

President's Commission on

# Slavery and the University

Report to  
President Teresa A. Sullivan  
2018

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# President's Commission on **Slavery and the University**

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President Teresa A. Sullivan  
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# Prologue

In the five years since the President's Commission on Slavery and the University was founded by President Teresa A. Sullivan, the commission has dedicated itself to research, education, and community engagement. If we needed clearer evidence of the urgency of this work, as well as the work of over forty other universities and dozens of historic sites, we doubt one could find it. White supremacist violence here in Charlottesville in July and August 2017 brought into sharp relief just how important this work is. We have aimed to engender a national conversation about our own past, one that moves beyond campuses and changes general public understandings.

Our own work here at the University of Virginia (UVA), although most often met with praise or encouragement to do more and move faster, has been regularly greeted on social media by statements including: "Slavery was bad. Got it. It is over." "Can UVA please quit dwelling on slavery? Enough already!" "Stop haranguing white students for the sins of their great great great great grandfathers" or studying and acknowledging slavery is "not a priority," and "tears us apart." We know we still have quite a bit of work to do as a university, as a community, and as a nation.

The President's Commission on Slavery and the University is not a South African truth and reconciliation commission, but we have been deeply informed by a similar restorative justice model. This has meant sustained community engagement for the past several years—workshops, coffees, public presentations, meetings in schools, meetings in churches—all of it framed around listening and bringing the community to the table as partners in our work. The goal all along has been to create the foundations for meaningful dialogue (if not actual dialogue). We learned very quickly that it is a mistake to understand UVA (or any other university) as walled off from the community in which it is embedded. Even our Memorial to Enslaved Laborers speaks directly to the many members of the public who shared with us their perspectives. It is all the more powerful because of those conversations.

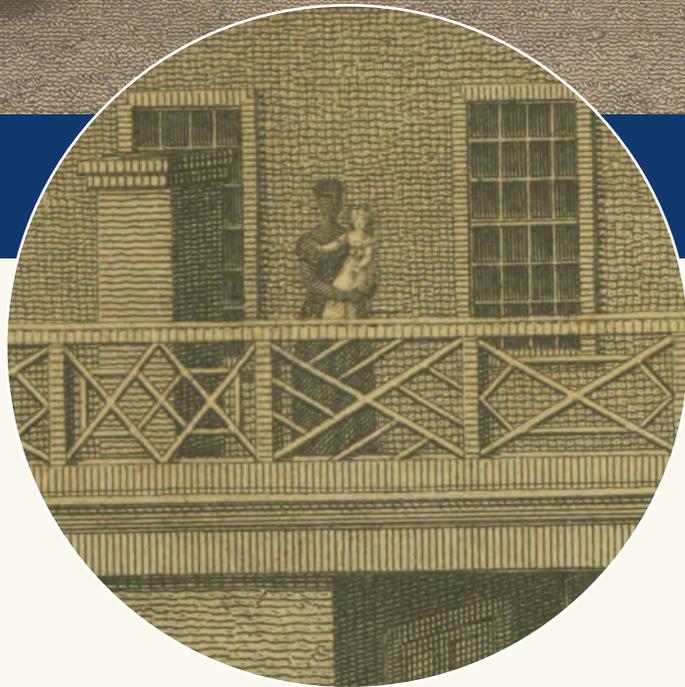
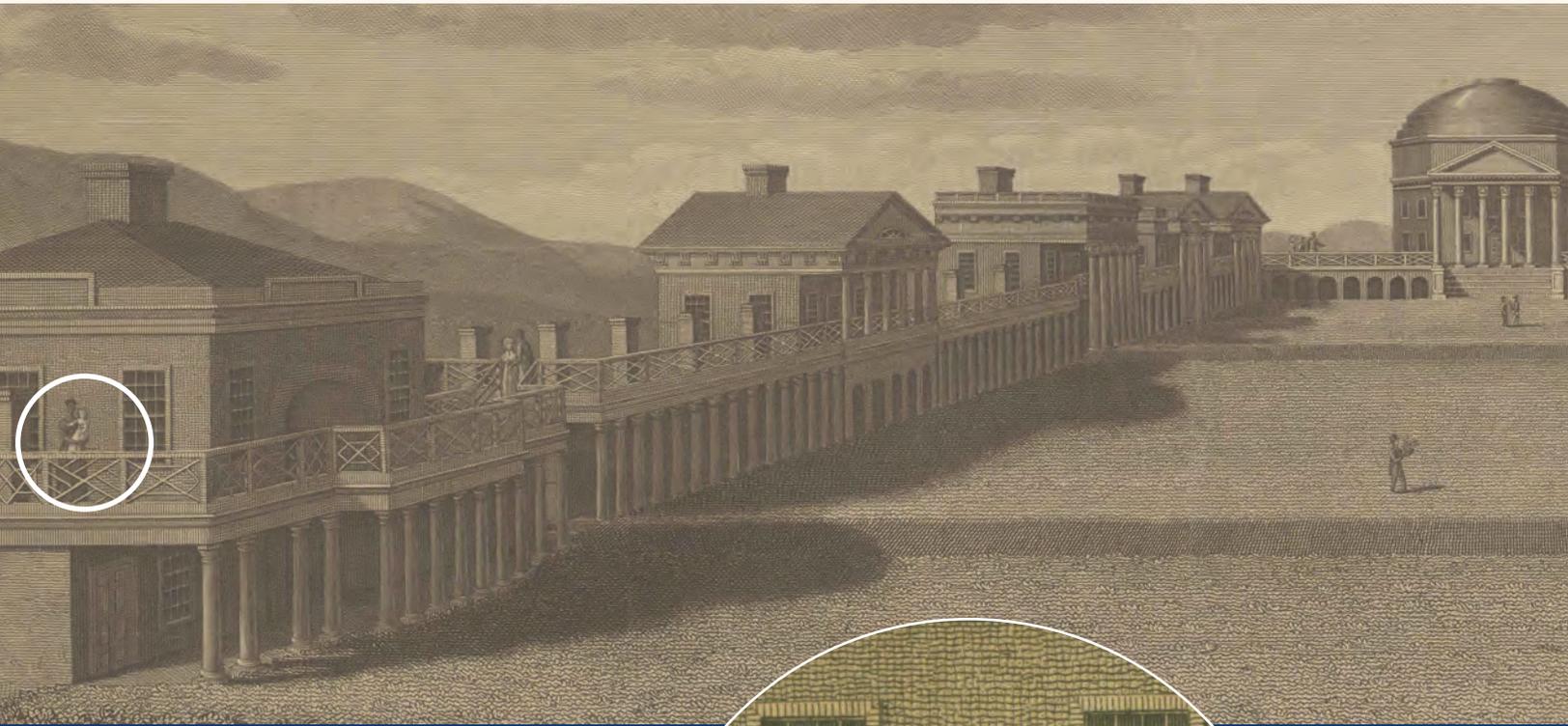
Our work has also meant strengthening relationships with our many community partners, including (but not limited to) Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, James Madison's Montpelier, James Monroe's Highland, the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center, the Preservers of the Daughters of Zion Cemetery, descendants, The Slave Dwelling Project, and other local preservation groups. We continue to stand on their shoulders as we do this work.

Informed by restorative justice, we have also focused on acknowledgment as a dynamic process—one that has to be done again and again and in different ways—reinscribing this previously hidden history back onto the built landscape, making it visible in multiple formats (signage, interpretive

panels, maps, tours, digital media, print, classes), and moving forward with plans for more memorialization and rituals of remembrance that keep the history and meaning alive for future generations. All of these together now form an important pedagogical tool—acknowledging a fuller past and also educating those who visit any of those spaces and places.

We have worked on all of this because we think it is important, and both students and the community have made it clear that education and acknowledgement go hand in hand. We agree. As the restorative justice model has suggested to us, while inclusiveness and acknowledgment are important, the commission's work is not complete until two processes get underway. The first involves encouraging other institutions to engage in similar processes and confront their own difficult pasts. The second process that must begin is one that involves reconciliation or repair. We have been actively thinking about what this might look like and watching what other colleges and universities have been proposing.

In the following pages, we first share the findings from the multi-year research project and examine slavery at the University of Virginia. We then detail our acknowledgement, education, and atonement initiatives. We end by offering recommendations for the present and future.



**Engraving of the University of Virginia by B. Tanner, 1859**

This detail includes a depiction of an African American woman standing on the balcony of Pavilion IX. Likely an enslaved caregiver, she is holding an infant. Numerous accounts of enslaved workers exist in University records, but no other images have been located.

Courtesy of the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia

# Introduction

## Establishing the President’s Commission on Slavery and the University

In September of 2013, President Teresa A. Sullivan formally created the President’s Commission on Slavery and the University and charged the commission with providing her advice and recommendations on the commemoration of the University of Virginia’s historical relationship with slavery and enslaved people. The following addresses the historical context of how the commission was formed.

In February of 2007, the Virginia General Assembly passed a resolution, Virginia Joint Resolution 728,<sup>1</sup> expressing “profound regret” for the state’s role in slavery. Several months later, the University of Virginia’s Board of Visitors issued its own statement of regret for the University’s historical relationship with slavery, and approved the installation of a slate plaque in the passage under the south terrace of the Rotunda to honor the service of both free and enslaved workers during the construction of the University of Virginia’s original buildings.<sup>2</sup> It reads: “In honor of the several hundred women and men, both free and enslaved, whose labor between 1817 and 1826 helped to realize Thomas Jefferson’s design for the University of Virginia.”

The installation of the plaque represented a notable milestone at the University of Virginia, but the memorial was criticized by many for its inadequacy—its small size, its secondary recognition of the enslaved, and its failure to capture the scope of the integral roles filled by enslaved people during the University’s first four decades.

A group of faculty, students, and community members formed the group University and Community Action for Racial Equity (UCARE) shortly following the Virginia General Assembly resolution in 2007. The group was formed with the goal of helping the University and surrounding communities identify actions that would lead to reconciliation. In November 2011, UCARE released its report, *Call for Reflection and Action*, which identifies goals and actions that might be implemented at the University and in the Charlottesville community in order to improve the relationship between the two.

The University of Virginia (UVA) student desire for a larger and more fitting slavery memorial was first evident in the formation of the group Memorial for Enslaved Laborers (MEL), which was established in 2009 by Student Council’s Diversity Initiatives Committee. MEL was initiated after student leaders sent a survey to the entire University community. The survey, which received approximately 800 replies, asked questions about the small slate memorial installed in 2007 in the passage under the south terrace of the Rotunda and asked participants for feedback about the idea of proposing a new memorial. In 2010, MEL organized a panel discussion titled “The Slave Experience at UVA,” which brought together faculty members at UVA with knowledge of this history. MEL

then sponsored a competition in 2011, in partnership with Student Council, the Black Student Alliance, and UCARE, for memorial designs. Three winners for the contest were selected in hopes that, eventually, a larger and grander slavery memorial would be erected on Grounds and would incorporate concepts of the winning designs.

The UVA IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Access) Fund is a University of Virginia alumni group that was formed in 2010 by the Office of the Vice President and Chief Officer for Diversity & Equity (ODE) as a resource that supports the University's overall mission related to inclusion, diversity, equity, and access. As part of the annual Community MLK Celebration in 2012, ODE organized a panel discussion exploring the life and legacy of Henry Martin (1826–1915), who worked in slavery and freedom at the University for over fifty years. Additionally, there was a bell-ringing ceremony in the Dome Room of the Rotunda to honor Martin. Later that year, IDEA Fund trustee John Wright (College '61, Darden '63) and his wife Trula Wright funded the installation of a plaque honoring Henry Martin, which is set into the stone pathway near the UVA Chapel.

These events and the installation of the Henry Martin plaque continued the necessary conversation in the University community about the need to more broadly honor and investigate the University's historical relationship with slavery. The UVA IDEA Fund, then chaired by Tierney Fairchild (Darden '94, GSAS '96), declared its interest in further exploring this integral aspect of UVA's early history, and expressed its intent to begin to “fill this gap in our knowledge, elevate UVA's contribution, and seize the opportunity to educate the public about early life at our great institution.”<sup>3</sup> The group noted that though there had been a number of events, scholarly activities, and proposed initiatives to address and recognize the University's past with slavery, those projects lacked a structural framework that could gain strong institutional support.

The IDEA Fund financed the writing of a research report titled *Slavery at UVA: A Catalogue of Current and Past Initiatives*, which was finalized in early 2013. The report documented various projects relevant to the study and recognition of slavery at UVA. It concluded that the development of a larger framework for addressing and investigating the University's history with slavery was crucial in order to ensure that “a more complete and inclusive history of the University of Virginia is presented to students, faculty, staff, visitors, and the community.”<sup>4</sup> The report was distributed to numerous stakeholders, including President Sullivan.

In 2013, the University Guide Service, in collaboration with the IDEA Fund and the Office of the Vice President and Chief Officer for Diversity & Equity, worked with faculty, students, and other stakeholders to author a brochure titled “Slavery at the University of Virginia.” The brochure, housed alongside other pamphlets in the Rotunda, was made available to visitors of UVA.

The Office of the Vice President and Chief Officer for Diversity & Equity worked in close consultation with the UVA IDEA Fund in the production of the report *Slavery at UVA: A Catalogue of Current and Past Initiatives*. Meghan Faulkner, Assistant to the Vice President and Chief Officer for Diversity

and Equity for Programs and Projects, authored the report. As a result of the report's recommendations, Dr. Marcus L. Martin, Vice President and Chief Officer for Diversity & Equity, invited Tierney Fairchild (UVA IDEA Fund) and Edna Turay (Memorial for Enslaved Laborers) to a meeting of the UVA President's Cabinet in April 2013. During the meeting, Vice President Martin presented information on the variety of initiatives related to UVA's historical relationship with slavery, and recommended to the Cabinet that an institutional effort be formed to explore that relationship further.

## The PCSU's Leadership and Membership

President Sullivan formed the commission later that year and charged the group with providing her advice and recommendations on the commemoration of the University of Virginia's historical relationship with slavery and enslaved people. More specifically, the commission was asked to:

- Explore and report on UVA's historical relationship with slavery, highlighting opportunities for recognition and commemoration including, but not limited to, the following:
  - Investigate the interpretation of historically significant buildings and sites related to slavery at UVA. (Sites identified by the Office of the Architect include the Crackerbox, McGuffey Cottage, The Mews, the Pavilion VI garden, and the African American burial site adjacent to the University Cemetery.)
  - Discuss mutual interests with Monticello to include research and events focusing on Jefferson and slavery.
  - Promote a historical exhibition focusing on slavery at UVA.
  - Assist in interpretive/interactive media in the Rotunda Visitor's Center.
  - Propose projects, similar to the Henry Martin plaque, that would educate students, faculty, staff, and visitors about enslaved individuals who worked on Grounds.
  - Consider appropriate memorialization.

President Sullivan asked Dr. Marcus Martin and Kirt von Daacke, Assistant Dean and Professor of History, to co-chair the President's Commission on Slavery and the University. In consultation with the President's Office, the co-chairs invited a commission comprised of representatives from across the University as well as from Charlottesville/Albemarle-area organizations. The table on the following page shows the original commission members and their affiliations.

