come by . . . little book of history.”<sup>16</sup>

## Louise Bailey’s *From Rock Hill to Connemara* (1980)

Carrying the “Little Charleston” to its most elaborated form was Louise Bailey’s *From Rock Hill to Connemara* (1980), which appears to have functioned as a bridge between the popular Little Charleston narratives and official National Park Service documents concerning the Carl Sandburg site.<sup>17</sup> “Within the Flat Rock settlement,” Bailey says about the early years, “a summer colony grew, made up from established Charleston families who spoke of Flat Rock as their ‘little Charleston of the mountain’s,” implying that early settlers from Charleston themselves employed the phrase.<sup>18</sup> Several early (slave-owning, they were) rice planters were mentioned, but work their transported slaves did to help create the estates and staff the elegant homes goes unmentioned, cloaked in passive verbs (e.g., at the Memmingers’ Rock Hill, meals “*were brought* from the kitchen . . . to the spacious dining room . . . and served in fine china and silver.”)<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Parris, *These Storied Mountains* (1972), 101–3. A bit farther on, Parris related a conversation about this history he had had with Sadie Patton, who in turn recalled stories of “the life and times of . . . Old Flat Rock” her grandmother Elizabeth Rickman told her. In her *Condensed History*, Patton refers to Rickman only once (xi), saying that “Her memories of the early days in the little Charleston group gave color to many of my own.” Here, “little Charleston” appears to refer to a small, early group of Charlestonians, rather than to “Little Charleston.”

<sup>16</sup> John Parris, “The Little Charleston of the Mountains,” *Asheville Citizen-Times*, Jan. 12, 1975, pp. 1, 4. The piece had appeared earlier in his *These Storied Mountains* (1972), 101–3.

<sup>17</sup> The relationship this book and the Carl Sandburg NPS unit is further specified on p. 4, which says the book was “Published for Carl Sandburg Home N.P.S., National Park Service, with funds provided by Eastern National Park & Monument Association.” On the Association (chartered in 1948), see “About Us,” *Eastern National* (blog), accessed July 5, 2020, <http://easternnational.org/about-us>. It is a “not-for-profit cooperating association, that promotes the public’s understanding and support of America’s national parks and other public trust partners by providing quality educational experiences, products, and services.”

<sup>18</sup> Bailey, *From Rock Hill to Connemara*, 10, 20.

<sup>19</sup> Bailey, *From Rock Hill to Connemara*, 20.



This perspective is particularly evident in her later treatment of Ellison Adger Smyth, who bought Rock Hill (which he renamed Connemara) in December 1900. Her credulous and misleading characterization of him recounted the facts of Smyth’s involvement in the rifle clubs and Red Shirts, but presented them as positive accomplishments that restored “primary positions in the state . . . to native-born sons” rather than violent and regressive efforts that turned back freed people’s gains.<sup>20</sup>

For a decade, however, a published counter-narrative of Smyth’s past had been available in Leeming Grimshawe’s treatment of him in *Connemara, Formerly Called Rock Hill, and a Brief Description of Those Who Lived There, 1836–1967* (1970). Without questioning the virulent racist mores and activities of the post-war decades, Grimshawe detailed Smyth’s acceptance of the former and involvement in the latter. Against such evidence, Bailey’s “manly exercise of arms” and “native-born sons” rhetoric rang disingenuously hollow.<sup>21</sup>

Unfortunately, it turned out, by providing funds for *From Rock Hill to Connemara*, Eastern National Park and Monument Association had funded a critically flawed, selective “bridge” account of what happened in Little Charleston. The bridge proved to be rickety indeed and could not serve CARL’s purposes well.

## Institutionalizing “Little Charleston”: Historic Flat Rock, Inc., 1968

Historic Flat Rock, Inc. (Historic Flat Rock; formed in 1968 at the time the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site came into being) adopted and institutionalized the “Little Charleston of the Mountains” phrase, which they and others deployed for historic preservation and tourism purposes.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> See Bailey’s *From Rock Hill to Connemara* bibliography, 48, 34–36.

<sup>21</sup> Leeming Grimshawe, *Connemara, Formerly Called Rock Hill, and a Brief Description of Those Who Lived There, 1836–1967* (n.p., L. Grimshawe, 1970), 13–21. Space does not permit a detailed examination of pre-1970 sources available to Grimshawe, but a few appear in his note on sources, 4. The most accessible statement on Smyth as textile industrialist (1881–1923) is Bruce Baker’s “Smyth, Ellison Adger,” in *South Carolina Encyclopedia*, <http://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/smyth-ellison-adger>. Hyman S. Rubin III’s “Red Shirts,” also in the *South Carolina Encyclopedia*, offers a concise and unflinching account of the Red Shirts, which he characterizes as “simply a more organized version of the ‘rifle clubs’ or ‘sabre clubs’ . . . ostensibly social in nature . . . [but] in fact local paramilitary forces . . . [that] sometimes used deadly violence.” The worst instance, he says, was the Ellenton Riot during the Wade Hampton gubernatorial campaign of 1876, when “Edgefield Red Shirts killed thirty Black militiamen and a state senator, many in cold blood,” <http://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/red-shirts>. On the Ellenton Riot, see <http://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/ellenton-riot>. All articles accessed Sept. 20, 2018. These complexly interlinked histories have been extensively documented and analyzed for many decades.

<sup>22</sup> Historic Flat Rock, Inc. (1968), <http://historicflatrockinc.com/about-us/history/>, accessed Oct. 11, 2018.



Historic Flat Rock’s mission statement commits it to “protect and preserve, in the community of Flat Rock . . . landmarks . . . of historical, architectural, cultural or recreational value,” to solicit funds and “purchase [such] property [for] . . . protection and preservation,” and —pursuant to these ends—to collect relevant materials and “disseminate historical information” through various means.<sup>23</sup>

These are worthy and important aims. They are also challenging, and plagued by unforeseen perils and contradictions, as entities larger and better staffed and funded—up to and including the National Park Service itself—have discovered.<sup>24</sup>

### *Codifying History, and Waning Prospects*

The history that HFR has codified and deployed during its first half-century is burdened by some of the key problematics of the “Little Charleston”-based narrative—those that preceded the phrase itself, those that inhered within it, and those that flowed outward from it.

The “History” page of Historic Flat Rock’s website, dated 2017 and entitled “The Little Charleston of the Mountains” is at odds with decades of historical scholarship on pre-colonial and colonial America, the rice-planting and slave-owning Lowcountry, the Cherokees, the Civil War, western North Carolina history, Black history, and related topics.

Flat Rock, Historic Flat Rock’s history says, can “trace its beginnings to the time of the Cherokee” [indigenous status, cultural and social development unmentioned] who “laid claim” [a hint of the Cherokee claim’s illegitimacy inheres within the phrase] to the region “as their summer home” [easing the way, and in the process legitimizing by the Cherokee precedent, the contemporaneous Lowcountry wave of summering in the area].

Having “sided with the British” in the Revolution, the Cherokee “found themselves” [as they might have expected, is the liminal suggestion] “a defeated people,” and landless to boot after the state “ceded” their “raw” [that is, “undeveloped” in the proper European fashion] land to “the national government.” [The Cherokee removal of 1838–1839 goes unmentioned.]<sup>25</sup>

Fortunately, post-Revolutionary land grants to war veterans—“educated, self-reliant pioneers, mostly of English and Scotch-Irish [not, mind you, African or Caribbean] descent” turned the developmental curve upward.

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<sup>23</sup> “Our Mission,” from Articles of Incorporation of Historic Flat Rock, Inc.

<sup>24</sup> See Anne M. Whisnant, Marla R. Miller, Gary B. Nash, and David Thelen, *Imperiled Promise: The State of History in the National Park Service* (Bloomington: Organization of American Historians, 2011).

<sup>25</sup> The Cherokee removal has been written about extensively. A good place to begin reading is in the carefully and competently written scholarly articles in state encyclopedias for Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina; for instance: Tim Allen Garrison, “Cherokee Removal,” in *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, July 23, 2018, <https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/cherokee-removal>.

Brief references to *Captain Kuykendall*, *Colonel Earle* and the Old Buncombe Turnpike vault us forward to “the early 19th century,” when “the bustling and important seaport of Charleston was enjoying unparalleled success” and “Plantations were at the cusp of production, providing owners with great wealth . . . .”

Actually, according to recent scholarship, such a reading of Lowcountry history is not supportable: the port of Charleston was by then losing traffic, the rice market and plantations (hence Charleston) were in bad shape, the white social and cultural order was rumbling with instability, and the slave-based economy—under long-standing and growing attack—was slowly coming apart.<sup>26</sup>

But one would not suspect or know any of this from the Historic Flat Rock’s history statement. It winds to a conclusion with the long-familiar roster of Lowcountry names (headed by the Barings, Judge King, and C. G. Memminger, “first Secretary of the Confederate Treasury” and the one “most associated with our Nation’s [not the Confederacy’s] history” arrive, build their houses and estates, and transform Flat Rock (completely unaided by a single enslaved Black person, free laborer, or servant) into “a distinctive and influential social colony.”

The Civil War, readers are informed, “dealt a severe blow” to the village “by depleting plantation wealth and robbing many of their Low Country properties” (enslaved contributors to the building of those properties again erased and unmentioned). But “Resiliency won out,” and “most of the grand estate houses”—returned to their hereditary

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<sup>26</sup> These evaluations have been advanced and documented in preceding chapters of this report, as well as in the 438-page 2015 National Register of Historic Places boundary increase/decrease study, cited as the sole Historic Resources document on Historic Flat Rock’s “Historic Resources” page. Unfortunately, that page contradicts key aspects of the Historic Flat Rock “History” page—especially with regard to the role of enslaved people and Black people in general in Lowcountry plantation life as well as in the development and maintenance of Flat Rock. On Reuther, see the next note.

In a striking contradiction, Historic Flat Rock’s statement cites the National Register study as a warrant for Flat Rock’s stature and importance, while ignoring a substantial number of its key counterarguments and the documentation upon which they rest. *Slave* occurs in the National Register study 24 times (e.g., Charleston slave owners, slave trade, slave families and descendants, slave residences, slave baptisms, slave servants and slave labor in Flat Rock). *Rice* occurs 38 times (e.g., rice planter, rice plantations, spoils of rice culture, wealthy rice planter elite, wealthy rice planter and slave owner, lucrative rice fields vs. deadly health risks, rice planter with a keen eye for good [western North Carolina] land, [post-war] loss of slave labor. *Black*, in some relevant form or combination, occurs perhaps a dozen or so times (e.g., “Flat Rock’s small, close-knit Black community,” “jobs then [1910 ff.] available to blacks”). Surprisingly, *freedmen* or *freed men* occurs only 4 times. *Charleston* occurs 169 times, but “Little Charleston” is used only four times: twice in the title of Sadie Patton’s *Story of Henderson County*” and two other times (8/377 and 8/383) without clear specification of the time at which it first appeared. All of these references, and related others, may easily be verified by a keyword search of the National Register pdf. There is no evidence in the Historic Flat Rock statement that Galen Reuther had consulted local Black History Research Committee’s *A Brief History of the Black Presence in Henderson County*, which had appeared 21 years earlier.

and proper [white] owners—remain to populate the village listing on the National Register of Historic Places and to draw visitors to the Annual House Tour. “We are indeed,” the history concludes resolutely, “The Little Charleston of the Mountains.”<sup>27</sup>

Despite the strategies and programs of Historic Flat Rock, the appeal of the phrase (and its underlying assumptions) had been slowly waning for decades. Flat Rock’s (and Hendersonville’s) efforts to capitalize on the tourist trade followed closely upon the arrival of the railroad on July 4, 1879, when tourist-oriented boarding houses began to crowd Hendersonville’s main street. County population, which had dropped 26 percent between 1860 (10,500) and 1870 (7,700), rebounded to the pre-war level by 1880 and doubled between 1890 (12,600) and 1940 (26,000).<sup>28</sup>

As the post-1900 decades passed, patterns in land ownership and land use were shifting in the Henderson County / Hendersonville / Flat Rock area. Some land was subdivided and sold to new home builders and developers. By 1915, the city directory listed about fifty “summer home” names and addresses. Other land was getting new uses such as summer youth camps, religious assemblies (Camp Brandeis, Bonclarken, hotels and inns, schools, and other entities).<sup>29</sup>

Additionally, by the 1940s new attractions and roads into Maggie Valley and Gatlinburg were siphoning off substantial portions of Henderson County traffic, and the county’s economic prospects were leveling off.<sup>30</sup> Local developers and other movers and shakers were casting about for marketable strategies to boost them again. First they tried “The Dancingest Town in the USA,” with Monday-night street dances. That waned after a while as well, and “City of Four Seasons” replaced it as retirees increasingly bought and built permanent rather than seasonal estates and residences.<sup>31</sup>

A June 1968 Asheville *Citizen-Times* article assured Henderson countians that they need not worry. The area “first settled” by Charleston residents, the writer said, is becoming “a center for retirees” from the midwest, Florida, and elsewhere,” and “numerous attractions” (street dances and the Apple Festival, as well as the usual golf courses, hotels,

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<sup>27</sup> The history statement, dated Feb. 2017, was signed by native Canadian (now Flat Rock resident) and former President (now Historic Flat Rock Board member) Galen Reuther. Earlier, Reuther published *Flat Rock: Little Charleston of the Mountains* (Arcadia Publishing: Charleston, Chicago, 2004), which advances the key features of the Historic Flat Rock statement.

<sup>28</sup> “Henderson County” *Wikipedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henderson\\_County,\\_North\\_Carolina#Demographics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henderson_County,_North_Carolina#Demographics), accessed Oct. 15, 2018.

<sup>29</sup> The Preface to the 1937–1938 Hendersonville city directory notes that the area has numerous religious assemblies and summer camps. It lists many individual Flat Rock and East Flat Rock addresses (but none are designated as Black families). An excellent historical précis of these processes and entities is available in Griffith, *Flat Rock Historic District Boundary Increase, Boundary Decrease*, 8/397–400. As early as 1916, Southern Railroad issued a promotional postcard for the Heidelberg Hotel and the Highland Lake Club in Flat Rock.

<sup>30</sup> Appalachian Regional Commission, *Appalachian Land Ownership Study, IV: North Carolina*, 49–50

<sup>31</sup> Clarence Goode, “Henderson County Remains Haven for Summer Throngs,” *Asheville Citizen-Times*, June 30, 1968, G-19.

and natural areas). Whether, or to what degree, Sadie Patton’s 1947 county history, with its Lowcountry focus and insistently “Little Charleston”-inflected narrative derived from, or was influenced by, the salient marketing dynamics of this multi-decade era has not come to light. But in any case, the conjunction was important, and the phrase stuck.

### *Revitalizing “Little Charleston”: Historic House Tours*

A mechanism that helped it to stick during the next half-century was the annual historic house tour instituted by Historic Flat Rock, Inc. after its formation in 1968. An Asheville *Citizen-Times* article the following year (referring to Flat Rock as the “Little Charleston of the Hills”) focused on St. John in the Wilderness Episcopal church and several of the earliest houses, as did another a dozen years later.<sup>32</sup>

A full-page Asheville *Citizen-Times* article on the 1978 tour included much of the by then long-used and predictable detail and rhetoric invariably associated with the “Little Charleston” phrase:

affluent Charlestonians, Europeans, and prominent plantation owners of the low country . . . and estates that during antebellum summers became a round of Southern gaiety . . . Morning gatherings on latticed porches, picnics, tennis teas, quadrilles danced under candled chandeliers . . . attracting many of the leading men of the era. . . This is Flat Rock . . . the 20th century seen against a backdrop of a distinguished past, a period when Southern leaders still had leisure for gracious living.<sup>33</sup>

Each article presented large photographs illustrating the historic grandeur of the houses and stressed the social and political standing of their original owners.

Beyond the homes tour events themselves, other promotional efforts helped keep the “Little Charleston” version of Flat Rock history alive. In 2003, Amy McGraw explained (elliptically and confusingly) to *Hendersonville Times-News* that the community and the term shared a long history:

The Flat Rock community began before the Civil War when affluent Charlestonians, Europeans and plantation owners from the low country of South Carolina came to build large summer estates. The area was called the Little Charleston of the Mountains.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Lenoir Ray, “Old Flat Rock Church, Homes Open During Tour,” *Asheville Citizen-Times*, July 20, 1969, p. C-1, and Mary Ellen Walcott, “Antebellum Flat Rock,” *Asheville Citizen-Times*, Aug. 1, 1982, p. C-1.

<sup>33</sup> Mrs. W. Quealy Walker, “Old Flat Rock Dwellings Preserve Historic Period” and Mary Ellen Wolcott, “Four Homes on Annual Tour,” *Asheville Citizen-Times*, Aug. 6, 1978, p. C1. The two articles included four photographs of two Flat Rock homes—the Barings’ Mountain Lodge (1827), Judge Mitchell King’s Argyle (1830)—and mentioned numerous others, including C. G. Memminger’s Rock Hill. Oddly, the articles did not use the “Little Charleston” phrase.

<sup>34</sup> Amy B. McGraw, “The Little Charleston of the Mountains,” *Hendersonville Times-News*, May 26, 2003.

Four years later, native Canadian, local resident and former Historic Flat Rock president Galen Reuther’s *Flat Rock: The Little Charleston of the Mountains* (2006) brought together what was in effect a 128-page cumulative version of the annual house tour and the “Little Charleston” version of Flat Rock history. It featured “historic” Charleston and its magically reincarnated mini-version in the mountains: scores of “noted” individuals, families with all-too-familiar Lowcountry names (“the who’s who of the South”), their lavish homes and beguiling offspring; churches and graveyards (St. John in the Wilderness, of course, but others as well); oft-told stories of the war and its aftermath; historic businesses and hostelrys; and the “gay” social scene through many decades. Not one of upwards of two hundred photographs included a recognizably Black person; a single reference to “servants” in the introduction has to stand for the many that could have been included (from the Carl Sandburg site archive—including those mined by Brewster 60 years earlier, and elsewhere).<sup>35</sup>

## Into the 21st Century: “Little Charleston” Lives On

In 2010, Louise and Joseph Bailey and Terry Ruscin published *Historic Henderson County: Tales from along the Ridges*. For the most part, it consisted of brief popular sketches of scenic sites, “old times,” colorful local characters, and the like. A piece on the reunion of the King family (presumably early arrival Judge Mitchell King’s) tantalizes with assurance that “Few events are more satisfying than a springtime trip to the ‘Holy City,’ as Charleston is sometimes called.” And a two-page sketch on “Little Charleston of the Mountains” focuses on the annual tour of homes, during which

people will take note of architecture . . . and the assurance of getting relief from the summer heat and mosquitoes of the South Carolina Lowcountry. Hopefully they’ll remember . . . [those] who used to make Flat Rock, “little Charleston of the mountains” come alive from May into September.<sup>36</sup>

More recently, *Asheville Citizen-Times* columnist Rob Neufeld’s “Visiting Our Past” series drew upon Bailey, Ruscin (and perhaps others) for “The Sandburg House Harbors Two Past Worlds.” In it he revisited what he termed the “‘Golden Age of Flat Rock’ (1840–1860), when it had been ‘the little Charleston of the Mountains,’” and included the lives (and estates) of Charles Baring, C. G. Memminger (cast as lawyer, public official, erstwhile

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<sup>35</sup> Reuther, *Flat Rock: The Little Charleston of the Mountains*.

<sup>36</sup> Bailey, Bailey, and Ruscin, *Historic Henderson County: Tales from Along the Ridges*, 35, 57–59. A half-dozen years earlier, Ruscin and Joseph Bailey had published *Remembering Henderson County: A Legacy of Lore* (Charleston: History Press, 2005), which contained a few sketches of the Little Charleston genre (e.g. “Glimpses of Old Flat Rock,” “Connemara”). In *Henderson County and Flat Rock: An Intimate Tour* (Charleston: History Press, 2007), Ruscin revisited a number of the early houses.

reformer, and urbane, Bible- and Shakespeare-quoting conversationalist), Judge Mitchell King (polymath and fancier of mystical philosopher Emanuel Swedenborg), and King Louis-Philippe’s cousin, the ever-focal Count de Choiseul.

Neufeld came close to, but skirted, what he might have filled out into an unprecedented critique of some of Little Charleston’s contradictions. But to understand them, “would have required,” he said,

an agile historical mind to see how prejudice, culture, refinement, business sense and, for those in their circle, kindness and sympathy combined in the Flat Rock Charlestonians.<sup>37</sup>

Only modest agility would have been required, however. The relevant details and explanations had long been both available and fairly easily ascertainable with regard to “their circle,” which was at once social, racial, cultural, and political.

A year later, in “Big Party in Flat Rock in 1836,” Neufeld returned to the Golden/Little Charleston age for a grand birthday party for the regal Susan Baring in the family’s Mountain Lodge. Although Neufeld led the article by specifying that Susan was a “Charleston rice heiress” and that her husband was “of the London banking family,” he did not contextualize those details. Instead, the article once again laid out the elite families’ European pedigrees, exemplary achievements, elegant tastes and lavish lives in the mountains.<sup>38</sup>

Neufeld also asserted that the twenty surviving Lowcountry houses preserved by Historic Flat Rock “form one of the rarest survivals of an entire way of life in the American landscape.” And yet, twenty ostentatious 19th-century Charleston-esque mansions set down outside Hendersonville pale by comparison with (to take only a couple of examples) the pre-Columbian Native American city at Cahokia Mounds in southern Illinois, or, closer by, the one-thousand year-old Mississippian/Cherokee Kituwa mound on the Tukaseegee River in Swain County, less than one hundred miles west of Flat Rock.<sup>39</sup>

Also crucially missing from Neufeld’s account of the party was any evidence (available in public records, and already referred to in numerous published sources by the time) of the central importance of enslaved and free Black labor in creating and sustaining both the Charleston and “Little Charleston” ways of life. One learns from Buncombe County slave deeds (again, only a single example) that in the early 1830s (before Henderson County

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<sup>37</sup> Rob Neufeld, “The Sandburg House Harbors Two Past Worlds,” *Asheville Citizen-Times*, Oct. 10, 2016, p. 3.

<sup>38</sup> Rob Neufeld, “Big Party in Flat Rock in 1836,” *Asheville Citizen-Times*, Sept. 25, 2017, p. A3. This observation seems justified despite the fact that Neufeld was working in a short-form journalistic format, rather than a book, scholarly article, or agency study. In either case, choices can (and have to) be made.

<sup>39</sup> On Cahokia, “Cahokia Mounds,” see <https://cahokiamounds.org/>, accessed July 5, 2020; on Kituwa, see *We’re Still Here: Preserving the Cherokee Heritage Site Kituwah*, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xQnP0kX-KIAE>.



was formed) Charles Baring had bought slaves in the county: a “mullato [sic] man” Ralph, his wife Lucy and her child Ellick; “negro boy” Lark; Philis, Eveline and Sam; Jacob and Maria; and Frank. Presumably they all worked at Mountain Lodge.<sup>40</sup>

The still-dominant popular late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century narrative, carrying its cherished (and never adequately interrogated) “Lost Cause” valence, was in any case that, on the one hand, the grand, annually-toured houses (and the culture embodied within them—and lovingly resurrected periodically by new owners’ renovation efforts) would and should go on and on. A gnawing fear, at the same time, was that it would (and could) not. Whether its “Lost Cause” valence would, could, or should was another (tightly linked) matter.

This at once comforting and discomfiting dialectic was evident in Robert Cuthbert’s *Flat Rock of the Old Time* (2016). Lamenting the “disruption of civic society” in Flat Rock during the Civil War, he noted approvingly that Lowcountry elites returned soon thereafter, revitalizing the old order, and that “a period of extended tranquility settled in, lasting some four decades.” After 1900, however, tourists and automobiles flooded in, and “the peaceful rural life that defined old Flat Rock came to an end.” A brief post–World War I “sense of relief and optimism took hold of the county’s imagination” in the ‘twenties, but still “the older generation of Flat Rock’s summer crowd was passing . . . .” Land values spiked upward as “new people, new ideas and new money [flooded in] . . . , and old Flat Rock itself was fading away.” Some Lowcountry elites remained, but “the close-knit neighborhoods of cousins—when porch visits and trips to the post office occupied much of the days’ activities—would not survive.”<sup>41</sup>

Clearly the history of the Cuthbert family in both the Lowcountry and Flat Rock, hence Robert Cuthbert’s feelings about it and his personal investment in the old order, ran deep (as it had, and still did, among his Flat Rock neighbors whose presence he so carefully mapped).

Dusinberre, in his monumental turn-of-the-century *Them Dark Days: Slavery in the American Rice Swamps* (2000), found Cuthberts among the Allstons, Chisholms, Elliotts, Heywards, Kings, Manigaults, Rhettts and other wealthy rice planting families whom Governor Allston encountered while reviewing troops in the late 1850s. Unfortunately, the governor rather haughtily dismissed the family as “the young Cuthberts who have run through everything that was left to them and are now loafers sponging on anybody who will suffer them” (397).

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<sup>40</sup> Buncombe County Register of Deeds, Slave Deeds, Bk 16/Pg. 374, Bk 16/Pg. 375, Bk 16/P383, Bk 19/P99. A search for Baring on the South Carolina Archives and History site shows the Barings to have been trading (at least since 1803) in large acreages and numbers of slaves. One entry preserves an 1825 tax return for 3,242 acres and 422 slaves; see <http://www.archivesindex.sc.gov/>, accessed Sept. 25, 2018.

<sup>41</sup> Cuthbert, *Flat Rock of the Old Time*, 8–9. On Cuthbert’s map of Flat Rock Properties and Owners, following 96, the house is #39 (Woodedge). Multiple index entries on the family appear (see esp. 54, 63, 74).

More soberly, Brewster had noted that the Cuthberts were one of the “prominent planter families” who around the turn of the nineteenth century were building townhouses in Beaufort—an early developmental node in the longwave process that eventually established its terminal node in the western Carolina mountains. There, Patton commented that in 1859 (around the time of the Governor’s comment) the Cuthberts bought a house on Glassy Mountain, near the Memmingers’ Rock Hill.<sup>42</sup>

Popular and scholarly discourses are one thing; CARL, NR, and National Historic Landmark (1995) documents and studies are another. Though related and obligated toward one another in various specified respects, they have lacked clear and significant controlling influence over one another.

A rather loose (thus permissive) Venn-diagram relationship has allowed the NR/ NHL/ CARL narratives to ride along (mostly) separately, with CARL locating its operational mandates primarily within its establishing legislation.

Ultimately, however, over its half-century of existence, CARL has become (less self-critically than one might have hoped) engaged with and *embedded in* the golden-hazed (to borrow Stephanie Yuhl’s term) Flat Rock narrative and its established social/cultural/political order. At the same time, CARL has chosen to focus on the Sandburg story, which in truth has very little to do with Flat Rock except for its (virtually accidental, one is tempted to say) physical location there. Meanwhile, CARL has attended only sporadically to tectonic shifts and movements within the larger world, and even less to the burgeoning scholarship that illuminates them.

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<sup>42</sup> Dusinberre, *Them Dark Days*, 397; Brewster, *Summer Migrations*, 15; Patton, *Story of Henderson County*, 212.



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# APPENDIX 1

## Pre-Sandburg History in Prior CARL and National Register Studies: List, Annotations, and Analysis

**A**s one seeks details about the pre-Sandburg history of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, many are listed and discussed in CARL and National Register studies.

P. L. 90-592 Carl Sandburg Home NHS Authorizing Legislation (90th Congress, HR 13099, October 17, 1968) designated

a 242-acre Flat Rock site as comprising the property and improvements . . . where Carl Sandburg lived and worked during the last twenty years of his life . . . for establishment of the Carl Sandburg National Historic Site.

The legislation did not mention prior owners, or any other detail that might have acknowledged a longer historical period.<sup>1</sup>

Carefully reviewed and considered, the CARL and National Register sources yield names of individuals, highlight key historical moments and turns, and reveal previously unremarked connections.

This Appendix assesses the most useful of these pre-CARL materials and National Register studies, and highlights areas of special usefulness. Materials especially relevant to Black history are the subject of Appendix 2.

Our examination proceeds in chronological order, so that the data will be optimally sequenced and useful to CARL staff, now and in the future.

Four questions prove especially useful:

1. How much data that bears upon the central focus of this present HRS, and of what sorts, is available in existing documents?
2. What can be said on the basis of those documents concerning the history of Rock Hill/Connemara from the 1830s to the arrival of the Sandburgs in 1945?
3. How might they help guide future research and planning?
4. What can be said about the historic challenges of moving from the initial Congressional designation of the site as the “Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site” toward a more historically inclusive and defensible framing?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-82/pdf/STATUTE-82-Pg1154.pdf>

Our examination proceeds in chronological order, so that the data will be optimally sequenced and useful to CARL staff, now and in the future.

## 1969

### (March 11): National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings, Connemara, Carl Sandburg Home, Index No. 20

This appears to be the first National Register-related document on the CARL site. It appeared about five months after authorization of the site, and three years after President Johnson signed the National Historic Preservation Act (October 15, 1966), from which the National Register emerged.

This document refers several times to the pre-Sandburg history of the site, and to Sandburg's social justice involvements and writings, either of which might have been taken to argue for a longer interpretive time frame—minimally, to the time of Sandburg's first social justice involvement in 1907, when he joined the Social Democratic Party of Wisconsin, or more appropriately, to the Memminger period:

- 23: “The Sandburg home, built in 1838 by Christopher G. Memminger . . .”
- 24: The house is “a graceful example of Southern rural architecture of the mid-19th century . . . [which] had been constructed by Christopher G. Memminger, who later served as the Secretary of the Treasury for the Confederacy, Ellington [sic; Ellison] Adger Smyth, changed it to ‘Connemara’ . . . .”
- 25: “[On] the ground floor [of Sandburg's library collection] were novels, essays, biographies, and works on labor and trade unionism.”
- 25: Sandburg “gave names to physical features he encountered” on his walks. “The path around Little Glassy Mountain became Memminger Trail.”
- 27: An only marginally readable list of references includes no items specifically related to the site's pre-Sandburg period. A few references to inquiries addressed to libraries and historical societies are included but contain no detail.

These pages, constituting what may be the earliest post-authorization document, suggest that National Survey personnel were aware of the site's pre-Sandburg history, as was Sandburg himself.

1971

## Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Master Plan

This handsomely produced document is infused with the *American* political, cultural, and social emphasis of NPS's Division of International Affairs (1961); Interior Secretary Stewart Udall, NPS Directors Conrad Wirth and George B. Hartzog's predispositions about the national and international thematics of NPS; central emphases of the Mission 66 endeavor; and the public discourse and news media coverage concerning Sandburg's death in 1967. Congruently, the Plan quotes President Johnson's "He *was* America" comment.

The characterization of Sandburg (in the Significance of the Area section and elsewhere) as "one of America's most versatile writers" who wrote about "America's epic traditions" and fashioned his finest poems about "the lusty industrial growth of the Nation" is central to the Master Plan. This language silences more than it reveals and focuses. Indeed, the "lusty industrial growth" phrase might have been questioned by Sandburg himself, given his early critical investigation of workers' lives, his admiration for Eugene Debs and the IWW, and his membership in the Wisconsin Workers Party.<sup>2</sup>

Although the Americanist (not to say nationalistic) perspective and discourse were pervasive within popular understanding of Sandburg, to its credit the Master Plan surfaces the politically, socially and culturally critical side of Sandburg and his work.

The Biographical Data statement (6-7) is quite forthcoming in this regard. In the newspaper work of his post-Lombard College years, it says, Sandburg

became involved in the midwest reform movement, working as organizer in the Social Democratic Party, as secretary to the Socialist Mayor of Milwaukee, and as labor reporter on the Milwaukee Leader. . . . His thoroughly agrarian [writing reflects] . . . his sympathy with the common man, his democracy and sense of brotherhood. His subject was the pioneer, the cowboy, the lumberjack, the railroad work gang, the steamboat crew, the prairie farmer, those who toil and struggle to keep alive.

These strains are not the uncritically monolithic ones of "lusty industrial growth," but rather those of the critical edge unmistakable in Whitman and Twain, the songs and cartoons of Joe Hill, and the photography of Lewis Hine and Jacob Riis.

Thus one feels encouraged several pages later to encounter a short section (12-13) on Christopher G. Memminger. Based mainly, it appears, on a few selected details from the (rather fawning and hagiographic) Capers biography of 1893, the Plan refers to Memminger's post-Civil War correspondence with Robert E. Lee and other wartime acquaintances. One letter to President Andrew Johnson says

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<sup>2</sup> For abundant detail and discussion on this point, see Philip Yanella, *The Other Carl Sandburg* (Jackson MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1996).

outline[s] the problems of the South as a result of the emancipation of the Negro and his insistence on an educational program for former slaves shows a great insight into the problems of the times.<sup>3</sup>

“Finally in January 1867,” the Plan concludes, “Christopher Memminger received a full pardon from the United States and had his Charleston property restored to him. The Memmingers returned to Charleston . . .

And there the matter rests, with Memminger (it seems fair to conclude) at least partly vindicated with regard to some central features of his lifelong commitments. This would seem to cast a positive glow around Memminger’s life (hence the Memminger period of the Flat Rock story).

The Plan turns immediately thereafter to The Physical Resource—“significant as the home of the Sandburg family from 1945 to 1969,” where the Main House stands not as an example of the Charleston diaspora or a mostly slave-built antebellum structure, but “as a graceful example of rural architecture of the early 19th century.”

Whatever prior published resources or other documents say or do not say with regard to the Memminger-Smyth period, substantial evidence was present, on the ground, in the form of the period buildings. Even the Capers biography itself limned the Charleston diaspora, Flat Rock and western North Carolina, and Memminger’s work on his “inviting country seat” after he left his position as Treasurer of the Confederate States:

Mr. Memminger retired to his inviting country seat at Flat Rock, North Carolina, to enjoy a release from the official cares that had long burdened his mind . . . [He] had been among the first of the seaboard gentlemen to perceive the . . . attractiveness of the Flat Rock region of western North Carolina.

There was much to attract him among the grand mountains . . . of this section, and here, with Judge King, of Charleston, he was among the pioneers who as far back as 1835 or 1840 began the establishment of summer homes, as places of refuge from the heat and malaria of the sea coast. Here he improved Rock Hill and . . . for many years it became his loved mountain home.

To its natural attractions he had added year after year the elegant adornments of a cultivated taste, until Rock Hill became an estate . . . [which] must be seen by the appreciative to be enjoyed in all of the loveliness of its many attractive features.

Its lake of pure water, its green sward, its beautiful hills and grand forest trees, among which graveled walks and carriage drives led up to the seat of a noble hospitality, to a home where all that a refined taste and a cultured mind could gather of adornment or secure of comfort. Such was Rock Hill . . . (370-371)

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<sup>3</sup> Letter of September 4, 1865 to President Andrew Johnson, from Flat Rock, quoted from Capers, *The Life and Times of C. G. Memminger* (1893), p. 365, but not cited. The Master Plan contains neither footnotes nor references.

The point here, in sum, is that—fragmentary as it was—sufficient evidence was available at this early juncture to have justified taking a broader interpretive path than the Sandburg 1945–1967 one. As to why that choice was not made, the Plan itself offers only this:

The kind of life this literary giant and his family preferred seems to have been tailored for Connemara. . . . Besides the primary theme of Carl Sandburg, his accomplishments and way of life, the visitor should also have an opportunity to make his own decision as to Sandburg’s greatness. (31)

But how was the visitor to (freely) make such a judgment, given that Sandburg was presented unequivocally as “a literary giant”? Moreover, “The story of Christopher Memminger and the site, and [of] the Flat Rock community” was judged to be “a theme of secondary interpretive value” not congruent with the establishing legislation.

What seems reasonably clear is that, had such a ranking not been made, CARL would from then on have had a promising *dialectical* option: to use Sandburg’s record of critical, oppositional politics to address *both* the Sandburg era *and* the issue of race and the African American presence at the site from the 1830s onward.

## 1972

### **Svejda, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: *Historical Data on the Main House, Garage, and Swedish House*<sup>4</sup>**

This document’s statement of significance is interesting in that it attempts to account for the Sandburg-only focus of the site, despite its having had prior owners during a long history. “The site,” it says, “is closely related with the history of four prominent men” [Memminger, Gregg, Smyth, and Sandburg]. But then it hedges on this fact:

While the first three occupied a prominent role in the historical, political, economic, social and military development of South and North Carolina in general and the South in particular, Carl Sandburg . . . achieved prominence nationally and internationally as a poet, writer, historian and social thinker.

Brief biographical statements on the men follow, with Memminger’s quite extended statement drawn almost completely from Capers’s 1893 biography, augmented for the Flat Rock years from other popular pamphlets.

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<sup>4</sup> The title of this document as given on the title page is Historic Structure Report, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site. It was provided by CARL staff, and is dated April 28, 1972. Some pages are missing, but a partial Table of Contents shows that it should include 90+ pages. Pages 1-37 deal with the main house, pp. 38-41 with the Garage and Swedish House pp. 42-50 with “Historical Resources of the park.” Pages 51-89 consisted of appendices. The available copy consisted mainly of sequences of odd- or even-numbered pages.



**1973**  
**National Register of Historic Places, Nomination Form:**  
**Flat Rock Historic District**

This is an example of a large number of National Register-related documents produced in relation to CARL over several decades that bear upon the issues engaged in this present study.<sup>5</sup>

Among the items that bear upon the purposes of this current HRS is the Statement of Significance:

The Flat Rock Historic District is . . . dotted with well-kept estates centering on the ambitious summer houses of the prominent Charlestonians who began to settle there in the early nineteenth century. Vital to the significance of Flat Rock is the long association with . . . politically and socially notable families, names seldom rivalled in the Carolinas. . . .

There [is] . . . a major collection of country estates which represent a unique segment of Southern social history . . . a living record of the scale and quality of of life led by the affluent of the Carolinas . . . .

The significance of Flat Rock . . . lies not only in the handsome estates and well-preserved ambience of the area, but also in the long associations with some of the most outstanding individuals and families, primarily Charlestonians, who settled or summered there. Extensive information about the buildings and their owners has been amassed by local historians . . . .

A brief list of Major Bibliographical References includes the Flat Rock Historical Association, the Buncombe County Register of Deeds, and deeds and wills in the North Carolina Division of Archives and History. From these records and perhaps others, dozens of individuals, families and early 19th century houses are mentioned and briefly discussed. The earliest land purchase date is Peter Summey's Flat Rock Mill property of December 1830.

Curiously, having asserted the broad historical significance for Flat Rock quoted above, the Nomination then says that "The Connemara estate . . . is significant as the home of the Sandburg family from 1945 to 1967 . . ." Staying almost wholly within the Sandburg frame, it discusses 32 buildings which, it says, are "important to the pattern of living

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<sup>5</sup> National Register of Historic Places Inventory -- Nomination Form: Flat Rock Historic District, (1973). A brief precis of this document is available in Clay Griffith, Flat Rock Historic District Boundary Increase, Boundary Decrease, and Additional Documentation (National Register, 2015), 7/2. We use this document as one example among the many of the type that exist for CARL, reaching over its half-century history. See National Register of Historic Places Complete Set.pdf, which interleaves (by date and/or other criteria) 216 pages of these documents of various types and dates. To locate, extract, evaluate and map all of those documents (which include amendments, "additional documentation" items, and the like) with regard to the pre-Sandburg period is not possible within the resources allocated to this present study.

established by the [Sandburg] family. The grounds are characterized as “admirably suited to the tastes and needs of the Sandburg family,” preserving “favorite walks and viewpoints.” (Item 7, p. 1)

The Main House (HS 1) “was built by Charles Gustavus Memminger . . . on land purchased from Charles Baring in 1838 . . . and remained in his possession until his death in 1888,” but blacks (enslaved or free) are absent from the discussion. The Garage (HS 2), it says, was “originally used as a kitchen.” The Swedish House (HS 3), dated to c. 1838, is “Now a storage area for written materials.” A “white frame house” (HS 5; Wash House), it says, was “originally used as a residence and/or kitchen . . . [but used] by the Sandburgs as chicken house and later as a wash house.” When similar language was used in subsequent reports, “originally” was frequently taken to mean (*slaves* or *built with slave labor*).

Item 7 says “the Connemara estate . . . is significant as the home of the Sandburg family from 1945 to 1967 . . . .” It goes on to describe (at some length) the exteriors and interiors of five buildings (Main, Garage, Swedish House, Tenant House, Wash House), some features of the grounds, and the goat farm. It dates the Swedish House (c. 1838), the name bestowed upon it by the Sandburgs, but does not engage with the Memminger or Smyth periods.

1977

### Historic Resources Management Plan

This is also purely physical and technical analysis of the structures. The structures and some of their features are sometimes denominated as “historical,” but there is no historical analysis as such. It is thus not useful for the purposes of this present HRS.

1981

### Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: *Historic Structure Report: Front Lake and Dam, Side Lake and Dam, Pond Bridge, and Duck Cage*

Coming as it does after the detailed documents of the earlier 1970s (the CARL Master Plan of 1971, Svejda’s Main House study of 1972, the National Register nomination for Flat Rock of 1973), this meticulously detailed report nevertheless adds to the useful historical data found in earlier reports, as well as a few additional archival sources.

Further brief evaluation of this HSR with regard to Black history can be found in Appendix 2.

1984

**Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site:**  
*Historic Furnishing Report, Main House and Swedish House*

Although this report focuses on the Sandburg period, it refers to both Memminger and Smyth within discussions of prior room uses. About the Sandburg Book Room it says, When Connemara was the Smyth summer home, and perhaps in the Memminger years as well, this room served as a pantry where food brought from the separate kitchen building was readied for serving in the dining room . . . . These arrangements were changed in the 1924 remodeling which made Connemara a year-round residence for the Smyth family.<sup>6</sup>

These references appear to have been based upon primary (but unnamed) documents and some interviews (but whether they are among those included in the Bibliography is not clear). There is no consideration of expanding the period of significance (or interpretation) to include the Memminger and Smyth periods.

1993

**Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site:**  
*Cultural Landscape Report*<sup>7</sup>

Like some of the sources we have discussed above, this report contains information that could well have justified extending the CARL site's period of focus back to the Memminger era. Indeed, it provides a brief sketch of the Memminger acquisition, and transfers of the site to Gregg, Smyth, and later to the Sandburgs:

Christopher G. Memminger, Secretary of the Treasury for the Confederate States of America, acquired the property and built the residence by 1838. He retired there in summers to escape the heat of his Charleston home. In 1888, the estate was sold to Colonel William Gregg, who apparently never occupied the house. By 1900, the property changed hands again. Ellyson Adger Smyth, a wealthy textile businessman, bought the estate and changed the farm's name to Connemara.<sup>(7)</sup>

Two pages later comes a puzzling recommendation:

Attempts to restore the present Connemara landscape to its historic period have been based upon available documentation. Because much of this documentation provides information during the later period, it is recommended that the "Late Period" of 1960-67 [sic] be designated the historic period.<sup>(9)</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Main House and Swedish House ... Historic Furnishing Report, p. 73.

<sup>7</sup> Susan Hart (1993), <https://www.nps.gov/carl/learn/historyculture/upload/CARL-Cultural-Landscape-Report.pdf>, accessed Nov. 14, 2017.

Given the 1945–1967 available in other sources, this recommendation appears odd. All of the many subsequent uses of “historic” refer to the Sandburg period (e.g., “historic entrance” on p. 9). Why both the preceding 122 years (including Sandburg’s own first 15 years) were excluded—in the presence of easily available evidence—is not addressed. In any case, since both the 1971 Master Plan and the 1973 National Register nomination contradict the assertion that relevant evidence was not available, this assertion appears puzzling, unwise and unnecessary.

This omission is particularly surprising in view of the report’s list (16) of “Structures credited to Memminger at Rock Hill,” which include twelve structures—some no doubt built partly or wholly with slave labor—dating from 1838 to 1853. But searching the text for *slave*, *servant*, or *enslave*[d] is not productive. *Black* occurred only as modifier for the name of a bush, tree, etc.

The conclusion seems inescapable, therefore, that by at least the time of this report (1993), the 122 “missing” (or silenced) years of the site were known in considerable detail. Hence both the existing (1945–1967) “historic period” and the recommended shorter (1960–1967) designation contradicted known facts.

## 1995

### Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: (Additional Documentation) National Register Nomination

The “additional documentation” presented in this document is contained primarily in separately paged Section 7.<sup>8</sup> It “clarifies the periods and areas of significance for the properties listed and adds contributing historic structures and landscape features.”

It discusses Memminger and his initial development of the Rock Hill site: years of ownership (1838–1888) and “establishing boundaries and “principal spatial relationships and landscape features.” It then moves to Smyth’s ownership (1900–1942), during which he “expanded and formalized the use of the property as a Country Place Era estate,” building buildings, dams and ponds, walls, and other landscape features, and oversaw “a rigorous maintenance schedule for the grounds and employed a fulltime and seasonal staff.”

The NR Period of Significance statement is unequivocal about “The site plan developed by Memminger.” Although “enlarged and altered by subsequent residents,” the report said, that plan “remains largely intact throughout the estate’s period of significance, 1838–1967.”

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<sup>8</sup> National Register Nomination Form 1995 CARL4025.1.21\_AdditionalInformation.pdf, pp. 1-28. From CARL archive.

The Sandburg period is described circumspectly: “Despite their attraction to the physical beauty of Connemara established by Memminger and Smyth . . . the Sandburgs implemented changes in the landscape . . . that reflected their pragmatic approach to life.” In this context, *pragmatic* is at best a disingenuous euphemism.

Two reasons are offered for those changes: Mrs. Sandburg’s “goat operation” and sporadic maintenance and benign neglect of the ornamental landscape resulting from lack of help to maintain the carefully designed landscape or lack of interest in the formal landscape features established by Smyth and Memminger.

The “benign neglect” euphemism leads in turn to the ambivalent evaluation that the Sandburgs “*released*” most of the estate “from the rigors of regular maintenance and allowed some of Smyth’s creations to disintegrate.” Nevertheless, we are reassured, the family enjoyed spending solitary moments perched on the exposed granite outcroppings, hiking the trails built by Memminger and Smyth, and gazing at the Blue Ridge Mountains from the front porch of the main house. The designed estate as developed by Memminger and Smyth, although formalized, appealed to Paula Sandburg’s needs, and the landscape, in a more natural state, inspired Carl Sandburg’s imagination.

The cost of this (hardly benign, from the established NPS perspective on historic properties) neglect proved in the long term to be high, and even in the short (1945–1967) term, one would have difficulty showing that Sandburg’s imagination had previously required being surrounded by a bucolic and picturesque scene. Implying that it did was a sympathetic fallacy.

The report’s extended comparative discussion of the three eras focuses one issue more sharply than any previous CARL study: the difference between the National Register period of significance, and the one NPS used as the basis for site development and interpretation. Choosing the former rather than the latter could (and likely would) have led—a half-century earlier—to a discussion of African American presence at the site, since both relevant public documents (deeds, wills, land records) and some published sources were available at the time, as we have observed above.

Choosing the NPS’s short (1945–1967) period of significance rather than the long (1838–1967) National Register period could be argued to have proceeded from the administrative (Division of International Affairs / Mission 66 / Stewart Udall / NPS (and *construction*) of the then-popular Sandburg as its focus.

The significance section ((8/13-8/24; based upon prior CARL studies, some of the pre-1968 publications examined above, and standard published reference works on landscape design), provides a higher level of detail on the design and construction of the structures and landscape features. There is little detail on workers, Black or white, and no mention at all of enslaved people. “Memminger built,” it says,

several dependencies behind the house as guest quarters, servants quarters, and utility buildings. . . . Another house, later known as the tenant house and buck isolation quarters . . . may have served as temporary quarters for the Memminger family, their servants, or laborers.

*Servants, not slaves. Laborers, not slaves.*

### 1998: Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: *Archeological Overview and Assessment*<sup>9</sup>

This document, coming three years after the Cultural Landscape Report, is built upon extensive and meticulous research. It offers much that is useful for exploring both the issue of the Sandburg-only period of significance and the intended African American presence focus of this present HRS (the latter have been extracted for more detailed discussion in Appendix 2).

From the outset, the report is unequivocal about the relevant historical period: The property on which the park is located,” it said, has been occupied by three principal owners: “lawyer and political statesman” Christopher Memminger (29), “wealthy factory owner . . . “Captain” Ellison Adger Smyth (10), and . . . Carl Sandburg” Pushing the possible historical boundary back even further, the report noted artifact-documented occupation of the site probably by “settlers of Scotch-Irish descent . . . at, or near, the beginning of the nineteenth century” (71) (i.e., prior to the arrival of the earliest elite white Charlestonians in the mid-1820s).

Memminger himself it situated a little more precisely than any previous report had ventured—by mentioning not that he had owned slaves, but that he was “a member of the legislature” when it passed the Ordinance of Secession (and chaired the committee that drafted the Provisional Constitution). Because he had resigned as Treasury Secretary before the war ended, he “escaped imprisonment” (31).

About Smyth the report also said that

Before and during the Civil War, he was a proponent of using poor white tenant class workers instead of slaves as laborers at his Graniteville Mill in South Carolina, which was built around 1845. Although his choice of a labor force was criticized, his mill was successful. (31-32)

This is by no means all that could (and should) have been said about the two men’s involvements in racial issues before, during and after the war, but it was more than had been said before.

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<sup>9</sup> Heather Pence, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Archeological Overview and Assessment (Tallahassee: Southeast Archeological Center, National Park Service, 1998).



2002 [?]  
**Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site:**  
*Draft General Management Plan and  
Environmental Impact Statement*<sup>10</sup>

Four years after the *Archaeological Overview and Assessment* was completed, this study document restated and reaffirmed the Sandburg-period interpretive limitation in its Mission, Purpose and Significance statements in the Executive Summary and a more complete statement later:

Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site is dedicated to preserving the legacy of Carl Sandburg and communicating the stories of his works, life, and significance as an American poet, writer, historian, biographer of Abraham Lincoln, and social activist. The Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site preserves and interprets the farm, Connemara, where Sandburg and his family lived for the last 22 years of his life (1945–1967) (3, 20-21, 71).

Including even the vague “social activist” strain within the stories to be communicated could have allowed some social/cultural/political latitude within the interpretive thematics, but whether such interpretation actually emerged, we do not know.

**Purpose Statement:** The purpose of Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site is: to carry on the legacy of Carl Sandburg’s works and life . . . through preservation, interpretation, education, and inspiration. . . . (3)

**Significance Statement:** Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site is significant because

[it] is where one of America’s most versatile and recognized writers completed a literary career that captured and recorded America’s traditions, struggles, and dreams . . . . Sandburg relentlessly advocated for social justice . . . . The [site’s features] embody the presence of Carl Sandburg more vividly than any other place he lived. The museum collection . . . provides a unique and rare perspective of this American author’s lifestyle, philosophy, intellectual pursuits, and life experiences (20).

Taken together, these three statements appear to foreclose the possibility of more historically inclusive development of the site. From them, four “Alternative Plans” emerged (3): Sandburg Center, Paths of Discovery, Connemara Lifestyle, and No Action. Of these, the Sandburg Center alternative was “the proposed action, the NPS preferred alternative and the environmentally preferred alternative” (4).

The only mention of the site’s pre-Sandburg history occurs 15 pages in:

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<sup>10</sup> This draft is undated. Internal evidence suggests that 2002 is likely.

The estate had . . . an ironic history for the biographer of Abraham Lincoln - for Christopher Memminger, who built the main house around 1838, had served from 1861 to 1864 as Secretary of the Confederate Treasury. Upon the death of Memminger, the estate was sold to Colonel William Gregg, who apparently never occupied the house. In 1900, textile tycoon Captain Ellison Smyth purchased the estate and renamed it Connemara . . . Smyth's heirs sold it to the Sandburgs in 1945. (15)

The choice of *textile tycoon* echoes at least vaguely the Gilded Age of the Robber Barons.

Curiously, this 107-year pre-Sandburg history (1838–1945) did not turn up in the “Alternative Past” list.

This draft, in-process document invites one to ask whether the establishing legislation or other laws and NPS policy would have allowed moving outside the Sandburg Center alternative. The document's Special Mandates, Law, and Policies discussion (21-24) opens by saying that “the establishing legislation, as amended . . . does not provide specific direction for *managing* the site,” but that appears to mean *administrative* (broadly construed), rather than interpretive, management.

In any case, comments “appropriately addressed by a GMP” (24) assembled during scoping are sufficiently ambiguous to permit a variety of interpretations. Thus, they offer little serviceable guidance about the vexing issues of interpretive scope and focus faced by CARL at the time.

## 2003 Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement<sup>11</sup>

This document offers evidence that its writers and reviewers were aware of at least the main outlines of the history of the site since 1838. That knowledge did not, however, lead them to extend the period of interpretation.

The study's Statement of Mission, Significance Statements, and Alternative Plans are essentially unchanged from the Draft GMP of 2002. In that regard, the entire focus remains upon Carl Sandburg and his career—actually his post-1940 career. A single phrase in the Mission Statement (3) referring to his work as “social activist” leaves open the possibility of extending the period of interpretation at least back to 1902, when his work as a journalist—focusing on labor and other social issues—began. But that opening is not

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<sup>11</sup> General Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement for Carl Sandburg Home, National Historic Site North Carolina: Record of Decision. [https://www.nps.gov/carl/learn/management/upload/gmp\\_small%202.pdf](https://www.nps.gov/carl/learn/management/upload/gmp_small%202.pdf). Provided by CARL. Quotations and citations are from the published final [paged] document.

pursued further except to declare (13) that NPS “is dedicated to communicating the stories of Carl Sandburg,” including “his significance as . . . [a] social activist.” The term does not appear thereafter except on page 26, as noted below.

There are brief mentions of Memminger (as Secretary of the Confederate Treasury), Gregg and Smyth (“textile tycoon” is retained from the Draft plan; 16-17)—possibly inviting the phrase’s negative valences that might buffer moves toward including Smyth.