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## Endnotes

1. Virginia General Assembly. "House Joint Resolution No. 728." 24 February 2007.  
<http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?071+ful+HJ728ERR>
2. Wood, Carol. "University of Virginia's Board of Visitors Passes Resolution Expressing Regret for Use of Slaves." *UVA Today*. 24 April 2007.  
<https://news.virginia.edu/content/university-virginias-board-visitors-passes-resolution-expressing-regret-use-slaves>
3. UVA. IDEA Fund Phase I Report Proposal (2012).
4. Meghan S. Faulkner, *Slavery at the University of Virginia: A Catalogue of Current and Past Initiatives* (2013),  
2.[http://vpdiversity.virginia.edu/sites/vpdiversity.virginia.edu/files/documents/SlaveryatUVA\\_FAULKNER\\_001.pdf](http://vpdiversity.virginia.edu/sites/vpdiversity.virginia.edu/files/documents/SlaveryatUVA_FAULKNER_001.pdf)

## Original Commission Members

Name	Area/Organization
<b>Derrick P. Alridge</b>	Curry School of Education
<b>Andrea Douglas</b>	Jefferson School African American Heritage Center
<b>Ishraga Eltahir</b>	UVA Alumna (Class of 2011)
<b>Tierney Fairchild</b>	UVA IDEA Fund
<b>Dorrie Fontaine</b>	School of Nursing
<b>Gertrude Fraser</b>	Department of Anthropology, Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost
<b>Patrice P. Grimes</b>	Office of African American Affairs, Curry School of Education
<b>Walter F. Heinecke</b>	UCARE, Curry School of Education
<b>Petrina Jackson</b>	University Libraries
<b>Alex M. Johnson Jr.</b>	School of Law
<b>Ervin L. Jordan Jr.</b>	University Libraries
<b>Khalifa Lee</b>	UVA Alumnus (Class of 2009)
<b>Marcus Martin</b>	Office of the Vice President and Chief Officer for Diversity and Equity
<b>Deborah McDowell</b>	Department of English, Carter G. Woodson Institute for African and African American Studies
<b>Maurie McInnis</b>	Department of Art History, Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost
<b>Susan Stein</b>	Thomas Jefferson Foundation / Monticello
<b>Chelsea Stokes</b>	Memorial for Enslaved Laborers, Undergraduate Student (Class of 2015)
<b>Edna Turay</b>	Memorial for Enslaved Laborers, Undergraduate Student (Class of 2014)
<b>Elizabeth Varon</b>	Department of History
<b>Kirt von Daacke</b>	College of Arts & Sciences
<b>Richard Guy Wilson</b>	Department of Architectural History
Ex-Officio	
<b>Benjamin P. Ford</b>	Rivanna Archaeological Services
<b>Gary W. Gallagher</b>	Department of History
<b>Mary Hughes</b>	Office of the Architect
<b>Patricia M. Lampkin</b>	Office of the Vice President and Chief Student Affairs Officer
<b>Matthew Reeves</b>	Montpelier Foundation
Staff	
<b>Meghan S. Faulkner</b>	Office of the Vice President and Chief Officer for Diversity and Equity
<b>Kristin L. Morgan</b>	Office of the Vice President and Chief Officer for Diversity and Equity

### **In addition, several members joined the commission after 2013**

<b>Jared Brown</b>	Undergraduate Student, Chair of MEL (Class of 2013)
<b>Diana Wilson</b>	Undergraduate Student, Chair of MEL (Class of 2018)
<b>Leontyne Clay Peck</b>	UCARE
<b>Louis Nelson</b>	School of Architecture, Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost

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**The PCSU would also like to acknowledge and thank for their dedication and service the members of its two advisory boards and its Community Relations Task Force:**

### **Local Advisory Board Members**

Rosa Atkins, Mary Jo Bateman, Caruso Brown, Lloyd Cosby, Alvin Edwards, Annie Evans, Doreen Feldman, Hodari Hamilton, Phoebe Haupt, Gertrude Ivory, Dorenda Johnson, Maurice Jones, Lynn Rainville, Preston Reynolds, Kristin Szakos, Jesse Turner, Rick Turner, Hilda Ward, Karen Waters-Wicks

### **National Advisory Board Members**

Susan Allen, Alfred Brophy, Jim Campbell, Scot French, Leslie Harris, Evelyn Hu-DeHart, Nelson Johnson, Joyce Johnson, Terry Meyers, Joshua Rothman, Craig Wilder

### **Community Relations Task Force Members**

Sara Bon-Harper, Renee Branson, Carolyn Dillard, Andrea Douglas, Alvin Edwards, Tierney Fairchild, Joanie Fasulo, Meghan Faulkner, Linnea Grim, Elizabeth Jones, Meryem Karad, Marcus Martin, Leontyne Clay Peck, Matthew Reeves, Susan Stein

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Kelley Deetz, Jessica McCauley, Kristin Morgan, Gail Prince-Davis, Michelle Strickland, Leslie Walker, Maurice Walker, Debra White



**Isabella Gibbons,  
ca. 1833–1889**

Isabella Gibbons and her husband William Gibbons struggled to create and maintain a family while owned by different professors at the University. After emancipation, Isabella received a diploma from the New England Freedman's Aid Society's Charlottesville Normal School and became that school's first African American teacher.

Courtesy of Boston Public Library

## The African American Community at the University pre-1865

From 1809 to 1819, when Thomas Jefferson was developing his vision for a new form of public higher education in Virginia, he and the other men he worked with to bring the vision to reality did so in the single largest slaveholding state in the United States. All of the men involved were large slaveholders. Thomas Jefferson owned 607 people over the course of his life. Joseph Carrington Cabell, James Madison, John Hartwell Cocke, and James Monroe each also owned large plantations and a hundred or more people. With political battles raging at the state level after 1817 about how the University would be funded, the men planning the University created a subscription fund that grew as other men whose wealth and power were based in the ownership of human beings pledged money. Their wealth, a product of human bondage, was vital to the birth of the University of Virginia. Slavery, in every way imaginable, was central to the project of designing, funding, building, and maintaining the school.

Even in Jefferson's own imagining of what the University of Virginia could be, he understood it to be an institution with slavery at its core. He believed that a southern institution was necessary to protect the sons of the South from abolitionist teachings in the North. Jefferson wrote his friend James Breckenridge in 1821, expressing his concern with sending the youth of Virginia to be educated in the North, a place "against us in position and principle." He worried that in northern institutions, young Virginians might imbibe "opinions and principles in discord with those of their own country. This canker is eating on the vitals of our existence, and if not arrested at once will be beyond remedy."<sup>1</sup>

In other words, Jefferson believed it was important to educate Virginians, and other southerners, in an institution that understood and ultimately supported slavery. In fact, Jefferson's own world was one that was so intimately connected with slavery that he likely could not imagine a different reality. His earliest memory was being carried on a pillow at the age of two by an enslaved person, and when he died in 1826 his last moments were eased by his enslaved butler Burwell Colbert who adjusted Jefferson's pillows in his waning hours.<sup>2</sup> He had never known life without slavery and the educational institution he designed in the last decade of his life had slavery at its core. Slavery remained essential to the University of Virginia for its first fifty years, until the end of the Civil War brought freedom to the people who lived and labored there. The legacies of that period, though, would live on at the University far past the general emancipation in 1865. Freedpeople often continued to work at the school for very low wages in the immediate aftermath of the conflict. That remained unchanged with the rise of de jure Jim Crow segregation and the white supremacist state in the early twentieth century. Echoes of that racially structured inequality, born in slavery and sustained long afterward, remain with us today at the twenty-first-century University.

Albemarle County, the location ultimately chosen as the site for what would become the University of Virginia, was situated in the heart of the Virginia Piedmont, a region where slavery remained a powerful force shaping politics, the economy, and daily life. Albemarle County at the time construction on the University began was home to ten thousand enslaved people who constituted over half the county's population. From the first moments when the abandoned farm a mile and half from the village of Charlottesville was cleared to make way for the new school, the enslaved would be involved in many aspects of building and maintaining the University.

In July 1817, Thomas Jefferson stood in a field less than two miles from the Albemarle County courthouse to mark off the location of the buildings he planned to erect for what would become the University of Virginia. Having recently purchased land from John Perry, the seventy-four-year-old Jefferson used a theodolite to fix the center of the northern square, "the point destined for some principle building." Importantly, however, Jefferson was not alone on that day, nor was he alone as the work of constructing the University became a reality. From its beginning through the end of the Civil War, the University of Virginia was the work of many individuals, including hundreds of enslaved laborers. It began on that July day when Jefferson marked off that "old field" with his overseer Edmund Bacon, an Irish builder named James Dinsmore, and ten enslaved "hands." Together the group used twine, shingles, and pegs to mark off the "foundations of the University." After marking it off, Jefferson "set the men at work."<sup>3</sup>

Much of the history of the University of Virginia is hidden in phrases like "hands," "labourers," and "set at work." From constructing and maintaining the buildings to feeding and caring for the faculty and students, enslaved people brought into existence and later sustained the institution. Additionally, it was the state's slave-based economy that provided the wealth that made it possible for most students to attend (a vast majority of the students were from slave-owning families). The University's history was thus tied inextricably to the South and to slavery. Many of its alumni became important southern politicians and intellectual leaders; they were congressmen and governors, leading voices in the pro-slavery movement, Confederate cabinet officers, and soldiers in the Confederate Army.

Construction began on what would become the University of Virginia in 1817. For nearly ten years it was one of the largest building projects in America. Dozens of artisans—free white and black and enslaved—lived on site and worked to raise the buildings of the University. Many of these workers were enslaved, some were owned by the white builders who came to Charlottesville, but the need for both skilled and unskilled labor was immense. In order to secure the labor that was needed, the University rented enslaved people from slaveowners in Albemarle and the surrounding counties, with some enslaved people traveling upwards of seventy miles to the construction site. Slave hiring was a common practice in the American South, bringing in cash income for owners and creating access to enslaved labor for a much wider swath of the population. Most of the people the school rented during construction were men. Some, but not all, are named in University records.

They include Willis, Warner, Gilbert, Caesar, Sam, Abraham, Sandy, Lancelotte, Nelson, Squire, Jack, Tom, Billy, Ishmel, Lewis, Ben, Madison, Wyatt, Jackson, Roda, and many more.<sup>4</sup> Many others appear in the records only as “hand”/“hands,” “labourer”/“labourers,” “servant”/“servants,” “negro”/“negros,” “boy,” and the like. In all likelihood, their names are not recoverable.

During construction, the University hired anywhere from twelve to more than thirty people annually as well as many others who were hired for specific tasks and shorter periods of time. In addition, many of the white contractors hired by the University also owned and hired slaves, between three and eight people each according to the 1820 census.<sup>5</sup> Some, however, owned considerably more, such as John M. Perry, who owned thirty-seven people in 1820 and Dabney Cosby, also a contractor, who owned fourteen.<sup>6</sup> The work done to supply and create the University’s built landscape was overwhelmingly done by enslaved people, who terraced land, hauled dirt, dug foundations, shaped and fired bricks, and did tinwork, carpentry, roofing, and stone masonry. They were rented from a slaveholding hinterland that extended at least seventy miles from the construction project. Enslaved people rented to the school were separated from family and community in their home counties of Albemarle, Orange, Madison, Goochland, Fluvanna, Louisa, and even the Richmond area. In February 1823, UVA contractor John Neilson wrote to Board of Visitors member John Hartwell Cocke, stating, “our workmen are nearly all African.”<sup>7</sup> It is clear that the bulk of the labor, both skilled and unskilled, was completed by enslaved people the school rented regionally.

In the years between 1825 and 1865 when the University began operating as an educational institution, the population of enslaved African Americans at UVA grew, averaging well over one hundred people annually. The enslaved people hired by the University as a corporate body, however, declined dramatically. Full-year slave rentals by the school remained fairly stable between 1827 and 1865, averaging four to seven hires a year. Most of the enslaved people living and working in the Academical Village<sup>8</sup> after 1825, therefore, were owned or rented by professors and hotelkeepers. The federal census taken every ten years thus provides a snapshot of the number of people living there. Unfortunately, the census did not record the names of any enslaved persons, and only beginning in 1850 did it begin recording their exact age and gender. Between 1830 and 1860, according to the census records, the population of enslaved African Americans residing in faculty, staff, and hotelkeeper households fluctuated from a high of 143 in 1830 to a low of 92 in 1850. The actual overall numbers yearly were likely somewhat higher when short-term rentals are factored in. The census data shows that enslaved African Americans were at all times one of the largest populations residing within the Academical Village. The federal decennial census records should be taken as a conservative baseline, because they represent a snapshot in time when the census taker visited the school. Those numbers were additionally supplemented by those who were rented to the school, to professors, or to hotelkeepers for shorter stints. As well, many enslaved people owned by local merchants frequently engaged in business inside the University. In most years, it is reasonable to imagine a fluctuating population of between 125 and 200 enslaved people at the University.

The school rented the enslaved for a wide variety of jobs and for varying lengths of time. Some people were rented for a short term and specific jobs, while others were rented year after year to work at the University. Some provided the grunt work of earth moving, forming terraces, and digging cellars; others were skilled artisans working alongside free white workers laying bricks, plastering walls, and shingling roofs. For instance, in 1821 and 1822 the University rented an enslaved man named Zachariah annually and had him dig the entire cellar for what would become Hotel A. The school paid Zachariah's owner for his labor and may have paid Zachariah directly for additional work completed in the evening or on Sundays.<sup>9</sup> An enslaved man named Caesar was rented from George P. Digges to do unspecified work for one month in 1818. For Caesar's efforts, Digges was paid \$12.<sup>10</sup> In December 1818, the University agreed to pay Pallison Boxley (who lived in eastern Louisa County) \$670 for the "hire of four negro men two boys and a woman for the next ensuing year."<sup>11</sup> That particular contract specified that the University would provide all of them with winter clothes. However, in early March 1821, their work completed and the contract up, the University sent them away after keeping their winter clothes. Those enslaved people marched nearly fifty miles along local roads back to Boxley's Centerville plantation along the North Anna River without seasonally appropriate clothing.

One of the ways that slavery at the University of Virginia differed from slavery at other southern universities was that the students were not permitted to bring their own enslaved servants with them as they were elsewhere. Revealing the complexity of his relationship with slavery, Jefferson himself had written about the corrupting influence of slavery on the morals of southerners even as he wanted to remove southerners from northern colleges that might critique the institution. In his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, he had written of the "unremitting despotism" of slavery and commented, "The man must be a prodigy who can retain his manners and morals, undepraved by such circumstances."<sup>12</sup> Perhaps that is why the Board of Visitors, with Jefferson as its Rector, had passed the following regulation months before the University had any faculty or students: "No Student shall, within the precincts of the University...keep a servant."<sup>13</sup> That rule remained in place until the end of the Civil War. It might have been intended to remove the students from a position of mastery over enslaved people. It may have been in part a vain attempt to shield the students from the "moral depravity" of slavery that would compromise the educational program through the "perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions, the most unremitting despotism" of those participating in mastery.<sup>14</sup>

Perhaps the Board of Visitors hoped that for the years they were at the University, students might be removed from the corrupting influences that Jefferson believed were at the heart of a slave society. More likely, however, the rule was intended to have a social leveling. The student who had the financial means to have a personal servant would not be distinct from those who did not. Whatever the impetus for the rule that removed students from personal mastery while at the University, it did not work in reality. The students at the University acted as if they were master of any and all enslaved in the Academical Village. They also likely had multiple daily interactions with the people who were owned by both the faculty and the hotelkeepers.

Some of the daily contact between students and the enslaved was dictated by rules developed by both the Board of Visitors and the faculty. As the faculty turned their attention to operating the University, they spelled out expectations for the hotelkeepers. In addition to providing food (and they even specified a menu), each of the hotelkeepers was expected to provide services to the students in their dormitories. These began with lighting a fire by 6 a.m. and bringing fresh water at the start of the day. It was expected that the rooms be swept, the beds made, and firewood and/or ice delivered as appropriate for the season, in addition to the regular washing of sheets, windows, and so forth. All of those duties were to be performed by enslaved people generally owned or hired by the hotelkeepers. In 1835, the faculty minutes recorded that each hotelkeeper should keep at least one enslaved person to wait on every ten students.<sup>15</sup> That number was later raised to one person per twenty students.

In general, the hotelkeepers, each of whom generally owned or rented at least ten and up to twenty or more people, assigned different tasks to different individuals. Some were responsible for the duties of food preparation and serving and some were responsible for tending to the students in their dormitory rooms. Hotelkeepers typically had both adults and children who waited at table. In one document, they were described as “three men and several boys,” and in another as “two men, & a servant woman, and a boy & girl about 10 years old.”<sup>16</sup>

The faculty too were expected to provide for their own domestic needs and so they also owned people who were expected to take care of daily household tasks. Enslaved people living within faculty households performed many of the same chores: cooking, doing laundry, taking care of livestock, and keeping house. The spaces adjacent to each pavilion and hotel, the gardens and yards, were the busy work sites of the more than one hundred enslaved individuals who lived and labored at the University. Nineteenth-century life was messy. Preparing food for the several hundred people who lived inside the Academical Village (free and enslaved) meant that livestock had to be kept, crops had to be grown, animals had to be butchered, and meat had to be smoked. Cooking involved tending pots over open flames all day long, and laundry involved boiling water, vigorous scrubbing of garments on washboards, and tending clothes lines. This dirty work took place out of sight, primarily in basements of the pavilions and hotels, and behind walls and fences in the garden workyards.

## **The Enslaved and Violence at the University of Virginia**

Significantly, having so many people living in such densely packed quarters meant that there were constant points of friction. As well, maintaining this slave system required surveillance and both actual and threatened violence. On May 1, 1856, Noble B. Noland savagely beat a ten-year-old girl. The girl was owned by a female relative of a woman who operated a boarding house only a few hundred yards away from the University. On the day of the attack, the young girl had heard a knock on the back door and someone calling her name. Awaiting her on the other side of the door was Noland, a student who boarded at the house whom she had encountered earlier that afternoon as she was walking through the University. When she came to the door, the student grabbed her,

pulled her out of the house, threw her to the ground, and mercilessly beat and kicked her. As the attack continued, she curled up into a ball, crying loudly. The pain was so great, she passed out.<sup>17</sup>

As with so much of the history of slavery at the University of Virginia, what we know comes only from white authorities, in this case what was recorded by the faculty who questioned the student. The complaint against the student was brought by Lucy Terrell, whose boarding house was one of several just north of the school and just north of the main east-west road through town and the University. By the 1850s, over half of the students lived in boarding houses rather than lodging provided by the University. The student, Noland, boarded at Terrell's and probably knew the enslaved girl. The beating took place just off the campus but the faculty believed they had the authority to adjudicate the matter.

The day after he had beaten the young girl, Noland was summoned by the faculty to answer their questions. According to Noland's testimony, he encountered the young girl wandering through the University. Her presence on the campus did not seem unusual to anyone. She may have been running an errand for Terrell, or she might have been going to visit a friend, but the enslaved who worked near the University often moved freely about the University. Whatever her reason for being there, like many children she had become intrigued by a pigeon that she then chased as it flitted around. The faculty asked Noland why he had beaten her, leaving her "for a time insensible, and to require the attendance of a Physician afterwards." In Noland's testimony, he claimed that she had spoken to him with insolence.

The beating this young girl received was one of many acts of violence perpetrated by students on the enslaved people who lived and worked in and around the University of Virginia. Noland's testimony chillingly revealed the ever-present danger that all people of color faced, a danger heightened in the University setting. In many ways, the University campus more closely resembled an urban setting than a plantation. Here the countless daily interactions between enslaved people and whites who were not their owners meant the enslaved were constantly in jeopardy. Despite laws that reserved to owners the right to punish, many whites believed that they had a right to act however they wished against enslaved (or free) African Americans, even people they did not own. Noland told the faculty "whenever a servant is insolent to him, he will take it upon himself the right of punishing without the consent of the master." The result of this attitude was that the enslaved who lived and worked around the University had not one master but hundreds, all of whom were steeped in the pervasive pro-slavery thought that was promulgated at the school. It meant that they were subject daily to the arbitrary actions of faculty, hotelkeepers, and students. The commands of these different groups were frequently contradictory, making navigating daily life fraught with peril for those enslaved at the University of Virginia.

On a daily basis, there were numerous acts of harassment. Those generally went unmentioned in the official records unless they resulted in physical harm. In addition, there were many accounts of more violent offenses including acts of beating, kicking, whipping, and raping. One of the most stunning aspects of Noland's actions is that they were not the result of some burst of momentary anger. Instead, it was a cold and calculated beating, as he had encountered the girl on the campus

earlier in the day. Noland claimed that when he asked who sent her, she replied, “I sent myself.” He thought the reply was impertinent so he threatened to whip her, to which she responded, “No, you won’t,” further angering Noland, but he did not strike her at that time. Hours later, he spoke with Terrell and informed her he would “chastise” the girl for her “impertinent language.” Mrs. Terrell had promised to “correct” the girl and “earnestly requested” that he not punish her himself. Noland left once more, then returned later, knocked on the door, and beat the enslaved girl.

These accounts reveal important aspects of the racial attitudes that enabled some students to act with such inhumanity. The faculty who heard Noland’s case were taken by his assertion that he would punish the human property of another. “Do you mean to assert the right to exercise your own will and the suggestions of your own passions,” they asked him, “in the infliction of punishment on a servant of another person?” In the questioning that followed, he said that he could not promise that he would not do so again, only that he would try to restrain himself “not to whip a servant so severely as I did in this case, but no further.” The faculty decided to expel Noland “in view of the danger to the peace of society & the good order of the University.” The faculty’s concern about the “peace of society” reflected their main concern—that he had beaten a person who belonged to someone else and had said he would do it again. Noland’s beating of the young girl threatened to undermine the authority of hotelkeepers to supervise students and manage the enslaved who worked for them. Additionally, Noland’s actions threatened more broadly the structure of southern slave society that reserved to the owner the right to punish.

The faculty’s decision to expel Noland did not stand. The very next day, Noland delivered a letter apologizing to the owner of the girl, the other residents of the boarding house, and the University faculty. Part of the defense he offered was that he believed that his right to beat an enslaved person could be defended, especially if it should not exceed a “moderate flogging.” Defending his actions by saying it was “tolerated by society” and that it was a “necessity” to maintain racial order was apparently persuasive to the faculty and “in view of the contrition expressed,” they rescinded their decision to expel him. The faculty’s decision to allow Noland to continue at the University is telling. Modern readers likely find it quite shocking that such savage physical violence against a child resulted in absolutely no punishment. The decision of the faculty speaks to the violence that upheld the system of slavery and that generally went unquestioned. Noland’s apology was not to the girl, but to the owner of the girl and the other women who listened to and were upset by the savage beating. His defense was rooted in the kinds of conversations that were part of campus life.

The faculty’s response to Noland’s apology also points to the larger culture of violence that was part of nineteenth-century life, especially on a college campus. The University of Virginia was not unusual in the amount of unrest that existed between faculty and students. Mostly the children of planters, the students were used to being treated as masters and young patriarchs. At the University, however, they were treated by the faculty as if they were a subordinate class and some students responded by testing all forms of authority. The faculty expected them to wear a uniform, a suit coat

made from cloth not befitting their status as gentlemen. Even more loathsome to most students was that they were expected to answer the call of the bell, rung to wake them at six in the morning and to announce the changing of classes throughout the day. For many students, the only bells they would have known previously were the bells on their local churches and the bells on their plantations that were used to mark the work day for the enslaved. To be a student at the University of Virginia was to no longer be the master of your day and your activities. It is clear that many students resented, or may have even felt “enslaved” by their new status.

Violence and unrest were thus common features of campus life in the nineteenth century. In another instance, students Madison McAfee and J.H. Harrison threatened Professor Charles Bonnycastle when he tried to stop them from “murdering his servant Fielding.” The students claimed that Fielding was “exceedingly insolent.” They had both encountered Fielding off the campus and on the road to Charlottesville. For his “insolence,” they beat him with a stick and club and pursued him for additional beatings because Fielding made efforts to defend himself by threatening to throw a stone. When Bonnycastle grabbed McAfee by the collar of his coat, a witness said that McAfee yelled, “Any man who would protect a negro as much in the wrong as Fielding is not better than a negro himself.” He also threatened to “whip Mr. Bonnycastle.” The students argued that by intervening in the punishment they were inflicting upon Fielding that Bonnycastle had “thrown off the garb of a Professor and assumed that of a man recklessly interposing to screen his servant from merited chastisement.” In this instance, due to the “peculiar circumstances” of the incident, they chose not to do anything about the students’ threatened actions against Bonnycastle, and left what to do about the beating of Fielding to local authorities.<sup>18</sup>

The enslaved remained easy targets for the anger and frustrations of students. Numerous attacks on enslaved people are noted in the University archives. Likely many more occurred than are noted, because such acts were, as student Noble Noland had pointed out, “tolerated by society.” Violent incidents were only recorded when the slave owner complained to the faculty and when the faculty felt there was enough evidence to investigate the matter. Given that the faculty did not consider evidence from an enslaved person admissible, it meant that many cases were never even considered. There is little evidence, as well, that the local authorities ever did anything. Often, the punishments voted on by the faculty were surprisingly slight.

While most of the violence was done at the hand of individual actors, the faculty acting as a corporate body also sometimes punished or worked to punish the enslaved. In one instance, an enslaved man named Thornton, who was owned by a merchant whose business was next to the school, was accused of committing a “fraud” and of stealing things from students’ rooms. The faculty demanded that Thornton be arrested, tried in the local court, and receive “39 lashes at the public whipping post” in Charlottesville.<sup>19</sup> Less than two years later, the faculty chairman again complained that Thornton, “who is in the habit of gambling, and stealing,” had not been punished, even though he had asked the Proctor twice to do so.<sup>20</sup>

In addition to the violence recorded in the University's records, students also lodged frequent complaints about the level of services provided to them by the hotelkeepers. As most of the young men were of the planter class, many were used to having a personal servant. In their letters and diaries, the students thought possessively of men who tended their rooms. Such possessiveness of the enslaved people owned by others only contributed to the feeling held by many students that they had a right to treat the people working at the school as their own property. So, they would lodge complaints to the faculty about the fires not being ready or the rooms not being cleaned often enough. As with the dining room servants, they often asserted their status and their mastery through physical violence. Student G. F. Henry struck one of hotelkeeper John Rose's enslaved men because the enslaved man asserted the sheets had been changed when the student complained that they had not.<sup>21</sup>

Enslaved women in particular found themselves vulnerable to abuse, especially sexual violence, at the hands of students. In one instance, Gessner Harrison, who was chairman of the faculty at the time, complained about the loud conduct of several students. According to their own testimony, they had gone to a tavern in Charlottesville and returned intoxicated. As they returned after midnight, they woke Harrison. Harrison heard one student "knocking at...[a] cellar door & heard indecent propositions made to a female servant." The faculty determined to dismiss one student because he was frequently drunk at the tavern and on that evening he was "excessively drunk." At the same time, they only admonished William G. Carr for his drinking and "indecent conduct in endeavouring to get access to a female servant in a pavilion of one of the professors."<sup>22</sup>

Enslaved women were vulnerable anywhere on the campus, especially so at night. Standing one night around a water pump, several women who were owned by the Assistant Proctor were treated with "rudeness and indecency." We have no way of knowing what behaviors were behind those words, as the faculty often used euphemistic terminology when discussing matters of a sexual nature. In another instance, student G. Tucker (this was almost certainly Thomas G. Tucker) broke into Dr. Patterson's residence in Pavilion V in pursuit of an unnamed woman owned by the professor. The incident was only described as an "Outrage." Clearly, it was a significant assault, as the chairman expressed "abhorrence at his conduct." The student then wrote a letter of apology to Dr. Patterson, "expressing great sorrow at the feelings of Dr. P & family having been outraged by him." Dr. Patterson indicated that the student "did not seem to be much impressed with the immorality of his conduct." In the end, the only sanction the student received involved the professor reading "him a severe moral lecture & reprimand[ing] him in the strongest terms."<sup>23</sup>

Sometimes, the language about student sexual violence against the enslaved was recorded in much clearer terms. In one such instance in April 1850, the faculty clearly labeled the act "a violent outrage (a rape)." According to the notation in the minutes, the victim was described as a "small negro girl, a slave about 12 years old." The minutes do not record by whom she was owned, so it is not clear if she was regularly on Grounds or not. The attack took place west of the University, near some privately-owned boarding houses not too far from the University Cemetery. The rape was

committed by three students: George H. Hardy, Armistead C. Eliason, and James E. Montandon. They were discovered by three other students who “interfered to prevent it.” In this instance, the students reported the actions of their classmates to the authorities and the faculty voted to expel them from the school. The Board of Visitors would uphold the suspension two months later.<sup>24</sup>

The vulnerability of women was twofold, not only in the actions themselves, but also in the fact that in these cases the faculty often did nothing. The three students expelled for the rape in 1850 were clear exceptions in terms of their punishment. In Professor Harrison’s 1829 complaint, because “there was no evidence but that of a slave,” and because the “offence occurred in the dark,” and the students denied involvement, the faculty decided not to do anything.<sup>25</sup> In the second incident, when the student broke into Dr. Patterson’s pavilion in pursuit of an enslaved women, the punishment was quite light. The students were well aware that they were rarely held accountable for their behavior.

Enslaved people living and working at the school were vulnerable both in and out of the University precincts. There were numerous places over the decades that served as houses of prostitution, and many of those were staffed by enslaved women. In one instance, the faculty recorded a very clear recitation of the sort of violence that could occur. According to the faculty minutes, a group of students attacked Mr. Crawford’s house and a woman there “was stripped of her clothes.” George Hoffman, one of the students involved, explained that they “insulted and stripped the servant girl of her clothes” because students were “under the impression that she was one of the women who had infected the students with disease.” The students blamed an enslaved woman for their own sexual behaviors and predation. The faculty decided that Turner Dixon and George Hoffman, “having been implicated in an indecent outrage upon a female,” be reprimanded. Their punishment was light because they “appeared sorry” and promptly apologized to Crawford and paid him ten dollars.<sup>26</sup>

The enslaved people who lived and worked at the University of Virginia found themselves in an unusual situation. Their lives differed in many important ways from what they would have experienced on a typical plantation where many of them likely had lived prior to coming to the school. Now, instead of clear lines of authority, the owner and the enslaved, they encountered a much more complicated social order. The authority of their owner was diluted by their ability to move around and engage in activities with a much larger enslaved community that extended well beyond the University precincts. But, they also had hundreds of others—faculty, hotelkeepers, the University janitor, the University overseer, and students—who acted in many instances as if they were their owners. Thus, their situation was that they were owned simultaneously by no one and everyone. They used this ambiguity to carve out more freedoms for themselves, to engage in entrepreneurial activities, and to build families. Nevertheless, the prevailing ideology among the students, faculty, and hotelkeepers was that all of the enslaved were property and that they, therefore, held certain rights of mastery over the enslaved, even if they did not own them. This ambiguity of authority meant that the enslaved were increasingly vulnerable to physical violence, and in the violent culture of nineteenth-century student life, that violence was often enacted upon them.

## Life and Labor of the Enslaved at UVA

Jefferson's architectural plan for the University created distinct zones for the students and for the enslaved. The enslaved were to live and work in the basements and in the garden work yards where students were in theory to have little reason to venture. Students were to spend their time in their dormitory rooms, in pavilion classrooms, and in the library—places where the enslaved were to have little reason to venture. The lived reality at the University, however, was quite different. Instead of separate zones, there were frequent daily interactions between the students and the enslaved who lived and worked around them. Even though the high walls of the gardens were designed to limit the ability of the enslaved to see beyond them and to essentially isolate the enslaved from contact with anyone outside the walls, they would not function that way in reality. The walls were also intended as barriers separating people owned by one faculty member or hotelkeeper from another and designed to make it easier for their owners to monitor their enslaved people. Instead, work at the University meant that the enslaved moved freely in and around the precincts as they conducted the daily business of running a college. They moved from work yard to work yard, from hotel to student rooms, and from University to town.

Unlike a plantation where the movement of the enslaved was largely confined to a limited geographic area under the control of a single master, many of the enslaved at the University had reason to move through the University and back and forth from Charlottesville and the surrounding area. Jefferson's design, in theory, was intended to make it easy for the professor or the hotelkeeper to watch the enslaved as they worked. Yet, there were so many places where the enslaved could not be seen. Outbuildings and walls blocked sightlines. The alleyways were virtually impossible to monitor. The dark of night provided additional cover. Enslaved workers knew that they could use that invisibility to their advantage. One of the expected duties for the enslaved who worked at the hotels was to run errands for the students—often, these included fetching things from merchants in town. Additionally, the requirements of their work gave them excuses to be moving around even when their movements were observed. Such freedom of movement meant that they had much greater latitude to direct their time and their movement according to their own preference than the majority of enslaved persons on a plantation. Doing so, however, required navigating a landscape of student privilege and expectations that offered both peril and opportunity.

As most of the students were of the planter class, many were used to having a personal enslaved servant. In their letters and diaries, the students thought possessively of the enslaved men who tended their rooms. Charles Ellis, who was a student from 1834 to 1836, made many casual references to enslaved people in his diary. He wrote of “my servant” waking him in the morning and of “Albert, our servant,” arranging their room. Such possessiveness of the enslaved people owned by others only contributed to the feeling held by many students that they had a right to treat the people working in the Academical Village as their own property. So, they would lodge complaints to the faculty about the fires not being ready or the rooms not being cleaned often enough.

What the students desired was a personal manservant who promptly attended to their every whim at any hour of day or night. That was a privilege that many of them had enjoyed at home. Not surprisingly, many African Americans saw in those desires an entrepreneurial opportunity. John Taylor, a man “hired” by Mr. Conway, agreed to wait exclusively on twenty-two students. They paid him forty-five dollars for the term.<sup>27</sup> When a complaint was brought to the Faculty Chairman, he insisted that Taylor be replaced “by another servant maintained by the Hotelkeeper.”<sup>28</sup> Nine of hotelkeeper John Rose’s boarders similarly joined together to hire “the services of an old man named Ben” and they paid him fifty cents a month. Ben was apparently not owned by any of the hotelkeepers and the faculty ordered that he be sent away.<sup>29</sup> Sending an enslaved person away or “removing” them from the University was one of the powers frequently exercised by the faculty, such as when they learned that student A.B. Mason had hired “a small boy to attend to his room” and ordered the boy removed, or, when they asked the Proctor to ensure that “all the servants hired by the students” be sent away, especially a boy called German.<sup>30</sup>

Even though students may have felt as if a certain enslaved person was “theirs,” their interactions with enslaved people were not limited to the dormitory servant assigned to them. In fact, in the course of any day, they had contact with many, probably dozens of enslaved people. Student Charles Ellis listed numerous interactions with enslaved people other than Albert (who was assigned to his room), such as when “a servant” delivered a letter to him or when “Cook” caught him darning a sock. These numerous references suggest the many daily interactions that took place between students and the enslaved on a regular basis. Given the many duties performed by enslaved people—obtaining and preparing food, chopping and hauling wood, carrying supplies to students’ rooms, running errands for students, to name only a few—it meant that the usual forms of surveillance present in a slave society largely broke down. The enslaved were able to use their ability to move about in places where they could not be observed and the fact that their duties meant that they were expected in many different places as cover to assert some control in their own lives.