In a list of 21 “Comments more appropriately addressed by . . . a Comprehensive Interpretive Plan” (26), two (nos. 7 and 10) urge that CARL “Tell the whole story of the site - the Memminger and Smyth stories are important too” and provide “More programs on Carl Sandburg as a social activist.” Specific sources for list items are not given, but the Comment Summary (in *History of Public Involvement*, 112ff.) offers some possibilities, and states that the Sandburg Center alternative gained “broad public support.”

Three alternative concepts and a “no-action” alternative are presented . . . Sandburg Center alternative, Paths of Discovery alternative, and Connemara Lifestyle alternative (29). The Sandburg Center alternative was the proposed action because it was the NPS preferred alternative, and was also the environmentally preferred alternative.

The Sandburg Center alternative is defined as “a national, if not worldwide, focal point for interpretation and research about Carl Sandburg,” with the Main House and grounds would “remain the centerpiece of the interpretive program at Connemara” .

Somewhat defensively, it might appear, the study adds that

The intent of this concept is not to divert attention from the historic significance of these features but, rather, to enhance a visitor’s understanding of Carl Sandburg by providing access to more in-depth information about his works and life. (43)

The phrase “*the* historic significance” is somewhat ambiguous. Does it mean the *pre-Sandburg* significance, or that of the Sandburg period? If the latter, the explanation is redundant, given the repeated assertions—both earlier and later in the study—that the site is exclusively about Sandburg and his career.

In any case, “There are over 50 historic structures located within the park. Many of them were used from the Memminger period through the Sandburg’s ownership of the estate” (67). With regard to possible (and a few then known) archeological resources, this document notes briefly that “A comprehensive archeological investigation . . . has not been

undertaken,” and says that “there is a strong probability that . . . prehistoric and historic resources may exist . . . .” The latter, it says, “are likely to . . . [date] from circa 1807 to 1830, before Memminger owned the property.”<sup>12</sup>

The terms *slave*, *enslaved*, or *servant* do not appear in the study. *Black* (with reference to persons) occurs once, as the percentage of Henderson County population at the time of the study (74). *Worker* appears only in reference to CARL volunteers. *Chauffeur* (which occurs with some frequency elsewhere) does not appear.

## 2005

### Jones, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: *Connemara Main House: Historic Structure Report*<sup>13</sup>

This broadly conceived and historically detailed study provides unprecedented data and analysis relevant to the purposes of this present HRS.

Relevant details -- and the insightful analyses based upon them -- bulk too large to specify here, but we offer a brief list of some aspects of the Main House HSR that are especially promising:

- Historical background of site and its owners
  - 5-8: Flat Rock history and the Charleston diaspora
  - 8-17, 50-: Memminger and Rock Hill
  - 7, 17-23, 35, 56: slaves, enslaved, slavery, “enslaved human beings”, “antislavery violence”; servants, caretakers, workers, and tenants
  - 20-26: Memminger biography
  - 26-28: the Greggs
  - 28-38, 85: Smyth family biography, from Irish ancestors through Charleston, Civil War, Ellison’s enlistment and action in a “Seed Corn” (under age) Regiment, relocation to mid-state Clarendon County, Rock Hill/Connemara, textile industry involvements and mill ownership (including Balfour in 1923)
- Chronology of Development and Use
  - 50-61: the Memmingers’ Rock Hill, including design and plan, contractors and craftsmen, employment of one slave
  - 63-66: the Gregg’s Rock Hill: 1890s exterior and interior alterations to house and site; permanent residency, 1925ff

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<sup>12</sup> Appendix 2 of the (Pence 1998) study includes multiple tables detailing archeological objects recovered from the site from 1977 onward. Map in Figure 3-a (p. 68) shows (and names) several of the Memminger-era buildings. Numerous other references, falling within the study’s environmental purview, cite Memminger Creek as an important landscape feature. Quite unaccountably, this brief and misleading statement is followed by a source reference to (Pence 1998), the detailed Archaeological Overview and Assessment already discussed above.

<sup>13</sup> Tommy Jones and Lynn White Savage, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site - Connemara Main House - Historic Structure Report ,<https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2191736>, accessed July 8, 2017.

- 66-72: the Smyths' Connemara; early alterations and additions
- 72-88: The Sandburgs' Connemara: 3-year vacancy after Smyth's death (1942); extensive alterations
- Connemara Timeline, 1836–2002 [table]
  - 90-91: construction of buildings, local history, property transfers, contractors and employees
- Interviews
  - 191: four oral interviews, Frank Ballard (son of Smyth's farm manager), Emily Jane Ballard (widow of Smyth's farm manager Ulysses Ballard), James Fisher (Smyth's butler and valet)

## 2005

### Jones, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: *Swedish House - Historic Structure Report*<sup>14</sup>

This report cautions at the outset that

Archival research for this project has been limited, and additional research in Memminger's account book, the Federal census and other sources would no doubt add many useful details to the chronology of the building's evolution and could support a broader interpretation of the site (1).

Notwithstanding this modest cautionary note, the report is in fact based partially upon primary source research and offers detailed discussions of some of the historical foci crucial to this current HRS--covering the Memminger, Gregg, and Smyth periods.

The report's most useful materials for our purposes are its List of Figures (ix-xi), (which includes numerous photographs) and Management Summary, Historical Background and Context, and the beginning of Chronology of Development and Use.

Especially detailed information on the Black presence appears in "The Help: Overseers and Hired Hands, Slaves and Servants" (19-25). Some of this information occurs in connection with the construction and/or use of particular structures, and some is attached to photographs.

These and other details are elaborated in Appendix 2, and will figure importantly in Chapter 7: Blacks and "Little Charleston of the Mountains": Before the War, and Chapter 8: Blacks After the War.

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<sup>14</sup> 2005\_HSRSwedishHouse.pdf. CARL archive.

2007  
Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site:  
*First Annual Centennial Strategy*<sup>15</sup>

Coming as it does so soon after the Tommy Jones Connemara Main House and Swedish House HSRs (both 2005), this brief document is disappointing with regard to the strictly-Sandburg period of significance choice, and it does not touch upon the African American presence issue.

Instead it turns to the 2003 General Management Plan (already discussed above as taking the Memminger and Smyth periods into account and suggesting their possible interpretive importance).

Nevertheless, the document's Vision Statement is unequivocal about the Sandburg focus, and globally ambitious:

The Park has a vision to increase national awareness of Carl Sandburg's contributions to American literature and culture, and to continue to expand the education and preservation work already in progress. The park will serve as a national, if not worldwide, focal point for interpretation and research about Carl Sandburg.

Oddly, however, having reasserted the Sandburg *historical* boundary, the Stewardship section of the document responds to NPS's stated requirement to "Assure that no compelling chapter in the American heritage experience remains untold and that strategically important landscapes are acquired, as authorized by Congress," by saying that (as mentioned in the GMP) acquiring 110 acres of additional *land* needs to be authorized to preserve the historic landscape that *the Sandburg family* enjoyed and were inspired by while they lived at the site." The logic appears to be that anything pre-Sandburg is not "strategically important."

Thus the importance of this document for the present HRS is only that it documents another moment at which the Memminger/Smyth expansion could have been considered, but was not.

Fortunately, however, a more substantial document from the same year took the historical boundary expansion possibility more seriously.

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<sup>15</sup> <http://npshistory.com/publications/future-americas-parks-2007/centennial-strategies/carl.pdf>, accessed January 5, 2018.



## 2007

### **Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Boundary Revision Act of 2007 (H.R. 1100; May 17, 2007)<sup>16</sup>**

This legislation’s opening background statement (p. 2) reasserts the established rationale for CARL:

Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site is dedicated to preserving the legacy of Carl Sandburg and communicating the stories of his works, life and significance as an American poet, writer, and historian. The Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site preserves and interprets the farm, Connemara, where Sandburg and his family lived for the last 22 years of his life (1945–1967).

This legislation was authorized after an acrimonious argument between its sponsors and its opponents, who called it “an egregious example of land-grabbing legislation” (p. 7). It added 115 acres to the original acreage, as recommended by CARL’s General Management Plan of 2003, which “identified and evaluated boundary adjustments that may be necessary or desirable in order to carry out the purposes of the historic site.” The GMP, as discussed above, proffered a Statement of Mission tightly focused on Sandburg.

## 2007

### **Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: *Chicken House/Wash House - Historic Structure Report*<sup>17</sup>**

This superbly executed HSR contains detailed information and narrative on the Memminger and Smyth periods, supporting their importance for determining a broad definition of the chronology of the site—including Black history. The latter appears in Appendix 2.

- 1.A.2: References to, and quotation from, Memminger’s (now apparently lost) “published journal entries” concerning his 1836 purchase of “miserably barren” Flat Rock land from Charles Baring.<sup>18</sup>
- Construction details on Rock Hill and other structures, taken from Memminger’s ledger (in the Southern Historical Collection at UNC-Chapel Hill), including the names of a hired carpenter and the project architect.

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CRPT-110hrpt157/pdf/CRPT-110hrpt157.pdf>, accessed January 12, 2018.

<sup>17</sup> Joseph K. Oppermann, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site - Chicken House/Wash House - Historic Structure Report. Oppermann (2007); 2007\_HSRChickenHouse.pdf, <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2191743>, accessed October 13, 2017.

<sup>18</sup> “Published journal entries” would appear to refer not to a separate publication of the journal, but to Sadie Patton’s inclusion of Memminger journal entries in *Flat Rock: Little Charleston of the Mountains* (1961), p. 11.

- 1.A.3: Details on the travel route (and times) from Charleston to Flat Rock, the summer season, and the coming of the railroad to Columbia and then to Spartanburg.
- 1.A. 4: Memminger’s political and business career.
- 1.A.5-1.A.6: William Gregg family ownership of Rock Hill. Detailed account of the Smyth family’s workers and construction projects at the site.
- Figures A-3 through A-5: Photographs of Smyth servants.
- 1.B.1: This section, based upon the ledger document Account of Expenditures for a/c of Buncombe Establishment and an otherwise unidentified “group of records from 1840-42” (from the ledger, or elsewhere?), contains a great deal of detailed data on workers.

2008

**CARL Visitor Services Division:**  
*Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Long Range  
Interpretive Plan*

This document is useful primarily as a recent source of confirmation of the durable commitment to maintaining the Sandburg-only domain and period (1945–1967) for interpretation.

Section 1: Goals provides ample evidence of this intent in its statement of Mission (“to carry on the legacy of Carl Sandburg’s works and life”), Management Goals (“preserve the site’s integrity and the appearance to that of the Sandburg occupancy from 1945 -1967” and “Promote Sandburg’s relevancy in the community and beyond”), and Visitor Experience Goals (“Forge an emotional or personal connection to Carl Sandburg, his family, and the Site”).

Section 1:15 concerning the Main House advocates reducing the bookstore inventory “to include only Sandburg titles, and works by his contemporaries, and create a space conducive to immersion in Sandburg’s writings.” The site is “significant because,” the Mission statement continues, it

is where one of America’s most versatile and recognized writers completed a literary career that captured and recorded America’s traditions, struggles, and dreams . . . Sandburg relentlessly advocated for social justice and his writings reflect a deep respect for people as individuals.

The succeeding theme statement on Sandburg’s life was a bit more specific. Sandburg, it says,

captured the American people’s struggles, dreams, and voice through the lecture platform, poetry, newspaper columns, novel, collection of folk music, children’s stories and biography of Abraham Lincoln.

In 2008, however, four decades after CARL was authorized, to emphasize that in newspaper columns and elsewhere he “advocated for social justice” seems gratuitous, given that nowhere in the CARL or NPS documents and studies we have examined is there any substantial explanation, detailing, or discussion of that aspect of Sandburg’s career or work.<sup>19</sup> Had there been, it would seem that pushing the interpretive domain back at least 1830 would have been implied. To the LRIP’s credit, a few bits of information in it suggest that such a direction was in fact contemplated, but the evidence was mixed.

The 41-item list of “Topics Associated with Carl Sandburg” includes “Political activist” and “Socialist,” and the 30-item one for Mrs. Sandburg includes “Political advocate,” “Women’s advocate,” and “Self-made scientist,” but many more of the terms from the latter list refer to conventional “women’s” roles: “Household manager,” “Mother,” “Humble,” “Gardening,” and the like.

Additionally, the Interpretive Program Description in Part II, which catalogs then-current interpretive use of buildings, includes no mention of the pre-Sandburg historical frame. A search of the entire document for *black*, *slave*, enslaved and related term produced nothing.

Later in the (unfortunately unpagged) LRIP, in II: Proposed Interpretive Program, three expansions of the historical frame are projected: “Develop and install exhibits on immigration story, Swedish immigration in particular, and Sandburg’s early years in Galesburg,” and for the Chicken House, “Tell ‘Three Families Story’ here: Memminger, Smythe, Sandburg, (and National Park Service).”

What was meant by “and National Park Service” can only be guessed (one might hope for a self-reflexive treatment of NPS’s role in choosing and promulgating the 1945–1967 frame, but the mystery remains). The Implementation Plan chart includes “Plan exhibits for the Swedish House” for 2009, and “Plan exhibits for the Chicken/Wash House” for 2010, but offers no detail.

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<sup>19</sup> The language of this statement appears to come from the Draft General Management Plan of 2002 (p. 3).

## 2014

### Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: *Barn Complex Historic Structure Report*<sup>20</sup>

This meticulously detailed (331 pp.) HSR contains both a historical perspective and a great deal of information relevant to this present HSR and to the history of blacks at the site.

At the outset, the brief Historical Overview in the Management Summary outlines the histories of the Memmingers, Greggs, and Smyths at the site. The three appear first in a concise “Historical Overview” section (pp. iii-iv), where they are described only by the usual honorific phrases: “prominent Charleston attorney and South Carolina statesman,” “from a noted and wealthy family,” and “national figure in the textile industry,” respectively.

The historic estate was the home of three persons nationally recognized in their fields of endeavor. Each constructed buildings and modified the landscape to suit tastes and needs, which together create the property now under the stewardship of the park. The designs are significant in their own right. However, it is recognized today for its association with the last of the three, Carl Sandburg (p. iv).

Although the study refrains from criticizing the Sandburg-only bracketing, it concludes its Statement of Significance cautiously:

[in] light of the recent research, consideration should be given to presenting to visitors the long history of the site as a barn complex. While today the barns accurately reflect the complex as fashioned by Sandburg, the earlier structures have a rich history to tell as well (p. vii).

Taking the report’s own suggestion seriously, the nine-page Historical Background and Context section (pp. 1-9), carries the description and analysis of the pre-Sandburg period further than any previous report.

The study continues thereafter to provide potentially useful information for any future alteration of the Sandburg-only limitation. The extensively researched Historical Background and Context chapter (pp. 1-20) begins with pre-19th century western North

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<sup>20</sup> Joseph K. Oppermann, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Barn Complex Historic Structure Report (2014); <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2225183>, accessed December 8, 2017. This HSR comprises ten buildings: Goat Barn: HS-16, LCS 005161, FMSS 69819  
Milk House: HS-16A, LCS 005162, FMSS 69690  
Horse Barn: HS-17, LCS 005163, FMSS 69863  
Silo: HS-20, LCS 005166 (s-o-w gives no FMSS)  
Shavings Shed: HS-19, LCS 005165, FMSS 69691  
Cow Shed: HS-18, LCS 005164, FMSS 69697  
Buck Kid Quarters: HS-15, LCS 005160, FMSS 69689  
Corn Crib: HS-14, LCS 005159, FMSS 69698  
Barn Garage: HS-13, LCS 005158, FMSS 69895  
Isolation Quarters, or Isolation Shed: HS-12, LCS 005157, FMSS 69817

Carolina and Lowcountry settlement, Flat Rock settlement and associated travel routes to the Charleston area, early Charleston summer people, enslaved and free workers on their estates (including some photographs), the lives of their owners (Memminger, Gregg, Smyth, and ultimately the Sandburgs), and the construction, modifications, maintenance, and rehabilitation of buildings.

## 2015

### Flat Rock Historic District, Boundary Increase, Boundary Decrease, and Additional Documentation (National Register)<sup>21</sup>

This is a detailed and skillfully written account of the origin and development of the Flat Rock area, beginning with the Cherokee Nation prior to 1785 and extending to 1964.<sup>22</sup> The two most pressing questions with regard to the focus of the present HRS are: How thoroughly does it engage with the pre-Sandburg history of the site? The answer is: a great deal, since it defines the Period of Significance as 1827–1964 (p. 7/3). That is the focus of this Appendix. The second, more specific, question is: how much detailed information on Black history is presented? That is the subject of Appendix 2.

Using the 1973 National Register document as a baseline, this document foregrounds the major alterations emerging from the 2015 boundary alterations: expansion of the period of significance backward to 1827 and forward to 1964, and consequent expansion of the geographical area and the addition of included properties.

The following items therefore merit particular attention:

- 7/2-3: Narrative Description of 1973 National Register Nomination and 2015 Update.
- 7/3: Period of Significance statement (the most expansive definition of the period we encountered in any document):
  - The period of significance begins with the construction, in 1827, of Charles Baring’s Mountain . . . , the first summer place established by Charleston family in Flat Rock for seasonal use.<sup>23</sup> Baring was soon followed by other wealthy Low Country families—King, Lowndes, Pinckney, Memminger, and others—seeking a retreat from the unhealthy conditions of their rice plantations . . . .

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<sup>21</sup> Clay Griffith, Flat Rock Historic District Boundary Increase, Boundary Decrease, and Additional Documentation, 2015; FlatRockHistoricDistNRNomination.pdf; from CARL archive.

<sup>22</sup> The Bibliography (8/418-423) and Interview list (8/423-427) for this study attest to intensive research and grounding in primary documents (e.g., C. G. Memminger Papers, Henderson County public records), published popular narratives (e.g., Sadie Smathers Patton, Louise Bailey and Edward R. and Allard Memminger), newspapers, standard reference works, institutional reports (e.g., National Register, Historic Flat Rock, Inc., North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources), and both early and recent scholarship (up to 2010), and prior CARL and NPS studies.

<sup>23</sup> The “Additional Documentation” section references “Representative black and white photographs of the property”: 9/431-432: List of 27 photographs, none useful for this HRS except possibly photo #1 of Connemara. No photographs are included in the PDF we worked from.

Through the nineteenth century, Flat Rock grew as a popular summer resort for a close-knit group of families from the Charleston area, but the Civil War brought about the end of their hegemony with the end of slave labor and the decline of rice production. . . . [In] the early twentieth century, visitors slowly began to make Flat Rock a new kind of summer destination with modern inns, clubs, camps, and retreat grounds intermingled with large, surviving estates. The period of significance ends in 1964, with the continued growth and development of Flat Rock as a popular summer destination and residential community.

- 7/5-7/375: Inventory List—Updates to Existing Historic District
  - This extensive list is (somewhat unfortunately for our purposes), not organized by date, although construction dates “have been determined as accurately as possible by correlating information from tax records, deed research, historic maps and plats, prior survey documentation, and published sources” (p. 7/5).
- 7/376-378: Summary Statement of Significance
  - Partly because of these alterations, this document offers extended discussions of local topography; access to the area from Indian trails onward (8/380-381); early inns and their owners (8/381); the Civil War and its aftermath (8/389-390); the coming of the railroad and its impact upon development (8/390-392); the contributions and involvements of year-round residents and families, many of them named (8/392-393); turn-of-the-century commercial tourism development, including social clubs and religious assembly grounds, lake clubs and youth camps (8/395-399), the demographic shift from Lowcountry to Florida clientele (8/399-400), and the World War II era (8/399-402).

## 2016

### **CARL Administrative History: “*The First National Historic Site Dedicated to a Poet*”: A History of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, 1968–2008<sup>24</sup>**

This detailed narrative administrative history is based upon primary, institutional, and secondary sources. Some administrative and programmatic details useful for the present study are included, most of them assembled from prior CARL studies already examined above.

Memminger and his activities at the site are mentioned briefly at the outset (3-4), and later mentions chart the persistent relegation of the Memminger period and its potential interpretive importance to the status of “minor theme”:

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<sup>24</sup> Comments and quotations that follow are based upon a pdf of the published administrative history of the site: “The First National Historic Site Dedicated to a Poet:” A History of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site (2016). We have encountered no reference to, date for, or explanation of, the change from Farm to Home in the site name.



- 10: In early August 1967, Flat Rock postmaster E. G. Quinn wrote to local Rep. Roy Taylor that the idea of the new park was “creat[ing] a buzz in the Flat Rock community,” and suggested that “the historical association with Christopher Memminger be added to the property’s significance.” But H.R. 13099, which Taylor introduced on September 25, 1967, called for “the establishment of the Carl Sandburg Farm National Historic Site . . . where Carl Sandburg lived and worked during the last twenty years of his life . . . .” Taylor forwarded Quinn’s letter to NPS Director Hartzog, and both NPS and Congressional consultations followed.
- 12: A short time later, Interior Secretary Stewart Udall’s formal letter of support referred to the site’s “rich history with Memminger,” but judged that “the furnishings and mementos” of the “Great American” Carl Sandburg were “most important of all.”

Hartzog dispatched Assistant Directors Theodor Swem and William Everhart to visit the site. Swem’s report suggested that the site’s historical significance should “include, besides Sandburg, other historical values, including Memminger’s occupancy.”

But the December draft Master Plan still referred to the Carl Sandburg *Farm* National Historic Site, thus prioritizing Mrs. Sandburg’s 22 years of goat farming (with which Carl Sandburg himself had little to do) over the Memmingers’, Greggs’, and Smyths’ preceding 123 multifaceted years there.

In late February, three Hartzog deputies met with Hendersonville residents . . . to discuss the park. The team praised the work of E. B. Quinn, Hendersonville postmaster . . . who had helped them gain local support from the residents.” They talked with local residents about several issues, and “noted that many . . . seemed disappointed that the

Memminger name was not included in any press releases . . . [and] advised that perhaps this area of significance should be included in the future . . . .” This recommendation was based, however, not for historical reasons, but “to garner more local support” for creating the park (p. 19).

On April 18, 1968, “the Advisory Board heard and approved the proposal to establish the Carl Sandburg *Farm* National Historic Site.” A memorandum from Secretary Udall claimed broadly that “the preservation and interpretation of the Sandburg farm and literary works and the continued management of the site which he loved as a living farm will lend great insight to future generations, through this one man’s example, into the whole chapter of American history experience by his generation” (pp. 20-21).

The authorizing legislation (P.L. 90-592) that passed Congress on October 27 named the site Carl Sandburg *Home* National Historic Site. When (between April and October) and by whom the Farm became the Home is not explained within the Administrative History.

McCleary and Butler did note that in February 1970 the Interpretive Prospectus “included sections on interpretive themes and objectives” and “identified Christopher Memminger’s relationship to the site as a minor interpretive theme.” It went on to say that

the Master Plan's "Management Objectives" would "interpret" Sandburg in his many roles—as poet, historian, and "bearer of American traditions." The park would be preserved "as a living farm to best reflect the life and times of Carl Sandburg" (pp. 34-35).

Subsequent references to Memminger and Smyth in the Administrative History are drawn mostly from several studies produced from the mid-1970s to 2005: Shepard and Walker's *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Archeological Investigations Conducted in November 1976*; Heather Pence's *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Archeological Overview and Assessment* (1998; see our evaluation of the latter above) and the meticulous Main House HSR of 2005 by Tommy Jones (see our evaluation above). The latter, McCleary and Butler note, corrected the "limited understanding of and, in fact, some significant misconceptions about the historic evolution of the house prior to the Sandburg era."



## APPENDIX 2

### Black History in CARL and National Register Studies: Annotated List and Evaluation

**A**s one seeks details concerning the African American presence at Rock Hill/Connemara from the 1830s onward, some prior CARL and National Register studies prove useful. They yield names of individuals, highlight key historical moments and processes, and reveal previously unremarked connections.

Like Appendix 1, this Appendix assesses these materials and highlights their areas of special usefulness. Our examination proceeds in chronological order, so that the data will be optimally sequenced and useful to CARL staff, now and in the future.

Three questions have proved especially useful in compiling this Appendix:

1. How much data, and of what sorts, which bears upon the the central focus of this present HRS, is available in existing documents?
2. What clues are there to guide further research and planning?
3. What can be said about the historiographical challenges of moving from the Congressional designation of the site as the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site toward a more historically inclusive treatment?

*The documents, in chronological order:*

#### 1968 (October 17) P. L. 90-592 Carl Sandburg Home NHS Authorizing Legislation<sup>1</sup>

The legislation designated a 242-acre Flat Rock site as comprising the property and improvements . . . where Carl Sandburg lived and worked during the last twenty years of his life . . . for establishment of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site.

The legislation did not mention prior owners, or any other detail that might have acknowledged a longer historical period.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-82/pdf/STATUTE-82-Pg1154.pdf>

## 1969

### (March 11) National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings: Connemara, Carl Sandburg Home, Index No. 20

This brief (6 pp.) document appears to be the first National Register-related document on the CARL site. It appeared about five months after authorization, and three years after President Johnson signed the National Historic Preservation Act (October 15, 1966), from which the National Register emerged.

This document refers several times to the pre-Sandburg history of the site, and to Sandburg's social justice involvements and writings, either of which might have been taken to argue for a longer interpretive time frame that would have included blacks in various roles. But it includes no references to pre-Sandburg African American history.

## 1971

### Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Master Plan

In this document, Sandburg is characterized as “one of America’s most versatile writers.”<sup>2</sup> Although as we have pointed out earlier, the Americanist (not to say nationalistic) perspective and discourse were pervasive within popular understanding of Sandburg, to its credit the Master Plan surfaces the politically, socially and culturally critical side of Sandburg and his work. After college, it says, he

became involved in the midwest reform movement . . . in the Social Democratic Party, as secretary to the Socialist Mayor of Milwaukee, and as labor reporter on the Milwaukee Leader. . . . His thoroughly agrarian [writing reflects] . . . his sympathy with the common man, his democracy and sense of brotherhood. His subject was the pioneer, the cowboy, the lumberjack, the railroad work gang, the steamboat crew, the prairie farmer, those who toil and struggle to keep alive.

With regard to Black history, one notes especially the reference to “the railroad work gang”—work that employed mostly blacks (free, freed, or as convict labor), and was widely documented by photographers, oral historians and folklorists.<sup>3</sup>

But the Plan does not either pursue or elaborate upon these prominent strains in Sandburg's work, or their possible linkages to African American history, either at the Connemara site or beforehand. Instead, a two-page section on The Christopher

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<sup>2</sup> For abundant detail and discussion on this point, see Philip Yanella, *The Other Carl Sandburg* (Jackson MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1996).

<sup>3</sup> See for example, Darin J. Waters, *Life Beneath The Veneer: The Black Community in Asheville, North Carolina from 1793 to 1900* (PhD diss., University of North Carolina, 2011), 60-64. The most famous of such workers was West Virginia Black “steel-drivin’ man” John Henry, immortalized in a variously titled song.

Memminger Period, the Plan presents him unproblematically as a precocious orphan, law student and lawyer, “outstanding” orator, legislator, and proponent of “a free school system.”

That the school system was only for whites went unmentioned, as did his purchases of slaves and his legal work in facilitating slave sales for others.<sup>4</sup> Without comment, the study quoted popular Civil War historian Bruce Catton’s matter-of-fact reference to Memminger as “a thrifty, small-scale lawyer and politician.”