In many ways, the ability of the enslaved to come and go, to direct their own movements, led to a diminution of white authority. For the most part, hotelkeepers were not able to regularly surveil the enslaved working for them because their duties routinely took them away from the hotel and garden work yard. Hotelkeepers were criticized by the faculty and the students for their lack of supervision of the enslaved workers. The faculty sometimes accused the hotelkeepers of facilitating illicit activities of students, especially drinking, gambling, and card playing. Hotelkeeper Mr. Conway admitted to occasionally taking a drink with students in their dormitory rooms. When asked by the faculty how they acquired liquor, Conway said it was supplied by the enslaved “servants about the University. All of them there wait on the Hotels and other Servants, all servants are admitted in to the University.” His point was that any enslaved person, even those not owned by faculty or hotelkeepers, could enter the University precincts. Thus, it was easy to bring in liquor and sell it to students. He also told the faculty that he did not forbid his slaves from going to town for liquor for the students because “they claimed all the services of his servants who were waiters on their

own Dormitories.”<sup>31</sup> He was admitting that although he may have owned the people, the students controlled them. Another hotelkeeper said he “has no control over dormitory servants.” A third claimed that the “students control them [the enslaved] in dormitories.”<sup>32</sup>

For the faculty, part of the challenge of regulating the behavior of the enslaved who worked at the University was that it was not clear who was really the master: it was simultaneously no one and everyone. At times, the enslaved were in jeopardy because of this ambiguity. Would they rather be punished by the faculty or hotelkeepers for bringing in liquor, or by the students for not doing so? At other times, the enslaved learned how to use this ambiguity to their own advantage, exploiting their relative freedom of movement. Many also used the misbehavior of the students to their own advantage, engaging in a variety of entrepreneurial activities that gave them access to cash. Perhaps most commonly, they profited from the students’ illicit activities, getting them alcohol, card playing and gambling, and even cockfighting.

The faculty were constantly worried about the underground economy between students and the enslaved because it diminished faculty authority and control over both groups. Supplying the students with alcohol was one of the easiest ways for the enslaved to earn money. In one instance, the Faculty Chairman complained that when he looked inside the basket of one of hotelkeeper Conway’s enslaved servants, it had a bottle of rum and a bottle of whiskey. Even though the servant said it was for himself, the Chairman was certain it was for the students. He asked the Proctor to begin monitoring what was in the servants’ baskets as they returned from town. The very same day, the Proctor reported that two of hotelkeeper Mrs. Gray’s enslaved people were carrying rum and wine.<sup>33</sup>

The faculty also were chronically concerned with gambling. Numerous records mention their suspicions, and most frequently, they thought students’ misbehavior was facilitated by the enslaved. Professor John A.G. Davis once said he had reason to suspect there was frequent gambling in the rooms of the West Range near Mrs. Gray’s hotel at the southwest end of the lawn. He said “that there can be no doubt that Mrs. Gray’s servants gambled, and that the fact [was] well known to the students.”<sup>34</sup> All he had was a suspicion. What is clear is that neither he nor other faculty could confirm these activities because at night the students and the enslaved were moving about largely without being seen by professors, the overseer, or any other white authority at the school.

The enslaved also capitalized on the students’ desire for better food than what was served by the hotelkeepers. Quite a number created a side business of selling food, often bringing in complete dinners in baskets. Student Charles Ellis casually remembered a “chicken supper” which consisted of a turkey, half a dozen chickens, and some biscuits. In addition, there was also coffee which was apparently much better than anything offered by the hotelkeepers as it was the “greatest part of the feast in demand.”<sup>35</sup> Alfred T. Howell, a student in 1850, described the many ways in which African Americans tried to earn income: “Black men, women and boys are constantly surveying us with every sort of question. Do we want to buy this, that and other or will we have a hack to go to town, or have we not something we would like to send after or no message to send? ... The U is a regular

market place for everything.”<sup>36</sup> As African Americans exploited the ambiguity of authority, they were able to find multiple ways to earn income from the students.

Those living at the University were not the only ones to profit from the students. In one such case, the faculty noted that breakfasts were being supplied by a small boy, “belonging to no one in the University, but living with a free woman, the wife of Dr. Magill’s servant, in the basement of Mr. Roger’s house.” A young black boy, probably not owned by anyone, was living with a free African American woman, who was considered married to an enslaved man owned by a professor. They lived in another professor’s pavilion on the other side of the lawn from where the enslaved father lived. This points to the fluidity of living arrangements and highlights some of the difficulties that faculty faced in trying to oversee the movement of people they owned. It also demonstrates just how porous the Academical Village was—both free and enslaved people moved easily in and out of the University.<sup>37</sup>

That example, one of many featuring an enslaved person who lived and worked at the University who was clearly a child, speaks as well to the demography of slavery at the University. Extant records do not give us a clear picture in all moments of the makeup of the enslaved population at the University—we simply do not know in many cases an individual’s name, gender, or age. Nevertheless, there is some data that suggests children were over-represented. First, forty percent of the burials in the recently re-discovered enslaved burial ground adjacent to the University Cemetery were of children. Burial patterns in that cemetery are indicative of familial groupings, suggesting that the enslaved at UVA, despite the prevalence of rental and dozens of owners, found ways to create family and community. The high percentage of burials of children there may also speak to the unhealthy living conditions the enslaved faced.

Census records, which give snapshots of the enslaved community at the University of Virginia in 1830, 1840, 1850, and 1860, similarly suggest that the enslaved labor force may have often tilted toward the young. For instance, in 1830, 45 of 143 enslaved people recorded as living at the University were under ten years old. In that year, thirty-one percent of the enslaved community were children. As well, half of the small population of free people of color living at the school in that year were also children under age ten. In 1840, the percentage of the enslaved community under age ten dipped to twenty-seven percent (39 of 143 people). In 1850, twenty-eight percent of the enslaved population of 93 people were under age ten and nearly thirty-seven percent were age fifteen or younger. In 1860, nearly thirty percent of the enslaved population of 105 people were under ten and thirty-nine percent were age fifteen or under. One historian has noted that “enslaved children had virtually no childhood because they entered the workplace early and were subjected to arbitrary authority, punishment, and separation, just as enslaved adults were.”<sup>38</sup> The archival evidence found at the University of Virginia supports that conclusion. Children appear in the records delivering food, waiting on tables, cleaning rooms, running errands, and, most significantly, enduring at times horrific violence at the hands of white students.



**Isabella and William Gibbons.** Isabella and William Gibbons were among the thousands of enslaved people who toiled at the University of Virginia during its first half century. We are fortunate to know much more about their lives than we do about the vast majority of other enslaved people who lived and worked at the school.<sup>39</sup>

William Gibbons was born into slavery on a nearby plantation in 1825 or 1826. Isabella was born into slavery, possibly in Charlottesville, circa 1836. Refusing to be restricted by the laws and customs of slavery and rejecting then prevalent racist ideas about black inferiority, Isabella and William Gibbons struggled to create and maintain a family while owned by different professors at the University. Isabella, owned by Physics professor Francis Smith, worked in the kitchens of Pavilion V and VI from 1853 to 1863. William worked as a butler for the household of Moral Philosophy professor William McGuffey, who resided in Pavilion IX.<sup>40</sup> Both William and Isabella sought opportunities to learn and both managed to learn to read and write while enslaved. According to the Gibbonses' daughter Bella, William educated himself by reading books in the McGuffey household and paying attention to student conversations.<sup>41</sup> Their lives in slavery and freedom were a testament to their quiet resistance to enslavement and to white supremacist myths about African American capabilities. Although Virginia law did not recognize the marriages of enslaved people, the Gibbonses married in the early 1850s and struggled to raise a family while laboring in the households of different masters.

Following the general emancipation ending slavery in 1865, William and Isabella Gibbons worked hard to enjoy the fullest fruits of freedom. They built on the education they worked so hard to obtain while enslaved and, in freedom, further developed their talents to enrich their community. Isabella Gibbons received a diploma from the New England Freedman's Aid Society's Charlottesville Normal School in May 1867 and became the first African American teacher in that same school, which became the Charlottesville Freedmen's School (now the Jefferson School). Regarded as "quick and bright" and "an excellent teacher," she was admired by the school's founders and her colleagues. That same year, Isabella Gibbons wrote a letter that was published in the *Freedman's Record*. In it, she spoke eloquently about slavery and emancipation, asking, "Can we forget the crack of the whip, the cowhide, the whipping post, the auction block, the handcuffs, the spaniels, the iron collar, the negro-trader tearing the young child from its mother's breast as a whelp from the lioness? Have we forgotten those horrible cruelties, hundreds of our race killed? NO, we have not, nor ever will." She remained a leader in the local African American community for decades, teaching at the freedman's school through the late 1880s.<sup>42</sup>

The Gibbonses, "by their persevering industry...acquired considerable property in Charlottesville" in the years after 1865. William Gibbons, noted for his "rich, sonorous voice and a wonderfully magnetic manner," became minister to the congregation now known as the First Baptist Church, one of Charlottesville's oldest black churches.<sup>43</sup> He later served as pastor of Zion Baptist Church in Washington, D.C. At the age of fifty-nine, William began his formal studies, enrolling at Howard

University as a divinity student. When he died in 1886, *The Washington Post* reported his passing in a front-page obituary.<sup>44</sup> Ten thousand mourners reportedly attended his funeral in D.C. His remains were returned to Charlottesville, where another large funeral was held before he was buried in the segregated section for African Americans in Charlottesville's Oakwood Cemetery. Isabella died three years later and was buried next to William in the same cemetery.



**Henry Martin.** Henry Martin was indeed, according to his own recollections and those of others, born into slavery at Monticello in 1826, perhaps on the very day that Thomas Jefferson died. He was likely sold at an estate auction in 1827 to William Carr and ended up owned by the Carr family. He lived and worked at the Bentivar plantation in Albemarle County until circa 1847, when he was rented out, likely by the Ferrel Carr estate as a way to maintain the estate's financial bottom line. They rented him to a relative, Mrs. Dabney Carr, who was then running a boarding house just north of the University of Virginia (an area that would later be known as Carr's Hill). At Mrs. Carr's, he worked as a dining room attendant and hauled wood from Bentivar to the University and then coal in the area.<sup>45</sup>

During the Civil War, he was again rented out, this time to Bolling Haxall in Richmond, seventy miles away. According to one report, he ran away from Richmond "in the guise of a Confederate soldier," and returned to Charlottesville and the neighborhood around the school, where he was then put to work by the University in one of the hospitals in town. After the war, now a free man, he worked odd jobs at the school and was briefly hired by Charles Murray to work on the Abell farm in Albemarle County. By 1868, he returned for good to the University of Virginia after he was hired as a janitor and bellringer, earning wages for work similar to what he had done during slavery. He would continue to work there until 1909–10, when he retired.<sup>46</sup>

In 1890, he had already developed a reputation amongst white students at the University as "Uncle Henry," the faithful slave who knew his place as a menial laborer supporting white learning. They saw him as someone who never desired an education (this was part of a post-war Lost Cause mythology—the formerly enslaved were happy in slavery and not ready nor even desirous for freedom or its fruits). In that year, the student publication *College Topics* published a letter from Mr. Martin recounting his life story. Martin recalled that he came to the school in 1850 and "first served for the term of two years as waiter, in the dining hall on Carr's Hill." It appears that he wrote the letter to the student publication because he had heard they were planning on running a story about him. In the letter, he "consented to state the history of my connection with the University of Virginia," quietly but powerfully reminding anyone who might read the letter that he was a free man who could read and write and owned his own life story.<sup>47</sup> He had remained at the University because he had family, friends, and a community in the area. So, Henry Martin, after a lifetime's struggle, first as an enslaved person for forty years and then as an African American low wage worker in post-emancipation and then Jim Crow Virginia, earned a well-deserved pension for his work.

If Mr. Martin was faithful to anyone, it was likely first and foremost to his family (he had married three times) and friends in Charlottesville. He almost certainly wore the mask of the “happy slave” when at work and in a public setting surrounded by white students and faculty, but his letter suggests he was not actually content to work for low wages and did in fact learn how to read and write. In 1909–1910, he earned a pension, getting his then current salary for the rest of his life, but at that point, he had already given a lifetime’s labor to white enslavers and the white University.

Only five years later, at the age of eighty-nine, Henry Martin would die. *The Daily Progress* described his funeral as “the largest and most distinguished crowd of white people that ever attended a colored man’s funeral in Charlottesville.”<sup>48</sup> The service was held at First Baptist Church on West Main Street, one of the first African American churches in town and the same church where William Gibbons, also formerly enslaved at UVA, became the first minister of color. After the funeral service, Martin would be buried in the Daughters of Zion Cemetery, described in 1915 by *The Daily Progress* as “the little colored burying ground in the rear of Oakwood Cemetery.”<sup>49</sup> Daughters of Zion, however, was an African American mutual aid society cemetery, one designed and created as completely separate from the adjacent white Oakwood Cemetery (which had a segregated section for African Americans). Martin had long been part of a tight-knit African American community that was working hard to make the most of freedom even against terrible odds in Jim Crow Charlottesville.

In life and death, Henry Martin, for white students, professors, and townspeople, continued to be “Uncle Henry,” the embodiment of the white supremacist “slavery was a positive good” school of thought that was linked to Lost Cause mythologizing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. UVA student yearbook *Corks and Curls* even ran an article in 1914 (the year before Martin died) that was written in an imagined slave dialect. The article’s author had Henry Martin say: “I dun know why they named me Henry Martin. Ole Missus got it out’n a book”; “I heard all of the Bible lectures of Dr. McGuffey and Mr. Minor. I learned more from them lectures than a colored man ever gets out’n readin’ and writin’.”<sup>50</sup> The actual details of Henry Martin’s life, however, hint at something far more powerful—a man who struggled for nearly ninety years to survive in enslavement and later the Jim Crow era and knew far more than he would admit in public. His life was in many ways a testament to quiet resistance to white supremacist ideas about African Americans.

**Lewis Commodore.** According to University financial records, Lewis Commodore was the only enslaved person who was purchased and owned by the University of Virginia directly as an institution. It appears that Lewis was born in Albemarle County in 1803, likely on the Gale Hill plantation owned by the Minor family. James Minor had died in 1791, so Lewis Commodore was owned by the estate for over a decade. In 1806, as part of a division of the Minor estate slaves, Lewis and his parents and siblings became the property of David Yancey and his wife Anne Minor.<sup>51</sup> Despite that division, Lewis was in fact owned by Dabney Minor for most

of his life. From 1808 to 1812, Dabney Minor purchased portions of his father's estate and took full possession of the Gale Hill plantation.<sup>52</sup> In 1819, Minor purchased the Carrsbrook plantation in Albemarle County, where he lived until his death in 1824.<sup>53</sup>

Unfortunately, we know very little about Lewis Commodore before he came to the University of Virginia, other than that he lived at Dabney Minor's Gale Hill plantation and shows up in some Minor records. In 1815, Lewis was 12 years old. Minor valued him at \$350. Two years later, Lewis, then fourteen, was valued at \$550. According to an inventory and appraisal of Dabney Minor's estate in 1824, Lewis was then twenty-one and valued at \$450.<sup>54</sup> By 1824, Lewis Commodore had moved from Gale Hill and was living and working as a house servant at Carrsbrook. As part of the Dabney Minor estate division in 1825, Lewis Commodore was separated from his parents Harry and Mary, as well as his sister and younger brother. It is unclear just where Lewis Commodore was between late 1824 and 1830 when he first arrived at the University of Virginia. In all likelihood, he was rented out for a number of years along with nearly fifty other enslaved people owned by the estate.<sup>55</sup> Fascinatingly, University Bursar Alexander Garrett served as the Dabney Minor estate executor in 1830, so he would have been responsible for renting Lewis to the University yearly starting in late 1830.<sup>56</sup>

The University of Virginia put Lewis Commodore to work immediately as the Rotunda bell ringer and as attendant to the public spaces in the Rotunda. These included the library, classrooms, and the chemical laboratory. His responsibilities included ringing the bell at dawn, at class pass time, and to mark the beginning of important occasions. He was also charged with keeping the Rotunda rooms clean, well-heated, and ready for use. Lewis, along with other room attendants, was typically sent to "work with other hands...& attend to cleaning urinaries, privies, & c." when school was not in session.<sup>57</sup> For two years, the estate rented Lewis Commodore to the University, where he lived and worked. However, in early 1832, the remains of the Dabney Minor estate were put up for public sale in Charlottesville. Professor John A.G. Davis, Faculty Chairman Robert M. Patterson, and Proctor John A. Carr, "believing that to lose his [Lewis Commodore's] services would be a real misfortune to the University, agreed to purchase him, for the use of the institution."<sup>58</sup> The three men purchased Lewis Commodore at the auction for \$580 and then brought the purchase to the attention of the Board of Visitors. Several months later, the University's Board of Visitors reimbursed the three men "for the purchase of servant Lewis Commodore...and that he be held hereafter as the property of the University."<sup>59</sup>