The Plan refers to Memminger’s post-Civil War correspondence with Robert E. Lee and other wartime acquaintances, which it presents without the context or analysis that was widespread at the time. One letter to President Andrew Johnson, it says,

outlin[es] the problems of the South as a result of the emancipation of the Negro and his insistence on an educational program for former slaves shows a great insight into the problems of the times.<sup>5</sup>

“Finally in January 1867,” the Plan concludes, “Christopher Memminger received a full pardon from the United States and had his Charleston property restored to him.”

And there the matter rests, with Memminger (it seems fair to conclude) at least partly vindicated with regard to central features of his lifelong commitments. Thus the plan casts a positive, de-racialized glow around Memminger’s life (hence also the Memminger period of the indisputably biracial Flat Rock story).

When the Plan turns to the Main House, it stands not as an example of the Charleston diaspora or a mostly slave-built antebellum structure, but as “a graceful example of rural architecture of the early 19th century,” and graceful architecture clearly trumps Black history.

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<sup>4</sup> Records of these activities, as well as Memminger’s own purchases of slaves, are online in the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, <http://www.archivesindex.sc.gov/onlinearchives/SearchResults.aspx>, accessed February 8, 2018. For quoted text, see Rock Comstock, *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Master Plan* (1971), 12-13.

<sup>5</sup> Letter of September 4, 1865 to President Andrew Johnson, from Flat Rock, quoted from Capers, *The Life and Times of C. G. Memminger* (1893), p. 365, but not cited. The Master Plan neither footnotes nor references this source.



1972

Svejda, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site:  
*Historical Data on the Main House, Garage, and Swedish House*

Since we had access to only an edited typescript of this study, no definitive statement is possible about its attention (or lack thereof) to Black history.<sup>6</sup> These items are relevant here, however, with regard to Black history:

- Christopher Memminger: brief sketch (pp. 2-12), based almost entirely on the hagiographical Capers biography. The sole mention of blacks occurred during a brief discussion of the conversion of his “elegant home” in Charleston into an “Asylum for Orphan Negro Children” during the War, and the restoration of his “rights, immunities and privileges” by President Johnson. There is no further mention of blacks, “servants,” or slavery.
- William Gregg (Sr. and Jr.) (pp. 13-15): William, Sr. discussed as “industrialist” only; William, Jr. hardly at all. No references to blacks. Connection to Flat Rock mentioned only with regard to sale/transfer of the property.
- Captain Ellison Adger Smyth (pp. 15-17): This slightly more than two-page discussion verges on surfacing Smyth’s racism when it mentions his captaincy in the virulently racist Washington Artillery (the source of the Captain honorific he subsequently insisted upon retaining, but it fails to characterize or discuss the organization. His later membership in the Red Shirts is not mentioned. The entry closes with his pious Biblical “philosophy of life”—“to do justice, and love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God.”
- Slaves, slavery: A single mention (p. 45) “Most probably the garage was originally used as either quarters for slaves or the kitchen.”
- Black, blacks: no mention.
- Servant(s): A frequent euphemism for *slave* in much of the relevant literature, the term does not occur except with to characterize Memminger as “an untiring servant of the public schools.”
- Civil War: One mention (p. 22), not significant for this purpose.

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<sup>6</sup> Quotation on the garage is from p. 38. The title of this document as given on the title page is Historic Structure Report, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site. Two versions of it (one obviously a fragment) were provided by CARL staff, both dated April 28, 1972. We used the second (93 pp.) typescript. Pages 1-21 deal with the Memminger, Gregg, Smyth and Sandburg families; main house, pp. 23-41 with the Residence, Garage and Swedish House, and pp. 42-50 with “Historical Resources of the park.” Pages 51-89 consisted of appendices, mostly photographs and floor plan sketches.

1973  
National Register of Historic Places—Nomination Form:  
Flat Rock Historic District<sup>7</sup>

The analytic perspective of this Nomination is clearly articulated in its Statement of Significance:

The Flat Rock Historic District is . . . dotted with well-kept estates centering on the ambitious summer houses of the prominent Charlestonians who began to settle there in the early nineteenth century. Vital to the significance of Flat Rock is the long association with . . . politically and socially notable families, names seldom rivalled in the Carolinas. . . .

There [is] . . . a major collection of country estates which represent a unique segment of Southern social history . . . a living record of the scale and quality of life led by the affluent of the Carolinas. . . .

The significance of Flat Rock . . . lies not only in the handsome estates and well-preserved ambience of the area, but also in the long associations with some of the most outstanding individuals and families, primarily Charlestonians, who settled or summered there. . . .

Staying almost wholly within the Sandburg frame, it discusses 32 buildings, but the history of blacks (free, enslaved, or freed) is absent from its discussions. With the exception of a single mention of “a row of servants’ quarters” at Many Pines, there is no mention of the Black side of the diaspora. Keyword searches for *slave*, *Black* (with regard to persons), and *servant* are unproductive. The names of several slaveholders (Baring, Heyward, Johnstone, King, Memminger) appear, but the fact that they *were* slaveholders is omitted. Far more attention is paid to elegant landscaping, molded plaster ceilings, patterned wood, ornate tiles, and other marks of elegance and opulence.

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<sup>7</sup> National Register of Historic Places Inventory -- Nomination Form: Flat Rock Historic District, (1973). A brief precis of this document is available in Clay Griffith, Flat Rock Historic District Boundary Increase, Boundary Decrease, and Additional Documentation (National Register) (2015), 7/2. As indicated in Appendix 1, we use this document as *one example* among the many of the type that exist for CARL, reaching over its half-century history. See National Register of Historic Places Complete Set.pdf, which interleaves (by date and/or other criteria) 216 pages of these documents of various types and dates. To locate, extract, evaluate and map all of those documents (which include amendments, “additional documentation” items, and the like) with regard to the history of blacks at the site is not possible within the resources allocated to this study.

1981

**Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site:**  
*Historic Structure Report: Front Lake and Dam, Side Lake and  
Dam, Pond Bridge, and Duck Cage*

A first approximation to the usefulness of this document in relation to Black history is not encouraging. Keyword searches for *slave* or *servant* are unproductive.

Except in synoptic statements on the pre-Memminger, Memminger, Gregg, and Smyth periods, which by their mere presence call attention to them as needing historical attention, it does not present data or analysis pertaining specifically to the African American presence,<sup>8</sup>

From another perspective, however, one might argue that the study pointedly excludes discussion of Black history by passing circumspectly over it within discussions that could be argued to make it appropriate or even essential. Its discussion of Memminger notes that he was “first Secretary of the Treasury of the Confederate Treasury of the Confederate States of America,” but did not reveal that he owned slaves and as a lawyer helped others to buy and sell them.<sup>9</sup> A brief biographical statement on Ellison Adger Smyth says that,

After serving with the Confederate Army, Smyth became involved in textile manufacturing. He became director or vice-president of ten cotton mills, eight banks, three insurance companies, and owned a newspaper.<sup>10</sup>

What is not included in this condensed laudatory chronology is that from 1876 (at least) onward, Smyth was involved in violent anti-black politics in South Carolina through the so-called “rifle clubs,” the Red Shirts, and the Wade Hampton gubernatorial campaign of 1876.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Memminger period, 9-13; Gregg Period, 13; Smyth period, 14-16.

<sup>9</sup> Memminger records available online in the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, <http://www.archivesindex.sc.gov/onlinearchives/SearchResults.aspx>, accessed February 8, 2018.

<sup>10</sup> “Smyth Period 1900–1945,” 14.

<sup>11</sup> See a fairly extended discussion in Leeming Grimshawe, *Connemara, Formerly Called Rock Hill, and a Brief Description of Those Who Lived There, 1836–1967* (1970), 15-17. On the much written-about Red Shirts, see, Facing History and Ourselves, “South Carolina “Red Shirts” Battle Plan (1876),” <https://www.facinghistory.org/reconstruction-era/south-carolina-red-shirts-battle-plan-1876>, accessed September 1, 2017.

1984

**Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site:  
*Main House and Swedish House . . . Historic Furnishing Report***

This report does not contain the word *slave*, *Black* (with reference to persons), or *servant* (except with regard to possible pre-Sandburg uses of rooms).

Although this report focuses on the Sandburg period, within discussions of prior room uses it refers to both Memminger and Smyth in such a way as to erase actual Black presence. About the Sandburg Book Room it says:

When Connemara was the Smyth summer home, and perhaps in the Memminger years as well, this room served as a pantry where food brought from the separate kitchen building was readied for serving in the dining room . . . .

The passive constructions (*food brought from*, and *was readied for serving*) mask the presence and agency of the (no doubt) Black servants and other workers at Connemara. In the same vein, Memminger was referred to simply as “a Charleston businessman.”<sup>12</sup> A single reference to “Captain” Smyth leaves the title unexplained.

1993

**Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site:  
*Cultural Landscape Report***

This report contains no historical information specifically about blacks at the CARL site, although it presents considerable detail about the Memminger, Gregg and Smyth periods during which there was such a presence, and considerable evidence to support it.

In view of this contradiction, it is important to bear in mind that the report not only omitted pertinent and available information on this matter, but also characterized the site’s two long-term, active owners (Memminger and Smyth) so as to obscure their personal history in relation to blacks.

The report includes a chapter on the Pre-Sandburg Landscape, which contains sketches of both Memminger and Smyth, and 17 illustrative figures from those periods. Memminger is described “statesman, lawyer, and subsequent Secretary of the Confederate Treasury” who “retired [at Rock Hill] in summers in order to escape the heat of his Charleston home.” About “Colonel” (in this context, the title functions as a social and

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<sup>12</sup> Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Main House and Swedish House . . . Historic Furnishing Report, p. 73. See, for example, references to butler/chauffeur James Fisher.

cultural honorific, as well as evoking the Lost Cause) William Gregg it says only that he “apparently never occupied the house.” Following Louise Bailey’s *From Rock Hill to Connemara* (1980), it tracked the by then established view of Smyth as

a wealthy man . . . a leader in the textile industry [who] held various offices in national manufacturing and industrial associations . . . [and] at the height of his career, . . . was director of thirty-six corporations and a dozen banks.<sup>13</sup>

Thus the report presented insufficiently (even for its own stated purpose) contextualized versions of Memminger and Smyth, consequently erasing their personal histories as key actors within the Black history of Charleston and Flat Rock. Keyword searches for *slave*, *enslave* and *Black* (with regard to persons) produce no results. *Servant* occurs once, with reference to a building.

With regard to Smyth, this historical erasure is especially striking and misleading, given the ready availability of biographical detail. Six decades before this report appeared, the *Asheville Citizen-Times* published a long and detailed 90th birthday biographical article on Smyth (1847–1942).

A Charleston preacher’s son and Citadel student, Smyth enlisted in the Confederate army in 1864, at age 16. The *Citizen-Times* article, in its title, photo caption and text, refers to Smyth (as he reportedly insisted) as “Captain” Smyth. But in fact it did not. Commenting upon Smyth’s post-war life, the article sketched his militant involvement in anti-black activities:

During the trying days of reconstruction . . . Captain Smyth distinguished himself . . . in the rifle clubs, which were organized . . . on the pretext of sportsmanship but were in reality for defense of white homes. He was Vice President of the Carolina Rifle Club . . . [which] had a battery of four guns . . . . On one occasion, he led . . . his fellow clubmen in the seizure of 200 rifles and ammunition, designed for use of the negro militia. As captain [small c] of the club, he participated in the big [gubernatorial] riot of 1876, when the clubs joined with the federal troops garrisoned in the old Citadel plant to quell the uprising.

But the small *c* became a big *C*, which Smyth adopted permanently, and which in the culture and discourse of Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction inevitably evoked the Civil War, rather than rifle clubs and Red Shirts. When President McKinley (who was a

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<sup>13</sup> Hart, *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Cultural Landscape Report* (1993), 7, 13-26, <https://www.nps.gov/carl/learn/historyculture/upload/CARL-Cultural-Landscape-Report.pdf>, accessed June 13, 2017. The report has no formal bibliography, but lists a number of buildings completed during the Memminger era, including “two servants’ quarters,” and repeatedly refers to details in the “C. G. Memminger Papers”—presumably those at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, which contained ample evidence of Memminger’s involvement with enslaved people both in Charleston and in Flat Rock. For an extensive biographical account, see “Capt. Ellison Smyth, Textile Manufacturer, Nears 90th Birthday,” *Asheville Citizen-Times*, October 24, 1937, A7.”

bundle of contradictions with regard to race) appointed Smyth to the federal Industrial Commission in 189,, he was its only Democrat—in the era in which the white supremacist Democrats were marauding violently through the south.<sup>14</sup>

1995

**Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site**  
*(Additional Documentation) National Register Nomination*

This report’s extended comparative discussion of the Memminger, Smyth and Sandburg eras focuses one issue more sharply than any previous CARL study: the difference between the National Register period of significance, and the one NPS used as the basis for site development and interpretation.

Choosing the former rather than the latter could (and likely would) have led—a half-century earlier—to a discussion of African American presence at the site, since both relevant public documents (deeds, wills, land records) and some published sources were available at the time, as we have observed above.

As part of a by then nearly 30-year effort to justify the chosen (Sandburg only) period of significance, the report followed the practice of previous reports by describing Memminger and Smyth so as to exclude their long involvement with blacks.

Memminger was described as “a South Carolina statesman and Secretary of the Treasury of the Confederate States of America,” and Smyth as “a well-respected South Carolina textile industrialist and businessman,” and subsequently as an “industrialist turned country gentleman established [who] oversaw a rigorous maintenance schedule for the grounds and employed a full-time and seasonal staff to manage the estate.”<sup>15</sup> Smyth’s “full-time and seasonal staff” was predominantly black, other evidence suggests, although none of it would have been enslaved at that period.

Memminger is reported to have built eight structures, including “guest quarters” and “servants’ quarters,” but not slave quarters. The race of the Smyth family’s “servants and/or laborers” is not indicated.<sup>16</sup>

Although the significance section of the report (8/13-8/24) provides a higher level of detail on the design and construction of the structures and landscape features, there is little detail on workers, Black or white, and no mention at all of enslaved people.

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<sup>14</sup> A précis of McKinley’s contradictory record with respect to blacks is available at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presidency\\_of\\_William\\_McKinley#Reconciliation\\_with\\_Southern\\_whites](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presidency_of_William_McKinley#Reconciliation_with_Southern_whites), accessed October 26, 2018.

<sup>15</sup> National Register Nomination Form 1995 CARL4025.1.21\_AdditionalInformation.pdf, 7/1-7/2.

<sup>16</sup> The National Register Nomination Form 1995 lists all of these structures, 7/2-7/9.



1998

**Pence, *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site:  
Archeological Overview and Assessment*<sup>17</sup>**

This document, coming three years after the Cultural Landscape Report, is built upon extensive and meticulous research. It offers much that is useful for exploring the intended African American history focus of this present HRS.

A key feature of the report in this regard is its unequivocal, artifact-based contention that the relevant historical period for the site could be argued to begin “at, or near, the beginning of the nineteenth century” (i.e., prior to the arrival of the earliest elite white Charlestonians in the mid-1820s). This possibility had been admitted by no previous study.

Memminger himself situated a little more precisely than any previous report had ventured—by mentioning not that he had owned slaves, but that he was “a member of the legislature” when it passed the Ordinance of Secession (actually, he was a member of the committee that drafted it), and that because he had resigned as Treasury Secretary before the war ended, he “escaped imprisonment.”<sup>18</sup>

On Smyth, the report also said that

Before and during the Civil War, he was a proponent of using poor white tenant class workers instead of slaves as laborers at his Graniteville Mill in South Carolina, which was built around 1845. Although his choice of a labor force was criticized, his mill was successful.<sup>19</sup>

This is by no means all that could (and should) have been said about the two men’s involvements in racial issues before, during and after the war, but it was more than had been said before.

After this study appeared, it seems, no reasonable doubt could have remained about pushing the period of the site’s focus back at least into the early 1830s, if not 1800. Doing so would have added the presence of enslaved and free/freed blacks as an essential focus for analysis and documentation.

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<sup>17</sup> Heather Pence, *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Archeological Overview and Assessment* (Tallahassee: Southeast Archeological Center, National Park Service, 1998).

<sup>18</sup> Guide to the Microfilm Edition of the Christopher G. Memminger Papers. Southern Historical Collection: 1966, University of North Carolina Library.

<sup>19</sup> Pence, *Archeological Overview*, 31-32.

2002 [?]  
Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site:  
*Draft General Management Plan and  
Environmental Impact Statement*<sup>20</sup>

Completed four years after the Archaeological Overview and Assessment, this study document mentions the site's pre-Sandburg history only once:

The estate had . . . an ironic history for the biographer of Abraham Lincoln - for Christopher Memminger, who built the main house around 1838, had served from 1861 to 1864 as Secretary of the Confederate Treasury. Upon the death of Memminger, the estate was sold to Colonel William Gregg, who apparently never occupied the house. In 1900, textile tycoon Captain Ellison Smyth purchased the estate and renamed it Connemara . . . . Smyth's heirs sold it to the Sandburgs in 1945.<sup>21</sup>

The choice of *tycoon* to describe Smyth was unfortunate, even for the apparently honorific purpose, because its valence—from early exemplars Daniel Drew (banking, from 1844 to bankruptcy in 1873) and James Fisk (railroads, gold, railroads), through the Teapot Dome bribery scandal in the 1920s, and far beyond—was decidedly negative.<sup>22</sup> Although the *Plan* offers little guidance or clues with regard to Black history at the Connemara site, its *tycoon* reference stands as a warning against insufficient investigation of CARL-linked founders and luminaries, a majority of whom made their fortunes in slaves, land, rice, cotton, textiles, phosphates and other valuable (and corner-able) commodities and goods.

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<sup>20</sup> This draft contains no date. Internal evidence suggests that 2002 is likely.

<sup>21</sup> Draft General Management Plan, 15.

<sup>22</sup> A Google ngram search for *tycoon* shows the word was in only limited use after 1800, until it plateaued slightly (and briefly) after the Civil War and then turned up dramatically soon after Teapot Dome, when it appeared in books, comic operas, cartoons and the like. For a historical precis of the best known tycoons, see Elena Holodny, "19 Robber Barons Who Built and Ruled America," in Business Insider, accessed April 19, 2019, <https://www.businessinsider.com/robber-barons-who-built-and-ruled-america-2017-7>. Built upon *Encyclopedia Britannica* summaries, it includes John Jacob Astor (American Fur Company), Cornelius Vanderbilt (shipping and railroads), James B. Duke (tobacco), Andrew Carnegie (steel), John D. Rockefeller (Standard Oil), J. P. Morgan (railroads, steel), Henry Flagler (Standard Oil, Florida tourism), Charles M. Schwab (steel), Andrew Mellon (aluminum, steel, oil, coal), Henry Clay Frick (steel).

## 2003

### Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement<sup>23</sup>

This document offers evidence that its writers and reviewers were aware of at least the main outlines of the history of the site back to 1838. There are brief mentions of Memminger (as Secretary of the Confederate Treasury), Gregg and Smyth (as “textile tycoon”) (16-17), and a list of 21 “Comments more appropriately addressed by . . . a Comprehensive Interpretive Plan,” two comments (7 and 10) urge that CARL “Tell the whole story of the site - the Memminger and Smyth stories are important too” (26).

With regard to actually telling the “whole story of the site,” however, the study is at best ambiguous. Three alternative program concepts and a “no-action” alternative are presented: a Sandburg Center alternative, Paths of Discovery alternative, and Connemara Lifestyle alternative. The Sandburg Center alternative is the proposed NPS- and environmentally preferred alternative. (29)

This alternative (43) is defined as “a national, if not worldwide, focal point for interpretation and research about Carl Sandburg,” which with the Main House and grounds would “remain the centerpiece of the interpretive program at Connemara.” Somewhat defensively, it might appear, the study adds that

The intent of this concept is not to divert attention from the historic significance of these features but, rather, to enhance a visitor’s understanding of Carl Sandburg by providing access to more in-depth information about his works and life.

As used here, the phrase “*the* historic significance” is somewhat ambiguous. Does it mean the *pre-Sandburg* significance, or that of the Sandburg period? There is some evidence that the former may have been intended, since the study notes (67) that there are “over 50 historic structures located within the park. Many of them were used from the Memminger period through the Sandburg’s ownership of the estate.”

With regard to possible (and a few then known) archeological resources, this document notes briefly that “A comprehensive archeological investigation . . . has not been undertaken,” and says that “there is a strong probability that . . . prehistoric and historic resources may exist . . .” The latter, it says, “are likely to . . . [date] from circa 1807 to 1830, before Memminger owned the property.”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> General Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement for Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site North Carolina: Record of Decision. [https://www.nps.gov/carl/learn/management/upload/gmp\\_small%202.pdf](https://www.nps.gov/carl/learn/management/upload/gmp_small%202.pdf). Provided by CARL. Quotations and citations are from the published final [paged] document.

<sup>24</sup> Quite unaccountably, this brief and misleading statement is followed by a source reference to (Pence 1998), the detailed Archaeological Overview and Assessment already discussed above. Appendix 2 of the (Pence 1998) study includes multiple tables detailing archeological objects recovered from the site from 1977 onward. Map in Figure 3-a (p. 68) shows (and names) several of the Memminger-era buildings. Numerous other references, falling within the study’s environmental purview, cite Memminger Creek as an important landscape feature.

The terms *slave*, *enslaved*, or *servant* do not appear in the study. *Black* (with reference to persons) occurs once (74), as the percentage of Henderson County population at the time of the study.<sup>25</sup> *Worker* appears only in reference to CARL volunteers. *Chauffeur* (which occurs with some frequency elsewhere) does not appear.

## 2005

### Jones, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: *Connemara Main House - Historic Structure Report*<sup>26</sup>

This broadly conceived, insightful, and historically detailed study provides unprecedented analysis and data relevant to the purposes of this present HRS, especially with regard to Black history at the CARL site. Historical background and context of the site are treated (partly on the basis of the C. G. Memminger papers at the University of North Carolina) more extensively than in any previous study. Consequently, the (usually) ambient level of equivocation and backgrounding of Black history evident in other studies is absent.

This study opens (1) with a brief presentation of historical context, including synoptic biographical data on Memminger, Gregg and Smyth, which leaves no doubt that the context reaches from the 1830s onward. Its discussion (5-8) of early Flat Rock history and its early founders (Charles Baring, Daniel Blake, Judge Mitchell King and Henry McAlpin) and those who followed them is more concise and insightful than that available elsewhere in the CARL studies and reports. *Tycoon* does not appear as a(n) honorific descriptor of these Lowcountry entrepreneurs, although *wealthy* (mostly minus the honorific valence) does.

This study is also more forthcoming than any other about the slave-based, planter origins of the Charleston wealth that undergirded the development of Flat Rock. Combahee rice planter Daniel Blake, it says, “claimed \$650,000 in personal property, most of it enslaved human beings.” Judge King “owned rice plantations near Savannah,” and McAlpin “became one of the richest men in the South” with the Hermitage, his great Savannah River plantation (6-7).

Closer to the issue of the presence of blacks, Jones has an extended section on the caretakers, employees and tenants who helped build, staff, and maintain Rock Hill. Some were from local families, but others were enslaved people brought from Charleston (17-20,

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<sup>25</sup> The percentage of blacks (2000 Census) is very small: “93.4% white, 3.3% black, 0.1% Asian or Pacific Islander, 0.7% American Indian or Aleut, and 2.8% other.” Darin Waters’s 2012 UNC Ph.D. dissertation, “Life Beneath The Veneer: The Black Community in Asheville, North Carolina from 1793 to 1900” (233-237) gives percentages of blacks in Henderson County from 1860 to 1900: 1860 (14%), 1870 (16%), 1880 (13.5%), 1890 (10%). Clearly, the percentage of blacks had dropped dramatically since Civil War times.

<sup>26</sup> Tommy Jones, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site - *Connemara Main House - Historic Structure Report*, <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2191736>, accessed July 8, 2017.

55). Memminger’s long involvement in the anti-secession and (later) pro-secession movements in South Carolina is discussed and contextualized more fully than it has been elsewhere in these reports (20-21).

Henry McAlpin apparently used slave labor in “a thriving brick business” on the Savannah River (7), and Jones notes that after the war “phosphate mining made fortunes for wealthy investors and provided much-needed employment to thousands of freed slaves” (23). “It was also a boon,” Jones says, “to cash-strapped planters whose lands were suddenly selling at tremendous prices, and throughout the 1870s and

1880s . . . was one of the state’s most lucrative industries.” Memminger came out of the war in comparatively good financial condition, and by 1868 had organized the lucrative Sulphuric Acid and Super-Phosphate Company.

Moving to Ellison Smyth (after an extensive account of his family of origin in Ireland, New Jersey and Charleston), Jones engages his life from the advent of the Civil War through the immediate post-war years (30-31). For the first time in any of the CARL studies, he then provides a brief but illuminating chronicle of Smyth’s leadership role in South Carolina’s anti-black, anti-Reconstruction “rifle and saber clubs” and the “red shirt rebellion” that helped usher the notoriously racist Wade Hampton III into the governorship in 1876.<sup>27</sup> As a reward for his efforts, Hampton appointed Smyth as a Captain of the Washington Artillery, part of the state militia. For the rest of his life, Smyth insisted upon being referred to as “Captain” Smyth (32). His brother Augustine served 16 years in the state legislature, and brother James became mayor of Charleston.<sup>28</sup>

## 2005

### Jones, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: *Swedish House - Historic Structure Report*<sup>29</sup>

This report, since it is an HSR rather than an HRS, focuses mostly upon the focal structure itself, but nevertheless is based importantly upon primary source contextual research, and offers detailed discussions of some of the historical foci crucial to this current HRS—covering the Memminger, Gregg, and Smyth periods.

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<sup>27</sup> Hampton has been written about extensively. See “Wade Hampton III” in [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wade\\_Hampton\\_III](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wade_Hampton_III), accessed October 30, 2018.

<sup>28</sup> Jones cites “Captain Ellison Adger Smyth,” *Cyclopedia of Eminent and Representative Men of the Carolinas*, 469-470 and “Captain Ellison Adger Smyth,” *Cyclopedia of Eminent and Representative Men of the Carolinas*, 469. Also useful, especially for its fuller list of Smyth’s involvement in the anti-black “rifle clubs” and the like, is J. C. Hemphill, *Men of Mark in South Carolina; Ideals of American Life; a Collection of Biographies of Leading Men of the State*, III, 469; available at <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008637768>, accessed October 30, 2018.

<sup>29</sup> Tommy Jones, *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Swedish House - Historic Structure Report* (2005). Also available at <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2191744>, accessed June 13, 2017.

Its extensive List of Figures (ix-xi), for example, includes a half-dozen photographs related to Black history at the site:

- Fig. 9: View of Memminger's first servants' house, now known as the Chicken House, probably constructed by slaves in 1842.
- Fig. 13: Smyth family on the steps at Connemara, c. 1903.
- Fig. 20: The Smyths' [black] maid Sylvene, 1937.
- Fig. 21: Three of the Smyths' grandchildren with one of the [black] servants.
- Fig. 22: The Smyths' [black] servants in front of the Kitchen, c. 1910.
- Fig. 23: Robert Marshall, c. 1900, the Smyths' [black] butler.
- Fig. 24: Undated photograph, probably of Smyth's [black] chauffeur James Robinson.
- Fig. 41: Chief of Maintenance Charlie Hamm and Joe Moore, temporary carpenter [small photograph; possibly black; original at CARL].

A section entitled The Help (19-25), with subsections on Overseers and Hired Hands (20-22) and Slaves and Servants (22-24) presents far more detailed information on these topics with regard to the Memminger and Smyth families than had been available in previous studies, except those that Jones himself had done.

Although Jones says modestly (63) that his archival work for this report was "limited," the report is based partly upon careful reading in census records and the Memminger Papers account book at the University of North Carolina Library. That work allowed him to go considerably beyond previous studies with regard to treatment of Black history. These details will figure importantly in Chapters 7 and 8, on blacks before, during, and after the Civil War.

2007

**Oppermann, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site:  
*Chicken House/Wash House - Historic Structure Report*<sup>30</sup>**

This superbly executed HSR contains some useful detailed information on Black history at the site during the Memminger and Smyth periods. Some of it is quite specific (names, dates, related structures, worker roles and positions), and some it is more general because such details (on the exact use of several "servants' houses," for example, I.A.2.) have not yet been uncovered.

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<sup>30</sup> Joseph K. Oppermann, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site - *Chicken House/Wash House - Historic Structure Report*. Oppermann (2007); 2007\_HSRChickenHouse.pdf, <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2191743>, accessed October 13, 2017.



Oppermann ventures, in fact, that the Swedish House itself may originally have built as the second servants' house:

As Memminger was a slave owner, it is believed that the building [shown in the sketch] originally housed enslaved persons for the summer months while the family was in residence.

Like Tommy Jones earlier, Oppermann is forthright about the early Flat Rock founders and developers who owned slaves. "Memminger was a slave owner," he says, citing both North and South Carolina census data from 1850 and 1860. He goes on to provide details from the Memminger Papers on specific named enslaved people and their work (I A.3 and II-1).

Moving on to the Smyths, Oppermann presents detailed discussions of their servants (white and black) and their roles and work: butler, caretaker, chauffeur, cook, laundress, maid, farm manager, and valet (I.A.4- I.A.6).

With regard to labor used and/or hired to build Rock Hill and later (Smyth-period) buildings, Oppermann cross-links buildings (and their dates) to entries for labor (local white and/or black in the Memminger ledger, yielding a few snapshot narratives of the development of the site (I.B.1).

Oppermann is also unequivocal (although not judgmental) about structural and functional (hence historical) changes the Sandburgs made to these buildings:

The Sandburgs made changes throughout the estate to accommodate their lifestyle and Mrs. Sandburg's goat herd. . . . They kept milking goats in the barn. . . . The original kitchen was converted to a garage, the other servants' house was used for storage and dubbed the Swedish House for its decorated bargeboard, and the Servants' House/Wash House was made to accommodate animals and was called the Chicken House or Wash House according to whether the south end or north end were signified. Chickens occupied only the south half of the first floor, while the north half was occupied by baby goats, called kids, beginning c. 1950s. (I.A.6 and I.B.6)

The question of on-site workers, Black or white, was hardly at issue for the Sandburgs. As Oppermann synthesizes the situation,

Frank Mintz, Jr., was hired in early 1946 as farm manager, succeeding Frank Ballard. Leroy Levi took over as farm manager around 1958. Other than these farm workers, the Sandburgs did not have a full-time resident staff, only an occasional cook or housekeeper. (I.B.6)

2008

## CARL Visitor Services Division, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: *Long Range Interpretive Plan*

This document (unpaged, but of approximately 23 pages) is a recent source of confirmation of the durable commitment to maintaining the Sandburg-only domain and period (1945–1967) for site definition and programming. As such, it contains little information on the Memminger and Smyth periods, and none at all on Black history.

A corollary to this observation is that the Memminger and Smyth periods. There are two brief references to Memminger and two to Smyth[e], but neither the two men nor any historic artifacts pertaining to them and to Black history) are never engaged as foci for long-range planning:

### I [6]: Themes / Concepts and Ideas

“Memminger and Civil War” and “Smythe [sic] and the textile industry” are listed, along with Dairy Goat Breeding and “solitude and inspiration,” but the dozen or so Untold Stories in the Tangibles column include nothing on either Memminger or Smyth.

### II [16]: Proposed Interpretive Program

This section mentions three structures that date from the Memminger period (or before, in one case), and that were originally built and used as “servants” quarters, and thus are relevant to Black history at the site:

- Swedish House: Develop and install exhibits on immigration story, Swedish immigration in particular, and Sandburg’s early years in Galesburg.
- Chicken House: Tell “Three Families Story” here: Memminger, Smythe, Sandburg, (and National Park Service).
- Buck House.

Congruent with these omissions, the terms *black*, *servant* and *slave* do not occur in this document. Sandburg himself named the house after it had stood for at least a century—perhaps because his parents were Swedish immigrants.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> *Archeological Overview*, 73: “the Buck House was constructed before Memminger acquired the property in 1842.” Tommy Jones’s HSR on the Swedish House says the “Swedish house” used as a servants’ house by the Memmingers, Greggs and Smyths—was called that only after the Sandburgs arrived, because “Sandburg thought it reminiscent of Swedish architecture.”

2014

## Oppermann, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: *Barn Complex Historic Structure Report*<sup>32</sup>

This detailed (331 pp.) HSR contains both a historical perspective and some general information relevant to the history of blacks at the CARL site.<sup>33</sup>

At the outset, the brief Historical Overview in the Management Summary outlines the histories of the Memmingers, Greggs, and Smyths. They appear first in a concise “Historical Overview” section (iii-iv), where they are described only by the usual honorific phrases: “prominent Charleston attorney and South Carolina statesman,” “from a noted and wealthy family,” and “national figure in the textile industry,” respectively.<sup>34</sup>

What is ultimately made available, however, is contingent upon the Sandburg-only establishing legislation:

The historic estate was the home of three persons nationally recognized in their fields of endeavor. Each constructed buildings and modified the landscape to suit tastes and needs, which together create the property now under the stewardship of the park. The designs are significant in their own right. However, it is recognized today for its association with the last of the three, Carl Sandburg (iv).

The passive phrase “it is recognized today for . . .” is vague: By whom? For what purpose(s)? On the basis of what evidence? Popular recognition, or officially by some entity? Any disagreement amongst visitors, or scholars, or official “recognizers”? In any case, the passive indicates agentless, already completed and uncontested action, which is counter to much of the documentation and argument in various CARL studies.

Although this study refrains from criticizing this bracketing, it concludes its Statement of Significance with a cautious observation and a guarded recommendation:

[in] light of the recent research, consideration should be given to presenting to visitors the long history of the site as a barn complex. While today the barns accurately reflect the complex as fashioned by Sandburg, the earlier structures have a rich history to tell as well (vii).

<sup>32</sup> Joseph K. Oppermann, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: *Barn Complex Historic Structure Report* (2014); <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2225183>, accessed December 8, 2017.

<sup>33</sup> This HSR comprises ten buildings:

Goat Barn: HS-16, LCS 005161, FMSS 69819

Milk House: HS-16A, LCS 005162, FMSS 69690

Horse Barn: HS-17, LCS 005163, FMSS 69863

Silo: HS-20, LCS 005166 (s-o-w gives no FMSS)

Shavings Shed: HS-19, LCS 005165, FMSS 69691

Cow Shed: HS-18, LCS 005164, FMSS 69697

Buck Kid Quarters: HS-15, LCS 005160, FMSS 69689

Corn Crib: HS-14, LCS 005159, FMSS 69698

Barn Garage: HS-13, LCS 005158, FMSS 69895

Isolation Quarters, or Isolation Shed: HS-12, LCS 005157, FMSS 69817

<sup>34</sup> The “test term” *tycoon* does not appear.

Taking the report's own suggestion seriously, the nine-page Historical Background and Context section (1-9), carries the narrative description of the pre-Sandburg period further than any previous report except those done earlier by Jones. Searching some key-words used to examine earlier reports and documents discussed above is moderately productive: two instances of *slave/enslaved*, multiple instances of *servant*, and several dozen of *caretaker*. "Domestic staff were invariably enslaved Black servants," the report says (3).

The synoptic Historical Background and Context chapter begins with pre-19th century western North Carolina settlement, rice cultivation (and wealth) in the Lowcountry, associated diseases that pushed rice planters and their families upcountry, early Charleston summer people and Flat Rock founders and owners.

Notwithstanding earlier vague characterizations of Memminger, Gregg, and Smyth ("industrialist," "statesman"), the report goes on to present extended statements on the site's pre-Sandburg owners and of Connemara, including a few workers at the site. "There is far more documentation," the report says,

of the life and work of the more prominent than of less wealthy workers and their contributions. In this report we have strived to find and report information on the caretakers, carpenters and others who worked on the farm buildings. (3)

Information on the "more prominent" individuals (Memminger, Gregg and Smyth) centers (but not exclusively) on the building of Rock Hill/Connemara. The initially proffered "luminous description" of the house and grounds unfortunately derives from Capers's hagiographic *Life and Times of C. G. Memminger* (1893). Memminger himself is presented as "a strong advocate for education for the white working classes" (and for both races after the war), but not, one notes, as a slave owner.

William Gregg (son of "the most significant figure in the development of textile manufacturing in the South) and his wife ("daughter of a wealthy Charleston merchant"), the report says, made "several significant changes" to the house, but the only Gregg-period worker mentioned is caretaker William Slattery who "apparently grew up around Rock Hill" (I-A, 4-5) is usefully detailed and contextualized but not critically engaged.

C. G. Memminger, "a Charlestonian and South Carolina statesman" and "a strong advocate for education for the white working classes" (qualified but class- and race-linked activity) who returned to Flat Rock in 1864, turned his house into "a sort of fortress," and stood his ground. After the war he regained ownership and control of his Charleston house, which had been confiscated and used as a "colored" orphanage.

Charlestonian Ellison Adger Smyth "had a significant impact upon the property," but commentary upon workers or his relationships to them refers not to Connemara but to his earlier "model mill town" at Pelzer SC, where he rejected the then-prevalent child labor in the textile industry, and encouraged school attendance. His employment of Black labor at Connemara is emphasized by a juxtaposed 1910 photo (Figure 10, p. 7) of the family's Black servants.

The bulk of the discussion of Black labor occurs, therefore, in the Connemara section (7-9). Smyth insisted on “a rigorous maintenance schedule,” the report says, which was met by a large staff, full-time for the grounds and buildings, and seasonal for domestic staff. He and his wife continued the Flat Rock pattern of bringing domestic help with them while hiring local workers year-round. Domestic employees were black, local workers white, each reflecting the population of their region. ( 7).

An account of the long tenure of Ulysses Franklin Ballard and his wife Emily as caretakers follows, but the Ballards were white, not black.<sup>35</sup>

What about Black workers (besides kitchen workers) in the photograph at Connemara during the Smyth period? Contrary to the earlier promise (p. 3) that such information would be “found in Part IB,” not a lot was forthcoming. One limit, the report says, was that “Memminger made only occasional entries in his account book after the mid-1850s, and farm buildings [hence workers] are not mentioned,” as they were in earlier years (21).

For whatever reasons, in any case, this report turns out to promise somewhat more than it delivers with regard to Black history at the Connemara site.<sup>36</sup> Fortunately, much more detail is available in the 2015 National Register boundary increase/decrease document.

## 2015

### *Flat Rock Historic District Boundary Increase, Boundary Decrease, and Additional Documentation (National Register)*<sup>37</sup>

This is a meticulously researched, detailed, and skillfully written account of the origin and development of the Flat Rock area, beginning with the Cherokee Nation prior to 1785 and extending to 1964. Generally speaking, a first approximation of the state of the data on any particular topic or aspect of CARL history should begin with a keyword search of an adequately OCR'd version of this document, since it contains no Index.

Three questions are productive with regard to the focus of the present HRS:

1. How thoroughly does it engage with the pre-Sandburg history of the site? The answer to this question (on pre-Sandburg history in general) is: a great deal, and that is addressed in Appendix I.

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<sup>35</sup> The report notes (15) that Ulysses Ballard ... remained with the Sandburgs for only a few months. He left in part because he preferred Guernseys to goats, but he was also unaccustomed to the Sandburg's more relaxed approach to upkeep and appearance.”

<sup>36</sup> In its bibliography (157-158) this study offers a few useful digital sources (e.g., “Forgotten Fields: Inland Rice Plantations in the South Carolina Lowcountry”), and especially McCandless's *Slavery, Disease, and Suffering in the Southern Lowcountry* (2011), digitized since the Barn Complex HRS was completed.

<sup>37</sup> 2015FlatRockHistoricDistNRNomination.pdf, from Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site.

2. How tightly and appropriately is this information tied to previous CARL studies?
3. More specifically, how much detailed information on Black history is available in the document?

With regard specifically to Black history, the answer is: considerably, but ultimately more limited than would have been permitted by resources (printed and documentary) available at the time of formation. These questions are addressed as appropriate in this Appendix.

On pre-Sandburg history, the document contains a great deal of evidence (including citations to sources). On the use and citation of previous CARL studies: fairly consistently and closely.

Commentary on Black history occurs on many pages of this document. Searching for *slave* (which includes *slavery*, *enslaved*) produces numerous results:

- 7/16: Andrew Johnstone, a wealthy rice planter and slave owner.
- 7/29-7/30: The Black Markley family.
- 7/64-7/65: Detached kitchen and slave house associated with Glen Roy/Kenmure.
- 7/94-7/96: St. John in the Wilderness: “The church was built with a slave gallery that was removed in 1881. Slaves and their families worshipped in the same space as their owners and were buried in a designated section of the cemetery. Church records from 1850 to 1864 note slaves’ baptisms, confirmations, marriages, and deaths.” “Following the Civil War, the former slaves and servants formed their own church in East Flat Rock. . . . The terraced churchyard contains numerous, closely-spaced . . . markers and tablets [that] denote the graves of parishioners, their family members, and others, including slaves, servants, and freedmen.”
- 7/333: Woodfield Inn, 1850–1852; “built by Henry Farmer, using slave labor”; no names.
- 7/381-7/406: This is the most extensive and fully contextualized account of Flat Rock history within studies related to the CARL site. It is detailed, explicit, and refreshingly unequivocal. A keyword search for slave produces repeated references to slaves, slave labor, the slave trade, slave-owning rice planters, slave-based wealth, and related topics, with regard to both the Low Country and Flat Rock.

*Servant*, frequently a euphemism for *slave*, is also useful as a search term, although it usually produces references to structures (rather than worker roles or names of individuals), some of fairly recent date:

- 7/36: Garage with attached servants’ quarters, ca. 1910.
- 7/47: Servants’ house, 1920 (race of servants not specified).
- 7/57-58: Servants’ quarters, 1841 (Memminger’s Chicken House/Wash House, and Sandburgs’ “Swedish house”).
- 7/67-7/68: Kitchen/servants’ quarters, 1886 (Penelope Parker House).



- 7/103–106: Servants’ house, 1893 (Tuctaway/Heyward House).
- 7/115: Servants’ porch with “access to the servants’ quarters,” 1934.
- 7/126: Servants’ house, Tanglewood, ca. 1925.
- 7/128-7/130: Servants’ house (ca. 1880), Argyle.
- 7/244-7/246: Servants’ house/stable, Sinkler-Fishburne House (1917).
- 7/268: Servants’ house “for the chauffeur and housekeeper” (ca. 1917), Pinecrest, ca. 1885.
- 7/292: Servants’ house, ca. 1840, “historically part of the Saluda Cottages property . . . [and] built for servants at Count de Choiseul’s estate.
- 7/295: Servants’ quarters, associated with Mountain Lodge (1827).
- 7/301: Servants’ house, ca. 1939, Stonybrook.
- Some of these aspects of Black history are repeated, elaborated, augmented, or contextualized in the *Summary Statement of Significance* (7/376-7/378) and the section on Historical Background and Development of the Summer Colony (8-378-8/402).
  - These two sections present an extended, detailed narrative, including discussions of the slave trade, the slave balcony at St. John in the Wilderness, the economic impacts of ending slave labor, and related matters.
  - The section on Architecture Context focuses primarily upon design, construction, and architectural details of the older houses, but also includes a few details relating to Black history:
- 8/381-387: Lowcountry rice culture and the Flat Rock diaspora; including family names and activities:
- 8/394: The involvements of blacks, both slave and free.
- 8/393-395: History of Black presence, pre- and post-Civil War.
- 8/406: Post-Civil War loss of slave labor and new textile mill wealth.
- 8/409: Fading of rice culture in favor of cotton; new textile wealth.
- 8/409: Mud Creek Cemetery (Mud Creek Missionary Baptist Church).

In sum, this National Register study contains considerable information on a variety of subjects related to Black history in Flat Rock. These materials figure importantly in Chapter 7: Blacks and “Little Charleston of the Mountains”: Before the War, and others.

## 2016

McCleary and Butler, *“The First National Historic Site Dedicated to a Poet:” A History of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, 1968–2008*

- 3, 10, 12, 13, 19, 32, 34: Mentions C. G. Memminger, but without reference to blacks or enslaved people. Numerous references to the Memminger Trail occur, as well.
- 11: Attention of Supt. Kenneth Hulick (1986–1993) to growing concern within National Park Service to affirmative action. McCleary and Butler report that
  - Hulick recalled that the Park Service was “a little white, male-dominated.” He tried to initiate change by starting a recruitment program at Voorhees College, a historically Black Episcopalian school nearby in Denmark, South Carolina.
  - Hulick formed a co-operative arrangement with Voorhees, and hired several Black summer students. He also brought several African American NPS staff members serving on “detail” into the park to see how the parks operated.
- 89: “Built circa 1841 . . . as quarters for enslaved people by the Memminger family” [memorandum of October 2, 1972].
- 119-120: Review of archeological evidence of the presence of the Memminger, Gregg and Smyth families, including buildings constructed. Citing previous CARL studies, McCleary and Butler observe that “the park knew that the Christopher Memminger family purchased the land in 1838 so there would be historic sites dating back to that year, if not earlier. The Memmingers constructed several buildings in their early years . . . [including] two slave quarters circa 1840; a privy circa 1840 . . . .”
- 121: References to and quotations from early 1980s *General Management Plans* with regard to Memminger-era buildings, but without mention of blacks.
- 158: Reference to and quotations from *Interpretive Prospectus* of 1970 with regard to Memminger era, and its relegation of that era to status as a “secondary interpretive theme,” as did numerous other documents. No reference to blacks.
- 162: “By 1984, the park had expanded the interpretive themes to include four minor themes. The first two themes were Mrs. Sandburg’s dairy goat operations and their influence on family life at Connemara . . . . The third theme referenced Christopher Memminger and Ellison Adger Smyth, each a former owner of the estate prior to the Sandburg era.” Clearly these “minor [or secondary] themes” did not foreground any aspect of Black history at the site.
- 280: Relevant data in *General Management Plan* (2003) and two Historic structure reports (*Swedish House* 2005, and *Chicken House/Wash House*, 2007).

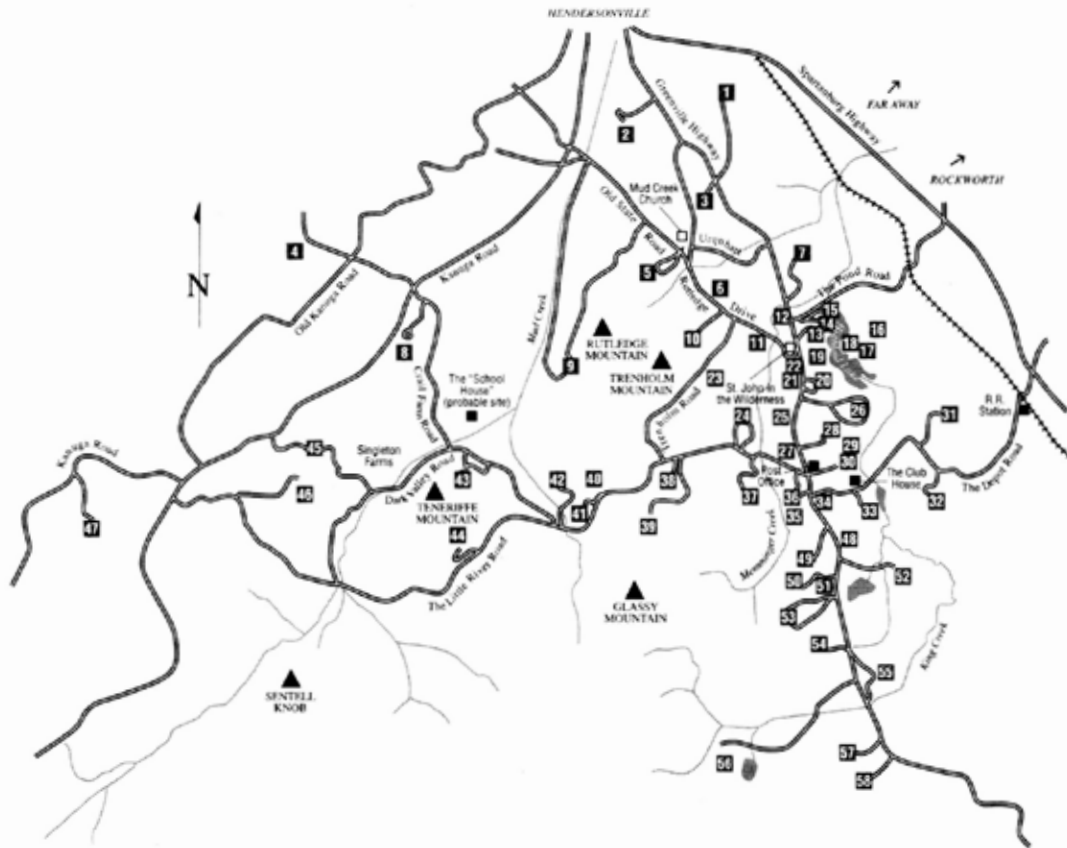


# APPENDIX 3

## Maps from Robert Cuthbert, *Flat Rock of the Old Time*

Columbia, South Carolina:  
The University of South Carolina Press, 2016

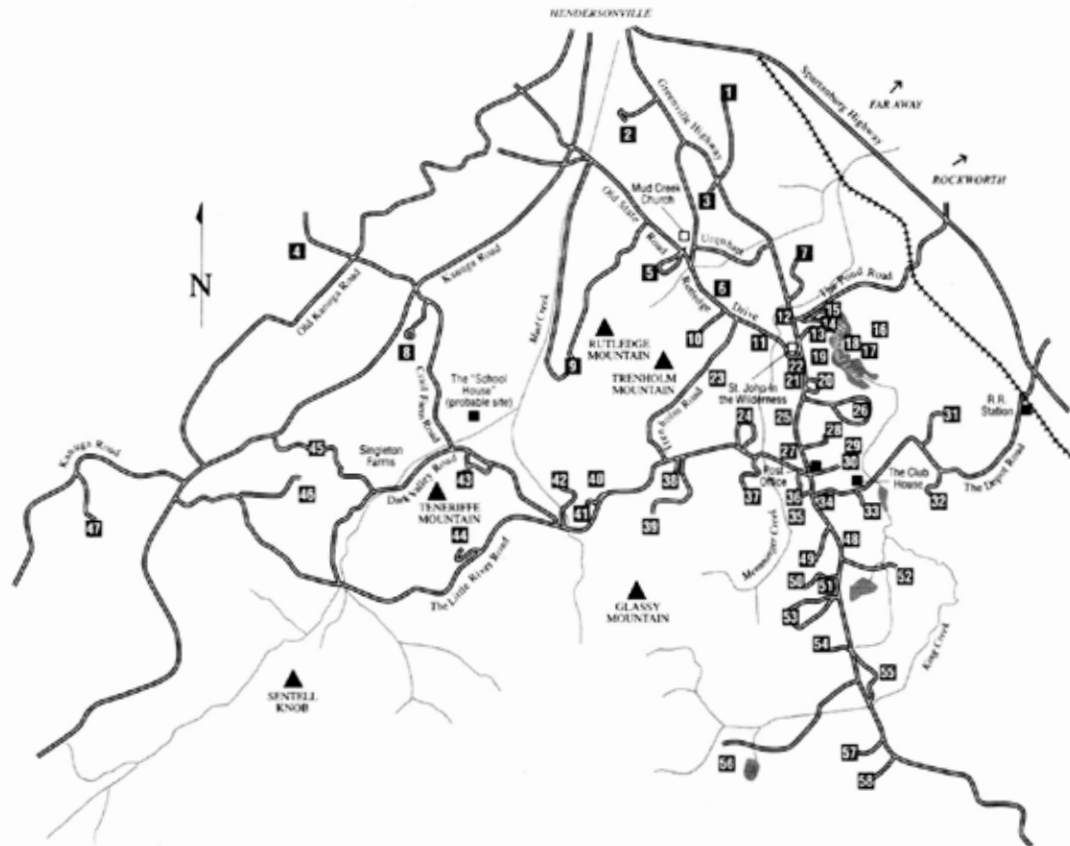
Used with permission



### Flat Rock Properties and Owners

(Legend for map of Flat Rock, by Paul F. Rossmann)

Acton Briars (7). Charles Baring, Dr. Charles M. Cheves and his descendants.	'The Camp (II). Mrs. R. F. W. Allston II.	Enchantment (33). Dr. Allard Memminger.
Appledore (2). John Maybank.	Chanteloup (9). The Count de Choiseul, David Urquhart, the Misses Norton, Mrs. Edwin Parson.	Mrs. Robert E. Lee III.
Argyle (55). Judge Mitchell King and King family descendants.	The Club House. Arthur Parker, Alan Wood III.	Far Away. Dr. Joseph Alston Huger.
Barings Mill (Rhett's Mill) (15). Charles Baring.	Diamond in the Desert (25). Charles Baring. Richard Lowndes, Robert R. McGoodwin.	Farmer's Hotel (Woodfield Inn) (49). "Squire" Henry T. Farmer.
Beaumont (45). Andrew Johnstone, Frank Hayne.	Dunroy (Amhersley) (5). David Williams, Mrs. James Rutledge, Mrs. Julius Heyward, Gen. Campbell King, Dr. D. I. C. King.	Forest Hill (Rutledge Cottage) (57). Dr. Mitchell King, sisters Miss Lise Rutledge and Sarah Rutledge Pinckney, Irvine R. Heyward.
Boxwood (52). Mrs. Lane Mullally.	Elliott Place (13). Col. William Elliott.	The Gaud Place (17). William Gaud.
Brooklands (1). Frederick R. Rutledge, Charles Edmonston, Edmund Molyneux, Maj. Theodore Barker, Henry Ficken.		Glenroy (56). Dr. Mitchell King, W. Gordon McCabe Sr.