Although University records do not indicate where Lewis Commodore may have lived, at least for several years in the 1830s it appears that he resided in the Rotunda itself. In July 1835, the Board of Visitors ordered the Proctor to "cause the room upon the ground floor of the Rotunda, near the Chemical Laboratory, now occupied by one of the Negroes of the University to be vacated by that occupant, and those rooms after being properly cleansed, to be locked up, or put to other desirable uses."<sup>60</sup> After purchase by the University, Lewis Commodore's life changed little. He had been

separated from his family since the 1832 auction, but he was no longer being rented out each year to different people. He continued to live and/or work in the Rotunda, ringing the bell and cleaning rooms. In 1832, Lewis had some health problems, as he was provided with salts to gargle in January, epsom salts in May, and had teeth extracted in the fall, all of which was prescribed or performed by Dr. Thomas Johnson, a medical professor. In 1835, the faculty chairman “directed servants Lewis and Jack, who have heretofore had holyday during the vacation though their labors are very light during the session, to go to work with the other University servants.”<sup>61</sup>

Former student Edward Alfred Pollard in 1859 remembered Lewis Commodore, describing him as “Big Lewis...the old negro Janitor and factotum.” Pollard’s recollections, while peddling in the stock pro-slavery caricaturing of the time, obliquely hint at details that may reveal something about the real Lewis. Pollard said Lewis was “a mild negro, of a greasy and overfed appearance, but most remarkable for the stories of learning he had amassed in his long familiarity with college life... he had acquired a smart, practical knowledge of chemistry. He was also something of a classical scholar.”<sup>62</sup> Lewis may have been forced to perform menial labor and to perform deference for the many white would-be masters he interacted with every day, all while being denied freedom and any sort of formal education. But, he had clearly learned quite a bit and understood far more than Pollard or other students truly recognized. Pollard also noted that Lewis “was particularly pleased in pumping the Yankee students of all they could tell him of the free country. The condition of his black brethren in the North was an object of great solicitude to him.” Lewis Commodore was also clearly part of a local African American community—he worked as a minister on Sundays—and had an entire life largely invisible to whites at the school.<sup>63</sup>

Again, what we know about Lewis Commodore is entirely derived from documents created by white enslavers, so it is difficult to know what his life was really like. But, that 1835 decision to move him out of his room in the Rotunda could have been motivated in part by Lewis’s struggles with alcohol. Just four years later, a University official sought Board of Visitors permission for “making sale or otherwise disposing of Lewis on account of his habits.” As was typical of University administrators when considering replacing or removal of a person of color, this official (possibly the Faculty Chairman) even considered “employing a white man who for the same salary & perquisites now paid to the janitor and those now discharged by Lewis, might be united in one person.” Several months later, in response to that 1839 request, the Board of Visitors ordered the Proctor to “sell or hire out Lewis the property of the University and to purchase or hire a suitable servant in his place.”<sup>64</sup> Ultimately, Lewis was not sold nor replaced by a free white worker, but may have been rented away from the school for a time. Upon his return to work at the University, however, Lewis Commodore would be monitored more closely, as the Board of Visitors also put the University librarian in charge. They indicated that it was “the duty of the Librarian to cause the hall and its galleries...to be swept once every day, & that he shall be authorized to employ the servant who attends the Rotunda and rings the Bell to perform this service.”<sup>65</sup>

Lewis Commodore likely continued to struggle with alcohol use, as in the 1840s, he was temporarily reassigned. University officials, in response to what they saw as intemperance, sent him to work with common laborers away from the Rotunda. For several months, Lewis was sent to do manual labor during any slow time at the school (and may have even been sent to do this work continuously during this stretch). In 1846, apparently satisfied that Lewis had changed his ways, the Board of Visitors noted: “Whereas Lewis Commodore the faithful and valuable servant of this University, with the exception of Drunkenness, which had well nigh ruined him, having seen his error, & for five months last past, maintained the steady and consistent course of a reformed man.” Impressed with Lewis’s apparent newfound sobriety, the Board further ordered that “Lewis shall not be required to work out in the grounds with the other laborers of the University, but be confined only to the performance of such a reduced portion of the duties of his station as the absence of the Students & Professors will permit.” This new arrangement, however, would require Lewis to “maintain his pledge of total abstinence from all intoxicating drinks.”<sup>66</sup>

Lewis Commodore’s troubles did not end in 1846. Charles C. Wertenbaker, reminiscing in 1897, suggested “a very interesting chapter could be written on the janitors of the University. It would probably begin with Lewis Commodore, an old-time slave, whose fealty to John Barleycorn was more sincere and constant than his devotion to his formal duties.”<sup>67</sup> Whether he continued to drink too much or he resisted the conditions of his enslavement, University faculty in 1851 had had enough. Professor Edward Courtenay indicated that “the duty of attending to the police of the public lecture rooms & keeping them properly warmed has been repeatedly and grossly neglected by the servant Lewis...the rooms being frequently left unsightly and so imperfectly warmed as to be unfit for use.” The faculty blamed this on Lewis’s “confirmed habits of intemperance” and ordered the Proctor to “remove said servant and to procure an efficient substitute at the earliest possible day.”<sup>68</sup> Lewis was likely sent to do manual labor elsewhere at the University for a time, but he would return to the Rotunda once more. Lewis again in 1855 was removed from “his present position” and replaced by a “more efficient hand.”<sup>69</sup>

Whether Lewis Commodore continued as the bell ringer and Rotunda attendant or was banished permanently to manual labor elsewhere at the University is unclear. He was still at the University in December 1862, when the University purchased him a pair of shoes.<sup>70</sup> At that time, most of the students had left, largely to enlist in the Confederate war effort. The University did not close during the war, but was reduced to about fifty students (mostly wounded soldiers) and, along with Charlottesville, became a hospital center for those wounded in fighting on the peninsula or around Richmond. It is likely that Lewis Commodore was reassigned as a hospital attendant, either at the University itself or at one of the makeshift hospitals in Charlottesville. In March 1865, Union troops led by General Sheridan occupied Charlottesville, effectively ending the war and slavery in the area. Lewis Commodore, ostensibly a free man in fall 1865, still lived in the area and may have continued to work for the school. Between August 1865 and February 1866, the University

of Virginia paid for Lewis's "subsistence" or "subsistence supplies," including food, clothing, bacon, meal, and molasses.<sup>71</sup>

On April 16, 1867, Lewis Commodore, clearly struggling to survive in the aftermath of war, moved into the Albemarle County Poor House. A year later, Lewis was still there and in bad health—the poor house records indicate he was suffering from a "rupture."<sup>72</sup> Having spent most of his life in slavery, Lewis had the misfortune to finally experience freedom only in old age and in an economically devastated area. He remained at the county poor house for the rest of his life. On March 2, 1872, Lewis Commodore died, reportedly of "old age." He was likely buried in the poor house cemetery.

## Pro-Slavery Thought at the University of Virginia

The University that grew after Thomas Jefferson's death in July 1826 in many ways fulfilled his vision in creating a southern pro-slavery Ivy League school. Students' daily experiences around the University landscape and in the classroom reinforced and expanded upon Jefferson's original vision. That educational experience from 1825 to 1865 also laid the foundation for more recent University of Virginia history, including eugenics and white supremacist thought in the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century.

Thomas Jefferson claimed slavery an "unremitting despotism" and that "man must be a prodigy who can retain manners & morals, undepraved by circumstances." Jefferson saw slavery, at least when writing about it during the eighteenth century, as something evil. In his 1784 *Notes on the State of Virginia*, he suggested the possibility of a gradual emancipation to end slavery: "It will probably be asked, why not retain and incorporate the blacks into the state? ...Deep rooted prejudices entertained by the whites; ten thousand recollections, by the blacks of injuries they have sustained...the real distinctions which nature has made will divide us into parties & produce convulsions which will probably never end but in extermination of one or the other race." Jefferson was not done. Yes, slavery was evil, but African Americans were incapable of the full fruits of freedom. To end slavery would be to invite race war. As he said, "This unfortunate difference of colour, & perhaps of faculty, is a powerful obstacle to the emancipation of these people."<sup>73</sup> Thus, for Jefferson in the eighteenth century, slavery was a necessary evil that could not end unless black Americans were removed from the country.

In *Notes on the State of Virginia*,<sup>74</sup> Jefferson continued to discuss what he saw as black inferiority: "first difference which strikes us is that of colour...the difference is fixed in nature & is real...& is this difference of no importance? Is it not the foundation of a greater or less share of beauty in the two races?" As he continued, he even compared a supposed desire of great apes to mate with black women to African Americans' mythical desire to mate with whites, terming the problem an inter-species one. He further argued that blacks "secrete less by the kidneys, & more by glands

of the skin...Perhaps too a difference of structure in the pulmonary apparatus.” For Jefferson, this “difference of race” was one that almost always favored whites and one that was rooted in a form of speciation. Thus, as early as the 1780s, Jefferson articulated a white supremacist understanding of racial difference and racial hierarchy (one where white always rules over black), but one that was rooted in an understanding of white and black as basically different species. He was offering a proto-biologic explanation for racial difference.

Jefferson had quite a bit more to say about African Americans: “Blacks are in reason much inferior...& in imagination they are dull, tasteless, & anomalous...never yet could I find that a black had uttered a thought above the level of plain narration.” Jefferson ended this line of thought with a slight equivocation: “The opinion, that they are inferior in the faculties of reason & imagination, must be hazarded with great diffidence.” So, Jefferson acknowledged glancingly that he might be wrong, but ever dedicated to reason, imagined that racial difference was a suitable subject for scientific investigation. He thought scientists in the future would answer the race question and likely discover a biologic basis for white superiority. Jefferson even had an idea about how they would investigate: racial difference and black inferiority “requires many observations, even where the subject may be submitted to the Anatomical knife.” That very research, submitted to the anatomist’s knife, would begin at the University of Virginia by 1827.

Jefferson was the intellectual leader of this radical Virginia public university project. He wanted to create a Harvard in Virginia, but one that would respond to particular “southern needs.” Jefferson viewed the toxin of northern antislavery as something that “if not arrested at once would be beyond remedy.” If Virginians were schooled in the North, they would learn “opinions and principles in discord with those of their own country.” He envisioned the University of Virginia as providing an alternative to schooling in the North, a place “against us in position and principle.”<sup>75</sup> He understood that the University would be built and maintained largely by enslaved people. After all, he lived in the largest and most important slaveholding state; his home was in a county where over half the population was held in bondage, and in a county where a majority of adult white male property-holders owned at least one enslaved person. When contractor John Neilson wrote “our workmen are nearly all Africans” in 1823, Jefferson’s understanding had already become reality.<sup>76</sup>

When the University opened in 1825, anywhere from 125 to 200 enslaved people would live and work at the school in most years. They were owned by a dozen or more people and had to move all across the campus and even into Charlottesville or beyond as they did their work. From the first day of classes in 1825, the vast majority of students came from slave states and from wealthy slaveholding families. They had been privately educated and indulged by their planter families. Their first experience living away from home became a daily education in mastery. Students, as young adult would-be masters, felt free to command or violently correct enslaved people and even any person of color, anywhere, any time. The landscape of the University created many daily opportunities to do so.

As student Noble Beveridge Noland explained in 1856: “Whenever a servant is insolent I will take upon myself the right of punishing him without the consent of his master.” Noland admitted that he lacked “the legal right” to punish other people’s slaves, but claimed the “liberty” to do so anyway rather than “trouble himself to go in search of a master.” Noland concluded: “When done on the spot and under the spur of provocation,” chastising another’s slave “is not only tolerated by society, but with proper qualifications may be defended on the ground of the necessity of maintaining due subordination in this class of persons.” Simply attending the University of Virginia before 1865 meant one was likely to get a practical education in not only the putative benefits of slavery, but in the importance of powerful white dominion over people of color. This particular brand of pro-slavery thought, one that posited slavery as a positive good, was a message that appeared in myriad ways in the formal classroom setting, too.<sup>77</sup>

For example, by 1827, the Anatomical Theater had been completed and two professors, Robley Dunglison and Thomas Johnson, had begun cadaver dissection demonstrations there. For the rest of the century, faculty would seek fifty or more bodies yearly just for these demonstrations. Students would find many more by grave-robbing on their own. The “subjects” submitted to the anatomists’ knife at the University were largely the bodies of recently deceased African Americans (both enslaved and free) who were grave-robbled for the school by hired professionals—known as resurrectionists—in Baltimore, Alexandria, Norfolk, Richmond, and elsewhere. This practice would expand in the 1840s under the leadership of alumnus James Lawrence Cabell, who sought to focus the modern department on race science. Cabell’s assistant in this project was junior professor John Staige Davis. Their work set the stage for the post-Civil War rise of the racist pseudo-science of eugenics. Generations of medical students would carve up stolen black bodies in the pursuit of a “science” of medicine that re-confirmed false ideas about white superiority. It was University of Virginia faculty and students before 1870 who built the foundation that eugenics professors Paul Brandon Barringer (himself an alumnus of Cabell’s medical program in the 1870s), Harvey Jordan, and Ivey Foreman Lewis (among others) would stand on in the early twentieth century as they turned the school into a leading eugenics research center.

From the beginning, the University of Virginia was in many ways a pro-slavery southern institution. By the 1840s, it was decidedly an incubator for pro-slavery thought. In June 1850, at final exercises, 1842 alumnus Muscoe R.H. Garnett (who would soon thereafter take a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives) said UVA was meant to defend the institution of slavery from all who would see it abolished. Too many southerners, educated in the North, had joined what he termed “an out-cry against Southern indolence, and its fancied cause, Southern Slavery.” These charges against slavery and the South were made so often that “we begin to believe, what was so often dinned into our ears, that slavery was the moral, social, and political evil they pretended.” But, Garnett said they were wrong: “African slavery is the fruitful source of moral & political, social & economical blessings.” Garnett made the connection explicitly back to the University’s founder: “Mr. Jefferson

saw this danger, and designed the University to avert it.”<sup>78</sup> Garnett was correct. That same year, in response to sectional crisis over western expansion (whether those territories would be slave or free), UVA students published an article arguing that the “flames of Northern fanaticism have kindled conflagration...likely to destroy...Union itself.” It is said northern attempts to limit slavery “rob” the South of “her rights...interfere with her domestic institutions.”<sup>79</sup>

In 1852, History & Literature Professor George Frederick Holmes critiqued *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in the *Southern Literary Messenger*. He argued that Harriet Beecher Stowe’s ignoring the property rights of slave owners “strikes at...the foundations of law, order, and government.”<sup>80</sup> Holmes’s argument was a straight-forward defense of slavery and white supremacy. In the 1850s, Law Professor and 1839 alumnus James P. Holcombe argued that slavery made freedom better for white Virginians and insisted that only white men were entitled to freedom.<sup>81</sup> In 1855, naval engineer Matthew Fontaine Maury spoke at the University and argued that the South’s great progress and internal development, better than that witnessed by any society before, was almost entirely attributable to slavery.<sup>83</sup>

In 1856, after South Carolina Representative Preston Brooks nearly caned abolitionist Senator Charles Sumner to death in the U.S. Senate chamber, University of Virginia students thanked him and sent him a gift: a “splendid cane...with a human head for the handle, badly cracked and broken.” They chose for the inscription a line from Brooks’ letter to his brother the day after the incident: “Every Southern man sustains me.”<sup>84</sup> That same year, Mathematics Professor Alfred T. Bledsoe published the book *Liberty and Slavery*, in which he crafted a political theory that slavery was the natural state of most humans and inequality was hardwired at birth into humanity. In 1857, student Joseph Hodgson, in a Jefferson Society address, argued that slavery was protected by the constitution and that slavery was also supported by American democratic values. In 1859, Edward Alfred Pollard, an 1850 alumnus of the University, published *Black Diamonds Gathered in the Darkey Homes of the South*. In it, he claimed that southern slave owners better understood African Americans, better understood the racial hierarchy, and offered suggestions about how to keep the slave states in the union. He argued: “How much better is the lot of the sable son of Ham, as a slave on a Southern plantation, well cared for, and even religiously educated, than his condition in Africa, where is at the mercy of both men and beasts, in danger of being eaten up bodily by his enemy, or of being sacrificed to the Fetish...” He also advocated for the reopening of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade as a way to keep slave states from seceding while also protecting the white supremacist order.

As the 1860 election approached, students and faculty at the University of Virginia continued to support slavery vocally while fretting about a possible Lincoln victory. In 1859, Professor Holcombe warned of the dangers if a “Black Republican” were to be elected president.<sup>85</sup> The threat was to slavery, to white supremacy, and to white southern freedom. After Lincoln’s victory in the 1860 election, support for secession grew at the University. Alumnus and U.S. Senator from Georgia Robert Toombs (who would soon join the Confederate cause) proclaimed, “We want no negro

equality, no negro citizenship; we want no negro race to degrade our own; and as one man [we] would meet you upon the border with the sword in one hand and the torch in the other.”<sup>86</sup>

On March 1, 1861, a group of pro-secession and pro-slavery students broke into the Rotunda and hoisted the Confederate flag above the building (Virginia had not yet seceded). Most students stopped going to classes and spent days on the Lawn and at the Rotunda cheering for the Confederate cause. They formed three volunteer companies in preparation for the coming conflict and saw themselves as defenders of the southern order. Seven of sixteen members of Jefferson Davis’s cabinet were alumni of the University of Virginia. They included first Confederate Secretary of State Robert Toombs, second Confederate Secretary of State Robert Mercer Taliaferro Hunter, third Confederate Attorney General Thomas Hill Watts, fourth Confederate Attorney General Wade Keys, first Confederate Secretary of War LeRoy Pope Walker, third Confederate Secretary of War George Wythe Randolph, and fourth Confederate Secretary of War James Alexander Seddon. Seventeen other alumni served in the Confederate House of Representatives. They represented Virginia, Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Nine UVA alumni served in the Confederate Senate representing Alabama, Florida, Missouri, Mississippi, Texas, and Virginia. Alumnus Clement Clay, a Confederate Senator from Alabama, directed a Confederate espionage network.

By 1865, the University of Virginia had fulfilled and expanded upon Jefferson’s vision that the school would be a special southern institution that nurtured the needs of the region. It had trained two generations of doctors who spread out across the country carrying the kernels of racist pseudo-science with them. It had become the intellectual protector of white supremacy and of the idea that slavery should be perpetual. Those messages were spread across the country by alumni who became lawyers, judges, university professors, doctors, and legislators elsewhere. This heritage would not disappear after Confederate defeat in 1865. It would not end in March 1865 when Union General Sheridan’s forces occupied Charlottesville and effectively freed 14,000 Albemarle residents. It would not disappear with the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment officially abolishing slavery. It would not disappear with the passage of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments seeking to create and protect African American citizenship. It was still with us in the early twentieth century when UVA became a eugenics center, it was still with us in the 1920s when the University had its own Ku Klux Klan chapter, and it appeared as recently as 2001 when the University objected to a state historical marker on University property that recounted Charlottesville’s surrender to Union forces in 1865.

## **Free People of Color and the University**

In October 1832, the University of Virginia paid four dollars to “Col’d woman Kitty Foster” for clothes washing.<sup>87</sup> Less than two years later, the Faculty Chairman “received information that a party of students...had visited several houses in the neighborhood, where they had conducted themselves in a disorderly manner.” They “had thrown down several flower pots at Foster’s” and attempted to forcibly enter her home. At that time, Catherine Foster owned a house immediately south of the University.

One student admitted that “the party went from Foster’s where they had upset some boxes containing dirt and they had knocked on her door” before continuing on to a cock fight.<sup>88</sup> Three years later, the Faculty Chairman noted that “almost every evening...the students are in the practice of firing pistols across the road south of the University...with pistols they allege they keep out of the precincts...the place of deposit, is, I understand, the house of Kitty Foster.” Certainly, Foster charged for this service.

How could a free woman of color, denied full citizenship rights both as a woman and as a member of a tiny marginalized population of free people of color in a slave society, come to own land and run a gun storage facility? She had come to the area near the University drawn by the promise of economic advancement. She indeed found economic opportunity but also an at times powerful white hostility to her presence, as the mob violence at her property attests. The school offered both great promise and significant peril to free people of color desperate for economic security and advancement.<sup>89</sup> Built in a rural plantation district encompassing several counties east of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the University of Virginia created the first urban center in the area, promising employment opportunity, more regular pay, and even skill development. Free people of color gravitated there in search of jobs, but also often viscerally bore the brunt of white supremacist violence. The new University needed labor and gladly paid them low wages. But, the school, peopled by white men steeped in the politics, economics, and culture of slaveholding society, simultaneously sought to eliminate the non-enslaved black presence on campus and did little to curb violence directed at black Virginians.

In 1829, students returning from town knocked at a cellar door and made “indecent propositions to a female servant.” Had a professor not intervened, the students may well have forced themselves upon the enslaved woman living there. In 1850, three students “committed a violent outrage on a small negro girl, a slave about twelve years old” in an empty field near the school. They were caught raping her. This threat was palpably real.<sup>90</sup> That night in 1834 when students smashed flower pots and “knocked” on Katherine Foster’s door may well have been sexual violence in the making.<sup>91</sup> In 1837, a free woman of color living near the University found her home under siege. Several students “committed an outrage upon the house,” banging on the door, breaking windows, and knocking down the front door. In 1839, students came upon what they described as “a large and disorderly assemblage of negroes in the street.” According to one student, “two of [the free blacks in the street] were engaged in a fight,” and the students endeavored to “drive away the crowd of negroes gathered about.” Other students passing by on a carriage joined the attack on the free blacks. The students mob violence was ultimately redirected at an enslaved man named Fielding when he intervened, telling the student mob that the black men gathered there “were free and should not be parted.”<sup>92</sup>

Free people of color may have seen the potential for harassment and violence at the school as worth the risk because the opportunities were simply so much better than what the rural county had offered before. In 1820, Stephen Bowles hauled coal for the school. That same month, the University paid Milley King nine dollars for cooking.<sup>93</sup> A month later, it paid William Barnett nearly ten dollars.<sup>94</sup> Dolly Battles made clothes for the enslaved people the University had rented in

1822. Free black people continued to haul coal, wash clothes, cook, sew, and even sell corn and beef.<sup>95</sup>

Areas adjacent to the University quickly developed with white landowners subdividing properties and renting out housing to free people of color. These neighborhoods included the one immediately to the south that became known as “Canada,” the name a direct reference to the free people of color there.<sup>96</sup> One “Canada” resident was William Spinner, who became the University of Virginia’s first janitor in 1825, drawing a \$150 annual salary. The faculty initially saw the janitorial position as a menial one. That would soon change, and not for the better for Mr. Spinner.<sup>97</sup> With the arrival of over one hundred students, the faculty’s ideas evolved as the reality of controlling them settled in. They responded by demanding that the janitor take on policing and inspection duties. In early 1826, Spinner “absented himself...for the space of a fortnight,” refusing to work or spend time on the campus. He may have found his new duties impossible to carry out—white students and faculty simply would not accept his oversight and he likely experienced harassment or violence. The faculty paid his wages up to that time and replaced him with a white man. Spinner and his family, however, did not leave the area and did not give up seeking economic and familial security. They continued to live in “Canada” and repeatedly found short-term work at the University digging and cleaning wells—work that still provided regular pay but did not demand regular interaction with students.<sup>98</sup>

Shortly after Thomas Jefferson’s death, the school hired Burwell Colbert, described as “the faithful servant of our late lamented Rector.” In 1828, Colbert earned \$52 for 3½ months’ painting.<sup>99</sup> In 1836, he earned one dollar a day painting and earned \$180 for his work in 1837. Colbert’s skills helped to deliver to him the University’s promise of economic security and opportunity. By living outside the University precincts and doing work involving little or no interaction with students, Colbert may have been able to shield himself to a degree from open white hostility and abuse that likely drove William Spinner from his job.<sup>100</sup>

Any free person of color, such as shoemaker Thomas Sturrs, found the school willing to pay them low wages but also wanting to banish people of color entirely. University officials saw free people of color as anomalous, inferior, and a threat to slave discipline.<sup>101</sup> As early as 1828, the faculty informed the Proctor that they “disapprove[d] of free Negroes being located within the University.”<sup>102</sup> The University later sought to rid the adjacent neighborhoods of the free black presence. In 1847, the Proctor, worried about “the evil resulting from the number of free Negroes, and those nominally so, hanging on about the University,” tried to convince the faculty to quit hiring free blacks and instead require hotelkeepers (or their enslaved laborers) to do all clothes washing.<sup>102</sup>

Despite persistent faculty conversations about free blacks and the very real threat of harassment or violence, free people of color continued to seek wage work and the school continued to hire them. The University of Virginia, for better or worse, simply represented the best source of paid work in the area and free people of color provided key services and labor that the University desperately needed. In 1828, John Neale sought to rent one of the vacant hotels. The faculty,

however, disapproved “of free negroes permitted to reside within the University,” and ordered John Neale “removed.”<sup>104</sup> In 1833, Jack Kennedy, “a mulatto man,” sought to move into “one of the cellar rooms for a barber’s shop for the accommodation of students.” The faculty wrestled with the request. Kennedy was “such a person [that] was much wanted,” because “the students might thus be prevented from going to Charlottesville so often.” They were attracted to the double usefulness of Kennedy’s barbering—providing a much-needed service and possibly reducing the number of trips to town the students took—but they were also suspicious about having him live within the University precincts and not under any white person’s control.<sup>105</sup>

That suspicion extended to those living off the campus. In 1828, the faculty wondered “whether the house occupied by Phil a free man of colour, and a free white woman... is not reputed to be a house of evil fame.” They worried that Phil’s home, possibly a brothel, was “injurious to the morals of the University” and ordered the Proctor to “consult as to any legal means which ought to be pursued to get rid of such disorderly neighbors.”<sup>106</sup> In 1863, the faculty ordered the Grounds superintendent “to remove Jackson, a negro having a white wife, from the house he occupied on University Grounds.” They were removed within one week.<sup>107</sup> Clearly, University faculty remained wary of a free black presence on the campus and were sometimes deeply concerned about the possibility of interracial sex and interracial relationships.

Some free people who moved near the University were ultimately successful in their quest to find continuing employment and a measure of economic security. Elijah Battles, a carpenter, was first hired in 1828 to build a small observatory and saw railings. His work cutting and carving chestnut railings suggests that he was already highly skilled.<sup>108</sup> In 1835, he and another free man of color, Thomas Farrow, were paid ten dollars for repairing a water pump.<sup>109</sup> Both men continued to do carpentry and water system work (hydraulic pumps, wooden pipes, cisterns, pond flood gates) for decades. Battles’ son in 1863 repaired and installed fencing almost everywhere on University property, and continued to do so through 1870.<sup>110</sup> Their long-term success in working for the University was in part attributable to their skilled work that largely insulated them from daily contact with students.<sup>111</sup>

The University of Virginia needed a lot of cooking, washing, and sewing—work that typically included a measure of independence from direct white managerial oversight and did not involve significant interaction with students. Keziah Davis was first paid in 1828 for “making clothes, shirts, and trowsers” for Zachariah, an enslaved man rented to the school. Later that year, the Proctor asked if the faculty “would object to a decent free woman’s occupying the house of the late Janitor and paying rent.” Davis began paying rent to the University in 1830 while working as a seamstress.<sup>112</sup> Several months later, the faculty chairman complained “that a free black woman, named Keziah Fortune, of bad character, was living within the precincts without being under the control of any particular master.” This was almost certainly Keziah Davis. Again, white faculty associated free people of color with what they saw as immoral student activities and simultaneously saw them as

would-be slaves. A hotelkeeper worried that “her immediate removal would cause him some very serious inconvenience.” Davis continued to make clothes, so she may not have been removed, or after being forced to move off Grounds, she was allowed to continue working for the school.<sup>113</sup>

The economic opportunity the University offered free people of color was real enough, but it often came with costs.<sup>114</sup> By 1832, a professor’s house just north of the University was being rented to “free negroes” Fanny Barnett and her family. In that year, the Proctor arranged to use the house “as a hospital if wanted” and “its present occupants—free negroes—agreed to act as nurses and attendants.” In 1834, three students indicated that while drunk, they went to “the house rented to Fanny Barnett.” Another witness, an unnamed free woman of color, described Barnett’s house “as a brothel—students come there every night.” She came forward despite students threatening to harm her if she did not keep quiet.<sup>115</sup> Court documents described Barnett as “not of good fame, nor honest conversation...unlawfully and wickedly did keep and maintain...for filthy lucre and gain, divers and dissolute persons...both black and white, and whores.”<sup>116</sup>

Again, the records suggest that white University and county authorities associated free people of color, including Barnett, with what they termed immoral behaviors. Barnett’s apparent choice of work, running a brothel, was shaped by her marginalization and domination as a person of color and as a woman. The work may have put her at greater risk of violence, working nights surrounded by often drunken young white men. Importantly, however, the work also put her in charge of her own business, one that gave her significant control over her life, allowed her to control to an important degree the terms of contact with students, and helped her create real financial security for her entire family. Despite her economic success, white authorities continued to harass her and the work always came with a real threat of violence. Barnett would be in and out of court repeatedly, often charged with or as the victim of physical assault.<sup>117</sup>

The University of Virginia, however desirous of free black labor, nonetheless regularly fretted about the presence of enslaved people and worked to minimize their visibility both on the campus and in the neighborhood. In 1823, Robert Battles, who owned a small farm between the University and Charlottesville, hauled nearly 200,000 bricks from the brickyards and kilns that had popped up at various locations nearby. He also hauled several tons of sand, earning over \$160.<sup>118</sup> Board of Visitors member John Hartwell Cocke spent years working to pressure Battles into selling his land. Cocke and his associates, all involved in the birth of the University, sought to remove free blacks and explicitly speculated that land adjacent to the school would greatly increase in value in just a few years. As one man told Cocke in 1825, “nothing but the failure of the University can prevent my opinion of its [Battles’ land] value then being realized and that in a very short time.” Thus, speculating in land meant both profit and removal of “mulattos” from the vicinity of the school. Cocke’s 1825 purchase of Battles’ farm succeeded in reducing the number of free people of color living in the area. For this trouble, however, Battles, after years of hard negotiation, netted a tidy profit, receiving \$2,000 for the 26-acre farm.<sup>119</sup>

Stephen Byars purchased his own freedom in 1837 after years of living as if free and hiring himself out. His owner allowed him to live in Charlottesville and find his own work as a groom or stableman near the University for nearly twenty years.<sup>120</sup> Despite Byars' freeing himself and his wife, he had not been granted permission to remain in Virginia. They decided to move to Ohio. Within two years, they had returned because, as Byars explained, "he found after a trial of about six months residence there, that so marked was the difference in the manners and habits of the people of Ohio that he would not remain amongst them with the least happiness or contentment."<sup>121</sup> His return to Albemarle involved risk—he had moved to a free state, meaning he could have been found in violation of a law regarding free people of color in Virginia. Four years later, he would actually be charged with illegally remaining, but the court would acquit him. However, some in the community continued to find his presence objectionable, as he was charged again in 1844.<sup>122</sup> Byars continued to work as a stableman near the University. In June 1840, having saved enough money, he purchased land along the main road just north of the school for \$700. The seller, someone he knew well, let him pay it off over seven years.<sup>123</sup> His experiences highlight both the promise of the University and the peril it could present to free people of color. They also speak volumes about the resilience and persistence of Byars and others struggling continuously to achieve freedom and economic security.

Although many were successful in the pursuit of a measure of economic security, they regularly faced intense harassment and white resistance to their presence. This abuse was particularly acute because the student population changed every year, limiting the development of the kinds of neighborly bonds that could mitigate chronic abuse. As a result, many free people of color only worked for the school in brief stints. Those who could do more skilled work that did not involve routine extended contact with students—painting, iron work, carpentry, clothes-making, and the like—were more likely to work long-term. As well, those who owned their own off-campus businesses (stables, taverns, brothels, etc.) that were in constant demand by students or faculty often found some success. Free people of color, in working at the University of Virginia, had to chart an uneasy course toward opportunity that could not entirely avoid harassment, violence, and peril at the hands of the predominantly white male population at the school.

## **Medical Education, Grave-Robbing, and Violence to the Black Body**

Early in the morning of December 10, 1834, James Oldham, who had been a contractor for the University of Virginia and now owned a farm and tavern a few miles west of the school, heard his dogs barking. It was a brightly moonlit night, so he whistled for them, grabbed his gun, and headed out to see what was causing the commotion. He headed in the direction of the barking, toward a burial plot on his property where an enslaved person had recently been interred. As he approached, he found a group of five men busy digging up the recent burial. Oldham was furious at the trespassing grave-robbers. The grave-robbing party quickly dispersed, with three

men running away. Two, however, were caught in the midst of digging up the body, and did not immediately leave. Oldham continued to advance, yelling, “We will blow your brains out...Go off my land!” Oldham then fired his gun at them, striking one in the back, as they fled.<sup>124</sup>

The next day, students filed a complaint and a warrant was issued for Oldham’s arrest, charging him with “feloniously...and of purpose shoot[ing] and maim[ing] a student.”<sup>125</sup> Another student said: “the young man, was shot in the back by an old fellow whilst endeavoring to take a dead negro for our anatomical dissections...the old coot will be sent to the Penitentiary.”<sup>126</sup> Several months later, a Grand Jury decided not to indict Oldham.<sup>127</sup> Student Charles Ellis wrote that he was shocked by the decision. He saw the local population as “ignorant countrymen” who could not understand that the grave-robbing students were acting as modern, scientifically-minded disciples of medical inquiry. He said the locals “imagine us cannibals, or something worse, who can take up the bodies of dead persons, and cut them to pieces; thus it is that Superstition ever combats against Learning, and Science.”<sup>128</sup> Ellis’s characterization of locals as “ignorant countrymen” fit perfectly with emerging medical views at the time.