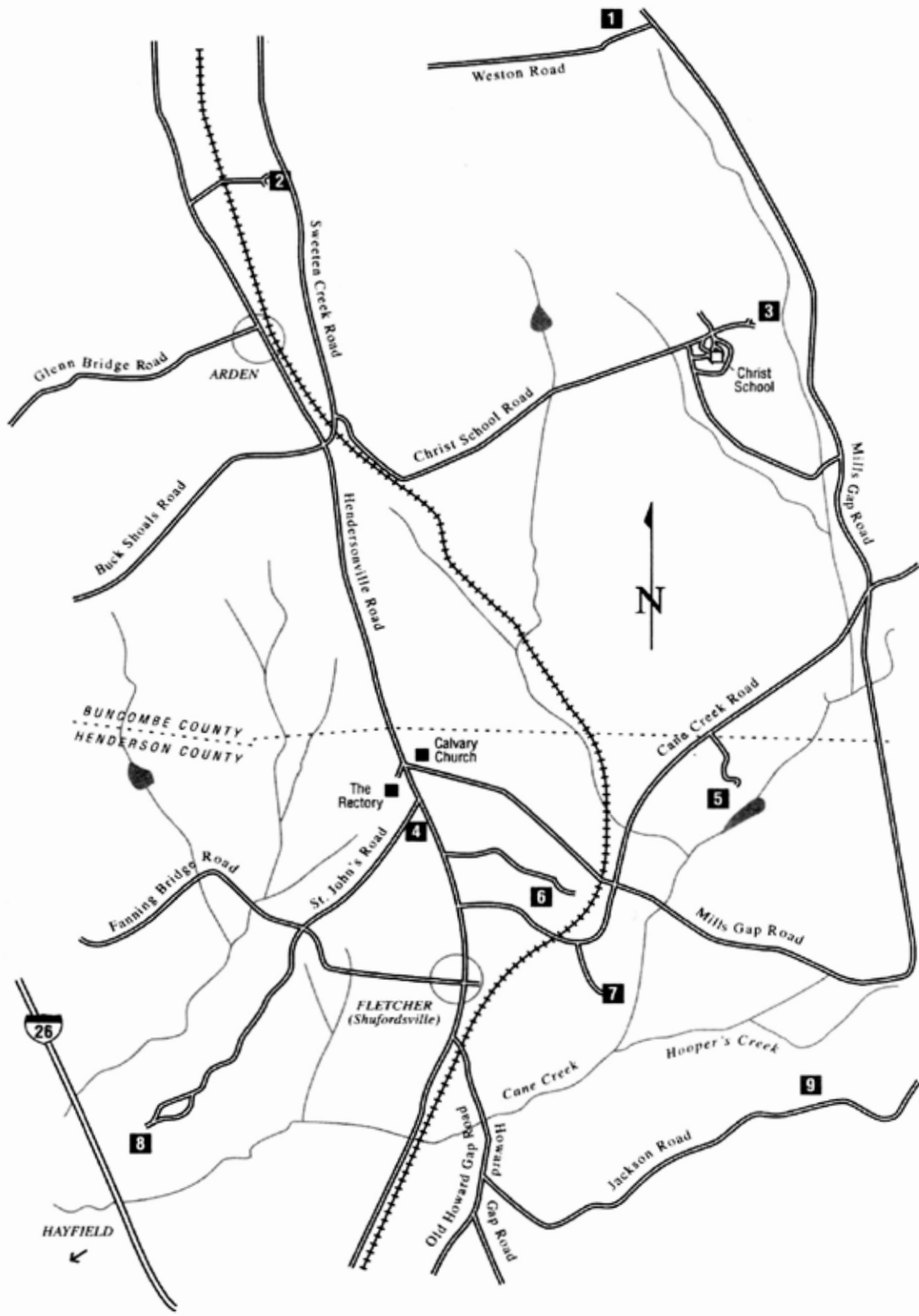
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(Legend for map of Flat Rock, by Paul F. Rossmann)

- |  |  |  |
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| Acton Briars (7). Charles Baring, Dr. Charles M. Cheves and his descendants.                                   | The Camp (11). Mrs. R. F. W. Allston II.   | Enchantment (33). Dr. Allard Memminger, Mrs. Robert E. Lee III.  |
| Appledore (2). John Maybank.   | Chanteloup (9). The Count de Choiseul, David Urquhart, the Misses Norton, Mrs. Edwin Parson.                             | Far Away. Dr. Joseph Alston Huger.   |
| Argyle (55). Judge Mitchell King and King family descendants.  | The Club House. Arthur Parker, Alan Wood III.  | Farmer's Hotel (Woodfield Inn) (49). "Squire" Henry T. Farmer.   |
| Baring's Mill (Rhett's Mill) (15). Charles Baring.   | Diamond in the Desert (25). Charles Baring, Richard Lowndes, Robert R. McGoodwin.  | Forest Hill (Rutledge Cottage) (57). Dr. Mitchell King, sisters Miss Lise Rutledge and Sarah Rutledge Pinckney, Irvine R. Heyward. |
| Beaumont (45). Andrew Johnstone, Frank Hayne.  | Dunroy (Ambersley) (5). David Williams, Mrs. James Rutledge, Mrs. Julius Heyward, Gen. Campbell King, Dr. D. I. C. King. | The Gaud Place (17). William Gaud.   |
| Boxwood (52). Mrs. Lane Mullally.  | Elliott Place (13). Col. William Elliott.  | Glenroy (56). Dr. Mitchell King, W. Gordon McCabe Sr.  |
| Brooklands (1). Frederick R. Rutledge, Charles Edmonston, Edmund Molyneux, Maj. Theodore Barker, Henry Ficken. |  |  |



- Greenlawn (Tall Trees) (54). Alfred M. Huger, Gov. Thomas Bennett, James B. Gordon.
- Harry Grimballs (12).
- Grimshawes (48). R. W. Memminger, Thomas Grimshawe.
- The Hanckel House (19). Charles Hanckel, the Woodhull-Willett family.
- Heidelberg House (26). Dr. Arthur R. Guerard.
- Hemlocks (6). Edward Rutledge Pinckney.
- Hemlocks (8). Ralph Izard Middleton, Matthew Singleton, Hugh D. Vincent.
- Henrietta (Greenwoods) (14). Dr. and Mrs. Joseph Maybank.
- Hilgay (41). Glen Drayton Grimke.
- Idlewild (50). The Daniel Huger family.
- Laurelhurst (40). Miss Morton. Marion Brawley.
- Little Hill (35). Laurens family.
- The Little Gray House (Tucked Away, Chip Ranch) (28). T. P. Mallorie, Mrs. Julius Heyward.
- The Lodge (Mountain Lodge) (10). Susan and Charles Baring, Edward L. Trenholm, George Baldwin, Dr. Edward Jones.
- Longwood (23). Robert M. W. Black.
- Many Pines (31). James R. Pringle, Arthur Barnwell, Augustine T. Smythe.
- The Edward Mayberry Place (21).
- McAlpin Place (Dolce Ear Niente) (20). Henry McAlpin, Mrs. Elizabeth Dent, William Elliott, I'on Lowndes.
- Miss Sarabelle Miles (3).
- Oak Knoll (29). Mrs. Penelope B. Parker, James Rose Parker.
- Oriente and Dawn Hill (4). Jane Screven Heyward and DuBose Heyward.
- Peaces (34).
- Piedmont (43). Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Mrs. Morris, Mrs. Price, Henry I. Middleton.
- Edward R. Pinckney (58). Mr. Pinckney, Q. J. Tanner.
- Pine Crest (32). Charles H. Simonton, Alan Wood III.
- Pine Point (18). Henry King. Sen. Burnet R. Maybank.
- Pleasant Hill (Annandale) (46). William Johnstone, Dr. Thomas Means.
- Ravenswood (36). The Rev. John G. Drayton, Mrs. William Hastie, C. Norwood Hastie Sr.
- The Rectory (22). St. John in the Wilderness.
- The Rhett House (Solitude) (16). Charles Baring, George Trenholm, Mrs. Burnet Rhett, Highland Lake Club.
- Rhododendron (part of Woodedge) (38). Gen. Rudolph Siegling, Robert P. Tucker, Robert Cleveland.
- The Rock (Flat Rock Playhouse) (27). Richard I'on Lowndes, J. J. Pringle, Robert McGoodwin.
- Rock Hill (Connemara) (37). C. G. Memminger, Col. William Gregg, Ellison E. Smyth.
- Rockworth. John Parker.
- Saluda Cottages (24). The Count de Choiseul, A. S. Willington, C. G. Memminger, The Rev. C. C. Pinckney, Ralph Izard Middleton, Gen. Rudolph Siegling. Conrad Cleveland.
- Sherwood (53). Joe Cox, Eugene Jervey, Leonard Phinizy, Julian Mitchell, Reuben Robertson.
- Teneriffe (44). Dr. J. G. Shoolbred, Dr. James S. Gibbes, Charles A. Hill, Hugh DeL. Vincent.
- Tranquility (42). C. G. Memminger, Edward R. Memminger.
- The Wigwam (51). Gen. Edward P. Alexander.
- Wildwood (30). Arthur Parker, Emily Allston, Sue Allston.
- Woodedge (Eagles Nest) (39). William R. Maxwell, William H. Cuthbert, Mortimer Glover, Miss Fowles, Gen. Rudolph Siegling.
- Yonholme (47). The Rev. Christian Hanckel, the Barrow family.



French Broad Properties and Owners

### Appendix 3

(Legend for map of French Broad by Paul F. Rossmann)

Calvary Church, built 1856-59.

Hayfield. Built by Walter Blake (1804-71), rice planter at Bonny Hall on the Combahee River. Beaufort District. S.C. Educated at Cambridge University. England. An 1862 sketch shows a two-storied house with wide porches, not elaborate, but the view north and east was spectacular. A more recent house now stands on the site.

The Knoll (5). Benjamin Huger Rutledge Sr.

Meadow View (7). Benjamin Huger Rutledge Jr.

The Meadows (6). Built by Daniel Blake, planter on Combahee River, S.C. He bought 950 acres in 1826, adding to that in 1827-29, and built his house soon thereafter. An 1838 letter reports it in ruinous condition. It was destroyed by fire in 1867. The present stone residence, built by Robert B. Blake, is dated 1884.

Newington (2). Built 1847-50 by Joseph B. Pyatt, planter of Georgetown District, S.C., who called the place Colly Hill. Bought for Frederick Rutledge Blake in 1852, who changed the name to Newington.

Rock Hall (1). Built c. 1853 by Joshua Ward, Georgetown District, S.C. son of Joshua John Ward. House burned 1912.

Oliver Middleton Rutledge House (4).

Rugby Grange (8). Built by William Heyward of Beaufort (1800-71), locally known as "Tiger Bill" for his bad temper. He harassed the young Charleston Light Dragoons, who were stationed near his Buckfield plantation in Beaufort District. S.C. They had destroyed fences and farm buildings, and flagrantly trespassed. He accused the men of cowardice and challenged them to a fight. By the end of the war the interior of his Rugby Grange home was uncompleted. The place was sold in 1868 to George Westfeldt.

Struan (4). Built 1848-54 by Alexander Robertson, Charleston District, S.C., planter.

Its location is now on the campus of Christ School, but the building no longer stands.

White Oak Hill (9). Lise Rutledge Ravenel to W. W. Childs, 19 September 1893:

"Henry Rutledge |Colonel Henry Middleton Rutledge, 1849-1921| who is a pauper, is very much excited over a house he is going to have built, on a little piece of land Aunt Lise bought for him in the Blake neighborhood. It is only to cost \$800...." Later substantially burned. The present structure is more elaborate than the original.

## APPENDIX 4

### Pinckney Transcripts from St. John in the Wilderness Register

These lists, from Elise Pinckney's transcriptions, published in three articles in the *South Carolina Historical Magazine* in mid-1962, include only the items related to aspects of the black presence in Flat Rock during the indicated years.<sup>1</sup>

#### Baptisms:

- 1847 Sept 26: Baptised George & Peg (Colored) Adults. Servants of A H. Seabrook of Beaufort, South Carolina
- 1854 July 10. Martha, daughter of William & Pigeon, servants of Dr. M[itche]ll. C. King Aged 1 month. Sponsors, Rebecca & Martha, servants of Dr. King
- 1862 June 7. Joseph Thomas, servant of John R. Jones
- 1862 Sept. 21. Sarah Jane, daughter of George and Margaret Cartwright. Aged three weeks. (Baptised by Rev. Mr. Mallet at Mr. Andrew Johnstone's; Kate, daughter of Laurence and Grace. Aged 3 months; Caroline, daughter of Jackson and Silvia. Aged 1 year. West, son of West and Hettie. Aged 1 year.
- 1863 Nov. 8. Casar and Maria, servants of R[alph]. I[zard]. Middleton. (adults); Prince, servant of C. C. Pinckney; and Cis, servant of Rev. J. G. Drayton
- 1864 July 3. Adam, servant of Rev. J. G. Drayton. (Adult). Robinson, servant of Rev. J. G. D., and [blank] servant of Charles Baring.
- 1864 August 5: Simon, servant of Jas. R. Pringle. 11 months. Baptised at home (sick).
- 1864 Oct. 30. Susan and Molly (servants of Dr. Means). Hannah, Grace and Eliza (do, Estate of A. Johnstone)

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<sup>1</sup> *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 63, No. 2 (April 1962), 105-111. Numerous baptisms prior to 1847 are listed, but none for servants. These records were transcribed (partially, it appears) in 1962 by Elise Pinckney, who published them in three parts under the title "Register of St. John in the Wilderness, Flat Rock" in the *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 63, No. 2 (April 1962), 105-111; 63, No. 3 (July 1962), 175-181; and 63, No. 4 (October 1962), 232-237. They include baptisms, confirmations, marriages, and burials from 1847 to 1881. Entries from 1847-1865 use the term servant rather than slave, but dates and other contextual clues clearly imply the latter. Entries later than 1865 use *Colored*. All materials presented here come from Pinckney's published work. Note that (1) neither enslaved children nor their parents are given surnames, (2) non-enslaved children tended to be baptised within a few days or weeks after birth, but enslaved ones perhaps months later, (3) witness names are not included here unless they are revealing in some way (e.g., known slaveholders). Years earlier, Mabel L. Webber had published "St. John's [sic] in the Wilderness, Flat Rock, N. C.: Tombstone Inscriptions" in *The South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, 40 (1939), No. 2, 52-57. Numerous prominent Charleston and Beaufort names are mentioned (e.g., Memminger, Johnstone, Middleton, Rutledge, Lowndes, Drayton), but no transcriptions of "*Colored*" gravestones are included.

- 1864 Nov. 6. Abram and Billy, Sons of Casar and Venus [and] William, son of Andrew, servants of R. I. Middleton; Amanda, daughter of Bella [and] Pino, son of Ann, servants of R. H. Lowndes; Elizabeth, daughter of William, servant of Thos. Bennett; Tina, daughter of Morris and Mary, servant of E. L. Trenholm
- 1864 Nov. 20, Sarah, daughter of Hesse, 7 years; Seymour and Lee, children of Harriett, 4 and 2 years, servants of Mrs. Ed. Reed; Rosy, daughter of Becy [and] Richard, son of Richard and Peggy, servants of Dr. M. C. King
- 1875 Sept. 5: Celia Henderson (colored)<sup>2</sup>
- 1881 Aug. 14. Mary and Martha, children of George and Lavinia Potts (colored) (176)<sup>3</sup>

Some dated confirmations and marriages were also included in the Register:<sup>4</sup>

- 1847 July 18. Three Colored adults: Pompey [and] Philippa, Servants of R. I. Middleton; Grace, Servant of Rev. C. C. Pinckney.
- 1864 Sept. 22. R. Withers Memminger Serena C. Williams By Bp. Atkinson. Casar, Marie, Venus, Servants of R. I. Middleton. Louis, Servant of Thos. Bennett. Richard, Servant of Misses King. Margaret, Servant of Thos. Means. Adam, Servant of Rev. J. G. Drayton Catherine, Free
- 1875 Sept. 5. Celia Henderson (colored)

Nearly a dozen marriage listings of enslaved servants and (later) other “colored” people, beginning in 1855, are to be found in these documents:

- 1855 June 9. Casar and Venus (servants of R. I. Middleton.) 1858; Aug. 6. Sam (servant of R. I. Middleton) to Statyra (servant of Thos. Bennett)
- 1861 Sep. 5. Elias (servant of Thos. Bennett) to Martha (servant of Fred Rutledge.)
- 1863 May 1. Tom to Molsy. Aug. 12. Fredric, Servant of Thos. Bennett, to Sarah, Servant of the Misses King. Nov. 8. Thomas, Servant of Mrs. M. Singleton, to Rose, Servant of Wm. H. Cuthbert
- 1864 Oct. 20. Martin, Servant of C. G. Memminger, to Kate, Servant of Henry T. Farmer
- 1865 Sept. 28: Charles to Clarinda

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<sup>2</sup> Register of St. John-In-The-Wilderness, Flat Rock (Continued). *The South Carolina Historical Magazine*, Vol. 63, No. 3 (July, 1962), pp. 175-181, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27566415>. This list starts with 18, 1872. It was just called “Register” at that point. There was no indication of “Baptisms,” but since it says “(Continued from April),” it was presumably a list of baptisms.

<sup>3</sup> This late date is included because it shows that, despite many blacks having long ago departed for Mud Creek Baptist Church, a few were still affiliated with St. John. No more baptisms are listed.

<sup>4</sup> *The South Carolina Historical Magazine*, Vol. 63, No. 3 (July, 1962), pp. 175-181.

- 1866 July 14. Paul to Cloe Westmoreland—Colored. Aug. 18. Gilbert Jones to Lavinia Wiley—Colored. Sep. 13. John Horlbeck to Henrietta Williams—Colored.
- 1871 Nov. 30. George Potts to Lavinia Moultrie—Colored.
- 1880 William Jenkins to Ellen Cook—Colored. William Edwards to Katie (181) Williams—Colored.

Some burials of blacks are also included:<sup>5</sup>

- 1851 July 31 Woodruff, Servant to Mr. Molineaux. Aged 85. Joseph, Servant to Mr. Molineaux. Aged 1 year
- 1854 July 1. Pigeon, Servant of Dr. King. Aged about 20
- 1858 July 19. Catharine, Servant of Wm. Cuthbert. Aged 18 years
- 1860 July 13: Harry, Servant of Wm. Cuthbert. Aged 26. Aug. 6. Mary, Servant of Judge King. Aged 24 years.
- 1862 June 8. Joseph Thomas, Servant of J. R. Jones. Aged 4 months.
- 1863 Jan. 20: Frank—Servant of the late Judge King.
- 1863 May 23. Phoebe, Servant of Wm. Cuthbert. Aged 26
- 1863 Oct. 9. Juddy, servant of E. L. Trenholm [age not specified]
- 1864 [no date] Jim, servant of Dr. M. C. King. About 40
- 1864 July 0. John, servant of the Misses King. About 60.
- 1864 July 31. Harriet, servant of Mrs. Ed. Reed. Aged about 32.
- 1864 July 31. Sylvy, Servant of Henry T. Farmer.
- 1864 Aug. 1. Lewis, Servant of Jas. R. Pringle. Aged 2 years, 2 months, 2 days.
- 1864 Aug. 8. Simon, Servant of Jas R. Pringle. Aged 11 months.
- 1869 July 16. Margaret Shiems (colored). About 20.
- 1869 Sept. 14. Rose Harrison (Colored). About 45.
- 1879 May 20, May 22, July 5 and July 30: “A colored infant.”
- 1881 June 30 A colored child; Aug. 14 A Colored Boy.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Register of St. John-In-The-Wilderness, Flat Rock (Continued), The South Carolina Historical Magazine, Vol. 63, No. 4 (October, 1962), pp. 232-237, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27566430>, accessed June 6, 2017.

<sup>6</sup> This list continues through 1904, but there are no more *Colored* entries.





# APPENDIX 5

## County Black Populations in Western North Carolina, 1860–1890

Source: Darin J. Waters, *Life Beneath The Veneer: The Black Community in Asheville, North Carolina from 1793 to 1900* (PhD diss., UNC Chapel Hill, 2012), <http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/etd/id/4750>. Combination of Appendices I-IV, 233-236.

County	Date	Slave Pop.	Free Blacks	Total Blacks	Total Pop.	% Black Pop.
Alexander	1860	611	24	635	6022	10.50%
Alexander	1870			834	6,868	12%
Alexander	1880			897	8355	11%
Alexander	1890			842	9430	8.90%
Alleghany	1860	206	33	239	3590	6.60%
Alleghany	1870			290	3,691	7.80%
Alleghany	1880			519	5486	9%
Alleghany	1890			460	6532	7%
Ashe	1860	391	142	533	7956	6.70%
Ashe	1870			582	9,573	6%
Ashe	1880			963	14,434	6.60%
Ashe	1890			595	15,628	3.80%
Buncombe	1860	1,933	111	2,044	12,654	16.20%
Buncombe	1870			2,303	15,412	15%
Buncombe	1880			3,476	21,898	16%
Buncombe	1890			6,626	35,266	18.70%
Burke	1860	2,371	221	2,592	9,237	28%
Burke	1870			2,314	9,777	23.60%
Burke	1880			2,721	12,809	21%
Burke	1890			2,561	14,939	17%
Caldwell	1860	1,088	114	1,202	7,497	16%
Caldwell	1870			1,380	8,476	16%
Caldwell	1880			1,599	10,290	15.50%
Caldwell	1890			1,554	12,298	12.60%
Cherokee	1860	519	38	557	9,140	6.00%

## Appendix 5

Cherokee	1870			301	7,597	4%
Cherokee	1880			288	8084	3.50%
Cherokee	1890			274	9976	2.70%
Clay	1870			142	2,461	5%
Clay	1880			288	3463	8.30%
Clay	1890			142	4197	3%
Graham	1880			23	2146	1%
Graham	1890			25	3313	0.70%
Haywood	1860	313	14	327	5,801	5.60%
Haywood	1870			515	7,921	6%
Haywood	1880			484	10,271	4.70%
Haywood	1890			517	13,346	3.80%
Henderson	1860	1,382	85	1,467	10,448	14%
Henderson	1870			1,208	7,706	16%
Henderson	1880			1,388	10,281	13.50%
Henderson	1890			1,378	12,589	10.90%
Jackson	1860	268	6	274	4,453	6%
Jackson	1870			274	5,972	4.50%
Jackson	1880			375	6966	5%
Jackson	1890			518	9512	5.40%
Macon	1860	519	115	634	5,949	10.60%
Macon	1870			403	6,576	6%
Macon	1880			656	8051	8%
Macon	1890			665	10,102	6.50%
Madison	1860	213	17	230	5,908	3.80%
Madison	1870			334	8,192	4%
Madison	1880			459	12,810	3.50%
Madison	1890			710	17,805	4%
McDowell	1860	1,305	273	1,578	7,120	22%
McDowell	1870			1,772	7,592	23%
McDowell	1880			1,897	9836	19%
McDowell	1890			1,825	10,939	16.60%
Mitchell	1870			213	4,705	4.50%
Mitchell	1880			503	9435	5%
Mitchell	1890			553	12,807	4.30%
Polk	1860	620	106	726	4,038	18%

## Appendix 5

Polk	1870			978	4,319	22.60%
Polk	1880			1,144	5062	22%
Polk	1890			1,093	5902	18.50%
Rutherford	1860	2,391	123	2,514	11,573	21%
Rutherford	1870			2,642	13,121	20%
Rutherford	1880			3,255	15,165	21%
Rutherford	1890			3,692	18,770	20%
Swain	1880			109	3343	3%
Swain	1890			225	6577	3.40%
Totals	1880			24,224	218,560	11%
Totals	1890			27,533	266,576	10.30%
Totals:	1860	15,522	1,831	17,635	139,783	12.60%
Totals:	1870			18,990	160,230	11%
Transylvania	1870			309	3,536	9%
Transylvania	1880			517	5340	9.60%
Transylvania	1890			513	5881	8.70%
Watagua	1860	104	81	185	4,957	3.70%
Watagua	1870			226	5,287	4%
Watagua	1880			414	8160	5%
Wataqua	1890			431	10,611	4%
Wilkes	1860	1,208	261	1,469	14,749	10%
Wilkes	1870			1,662	15,539	11%
Wilkes	1880			1,924	19,181	10%
Wilkes	1890			2,042	22,675	9%
Yancey	1860	362	67	429	8,655	5%
Yancey	1870			308	5,909	5%
Yancey	1880			325	7694	4%
Yancey	1890			292	9490	3%



# APPENDIX 6

## Lynchings in Mountain Counties: North Carolina and Bordering States

### *North Carolina (western)*<sup>1</sup>

Alleghany (1; 1894); Buncombe (1; 1888, 1906); Burke (double; 1889); Catawba (1; 1881); Cleveland (1; 1888); Graham (1; 1899); Haywood (1; 1900); Mitchell (1; 1894, 1896); Rutherford (1; 1871, 1900); Stokes (2; 1892); Surry (1; 1892); Watauga (1)

### *Tennessee (eastern)*

Hamilton (4); Jefferson (1); **Johnson** (1); Knox (1); Loudon (1); Roane (1); Sullivan (1); Unicoi (1)

### *South Carolina (upcountry)*

Abbeville (5; 1889); Anderson (5; 1894, 1901, 1903); **Cherokee** (3); Chester (1); Fairfield (3); Greenville (4); Greenwood (15); Lancaster (2); Newberry (5); **Oconee** (5; 1930); **Pickens** (4; 1887, 1890); Saluda (2); **Spartanburg** (1886, 1894); Union (4; 1906); York (9)

### *Georgia (northern)*

Bartow (3); **Catoosa** (2); Chatooga (3); Clarke (1); **Dade** (2); Floyd (4); Franklin (1); Gordon (1); Gwinnett (3); Habersham (6); Jackson (1); **Murray** (2); Polk (1); Stephens (1); Walker (1); **Whitfield** (5)

### *Virginia (southwest)*

Alleghany (3); Bland (1); Roanoke (2); Russell (3); Scott (1); Tazewell (7); Wythe (3)

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<sup>1</sup> **Bold** indicates shared boundary with North Carolina. These lists combine data from two sources: *A Red Record* (1915), <http://lynching.web.unc.edu>, accessed April 25, 2018; titled from Ida B. Wells-Barnett's *The Red Record: Tabulated Statistics and Alleged Causes of Lynching in the United States* (1895), <https://archive.org/stream/theredrecord14977gut/14977.txt>, accessed April 26, 2018. Numbers of lynchings by county are from Equal Justice Initiative, *Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror and Supplement: Lynchings by County* (Third ed.), <https://eji.org/sites/default/files/lynching-in-america-third-edition-summary.pdf>, accessed April 24, 2018. Dates are from the *Red Record* website.

Although these two sources were developed independently of each other, and do not always agree completely on details, they are treated here as equally credible. If a date or number of events, or other details, are present on either site, they are included here. The *Red Record* site is rich in detail on individual events: dates, general and specific locations, newspaper accounts, and participants and victims.





# APPENDIX 7

## Manuscript Collections Relevant to C. G. Memminger and Rock Hill

Search conducted and annotations created by Laurie Medford, Graduate Student, History,  
UNC-Chapel Hill, Fall 2018

### *St. Peter's Episcopal Church records, 1834–1967*

Collection #327

OCLC Number: 70978478

South Carolina Historical Society

<https://beta.worldcat.org/archivegrid/collection/data/70978478>

*Type of Documents of Interest:* Baptismal Register

This might be one of the best ways to find names and consistent records of people enslaved by the Memmingers/Flat Rock community. St. Peter's Episcopal Church is where C. G. Memminger's family attended in Charleston. The family is listed on a South Carolina Historical Society's summary of the church records. Since Memminger was active in the church and other active church families had their enslaved people baptized at the church, there may be people enslaved by the Memminger family listed in the records. The finding aid (text on WorldCat) mentions that 45 "colored families" are listed as members of the congregation.\*NOTE: Relevant records might be contained within Microfilm (SCHS 54/17-18). SEE ALSO: Childs, Margaretta P., and Isabella G. Leland. "South Carolina Episcopal Church Records." *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 84, no. 4 (1983): 250-63. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27567808>.

### *Mitchell King Papers, 1801–1862*

Creator: Mitchell King

Collection #400

Series 3, Diaries, 1845–1861.

SHC, Wilson Library, UNC

<https://finding-aids.lib.unc.edu/00400>

*Type of Documents of Interest:* Diaries

Memminger family listed as frequently discussed.

### *Lucas family papers, 1758–1902*

Collection #477

OCLC Number: 828767941

South Carolina Historical Society

<https://beta.worldcat.org/archivegrid/collection/data/828767941>

*Type of Documents of Interest:* Correspondence

Christopher E. Memminger listed as correspondent. Likely a typo for Christopher G. Memminger, considering context and uncommon name. ArcGRID link to finding aid is not working as of 11/6.

### *C. G. Memminger Papers*

Creator: C. G. Memminger

Collection #502

Series 1

SHC, Wilson Library, UNC

<https://finding-aids.lib.unc.edu/00502/>

*Type of Documents of Interest::* Correspondence, Account Book, and papers related to secession.

The account book of Flat Rock expenses is of great interest. Scans available online through finding aid. Correspondence is also likely to be useful. Papers related to secession may contain Memminger's views of African Americans and slavery since similar writings in other places reflect on the subjects. The finding aid suggests that it is mostly letters he received, not complete correspondence, so it might be best to find letters C. G. Memminger wrote to others in other families' papers.

### *C. G. Memminger Papers*

Creator: C. G. Memminger

Collection #502

Series 2

SHC, Wilson Library, UNC

[https://finding-aids.lib.unc.edu/00502](https://finding-aids.lib.unc.edu/00502/)

Thomas Memminger Papers (Series 2 in collection) do not appear fruitful. Most is related to Civil War service, and no reference to pre-emancipation correspondence. A letter between Thomas Memminger and E. G. Memminger regarding the settlement of C. G. Memminger's estate might be helpful, but it's a long shot.

***John Wroughton Mitchell Papers, 1817–1865***

Creator: John Wroughton Mitchell

Collection #4282

Series 1, Correspondence, 1817–1865.

SHC, Wilson Library, UNC.

<https://finding-aids.lib.unc.edu/04282>

*Type of Documents of Interest:* Single Letter

Might include info about Flat Rock as typical news.

***John W. Anderson Diary: 1861–1866 (bulk: 1867)***

Creator: John W. Anderson

Identification: Ragan MSS 00124

Cushing Memorial Library, University of Texas, College Station, TX

<https://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/taro/tamucush/00124/tamu-00124.html>

*Type of Documents of Interest:* Diary

Anderson was a Corresponding Clerk in C. G. Memminger’s office when he was Secretary of the Treasury for the Confederacy. Memminger is listed as being named in the diary, and might be part of the rich descriptions of goings-on mentioned in the finding aid. This might not be as fruitful of a source because it is focused on 1861–1866 and is likely to discuss Memminger as Secretary of the Treasury more than his personal life. Unlikely to yield information on his views of slavery that aren’t available elsewhere.

***C. G. Memminger, “Showing African Slavery to Be Consistent with The Moral and Physical Progress of A Nation”***

Creator: C. G. Memminger

Gale Document Number: CY3804601156

Gale Online via UNC Libraries

<http://galenet.galegroup.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/servlet/>

[Sabin?af=RN&ae=CY104601155&srchtp=a&ste=14](http://galenet.galegroup.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/servlet/Sabin?af=RN&ae=CY104601155&srchtp=a&ste=14)

*Type of Documents of Interest:* Lecture on Slavery

Of interest due to subject of Lecture. CITATION: Memminger, C. G. (Christopher Gustavus). Lecture delivered before the Young Men’s Library Association, of Augusta, April 10th, 1851 : showing African slavery to be consistent with the . . . Augusta, Ga, 1851. 25pp. Sabin Americana. Gale, Cengage Learning. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. 05 November 2018 <<http://galenet.galegroup.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/servlet/Sabin?af=RN&ae=CY104601155&srchtp=a&ste=14>>

***C. G. Memminger correspondence, 1860***

Creator: C. G. Memminger

OCLC# 79454450

Library of Congress, Washington, DC

<http://www.worldcat.org/title/c-g-memminger-correspondence-1860/oclc/79454450#borrow>

*Type of Documents of Interest:* Single Letter

Contents not listed.

***James Petigru Boyce papers, 1854–1907***

OCLC# 124036612

Library of Congress, Washington, DC

<http://www.worldcat.org/title/james-petigru-boyce-papers-1854-1907/oclc/124036612>

*Type of Documents of Interest:* Correspondence

C. G. Memminger is listed as a person named in the records. Likely correspondence, but maybe business or financial records. 20 records in container.

***Whitemarsh B. Seabrook correspondence, 1849–1852***

Creator: Whitemarsh B. Seabrook

OCLC Number: 70981054

Library of Congress, Washington, DC

<http://www.worldcat.org/title/whitemarsh-b-seabrook-correspondence-1849-1852/oclc/70981054>

*Type of Documents of Interest:* Correspondence

C. G. Memminger is listed as correspondent. 29 items in collection.

***Papers, 1773–1856: Miller, John Blount***

Creator: John Blount Miller

Call Number: RUB Bay 0035:04 items 1-178 c.1

Rubenstein Library, Duke University

<https://search.library.duke.edu/search?id=DUKE002565808>

*Type of Documents of Interest:* Correspondence

C. G. Memminger is listed as a correspondent with John Blount Miller. Might include Flat Rock news or views regarding African Americans.

***James Butler Campbell papers, 1814–1897***

Creator: James Butler Campbell

OCLC Number: 35916192

South Carolina Historical Society

<http://www.worldcat.org/title/james-butler-campbell-papers-1814-1897/oclc/35916192>

*Type of Documents of Interest:* Correspondence

C. G. Memminger listed as correspondent. 7+ linear feet of records, unclear how many are correspondence. No finding aid linked to WorldCat as of 11/5/2018. Might be of interest if going to South Carolina Historical Society because of the types of records and people listed. Memminger might be among some of the other papers, too.

***Springfield Plantation journal, 1831–1864 (bulk 1832–1843):  
Withers, Francis, 1769–1847***

Creator: Francis Withers; Robert Withers

OCLC Number: 32141718

South Carolina Historical Society

<https://beta.worldcat.org/archivegrid/collection/data/32141718>

*Type of Documents of Interest:* Journal, Loose Papers

Springfield Plantation owner Robert Withers bequeathed the property to Mary Memminger, his niece and C. G. Memminger's wife. The finding aid sounds like the property never was transferred to Memminger because Withers sold it. The journal may still be of interest because of visiting culture among South Carolina planter families. If Mary Memminger was named in Withers' will, it seems quite likely that she visited the plantation and may have brought news of Rock Hill or enslaved people with her.

***A map of the Flat Rock settlement, 1997: Cuthbert, Robert B***

OCLC Number: 974945928

South Carolina Historical Society

<https://beta.worldcat.org/archivegrid/collection/data/974945928>

*Type of Documents of Interest:* Map

“principally drawn from the accounts of Langdon Cheves, Esq.”

***Collection, 1791–1933: Casey, Martha De Bow***

Creator: Martha De Bow Casey

OCLC Number: 26835913

Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, TN

<http://www.worldcat.org/title/collection-1791-1933/oclc/26835913>

*Type of Documents of Interest:* Correspondence

C. G. Memminger listed as correspondent. 29 letters within a broader collection, Memminger's among them.



### *Charles C. Pinckney papers, 1860–1922*

Creator: Charles C. Pinckney

OCLC Number: 668115225

University Libraries, University of South Carolina

<https://beta.worldcat.org/archivegrid/collection/data/668115225>

*Type of Documents of Interest:* Personal and Business Correspondence and Records

Charles C. Pinckney was C. G. Memminger's son-in-law and became a business partner in Memminger's law firm.

### *C. G. Memminger papers, 1830–1880*

Creator: C. G. Memminger

OCLC# 45459477

University Library, University of South Carolina\*

<http://www.worldcat.org/title/cg-memminger-papers-1830-1880/oclc/45459477>

Contains correspondence and records. Appears that most of the Flat Rock-specific records are in UNC's C.G. Memminger Papers Collection. \*Microfilm copy of South Carolina collection at UNC Libraries. See worldcat link for link to UNC microfilm.

### *St. John-in-the-Wilderness Church Records*

Creator: Unknown

St. John in the Wilderness Episcopal Church, Flat Rock, NC. (Phone Number for Church: 828-693-9783)

See: Pinckney, Elise. "Register of St. John-In-The-Wilderness, Flat Rock (Continued)."

*The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 63, no. 2 (1962): 105-11.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/27566400>

*Type of Documents of Interest:* Baptismal Register, Communion Records, Cemetery

This source could be very valuable in locating names and consistent records of people enslaved in Flat Rock. There are no records of "servants" belonging to the Memmingers, but there are enslaved people owned by the Middletons and other families. There might be people owned by the Memmingers in communion, death, burial, or other church records. The baptismal register transcription in *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* suggests some patterns among the Charleston Families and people they owned. The Church cemetery has a slave section with about 100 graves. If they have any dates for burial after the Civil War, it might be useful to determine how many enslaved people died in Flat Rock, which can then be used to compare with other enslaved and free populations. Church Phone Number: 828-693-9783. Church record custodian is there M-F, 9 am-3 pm.

*Papers, 1861–1878: Memminger, C. G. (Christopher Gustavus), 1803–1888*

Creators: Memminger, C. G.; Memminger Family

Call Number: Sec. A Box 94 items1-20 c.1

Perkins Library, Duke University Library, Duke University

<https://search.library.duke.edu/search?id=DUKE000868353>

*Type of Documents of Interest:* Business and Personal Correspondence

Correspondence and Business papers might refer to Flat Rock and Rock Hill, especially since he retired to that location in 1864.

*Johnstone family papers*

Creator: Mary Barnwell Johnstone

OCLC Number: 43147029

South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina\*

<http://libcat.csd.sc.edu/search/o43147029>

*Type of Documents of Interest:* Financial & Legal Records, Correspondence

\*AVAILABLE ONLY BY ADVANCE NOTICE.\* From collection description (emphasis added): “Chiefly bills, receipts, legal papers; correspondence of Mary Barnwell Johnstone, and family correspondence discussing activities in her community in the mountainis of Southwestern North Carolina, including the organization and activities of the Transylvania Volunteers of North Carolina in the American Civil War, Francis W. Johnstone’s trip to the Bahamas and reports on agricultural conditions in South Carolina and North Carolina; contract, 3 Oct. 1803, Buncombe County, North Carolina, for sale of land on French Broad River from Lambert Clayton to Nathaniel Johnston.” Description references some letters are copies, but other material is manuscript.



# APPENDIX 8

## Servants and Slaves in Household of C. G. Memminger, U.S. Census, 1840–1880

Census Year	Slave/Servant Name	Slave/Servant Gender	Slave/Servant Age	Slave/Servant Birth Year (Est)	Color	Estimated Age 1860	Count
Household Name: C G Memminger				City of Charleston, Ward No. 4			
1840		Male	under 10				1
1840		Male	under 10				1
1840		Male	under 10				1
1840		Male	10 & under 24				1
1840		Male	10 & under 24				1
1840		Male	24 & under 36				1
1840		Male	24 & under 36				1
1840		Female	10 & under 24				1
1840		Female	10 & under 24				1
1840		Female	10 & under 24				1
1840		Female	10 & under 24				1
1840		Female	24 & under 36				1
1840		Female	24 & under 26				1
1840		Female	36 & under 55				1
1840		Female	55 & under 100				1

## Appendix 8

Census Year	Slave/Servant Name	Slave/Servant Gender	Slave/Servant Age	Slave/Servant Birth Year (Est)	Color	Estimated Age 1860	Count
<b>Household Name: C G Memminger</b>				<b>Charleston, South Carolina</b>			
1850		Female	45	1805	Black	55	1
1850		Male	40	1810	Black	50	1
1850		Female	40	1810	Black	50	1
1850		Male	35	1815	Black	45	1
1850		Female	35	1815	Mulatto	45	1
1850		Male	25	1825	Black	35	1
1850		Female	25	1825	Black	35	1
1850		Female	25	1825	Mulatto	35	1
1850		Male	20	1830	Black	30	1
1850		Male	20	1830	Black	30	1
1850		Female	18	1832	Black	28	1
1850		Female	10	1840	Black	20	1

<b>Household Name: C G Memminger</b>				<b>Henderson, North Carolina</b>			
1850		Male	34	1816	Black	44	1
1850		Female	34	1816	Black	44	1
1850		Male	30	1820	Black	40	1
1850		Male	3	1847	Black	13	1
1850		Male	26	1824	Black	36	1
1850		Female	26	1824	Black	36	1
1850		Female	24	1826	Black	34	1
1850		Male	24	1826	Black	34	1
1850		Male	20	1830	Black	30	1
1850		Female	30	1820	Black	40	1
1850		Male	30	1820	Black	40	1
1850		Male	19	1831	Black	29	1

Appendix 8

Census Year	Slave/Servant Name	Slave/Servant Gender	Slave/Servant Age	Slave/Servant Birth Year (Est)	Color	Estimated Age 1860	Count
<b>Household Name: C G Memminger</b>				<b>Henderson, North Carolina</b>			
1860		Male	38	1822	Black		1
1860		Male	36	1824	Black		1
1860		Female	45	1815	Black		1
1860		Male	35	1825	Black		1
1860		Female	32	1828	Black		1
1860		Male	40	1820	Black		1
1860		Male	45	1815	Black		1
1860		Female	38	1822	Black		1
1860		Female	15	1845	Black		1
1860		Female	78	1782	Black		1
1860		Male	16	1844	Black		1
1860		Female	14	1846	Black		1
1860		Male	9	1851	Black		1
1860		Male	25	1835	Mulatto		1

<b>Household Name: Christopher Memminger</b>				<b>Charleston Ward 4, South Carolina</b>			
1870	Cupid McLowed	Male	30	1840	Black		1
1870	Thomas Whilden	Male	50	1820	Black		1
1870	Grace Whilden	Female	50	1820	Black		1
1870	Mary Bowser	Female	30	1840	Black		1
1870	Martha Price	Female	50	1820	Black		1

<b>Household Name: Chris Memminger</b>				<b>Charleston Enumeration Dist 64, South Carolina</b>			
1880	John Jenkins	Male	50	1830	Black		
1880	Charlotte Ray	Female	40	1840	Mulatto		





# APPENDIX 9

All Census Records  
C.G. Memminger  
South Carolina and North Carolina  
1840–1880







551 179

**SCHEDULE I.—Free Inhabitants in the Parishes of St. Philip & St. Michael in the County of Annapolis State of South Carolina** enumerated by me, on the twelfth day of November 1850. Amos Holmquist Ass't Marshal. 289

1		2		3			4		5		6		7		8		9		10 11 12			13	
No. of Family		No. of Inhabitants		The Name of every Person whose usual place of abode on the first day of June, 1850, was in this family.			Age		Sex		Color		Profession, Occupation, or Trade of each Male Person over 15 years of age.		Value of Real Estate owned.		Place or Birth. Naming the State, Territory, or Country.		Married within the year. (Marked with the year.)			Whether deaf and dumb, blind, insane, idiotic, pauper, or convict.	
1077	1100	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
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		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
		1	1	1	1																		

SCHEDULE I.—Free Inhabitants in \_\_\_\_\_ in the County of Henderson State  
of North Carolina enumerated by me, on the 14 day of Sept 1850. John Clayton Ass't Marshal.

Dwellings to which numbered by the order of visitation.	Persons numbered by the order of visitation.	The Name of every Person whose usual place of abode on the first day of June, 1850, was in this family.	Description.			Profession, Occupation, or Trade of each Male Person over 15 years of age.	Value of Real Estate owned.	Place or Bureau, Naming the State, Territory, or County.	Married within the year.	Attended School within the year.	Whether deaf and dumb, blind, insane, idiotic, pauper, or convict.	
			Age.	Sex.	White, Black, or Indian.							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1	202	Squire Morgan	51	M.		Farmer	1000	N.C.				
2	203	Larah Morgan	47	F.				N.C.				
3		Olivia Morgan	17	F.		Farmer		N.C.				
4		Carrie Morgan	14	F.				N.C.				
5		Stephen Morgan	12	M.				N.C.				
6		James Morgan	9	M.				N.C.				
7		B. P. Morgan	7	M.				N.C.				
8	204	Lucy King	47	F.		Farmer	2000	N.C.				
9	205	Nancy King	45	F.				N.C.				
10		J. L. King	19	M.		Farmer		N.C.				
11		Larisa King	17	F.				N.C.				
12		Harriet King	15	F.				N.C.				
13		R. H. King	14	M.				N.C.				
14		Sam King	10	M.				N.C.				
15		Morah King	5	F.				N.C.				
16		Matilda King	4	F.				N.C.				
17	206	John Will. Carson	34	M.		Carver		N.C.				
18	207	Elizabeth M. Carson	34	F.				N.C.				
19		Nancy M. Carson	17	F.				N.C.				
20		Luce R. M. Carson	14	F.				N.C.				
21		James A. M. Carson	13	M.				N.C.				
22		Mary M. Carson	10	F.				N.C.				
23		Martha A. M. Carson	8	F.				N.C.				
24		Her M. Carson	7	M.				N.C.				
25		Walter M. Carson	5	M.				N.C.				
26		Julian M. Carson	4	M.				N.C.				
27		Lucinda M. Carson	1	F.				N.C.				
28		William Guiso	26	M.		Farmer		N.C.				
29		Abner M. Gault	30	M.		Farmer		N.C.				
30	208	G. G. Reminger	43	M.		None		N.C.				
31	209	Mary Reminger	33	F.				N.C.				
32		Oliver Reminger	15	M.				N.C.				
33		J. B. Reminger	11	M.				N.C.				
34		Walter Reminger	10	M.				N.C.				
35		Lucinda Reminger	8	F.				N.C.				
36		Catrina Reminger	6	F.				N.C.				
37		Willie Reminger	4	M.				N.C.				
38		Albert Reminger	3	M.				N.C.				
39		Virginia Reminger	1	F.				N.C.				
40	210	Richard Heybendell	29	M.		Farmer		N.C.				
41	211	David Heybendell	28	M.				N.C.				
42	212	John A. Heybendell	9	M.				N.C.				

17 m  
29



SCHEDULE 2.—Slave Inhabitants in the Parish of St. Paul's & Michael in the County of District of Charleston State of South Carolina, enumerated by me, on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of November, 1850. *David S. Smith* Ass't Marshal.

1	NAMES OF SLAVE OWNERS.	Number of Slaves.	DESCRIPTION.			Fugitives from the State.	Number manumitted.	Deaf & dumb, blind, insane, or idiotic.	1	NAMES OF SLAVE OWNERS.	Number of Slaves.	DESCRIPTION.			Fugitives from the State.	Number manumitted.	Deaf & dumb, blind, insane, or idiotic.	1
			Age.	Sex.	Color.							Age.	Sex.	Color.				
1	<i>John Thomas Bennett</i>	1	26	M	B				1	<i>Henry Bagley</i>	1	17	F	W				1
2		1	25	M	B				2	<i>C. J. Hemmingway</i>	1	45	F	B				2
3		1	22	M	B				3		1	40	M	B				3
4		1	21	M	B				4		1	40	F	B				4
5		1	20	M	B				5		1	35	M	B				5
6		1	18	M	B				6		1	35	F	W				6
7		1	18	M	B				7		1	25	M	B				7
8		1	16	M	B				8	10	1	25	F	B				8
9		1	12	M	B				9		1	25	F	W				9
10		1	12	M	B				10		1	20	M	B				10
11		1	11	F	B				11		1	20	M	B				11
12		1	55	F	B				12		1	18	F	B				12
13		1	40	F	B				13		1	10	F	B				13
14		1	36	F	B				14		1	10	F	B				14
15		1	28	F	B				15	<i>Benjamin E. Hunt</i>	1	49	M	B				15
16		1	25	F	B				16		1	20	F	W				16
17		1	22	F	B				17		1	16	M	B				17
18		1	22	F	B				18		1	25	M	B				18
19		1	21	F	B				19		1	12	M	B				19
20		1	21	F	B				20		1	11	M	W				20
21		1	20	F	B				21	<i>V. Buzandke</i>	1	78	M	B				21
22		1	18	F	B				22		1	51	F	B				22
23		1	12	F	B				23		1	52	F	B				23
24		1	10	F	B				24		1	35	F	B				24
25		1	8	F	B				25		1	22	F	B				25
26		1	6	F	B				26		1	16	F	W				26
27	<i>Thomas L. Rogers</i>	1	35	F	W				27		1	14	F	W				27
28		1	30	M	B				28		1	14	F	W				28
29		1	23	F	B				29	<i>Byron Hunt</i>	1	25	M	B				29
30		1	15	M	W				30		1	20	F	B				30
31		1	7	F	W				31		1	25	F	B				31
32		1	4	F	W				32	10	1	12	M	W				32
33	<i>Henry Bagley</i>	1	30	F	W				33		1	11	F	B				33
34		1	14	M	W				34		1	32	F	W				34
35		1	8	F	W				35		1	27	M	B				35
36		1	4	M	W				36		1	45	M	B				36
37		1	2	M	W				37		1	45	F	B				37
38		1	28	F	W				38		1	35	M	B				38
39		1	10	F	W				39		1	60	M	B				39
40		1	4	F	W				40		1	20	F	B				40
41		1	3/4	M	W				41		1	11	F	B				41
42		1	26	M	W				42		1	12	F	B				42
43		1	22	M	W				43		1	9	F	B				43





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**SCHEDULE 1—Free Inhabitants in** 4 Ward City of Charleston **in the County of** Charleston **State**  
**of** So. Ca. **enumerated by me, on the** 15th **day of** July **1860.** T. Chittard Ass't Marshal  
**Post Office** Charleston So. Ca.

349

1	2	3	4			7	8		10	11	12	13	14
			Age	Sex	Color		Value of Real Estate	Value of Personal Estate					
1	740	Mrs. Adeline	25	F					So. Ca.				
2		Margaret Ford	55	F		Wife			Ireland				
3		W. C. G. G.	55	M		Merchant	\$30000	75000	So. Ca.				
4		Lena H.	22	F									
5		Ann C.	28	F									
6		Mary C.	18	F									
7		Eugene West	25	M		Merchant							
8		Ben H.	17	M									
9		Thos. S.	25	M									
10	742	George West	27	M		com Merchant	\$7000	17000					
11		Wm. E.	26	M									
12		James H.	5	M									
13		James C.	5	M									
14		Richard T.	3	M									
15		Lucius F.	2	M									
16		William H.	15	M									
17		Wm. H. Lane	17	M		Wife			Ireland				
18	743	C. A. Williams	31	M		Att. Gen.	\$25000	15000	Virginia				
19		Wm.	15	M					So. Ca.				
20		Thomas	22	M		Physician			So. Ca.				
21		Wm.	24	M									
22		Thomas	22	M									
23		Matthew	17	M		Student							
24		Wm.	15	M									
25		Wm.	5	M									
26		Bernard	16	M									
27		Wm.	7	M									
28		Wm.	5	M									
29		Edward	3	M									
30		Augustine Carter	42	M		Wife							
31		Wm. Brady	27	M									
32		Wm. C. Adams	50	M				10000	40000				
33		Charles	20	M									
34		Conrad	21	M									
35		Samuel	12	M									
36		Wm.	15	M									
37		Wm.	17	M									
38		Wm.	17	M									
39		Wm.	15	M									
40		Wm. H. Guffe	25	M									

No. white males, \_\_\_\_\_ No. colored males, \_\_\_\_\_ No. foreign born, \_\_\_\_\_ No. blind, \_\_\_\_\_  
 No. white females, 16 No. colored females, 3 No. deaf and dumb, \_\_\_\_\_ No. insane, \_\_\_\_\_  
 No. paupers, \_\_\_\_\_

SCHEDULE 2.—Slave Inhabitants in *4 Ward City of Charleston* in the *District of Charleston* State of *S. C.*, enumerated by me, on the *24th* day of *June*, 1860. *J. P. Hayward* Ass't Marshal.