As early as 1778, Thomas Jefferson displayed few qualms about medical practices or how those cadavers were procured. In that year, he wrote a bill stipulating “if any person commit Petty treason or murder a family member, he shall suffer death by hanging, and his body be delivered to Anatomists to be dissected.”<sup>129</sup> In 1784, in Query 14 of his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, after a lengthy disquisition on the supposed proto-biologic inferiority of African Americans, he even suggested scientists, proving him right, might launch investigations that “require some observations, even where the subject may be submitted to the Anatomical knife.”<sup>130</sup> By 1812, Jefferson had come to see his imagined school (what would become the University of Virginia) as a place where medical inquiry could enter the scientific temple, through understanding past “fatal errors...recorded in the necrology of man.”<sup>131</sup>

Jefferson saw anatomy as vital, for it “promised to serve as the vehicle whereby medicine...could remake itself into a reliable science, via a commitment to empirical investigation. Anatomy was a privileged mediator between mind and body, a middle way. To know anatomy one had to read learned texts *and* get one’s hands bloody.”<sup>132</sup> Thus, Jefferson’s design plans for the University included a separate Anatomical Hall where professors would perform cadaver dissections in front of students, but the outside world would not know what went on inside.<sup>133</sup> Jefferson argued, “There cannot be a single dissection until a proper theatre is prepared giving an advantageous view of the operation to those within, and effectually excluding observation from without.”<sup>134</sup>

By fall 1827, the new Jefferson-designed building was in use, as an enslaved woman named Prudence was paid for washing linens used in demonstrations. In 1829, the Faculty Chair stated that the school “strongly encouraged” anatomical dissections.<sup>135</sup> The race to procure fresh cadavers, driven by the rising popularity of “clinic-based scientific medicine” and in pursuit of proving Jefferson’s theories about white superiority, was officially underway.<sup>136</sup> Cadavers were first noted in the University financial records in 1829, when the school paid \$14.50 for a corpse.<sup>137</sup> At that time,

it was left to individual professors and medical students themselves to find bodies by robbing graves (what they termed anatomical excursions or anatomical expeditions). These “excursions” would overwhelmingly target cemeteries where free or enslaved African Americans were buried.

Student Henry Beatley, charged with a breach of the school’s uniform law in 1830, explained that he “had injured his uniform, by an anatomical excursion, and was obliged to send it to the tailor’s to be repaired.”<sup>138</sup> A year later, faculty approved a leave of absence for six students to travel over one hundred miles to Prince George County on an anatomical expedition. Again, most of the bodies dug up were of enslaved or free people of color. This was not surprising. As one New Yorker had commented back in 1788, “I rather believe that the only subjects procured for dissection are the productions of Africa or their descendants...and if those characters are the only subjects of dissection, surely no person can object.”<sup>139</sup> African Americans in nineteenth-century America essentially had no rights any person was bound to respect—this extreme vulnerability extended beyond life. At the University of Virginia, with medical training increasingly focused on proving those Jeffersonian ideas about white superiority, the pressure on African American cemeteries would be even more acute.

Charles C. Wertenbaker, an 1853 alumnus, remembered that “the University [enslaved] servants were buried on the north side of the cemetery, just outside the wall.” Those burials may have fallen prey to grave-robbing. Wertenbaker added “many of the bodies were only log or wood or stones, for fear of having their dead taken up by the medical class...caused the negroes to inter their dead secretly, and hold the usual ceremonies over the dummy.”<sup>140</sup>

The University in 1832 appropriated one hundred dollars annually, creating a fund for purchasing corpses from as far away as Baltimore. In 1833, a separate student dissecting hall opened (dubbed “stiff” hall by students). The school also started using “the small brick building in the Valley below the Theatre, as a boiling house and receptacle for subjects immediately after dissection.” People regularly filed complaints about the “extremely offensive” odors emanating from the buildings.<sup>141</sup> Even the yearly one-hundred-dollar appropriation proved insufficient to meet demand. In 1837, the University levied an annual five-dollar dissecting fee on medical students. This amounted to an additional \$160–\$260 or more yearly to pay for anatomical subjects.<sup>142</sup>

The birth and evolution of medical training at the University of Virginia had a visceral impact upon enslaved families and perpetuated a form of violence against their bodies. Enslaved people—Prudence, Simpson, Lucy, Jack, Jack Wilson, James Smith, Lewis, a “coloured man,” and others—washed the bloody surgical linens, cleaned the waste pit of human remains, prepared cadavers for dissection, cleaned up after dissection demonstrations, and boiled down whatever was left. The work was at times highly technical. In 1890, a student said the Anatomical Hall attendant “received the subjects or ‘stiffs’...washes them, inserts the embalming fluid, and boils free of all flesh from the bones.”<sup>143</sup> By 1837, the University’s professors hoped to get four or five cadavers weekly from Richmond, Baltimore, Norfolk, or Alexandria just for the demonstrations. The corpses, however, continued to be overwhelmingly African American, a trend seen at other southern schools in

particular. Eighty percent of the cadavers dissected at Kentucky's Transylvania University were African American. The percentage was similar at the Medical College of Georgia.<sup>144</sup>

African American communities in Virginia were often viscerally aware of the prevalence of grave-robbing as well as the targeting of black cemeteries and went to great lengths to hinder resurrectionists' efforts. Most Virginians, black and white, understood that to touch the dead was to be poisoned by moral pollution. The enslaved community at the University of Virginia may have seen Anatomical Hall attendant Lewis as polluted in powerful ways. Students called him "Anatomical Lewis." He was reported to be "an object of fear to the negroes," and "from the nature of his avocations was regarded by the children very much an ogre."<sup>145</sup> He reportedly lived alone in the school's woodyard (in the Pavilion VII garden).

Thus, that moonlit night when James Oldham found five students grave-robbing represents just one vivid episode in a decades-long story. Oldham's response, outrage at trespassing and desecration of a burial plot, was typical of Virginians witnessing this macabre medical practice. The University of Virginia program expanded from 1837 to 1861, creating five professorships as well as a number of subordinate demonstrator positions. All that growth meant more demand for corpses and more pressure on African American burial grounds. As Harriet Martineau observed in 1838, "the bodies of coloured people exclusively are taken for dissection 'because whites do not like it, and the coloured people cannot resist.'"<sup>146</sup> As scholar Harriet Washington argues, for both free and enslaved African Americans in Virginia, "anatomical dissection meant even more: it was an extension of slavery into eternity, because it represented a profound level of white control over their bodies, illustrating that they were not free even in death."<sup>147</sup>

The practice of grave-robbing and the specific targeting of African American graves were undoubtedly routine at the school. UVA student Philip Claiborne Gooch on October 11, 1844, referenced the practice when he wrote that while on his way to an anatomy lecture (by Professor James Lawrence Cabell), he "smelled something *queer*—the first reflection suggested a body for dissection...I saw something covered with a black cloth & my nose told me what before Dr. Cabell did." The bodies often arrived in active decay, so teaching schedules, as they did that day, shifted to accommodate arrivals of "a couple of subjects with arrived last night unexpectedly & we had to stop acting on the bones & to go immediately into the subject." Cabell divided the class into dissection companies and then drew lots for the subjects, but Gooch indicated "my class did not get it, the other was so old that it cd [could] not be used." Gooch also remarked on just how common the grave-robbing must have been and indicated that the one good body that day was "an old negro woman who came from Richmond."<sup>148</sup>

Gooch's memories also suggest that student grave-robbing was in no way secretive. Just four days after the classroom dissection of that woman, Gooch recollected that "2 fellows called me, (who were Garnett & Lewis)...they told me that McKenney had informed them of a good piece of 'fresh meat'...a man [who had] fell ill in the road and died drunk." The students then borrowed a local

merchant's (Clement McKennie) cart and enslaved driver, went to the coroner's house, snuck in, and stole the body. Gooch noted that "we took him out and cut stick for the cart...he was very heavy (170 lbs I guess) but we shot slapped him in cart...we all take big rock and place them in well [in the now empty coffin] and fix on the lid." The students, after stealing the body, weighted down the coffin so no one would notice the body's absence. When Gooch and the other students returned to UVA with the stolen corpse, Professor Howard "impressed us of the very great importance of never revealing the circumstances" of how they stole the body lest they damage the coroner's reputation.<sup>149</sup>

"Anatomical" Lewis, the enslaved man rented yearly from George W. Spooner who was forced to work as the Anatomical Hall attendant, was likely part of Gooch's anatomical expedition and would have prepared the stolen body for dissection. Gooch remembered that the next day, he "came to the college & went to see our fresh meat which ["Anatomical"] Lewis had striped [sic]—went to Dr. Cabell's lecture—then saw him surprised and delighted him by telling him our adventure." Just about a week later, Gooch noted that he "dissected a little-6 or 8 of us tried all morning to get out the viscera but nobody knew how—Dr. Cabell laughed heartily when he heard that we asked *Lewis* (the old negro) to aid us."<sup>150</sup> Gooch's diary entries are dotted with references to grave-robbing and dissection, the memories shared as casually as were those of sleeping, eating, and visiting friends. To white medical students and professors, the practice was completely unremarkable. Only a couple days after that conversation with Professor Cabell, Gooch "was informed by ["Anatomical"] Lewis that the Sick negro at Verulam was to be buried this morning and also one at Dr. Woods, so we made arrangements to go out." Once again, the desired corpses were of people of color. That same night, the students went out to attempt to dig up the bodies, but were deterred by the sound of men's voices as they approached the grave.<sup>151</sup>

In the 1840s, medical schools and students continued to seek out bodies. Grave-robbled corpses went from \$12–\$15 per body to as much as \$30. Hampden-Sydney promoted its medical school in Richmond, reminding anyone who would listen that "from the particularity of our institutions [white rule and slavery], materials [anatomical subjects] can be obtained in abundance, and we believe are not surpassed if equaled by any city in our country."<sup>152</sup> This was big business. In 1848, the Virginia General Assembly responded to public outcry by legislating against "violation of the sepulture," decreeing that "any free person who shall without authority wilfully disinter...a human body" could be jailed for up to a year and fined up to five hundred dollars.<sup>153</sup> The legislation did not outlaw the possibility of grave-robbers forcing enslaved people to do the work (nor make it a crime for an enslaved person to disinter a human body) and was merely a parchment barrier to continuing dissection at medical schools. It is doubtful that enforcement was robust anywhere in the state, and is certain that it was nearly non-existent when African American burial grounds were targeted.

By 1849, University of Virginia medical faculty were working closely with former classmates and former students, hoping to reach an agreement that would ensure a steady supply of cadavers for all. In August of that year, UVA alumnus Howell Lewis Thomas told the school: "It would be better if

you would state how many subjects you would want at a time, and at what intervals, for though a contract of this sort could not be followed utterly, owing to indicents of the trade.”<sup>154</sup> According to Thomas, a resurrectionist named Miller charged twenty-five dollars for “good fresh subjects well packed, delivered at the Richmond Depot” or thirty dollars for delivery to the University.<sup>155</sup> This push for fresh corpses clearly targeted African Americans. Thomas complained in November 1849 that “the subjects are all in incipient putrefaction when buried” thanks to some very warm weather and because there had been a recent paucity in “colored burial[s].” The University of Virginia’s medical professors clearly preferred African American bodies for their demonstrations. Thomas also told UVA professor Davis, “I heard the darkies talking of a funeral tomorrow; if there be anything to it, I will watch and endeavor to secure the commodity for you.”<sup>156</sup> Competition for stolen black bodies in Virginia was intense indeed.

UVA Professor John Staige Davis in July 1850 sent Hampden Sydney professor Arthur E. Peticolas one hundred dollars for subjects.<sup>157</sup> Although the University of Virginia had begun to work with Hampden-Sydney in Richmond to share grave-robbed corpses, Davis continued to pursue bodies in other locales independently. In September 1850, Naval Doctor Lewis W. Minor met with a “body snatcher...who agreed to furnish [UVA] in liquor or oil barrels, well secured,” a variety of anatomical subjects ranging in price from four dollars for a child under eight years old to fifteen dollars for a mother and infant.<sup>158</sup> The system was rather elaborate—UVA sent money to Minor, who paid a grave-robber named White to steal bodies and ship them in barrels via steamboat to J.W. Brockenbrough in Richmond, who would put them on the train to “McIntire Charlottesville.” This new agreement quickly produced two bodies: a thirty-five-year-old woman and a four-year-old child. On November 15, 1850, one shipment did not quite make it to the University. It was discovered by an unsuspecting station agent, who opened the barrel. His macabre discovery apparently received fevered news coverage. Minor reported: “The papers this morning state that the barrel was addressed to ‘McIntire Charlottesville’” and was “large enough to contain your favorite article of trade, and addressed as above, will in future be closely scrutinized.” Minor further suggested that in the future steps be taken to mask what was in the barrel, who sent it, and who was supposed to receive it.<sup>159</sup>

By the end of that month, Davis instructed the resurrectionists to no longer address barrels to Brockenbrough. Despite these difficulties, the bodies kept coming. Two adults and two children arrived in late November—the charge was thirty-two dollars. From then on, the barrels were marked with the date of burial and of shipment, one date on one end of the barrel, the other date on the other end.<sup>160</sup> Davis continued to work in multiple locations simultaneously. In November 1850, he was alerted to a “prime subject to be buried [nearby] tomorrow, who died the day before yesterday of mania, and is, I understand, perfectly emaciated. It is a coloured woman.” He also mentioned a “newborn child found dead at a door in Norfolk some two days since which I was very anxious to send you for exhibiting foetal circulation.”<sup>161</sup>

Richmond remained a favorite location, as it had a large African American population, many cemeteries, and was linked to Charlottesville via rail. In July 1851, the University of Virginia and Hampden-Sydney came to terms. UVA would “no longer employ a Resurrectionist in Richmond, but all of the Subjects in the City afforded shall be taken to the [Hampden-Sydney] College, where any that were unsuitable for dissection should be rejected,” Hampden-Sydney would keep two thirds, the rest would go to the University of Virginia.<sup>162</sup> The University of Virginia noted that “acceptance...does not preclude any attempt on our part to get an additional supply, if necessary, from Norfolk, [and elsewhere] but it does forbid any competition in the Richmond market.”<sup>163</sup>

Professor Davis also worked directly with railroads to secure efficient and discreet transportation of the grave-robbled corpses. The stolen bodies were packed in barrels in Richmond were shipped to Charlottesville via the Virginia Central Railroad on freight trains or in a separate freight car attached to a passenger train. This was because the railroad “concluded that it would not be proper to take subjects for dissection in the baggage car of a passenger train.”<sup>164</sup> The railroad scheduled regular freight train runs to Charlottesville. For the University, this meant it “would always be able to get subjects for dissection without much delay.”<sup>165</sup>

Railroad President E.F. Fontaine knew that the University of Virginia was transporting stolen corpses and required that a UVA “agent shall always in person apprise the Depot agent what the article is” as a way to avoid further outrage.<sup>166</sup> The concern was not misplaced—public scrutiny was very real. One scholar has argued that “from the late-eighteenth century to the late-nineteenth century, medical grave-robbery was a common occurrence in America, and the fear of body snatching and consequent anatomical dissection was widespread in any area within reach of anatomists or their agents.”<sup>167</sup> In January 1852, Hampden-Sydney professor Arthur Peticolas predicted “much difficulty...in procuring material from” Richmond for the remainder of the spring session because “soon after the Christmas vacation the resurrectionist was arrested and brought before the Mayor.” Peticolas continued, explaining that the arrests had “directed public attention to the *guarding* of the pauper and negro burial places, and as a consequence, our man, has since, found but little opportunity for the exercise of his talent.”<sup>168</sup> The resurrectionist’s conviction was overturned when he was pardoned a few months later. He would quickly return to work.<sup>169</sup>

Writing to University of Virginia medical professor John Staige Davis in 1856, Hampden-Sydney professor Peticolas expressed frustration, saying “he was forced to play resurrectionist” himself and go grave-robbing in the evening.<sup>170</sup> All of this—hiring a network of professional grave-robbers as well as private grave-robbing by both professors and students—did not get the medical program the large and regular supply of corpses it demanded. By the late 1850s, the medical school began chasing bodies of the executed statewide as it targeted the criminal justice system. In particular, University professors sought the bodies of executed African Americans.