1	NAMES OF SLAVE OWNERS.	DESCRIPTION.					Fugitives from the State.	Deaf & dumb, blind, insane, or idiotic.	No. of Slave Inhabitants.	1	NAMES OF SLAVE OWNERS.	DESCRIPTION.					Fugitives from the State.	Deaf & dumb, blind, insane, or idiotic.	No. of Slave Inhabitants.	1
		2	3	4	5	6						2	3	4	5	6				
1	<i>Miss Rogers</i>	1	48	2	B					<i>W. Collier</i>	1	65	2	B					1	
2		1	47	2	B						1	65	2	B					2	
3		1	31	M	M						1	115	2	M					3	
4		1	15	M	B						1	24	2	B					4	
5		1	16	2	B						1	27	2	B					5	
6		1	11	2	B						1	14	2	B					6	
7		1	9	M	B						1	12	2	B					7	
8		1	8	M	B						1	8	2	B					8	
9	<i>Dr. A. Bacot</i>	1	32	M	B						1	28	M	B					9	
10		1	41	2	B						1	26	M	B					10	
11		1	44	M	B						1	22	M	B					11	
12		1	31	M	B						1	16	M	B					12	
13		1	17	M	B						1	12	M	B					13	
14		1	21	2	B						1	80	M	B					14	
15		1	35	2	B					<i>C. H. West</i>	1	65	2	B					15	
16		1	25	2	B						1	43	M	B					16	
17		1	31	M	B						1	40	2	M					17	
18		1	17	M	B						1	31	2	B					18	
19		1	5	M	B						1	23	2	B					19	
20		1	1	M	B						1	6	2	B					20	
21		1	32	2	B						1	1	2	B					21	
22		1	15	M	B						1	12	M	B					22	
23	<i>Miss Smith</i>	1	10	2	B					<i>C. G. Meringer</i>	1	45	M	B					23	
24		1	41	M	B						1	38	2	B					24	
25		1	11	2	M						1	15	2	B					25	
26	<i>W. S. Comtey</i>	1	14	2	M						1	76	2	B					26	
27		1	41	2	B						1	16	M	B					27	
28		1	7	M	B						1	14	2	B					28	
29		1	31	M	B						1	9	M	B					29	
30		1	41	M	B						1	25	M	M					30	
31	<i>Austen West</i>	1	35	M	B					<i>Benj. H. Tarawa</i>	1	35	2	B					31	
32		1	21	M	B						1	32	2	B					32	
33		1	35	2	B						1	16	M	B					33	
34		1	35	2	B						1	12	2	B					34	
35		1	16	2	B						1	8	2	B					35	
36		1	15	2	B						1	41	2	B					36	
37		1	12	2	M						1	55	2	M					37	
38		1	8	2	M					<i>A. C. Phinn</i>	1	52	M	B					38	
39		1	32	M	B						1	22	M	B					39	
40		1	40	M	B						1	23	M	M					40	

No. of owners, \_\_\_\_\_ No. of male slaves, *57* No. fugitives, \_\_\_\_\_ No. deaf and dumb, \_\_\_\_\_ No. insane, \_\_\_\_\_  
 No. of female slaves, *47* No. of female slaves, \_\_\_\_\_ No. blind, \_\_\_\_\_ No. idiotic, \_\_\_\_\_  
 Total slaves, \_\_\_\_\_



SCHEDULE 2—Slave Inhabitants in \_\_\_\_\_ in the County of Worcester  
of W.C., enumerated by me, on the 10th day of July, 1860. G. M. Green Ass't

1	2	DESCRIPTION.			6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120	121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134	135	136	137	138	139	140	141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	149	150	151	152	153	154	155	156	157	158	159	160	161	162	163	164	165	166	167	168	169	170	171	172	173	174	175	176	177	178	179	180	181	182	183	184	185	186	187	188	189	190	191	192	193	194	195	196	197	198	199	200	201	202	203	204	205	206	207	208	209	210	211	212	213	214	215	216	217	218	219	220	221	222	223	224	225	226	227	228	229	230	231	232	233	234	235	236	237	238	239	240	241	242	243	244	245	246	247	248	249	250	251	252	253	254	255	256	257	258	259	260	261	262	263	264	265	266	267	268	269	270	271	272	273	274	275	276	277	278	279	280	281	282	283	284	285	286	287	288	289	290	291	292	293	294	295	296	297	298	299	300	301	302	303	304	305	306	307	308	309	310	311	312	313	314	315	316	317	318	319	320	321	322	323	324	325	326	327	328	329	330	331	332	333	334	335	336	337	338	339	340	341	342	343	344	345	346	347	348	349	350	351	352	353	354	355	356	357	358	359	360	361	362	363	364	365	366	367	368	369	370	371	372	373	374	375	376	377	378	379	380	381	382	383	384	385	386	387	388	389	390	391	392	393	394	395	396	397	398	399	400	401	402	403	404	405	406	407	408	409	410	411	412	413	414	415	416	417	418	419	420	421	422	423	424	425	426	427	428	429	430	431	432	433	434	435	436	437	438	439	440	441	442	443	444	445	446	447	448	449	450	451	452	453	454	455	456	457	458	459	460	461	462	463	464	465	466	467	468	469	470	471	472	473	474	475	476	477	478	479	480	481	482	483	484	485	486	487	488	489	490	491	492	493	494	495	496	497	498	499	500	501	502	503	504	505	506	507	508	509	510	511	512	513	514	515	516	517	518	519	520	521	522	523	524	525	526	527	528	529	530	531	532	533	534	535	536	537	538	539	540	541	542	543	544	545	546	547	548	549	550	551	552	553	554	555	556	557	558	559	560	561	562	563	564	565	566	567	568	569	570	571	572	573	574	575	576	577	578	579	580	581	582	583	584	585	586	587	588	589	590	591	592	593	594	595	596	597	598	599	600	601	602	603	604	605	606	607	608	609	610	611	612	613	614	615	616	617	618	619	620	621	622	623	624	625	626	627	628	629	630	631	632	633	634	635	636	637	638	639	640	641	642	643	644	645	646	647	648	649	650	651	652	653	654	655	656	657	658	659	660	661	662	663	664	665	666	667	668	669	670	671	672	673	674	675	676	677	678	679	680	681	682	683	684	685	686	687	688	689	690	691	692	693	694	695	696	697	698	699	700	701	702	703	704	705	706	707	708	709	710	711	712	713	714	715	716	717	718	719	720	721	722	723	724	725	726	727	728	729	730	731	732	733	734	735	736	737	738	739	740	741	742	743	744	745	746	747	748	749	750	751	752	753	754	755	756	757	758	759	760	761	762	763	764	765	766	767	768	769	770	771	772	773	774	775	776	777	778	779	780	781	782	783	784	785	786	787	788	789	790	791	792	793	794	795	796	797	798	799	800	801	802	803	804	805	806	807	808	809	810	811	812	813	814	815	816	817	818	819	820	821	822	823	824	825	826	827	828	829	830	831	832	833	834	835	836	837	838	839	840	841	842	843	844	845	846	847	848	849	850	851	852	853	854	855	856	857	858	859	860	861	862	863	864	865	866	867	868	869	870	871	872	873	874	875	876	877	878	879	880	881	882	883	884	885	886	887	888	889	890	891	892	893	894	895	896	897	898	899	900	901	902	903	904	905	906	907	908	909	910	911	912	913	914	915	916	917	918	919	920	921	922	923	924	925	926	927	928	929	930	931	932	933	934	935	936	937	938	939	940	941	942	943	944	945	946	947	948	949	950	951	952	953	954	955	956	957	958	959	960	961	962	963	964	965	966	967	968	969	970	971	972	973	974	975	976	977	978	979	980	981	982	983	984	985	986	987	988	989	990	991	992	993	994	995	996	997	998	999	1000	1001	1002	1003	1004	1005	1006	1007	1008	1009	1010	1011	1012	1013	1014	1015	1016	1017	1018	1019	1020	1021
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Inquiries numbered 7, 16, and 17 are not to be asked in respect to infants. Inquiries numbered 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 20 are to be answered merely by an affirmative mark, as /.

SCHEDULE 1.—Inhabitants in Charleston, Ward 4, in the County of Charleston of South Carolina, enumerated by me on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of July, 1870.

Post Office: Charleston S. C. W. H. Barnette, Ass't Marshal.



No. of Dwelling-house, numbered in order of houses.	No. of Family, numbered in the order of families.	The name of every person whose place of abode on the first day of June, 1870, was in this family.	Description.			Value of Real Estate owned.		Place of Birth, naming State or Territory of U. S.; or the Country, if of foreign birth.	FAMILIAR.		Whether deaf and dumb, blind, insane, or idiotic.	CONSTITUTIONAL INFIRMITIES.							
			Age at last birthday.	Sex.	Color.	Value of Real Estate.	Value of Personal Estate.		Place of foreign birth.	Number of foreign birth.									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1	2147	Hammings, George	32	M	W	Att. at Law	\$0.00	\$2,000	Hortenberg	/	/								
2		Wm	11	M	W				San Francisco										
3		Ellen	21	F	W				San Francisco										
4		Wm	33	M	W	Chemist		3000	"	/									/
5		Wm	11	M	W				"	/									
6		Mark	11	M	W	Sch. school			"	/									
7		Edward	13	M	W	"			"	/									
8		Wm	30	M	W	Bookbinder			"			/							/
9		Whitson, Lewis	41	M	W	Sabotier			"			/							/
10		George	20	M	W	Tradesman			"			/							
11		Demetrius	21	M	W	Domestic servt			"			/							
12		John	21	M	W	"			"			/							
13	2148	Thrice Thomas	21	M	W	Carpenter			"										/
14		Frank	17	M	W	Barber			"										
15		Frank	21	M	W	"			"										
16		Demetrius	21	M	W	"			"										
17		Elizabeth	17	F	W	"			"										
18		John	17	M	W	"			"										
19		Charlotte	4	F	W	"			"										
20		John	15	M	W	"			"										
21		Dell Jones	42	M	W	Domestic servt			"			/							/
22		Smith David	32	M	W	"			"			/							/
23	2149	James Samuel	23	M	W	Carpenter			"										/
24		George	11	M	W	Washer			"			/							
25		Ellen	17	F	W	"			"										
26		Charles	16	M	W	Sill Fish			"			/							
27		Samuel	11	M	W	Sch. school			"			/							
28		James	11	M	W	Domestic servt			"			/							
29	2150	John, Isaac	21	M	W	Dress maker			"										
30		Catherine	11	F	W	"			"										
31		Lucy Eliza	11	F	W	"			"										
32		Galbert Stephen	10	M	W	Sch. school			"			/							
33		Wm	7	M	W	"			"										
34		Smith	20	M	W	Tradesman			"										
35		James Lilla	11	M	W	Domestic servt			"			/							
36	2151	Samuel Lilla	11	M	W	"			"			/							/
37		Smith	25	M	W	Washer			"			/							
38		Smith	5	M	W	"			"			/							
39		John	4	M	W	"			"			/							
40		Joseph	1	M	W	"			"			/							
5		No. of dwellings, 5	No. of white females, 3	No. of males, foreign born, 1					No. of houses, —	— 4/10		9							
		" " families, 5	" " colored males, 14	" " females, —															
		" " white males, 4	" " females, 19	" " blind, —															





Page No. 11

Inquiries numbered 7, 16, and 17 are not to be asked in respect to infants. Inquiries numbered 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 19, and 20 are to be answered (if at all) merely by an affirmative mark, as /.

SCHEDULE I.—Inhabitants in St. Ann's Parish, in the County of Charlotte, State of \_\_\_\_\_, enumerated by me on the 1st day of Sept, 1870.

Post Office: Charlotte, Ass't Marshal.

1	2	3	4			7	8		10	11		13	14	15			18	19	20
			4	5	6		8	9		11	12			15	16	17			
		Justin Davis	5	W	Freeholder				La Co										
		John B. Smith	52	M															/
		William	30	M															
		John	58	M															
		Louisa	41	F															
		Lucy	8	F															
		David	3	M															
		William Davis	44	M															/
		Harriet	30	F															
		Edgy	12	F															
		John	10	M															
		Robert	4	M															
		William	3	M															
		William Davis	41	M															/
		John	50	M															
		Robert	23	M															/
		Nancy	28	F															
		Lucy	11	F															
		William	8	M															
		Robert	4	M															
		James	37	M															/
		Edgy	31	F															
		John	13	M															
		David	1	M															
		William Davis	38	M															/
		J. P. Davis	31	M															
		William	3	M															
		Edgy	28	F															
		John	2	M															
		William	7	M															
		James	55	M															/
		John	40	M															
		William	7	M															
		James	55	M															/
		John	40	M															
		William	20	M															
		John	30	M															
		John	16	M															
6		No. of dwellings, 6. No. of white families, 6. No. of males, foreign born, 0. No. of females, 6. No. of colored males, 2. No. of females, 0. No. of white males, 0. No. of females, 18. No. of blind, 0.																	





Page No. 27 Inquiries numbered 7, 14, and 17 are not to be asked in respect to infants. Inquiries numbered 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 19, and 20 are to be answered (if applicable) merely by an affirmative mark, as follows.

SCHEDULE I.—Inhabitants in Lower Township, in the County of Colleton, State of S. C., enumerated by me on the 21 day of Aug, 1870.

Post Office: Walterboro J. O. Richardson, Asst. Marshal.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		10	11		13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
							Value of Real Estate	Value of Personal Estate		Foreign Birth	Number of Foreign Birth								
1	1	Byron Jane	6	7/18						So. Ca.									
2	2	Lepaute Susan	7	7/18	Farm laborer					So. Ca.									
3	3	Oliver Sarah	7	7/18	Farm laborer					So. Ca.									
4	4	217 225	24	7/18	Farmer					So. Ca.									
5	5	Ellen	23	7/18	Keeps House					So. Ca.									
6	6	Eliza	2	7/18						So. Ca.									
7	7	225 229	57	7/18	Farmer					So. Ca.									
8	8	Sally	46	7/18	Keeps House					So. Ca.									
9	9	Sarah	14	7/18						So. Ca.									
10	10	Julia	18	7/18						So. Ca.									
11	11	Chien Susan	28	7/18	Farm laborer					So. Ca.									
12	12	Emmanuel	22	7/18	Farm laborer					So. Ca.									
13	13	Jones	19	7/18	Farm laborer					So. Ca.									
14	14	Silva	5	7/18	Keeps House					So. Ca.									
15	15	Abraham	13	7/18						So. Ca.									
16	16	229 230	61	7/18	Farmer					So. Ca.									
17	17	Sally	68	7/18	Keeps House					So. Ca.									
18	18	Jupiter	16	7/18	Farm laborer					So. Ca.									
19	19	Delia	22	7/18	Farm laborer					So. Ca.									
20	20	Leana	21	7/18	Farm laborer					So. Ca.									
21	21	River Hager	21	7/18	Farm laborer					So. Ca.									
22	22	Constance	3	7/18						So. Ca.									
23	23	Nellie	1	7/18						So. Ca.									
24	24	230 231	26	7/18	Farmer					So. Ca.									
25	25	Ellen	30	7/18	Keeps House					So. Ca.									
26	26	William	10	7/18						So. Ca.									
27	27	Charles	6	7/18						So. Ca.									
28	28	Eliza	4	7/18						So. Ca.									
29	29	John	3	7/18						So. Ca.									
30	30	Silva	2	7/18						So. Ca.									
31	31	Mary	15	7/18	Farm laborer					So. Ca.									
32	32	231 232	45	7/18	Farmer					So. Ca.									
33	33	Mary	40	7/18	Keeps House					So. Ca.									
34	34	David	17	7/18	Farm laborer					So. Ca.									
35	35	Mary	15	7/18						So. Ca.									
36	36	Selena	11	7/18						So. Ca.									
37	37	David	9	7/18						So. Ca.									
38	38	Maria	6	7/18						So. Ca.									
39	39	232 233	55	7/18	Farm laborer					So. Ca.									
40	40	David	50	7/18	Keeps House					So. Ca.									
6		No. of dwellings, 6. No. of white females, 4. No. of males, foreign born, —. No. of females, 6. " " colored males, 2. " " females, —. " " white males, 3. " " " females, 2. " " " males, —.																	
										No. of houses, 7		25/2		7					



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Inquiries numbered 7, 16, and 17 are not to be asked in respect to infants. Inquiries numbered 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 20 are to be answered if at all merely by an affirmative mark, as /.



SCHEDULE 1.—Inhabitants in Red Oak Township No 11, in the County of Barren, State of Kentucky, enumerated by me on the 25 day of June, 1870.

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Post Office: Barren St House

Francis J. Porter, Asst Marshal.

1	2	3	4			7	8		10	11		13	14	15	16	17	18	19		20
			4	5	6		8	9		11	12							19	20	
Identifying number, assigned to the number of families.		The name of every person whose place of abode on the first day of June, 1870, was in this family.		DESCRIPTIVE.			VALUE OF REAL ESTATE OWNED.		PLACE OF BIRTH, naming State or Territory of U. S.; or the Country, if of foreign birth.		FAMILY STATUS.		Whether absent within the year.		Whether dead and dumb, blind, lame, or idiotic.		CONSTITUTIONAL QUALIFICATIONS.			
				Age at last birthday.	Sex.	Color.	Value of Real Estate.	Value of Personal Estate.			Foreign born.	Number of foreign born.	Whether absent within the year.	Whether absent within the year.	Whether dead.	Whether dumb.	Whether blind.	Whether lame.	Whether idiotic.	
1		Kenneth Jones	41	m	B	Barren laborer			South-Carolina											1
2	231227	Davis H M	37	m	B	Kent Land	500													1
3		Mary Ann	30	f	B	Kent's house														
4		Samuel	4	m	B	At home														
5		Davis M C	16	m	B	Barren help														
6		Lizzie	10	f	B	at home														
7		James	15	m	B	" "														
8		Stephen	8	m	B	" "														
9		John	6	f	B	" "														
10		John	3	m	B	" "														
11		John	1	m	B	" "														
12	231228	Mary Jacob	30	m	B	Barren laborer														1
13		Charles	28	f	B	Kent's house														
14		John	8	m	B	At home														
15		William	5	f	B	" "														
16		Frank	1	m	B	" "														
17	231229	Davis Mary	36	f	B	Kent's laborer	165													1
18		Andrew	20	f	B	At home														
19		James	18	m	B	Barren laborer														
20	231230	Davis H M	33	m	B	" "	125													1
21		Mary	31	f	B	Kent's house														
22		Harley Reed	31	m	B	Barren laborer	125													1
23	231231	Mary Alice	26	m	B	Barren	525	256												1
24		James	17	f	B	Kent's house														
25		Jacob	19	m	B	Barren laborer														
26		Henry	18	m	B	" "														
27		Levitt	16	m	B	" help														
28		William	14	m	B	" "														
29		Henry	14	f	B	" "														
30		Henry	14	f	B	" "														
31		Elizabeth	9	f	B	" "														
32		Mary Caroline	11	f	B	" "														
33	231232	Swinger Loren	31	m	B	Invalide			North-Carolina											1
34		Lucy	16	f	B	Invalide			South-Carolina											
35		Forbit Lewis	29	f	B	Barren laborer														
36		Robert	9	m	B	" help														
37		Thomas	7	m	B	" "														
38		Thomas	4	f	B	At home														
39		Willie Smith	38	m	B	Barren laborer														1
40		Myer James	38	m	B	" "														1

No. of dwellings 6 No. of white females 6 No. of males, foreign born 0  
 " " " " colored males 16 " " " " " " 1  
 " " " " white males 18 " " " " " " 7 " " " " " " 2

No. of males 0  
 1874 9

Page No. 60      Inquiries numbered 7, 16, and 17 are not to be asked in regard to infants. Inquiries numbered 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 19, and 20 are to be answered (if at all) merely by an affirmative mark, as /.

SCHEDULE 1.—Inhabitants in St. George Parish, in the County of Calcasieu, State of Louisiana, enumerated by me on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of August, 1870.

Post Office: George      Geo. H. Polson, Asst. Marshal.

1	2	3	4			7	8		10	11			14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
			4	5	6		8	9		11	12	13								
The name of every person whose place of abode on the first day of June, 1870, was in this family.			Description.			Profession, Occupation, or Trade of each person, male or female.		VALUE OF REAL ESTATE OWNED.		FABRICATION.			Whether deaf and dumb, blind, insane, or idiotic.			CONSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS.				
			Age	Sex	Color		Value of Real Estate	Value of Personal Estate	Place of Birth, naming State or Territory of U. S., or the Country, if of foreign birth.	Value of Foreign Birth	Value of Foreign Birth	Value of Foreign Birth	Value of Foreign Birth	Value of Foreign Birth	Value of Foreign Birth	Value of Foreign Birth	Value of Foreign Birth	Value of Foreign Birth	Value of Foreign Birth	
		Mary	21	f	w	Housekeeper			Lo Ca											
		Joseph	47	m	w	Farmer	1100	545												
		Anna	44	f	w	Housekeeper														
		William	41	m	w	Farmer	1100	500												
		Emma	21	f	w	Housekeeper														
		Emma	10	f	w															
		Calaway	7	m	w															
		Letitia	5	f	w															
		Ernest	2	m	w															
		Conrad	48	m	w	Farmer	700	150												
		Madeline	20	f	w	Housekeeper														
		Lissy	11	f	w															
		Appley	75	m	w	McChandling	500	100												
		Angely	12	f	w															
		Idca	4	f	w															
		David	6	m	w															
		Charles	11	m	w															
		Samuel	21	m	w															
		Joseph	21	m	w	Dealer in News	100	200												
		Joseph	44	m	w	Housekeeper														
		Max	24	m	w	Farmer	200	150												
		Joseph	22	m	w	Housekeeper														
		Rebecca	2	f	w															
		Samuel	70	m	w	Farmer	500													
		Christy	70	f	w	Housekeeper														
		Martha	71	f	w															
		Joseph	71	m	w	Farmer	500													
		Joseph	27	m	w	Housekeeper														
		Letitia	10	f	w															
		Letitia	7	m	w															
		William	7	m	w															
		Mary	4	f	w															
		Samy	6	m	w															
		Abney	5	m	w															
		Rebecca	27	m	w	Farmer	40													
		Christy	11	f	w	Housekeeper														
		Jesse	6	m	w															
		Rose	1	f	w															
		Thomas	16	m	w	Farmer	10													
		Jessy	16	f	w	Housekeeper														
No. of dwellings			No. of white families			No. of males, foreign born			No. of females			No. of males			No. of females			No. of males		
9			7			2			2			2			2			2		
			9			2			2			2			2			2		
			15			4			4			4			4			4		





Page No. 37 of No. 207 Tablets numbered 7, 14, and 17 and not to be subdivided into details. Tablets numbered 11, 14, 16, 17, 19, and 20 are to be numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20 respectively by an affirmative mark, as follows.

SCHEDULE 1.—Inhabitants in Township No. 1, in the County of Fairfield, of South Carolina, enumerated by me or the 11th day of June, 1870.

Post Office: Winnabow B. G. Garrison, Ass't Marshal

1	2	3	4			7	8		10	11		13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
			Age	Sex	Color		Profession, Occupation, or Trade of each person, male or female.	Value of Real Estate		Value of Personal Estate	Whether Blind, Deaf, Dumb, or Insane								
1		Wm. Christie	10	M	W	Working school			South Carolina										
2		Wm. Christie	22	M	W	Working school			South Carolina										
3		William C.	7	M	W				South Carolina										
4		Karlback	7	M	W				South Carolina										
5		Lucy	5	F	W				South Carolina										
6		John W.	1	M	W				South Carolina										
7	192	Wm. Selma	16	M	B	Domestic servant			South Carolina										
8		Lavinia	9	F	B				South Carolina										
9		Judy	11	F	B	Domestic servant			South Carolina										
10		Monica Selma	11	F	B	Domestic servant			South Carolina										
11		Kellogg Selma	15	F	B	Domestic servant			South Carolina										
12	193	Wm. John W.	21	M	W	Farmer			South Carolina										1
13		May C.	33	F	W	Keeping house			South Carolina										
14		Shannah	5	F	W				South Carolina										
15		Wm. Nancy	23	F	W	At home			South Carolina										
16		John W.	2	M	W				South Carolina										
17	194	Wm. Selma	47	M	B	Farmer		125	South Carolina									1	✓
18		Elijah	43	M	B	Farm laborer			South Carolina										
19		Rebecca	13	F	B	Farm laborer			South Carolina										
20		Brooks	13	M	B	Farm laborer			South Carolina										
21	195	Wm. Selma	21	M	B	Farm laborer			South Carolina										1
22		Amelia	21	F	B	Farm laborer			South Carolina										
23		Wm. William	22	M	B	Farm laborer			South Carolina										1
24		John	19	M	B	Farm laborer			South Carolina										
25	196	Wm. Selma	26	M	B	Farm laborer			South Carolina										
26		Clara	5	F	B				South Carolina										
27		Wm. Selma	19	M	B	Farm laborer			South Carolina										
28		Franklin	11	M	B				South Carolina										
29	197	Wm. Selma	45	M	B	Farm laborer			South Carolina										1
30		Rebecca	41	F	B	Farm laborer			South Carolina										
31		Wm.	11	M	B	Farm laborer			South Carolina										
32		Robert	6	M	B				South Carolina										
33		Robert	2	M	B				South Carolina										
34	198	Wm. Selma	31	M	W	Farmer	2000	1150	South Carolina										1
35		Rachel C.	45	F	W	Keeping house			South Carolina										
36		Barbara	26	F	W	At home			South Carolina										
37		John R.	29	M	W	Farmer			South Carolina										1
38		Wm. Selma	26	M	W	Farm laborer			South Carolina										
39		Wm. Selma	15	M	W	Farm laborer			South Carolina										
40		Margaret	16	F	W	At home			South Carolina										

No. of dwellings, 37 No. of white males, 94 No. of males, foreign born, 2,000 546 No. of females, 0 1677

Male, 7 colored males, 94 female, 1677

white males, 94 female, 1677

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Page No. 491 Inquiries numbered 7, 16, and 17 are not to be asked in respect to Indians. Inquiries numbered 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, and 20 are to be answered (if at all) merely by an affirmative mark, as follows:

SCHEDULE I.—Inhabitants in Wardner Township, in the County of Waller, State of South Carolina, enumerated by me on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of June, 1870. 288

Post Office: Waller John K. Terry, Ass't Marshal

1	2	3	4			7	8		10	11		13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
			4	5	6		8	9		11	12								
The name of every person whose place of abode on the first day of June, 1870, was in this family.																			
Profession, Occupation, or Trade of each person, male or female.																			
Place of Birth, naming State or Territory of U. S., or the Country, if of foreign birth.																			
Whether deaf and dumb, blind, insane, or idiotic.																			
1	491	Manning, William	47	7	13				W. Va.										
2		Amelia	45	7	13				W. Va.										
3		Joseph	15	7	13				W. Va.										
4		Mary	16	7	13				W. Va.										
5		William	44	7	13				W. Va.										
6		Frances	12	7	13				W. Va.										
7	492	Francis, Abner	42	7	13	Keeping House			W. Va.										
8		Mary	11	7	13				W. Va.										
9		Henry	7	7	13				W. Va.										
10		Levi	18	7	13	Farm Laborer			W. Va.										
11	493	Stables, Benjamin	45	7	13	Farmer	1000	600	W. Va.										
12		Martha	45	7	13	Keeping House			W. Va.										
13		Martha	23	7	13				W. Va.										
14		John	14	7	13				W. Va.										
15		Lucy	13	7	13				W. Va.										
16		Abigail	10	7	13				W. Va.										
17		James	7	7	13				W. Va.										
18	494	Maline, Peter	25	7	13	Lawyer		200	W. Va.										
19		Clara	19	7	13				W. Va.										
20		Nelson	7	7	13				W. Va.										
21	495	Landers, James	28	7	13	Farmer	1000	500	W. Va.										
22		Sarah	21	7	13				W. Va.										
23	496	Burt, Richard	47	7	13	Farm Laborer			W. Va.										
24		Rhoda	20	7	13	Keeping House			W. Va.										
25		Delia	1	7	13				W. Va.										
26	497	Brown, Abner	15	7	13	Farm Laborer			W. Va.										
27		James	16	7	13				W. Va.										
28		Marion	17	7	13				W. Va.										
29		Koger, Andrew	13	7	13	Domestic Servant			W. Va.										
30	498	Bayl's, John	24	7	13	Farm Laborer			W. Va.										
31		Jane	32	7	13	Keeping House			W. Va.										
32		Ullis	13	7	13				W. Va.										
33		Sarah	11	7	13				W. Va.										
34		John	5	7	13				W. Va.										
35		Martha	1/2	7	13				W. Va.										
36	499	Cochran, George	17	7	13	Farm Laborer			W. Va.										
37	500	Campbell, Gaby	40	7	13	Farm Laborer			W. Va.										
38		Charles	25	7	13				W. Va.										
39		Jane	13	7	13				W. Va.										
40		John	11	7	13				W. Va.										
20		No. of dwellings, 10		No. of white males, 12		No. of males, foreign born, 2000		1930		No. of females, 3		77		5					
		.. .. .. 10		.. .. .. 10		.. .. .. 10				.. .. .. 10									
		.. .. .. 10		.. .. .. 10		.. .. .. 10				.. .. .. 10									