In 1856, Prince William County slave owner George E. Green was murdered. His slaves were charged with insurrection and sentenced to hang in Brentsville, Virginia, in January 1857.<sup>171</sup>

Four days before the scheduled execution, someone calling himself “T.R. Roberts,” whose letter implies he may have been (or was pretending to be) a UVA medical student, wrote to Governor Henry Wise. The writer reminded the governor that “to study Anatomy without subjects for demonstration is as fruitless as Geometry without diagrams... There has been an unusual dearth of medical subjects this session.” The letter writer also asked whether or not the governor might give the University “an order for the bodies of some negroes who will be hung... in Pr. Wm. County Va.” and assured the governor that he had “the hearty cooperation of our whole class.”<sup>172</sup>

Professor John Staige Davis also sought out the same bodies. In March 1857, Dr. T.C. Brown of Alexandria wrote that he had sent seven cadavers to the Gordonsville Depot and also noted: “Those negroes at Brentsville were to be executed... & by mistake failed to make the effort to get them.” This would not be the last time that UVA, voracious for cadavers suitable for dissection, sought out the bodies of executed African Americans.<sup>173</sup> In fall 1859, as the trials of those captured in the abolitionist John Brown’s failed raid on the federal arsenal at Harper’s Ferry ended and the convicted headed to the gallows in Charles Town, UVA professors Davis and Cabell again sought the bodies. The first three people to hang were a runaway enslaved man named Shields Green, a free man of color named John Copeland, and a young white man. On December 8, Davis wrote to Charles C. Wertenbaker regarding “the convicts awaiting execution & the chance of procuring one or more of their bodies for dissection in my department.” UVA would be unsuccessful, as nearby Winchester Medical College grabbed two of the bodies first. The white man’s body was not sent for dissection—he was properly buried—yet more evidence that black bodies were preferred.<sup>174</sup>

Professor Davis continued to work with doctors in Richmond, Norfolk, and Alexandria regarding hiring resurrectionists and having cadavers shipped back to Charlottesville regularly. The one hundred dollars appropriated for anatomical subjects back in 1832 had long since proven to be insufficient. In 1850, Professor Davis sent at least one hundred additional dollars to Richmond and another one hundred dollars to Tidewater. In 1856, he sent at least two hundred twenty-six dollars to Richmond alone. In 1857, one hundred fifty dollars was directed to resurrectionists in Alexandria. In 1859, a stunning four hundred fifty dollars was sent to Richmond for cadavers.<sup>175</sup> With cadaver prices fluctuating month to month and running the gamut from four to thirty dollars, it is difficult to estimate just how many stolen bodies the University of Virginia paid for, but most often the price hovered between twelve and twenty dollars per adult body.

By 1837, the University of Virginia had hoped to get at least four or five corpses weekly, which over the course of five or six months could have amounted to as many as one hundred bodies. A Norfolk resurrectionist promised twelve bodies monthly. Between November 19, 1858, and January 13, 1859, Professor John Staige Davis received at the University a total of thirteen subjects from Richmond alone. Davis indicated they would need more before the session ended in March.<sup>176</sup>

This race to find bodies clearly had a profound effect on African American communities across the state. Before 1865, at any one point in time, there were as many as five different medical schools in

the state actively pursuing cadavers. The demand from those schools alone meant that hundreds of recently buried African Americans in Virginia each year faced a real threat of being stolen under cover of night. The grave-robbing business was so brisk at times that resurrectionists “regularly shipped the bodies of southern blacks to northern medical schools.”<sup>177</sup> That reality surely created a palpable fear for both enslaved families and the families of free people of color.

The grisly business of cadaver procurement continued largely unabated after the Civil War started. In November 1861, Professor Davis indicated he “would like to purchase several dead bodies for practice in Operative Surgery.” Davis again requested “another subject” in February 1862. In December 1865, a doctor in Richmond wrote to Professor Davis to let him know that he had just sent “per National Express two subjects and shipped two” two days earlier.<sup>178</sup> Even the end of slavery could not stop the University of Virginia medical pedagogy’s insatiable desire for primarily black bodies. The practice would continue at UVA into the twentieth century.

## Endnotes

1. Thomas Jefferson to James Breckenridge, February 15, 1821. <http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/default.xqy?keys=FOEA-print-04-02-02-1839>
2. Henry S. Randall, *The Life of Thomas Jefferson*, (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1865) I: 11; John Meacham, *Thomas Jefferson: The Art of Power* (New York: Random House, 2012), 494
3. Thomas Jefferson, “Notes on the Siting of Central College,” July 18, 1817, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Retirement Series*: Vol 11, 19, Jan. to 31 Aug. 1817 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 544; Edmund Bacon, “Jefferson at Monticello: The Private Life of Thomas Jefferson,” in *Jefferson at Monticello: Recollections of a Monticello Slave and of a Monticello Overseer* James A. Bear, Jr. ed. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1967), 32–33.
4. George, Milly, Armsted, Anthony, Prior, Jeff, James, Reubin, Jenny, Sally, Jim Henderson, William Green, Fleming, Phil, Robert, Harry, William, Dick, Zachariah, Armstrong, Ned, Charles, Henry, Maria, Cather, Sukey, Isham, Simon, Wilson, Jefferson, John Edwards, Sharper, Barnett, Fran, George, Prince, Jim, Giles, Mike, Gilbert, Matt, Alfred, Randal, Davey, Peter, John Meads, Linus, Cristo, Young Sam, Bristoe, Bob, Winston, Humphrey, Primus, Moses, Guy, Zebray, Aaron, Violete, Isaac, Old Peter, Stephen, and Thrimston. Of the 4,000-5,000 enslaved people who lived and worked at UVA at some point between 1817–1865, names have been able to be identified in only about 500 cases.
5. Journals of Business Transactions of Central College, Vol 1: 1817–1822, March 26, 1819, p2; Vol 2: 1819–1828, August 26, 1820, p. 37.
6. John M. Perry also farmed a significant amount of land and it is likely that many of the enslaved African Americans owned by him may have performed agricultural labor. Population Statistics, Albemarle County, 1820. 4th Census of the United States.
7. John Neilson to John Hartwell Cocke, February 22, 1823. In Papers of John Hartwell Cocke, 1725–1939, University of Virginia Library.
8. “Academical Village” refers to the buildings in Thomas Jefferson’s original design for the University: the Rotunda, the Lawn, the pavilions, pavilion gardens, the ranges and the hotels.
9. Journals of Business Transactions of Central College, Vol. 1: 1817–1822, October 1, 1821, p. 58; Journals of Business Transactions of Central College, Vol. 2: 1819–1828, November 25, 1822, p. 159; Papers of the Proctors of the University of Virginia, 1817–1828, Box 17, Accounts, July–December 1821
10. Journals of Business Transactions of Central College, Vol. 1: 1817–1822, August 30, 1818, p. 3; Papers of the Proctor of the University of Virginia, 1817–1828, Box 1, Folder 6; Box 17, Proctor’s Notebook, 1818–1820.
11. Papers of the Proctors of the University of Virginia, 1817–1828, Box 1, Folder 6; Report and Documents Respecting the University of Virginia, p. 25. Richmond: Thomas Ritchie, 1819; Papers of the Proctors of the University of Virginia, 1817–1828, Box 17, Accounts January–June 1821.

12. Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Query XIV, 1784. <http://web.archive.org/web/20110221131356/http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/toccer-new2?id=JefVirg.sgm&images=images/modeng&data=/texts/english/modeng/parsed&tag=public&part=14&division=div1>
13. Minutes of the Rector and Board of Visitors of the University of Virginia, October 4, 1824.
14. Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Query XVIII, 1784. <http://web.archive.org/web/20110221131356/http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/toccer-new2?id=JefVirg.sgm&images=images/modeng&data=/texts/english/modeng/parsed&tag=public&part=14&division=div1>
15. Minutes of the Faculty of the University of Virginia, September 12, 1835.
16. Minutes of the Faculty of the University of Virginia, April 28, 1834; Journals of the Chairman of the Faculty, November 27, 1838.
17. Minutes of the Faculty of the University of Virginia, May 2 and 3, 1856.
18. The extensive testimony about the beating of Fielding is in the Journals of the Chairman of the Faculty, February 25, March 1, 1839; and in the Minutes of the Faculty of the University of Virginia, March 2 and March 8, 1839. This incident is more fully described at <http://juel.iath.virginia.edu/node/314>.
19. Journals of the Chairman of the Faculty, March 23 and September 28, 1829.
20. Journals of the Chairman of the Faculty, March 30, 1831. Thornton appears again in the Journals of the Chairman of the Faculty March 30, 1831 and November 30, 1831. In those instances, he is again linked with local merchant Clement P. McKennie, who operated a bookstore near the University.
21. Journals of the Chairman of the Faculty, February 17, 1834.
22. Journals of the Chairman of the Faculty, June 25, 1829.
23. Journals of the Chairman of the Faculty, February 1, 1830, p. 211.
24. Minutes of the Faculty of the University of Virginia, April 24, 1850, p. 80; Minutes of the Rector and Board of Visitors of the University of Virginia, June 28, 1850, p. 168.
25. Journals of the Chairman of the Faculty, November 8, 1830.
26. Minutes of the Faculty of the University of Virginia, September 20, 1826.
27. Minutes of the Faculty of the University of Virginia, February 3, 1834.
28. Journals of the Chairman of the Faculty, February 4, 1834. John Taylor may have been free. He is described as a "colored man" and is listed as having a last name.
29. Journals of the Chairman of the Faculty, March 10, 1831
30. Journals of the Chairman of the Faculty, February 14, 1828; Chairman's Journal, April 16, 1828.
31. Minutes of the Faculty of the University of Virginia, December 22, 1826.
32. Minutes of the Faculty of the University of Virginia, February 14 and June 26, 1828.
33. Journals of the Chairman of the Faculty, February 17, 1837.
34. Journals of the Chairman of the Faculty, February 17, 1831.
35. Diary of Charles Ellis, November 7, 1835.
36. Alfred T. Howell to Father, October 1, 1850; Alfred T. Howell to Morton B. Howell, October 15, 1850. *Correspondence of Morton Boyte Howell, 1851–1860*. MSS 8463. Microfilm M-1725. Alfred and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia.
37. Journals of the Chairman of the Faculty, March 11, 1836.
38. Wilma King, *Stolen Childhood: Slave Youth in Nineteenth Century America*. 2nd. edition. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011, p. xxi–xxii.
39. Their life stories have come to light thanks to the work of two people. One was Scott Nesbit, then a graduate student in the history department, who researched William Gibbons as part of a Kenan Fellowship. The other is local community historian Gayle Schulman, who has done decades of work uncovering the lives of the Gibbonses and published an article in the *Magazine of Albemarle County History* on them and also produced an unpublished paper on slavery at the University of Virginia. The President's Commission on Slavery and the University is deeply thankful for their pioneering work.
40. Gayle M. Schulman, "Slaves at the University of Virginia," unpublished paper presented to the African American Genealogy Group of Charlottesville/Albemarle, May 2003, p. 1.
41. *The Freedmen's Record*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (March 1868), p. 41–42.

42. Gayle M. Schulman, "The Gibbons Family: Freedmen," *Magazine of Albemarle County History*, Vol. 55, 1997, pp. 63–64.
43. Scott Nesbit, "The Education of William Gibbons," 2004 William R. Kenan, Jr. Endowment Fund of the Academical Village Fellowship paper, Center for Undergraduate Excellence, University of Virginia, p. 19.  
[https://www.virginia.edu/president/kenanscholarship/work/archive\\_files/scott\\_nesbit.pdf](https://www.virginia.edu/president/kenanscholarship/work/archive_files/scott_nesbit.pdf)
44. "Rev. Wm. Gibbons' Funeral," *Washington Post*, July 2, 1886. See also "South Washington News, *Washington Bee*, July 10, 1886. Both quoted in Scott Nesbit, "The Education of William Gibbons," 2004 William R. Kenan, Jr. Endowment Fund of the Academical Village Fellowship paper, Center for Undergraduate Excellence, University of Virginia, pp. 1–2.  
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45. John S. Patton, "Henry Martin, 1826–1915," *Alumni Bulletin of the University of Virginia*, Series 3, Vol. 8, No. 5, p. 597–601.
46. John S. Patton, "Henry Martin, 1826–1915," *Alumni Bulletin of the University of Virginia*, Series 3, Vol. 8, No. 5, p. 597–601.
47. Henry Martin, Letter to the Editor, January 29, 1890, *College Topics*, University of Virginia, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 5, column 2.
48. "Funeral of Henry Martin," *The Daily Progress* (Charlottesville, Virginia), October 9, 1915, p. 1, column 5.
49. "Funeral of Henry Martin," *The Daily Progress* (Charlottesville, Virginia), October 9, 1915, p. 1, column 5.
50. C. Alphonso Smith, "Uncle Henry: Bell-Ringer," *University of Virginia Corks and Curls*, Vol. 27 (1914), p. 149–151.  
<http://juel.iath.virginia.edu/node/361>
51. See Albemarle County Will Book No. 3, p. 136, 1791 inventory of James Minor estate; A Division of the Negroes of James Minor, deceased, December 3, 1805. *David Yancey vs. James Minor's Executors, Abated June 7, 1809*, 1809–044. Albemarle County Chancery Court Records, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia; Albemarle County Will Book No. 7, p. 177, November 11, 1806. The commission is indebted to the research of Benjamin Ford of Rivanna Archaeological Services, including an unpublished paper, "Lewis Commodore," that details Lewis Commodore's life before and after his time at UVA. The biographical material here is drawn from his work.
52. Albemarle County Deed Book No. 3, p. 308; No. 17, p. 122; No. 18, p. 56.
53. Albemarle County Deed Book No. 21, p. 397.
54. Notebook of Dabney Minor, 1808–1820. University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Virginia; Albemarle County Will Book No. 8, p. 140 (November 10, 1824).
55. *The Central Gazette*, Dec. 25, 1824, p. 4.
56. Journals of the Business Transactions of Central College, Vol. 3, 1828–1832, p. 98 (December 11, 1830), p. 100 (January 6, 1831), p. 130 (December 23, 1831). University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Virginia.
57. Papers of the Proctor of the University of Virginia, Box 8, Correspondence 1831, July 1831. University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Virginia.
58. Journals of the Chairman of the Faculty, Vol. 3, 1831–1832, p. 62 (January 2, 1832).
59. Minutes of the Rector and Board of Visitors of the University of Virginia, July 10, 1832.
60. Minutes of the Rector and Board of Visitors of the University of Virginia, July 2, 1835. University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Virginia.
61. Journals of the Chairman of the Faculty, 1827–1864, Vol. 6 (1835–1837), p. 1. University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Virginia.
62. Edward A. Pollard, A Re-Gathering of 'Black Diamonds' in the Old Dominion, *Southern Literary Messenger*, New Series, Vol. VIII (October 1859), p. 295.
63. Edward A. Pollard, A Re-Gathering of 'Black Diamonds' in the Old Dominion, *Southern Literary Messenger*, New Series, Vol. VIII (October 1859), p. 295.
64. Papers of the Proctor of the University of Virginia, Box 12, Committee Reports, Resolutions & c. 1839. University of Virginia Library; Minutes of the Rector and Board of Visitors of the University of Virginia, July 4, 1840.
65. Minutes of the Rector and Board of Visitors of the University of Virginia, July 4, 1840.
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67. Charles C. Wertenbaker, Early Days of the University, p. 24. *Alumni Bulletin*, Vol. IV, No. 1 (May 1897), p. 21–25.
68. Minutes of the Faculty of the University of Virginia, Vol. 7, September 1848–September 1856, p. 192 (December 30, 1851).
69. Minutes of the Faculty of the University of Virginia, Vol. 7, September 1848–September 1856, p. 455 (October 27, 1855).
70. Ledgers Maintained by the Proctor of the University of Virginia, 1817–1910. Vol. 1861–1865, p. 561 (December 2, 1862).

71. Ledgers Maintained by the Proctor of the University of Virginia, 1817–1910, Vol. 1861–1865, p. 404–407.
72. Tabular Statement Relating to Persons considered Paupers Rec'd at the Poor House, Albemarle County, 1867. Overseers of the Poor, Misc. and Loos Papers, Albemarle County Civil War Era, 1858–1871, Box 5. Library of Virginia. Tabular Statement Relating to Poor Persons Received of the Poor House, Albemarle County, April 1868. Overseers of the Poor, Misc. and Loose Papers, Albemarle County Civil War Era, 1858–1871, Box 5, Library of Virginia; Tabular Statement Relating to Paupers Supported at the Poor House During the Fiscal Year ending March 31, 1868, Overseers of the Poor, Misc., and Loose Papers, Albemarle County Civil War Era, 1858–1871, Box 5.
73. Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Query XIV, 1784. <http://web.archive.org/web/20110221131356/http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/toccer-new2?id=JefVirg.sgm&images=images/modeng&data=/texts/english/modeng/parsed&tag=public&part=14&division=div1>
74. Thomas Jefferson. *Notes on the State of Virginia*. Philadelphia: Prichard and Hall, 1788. p. 147–148. <http://docsouth.unc.edu/southlit/jefferson/jefferson.html>
75. Thomas Jefferson to James Breckenridge, February 15, 1821. <http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/default.xqy?keys=FOEA-print-04-02-02-1839>
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78. Muscoe R.H. Garnett, *An Address Delivered Before the Society of Alumni of the University of Virginia, At Its Annual Meeting: Held in the Rotunda on the 29th of June, 1850* (Charlottesville, VA: 1850): 27.
79. "The Present Crisis," Jefferson Monument Magazine I, no. 5 (February 1850): 146.
80. George Frederick Holmes, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," *Southern Literary Messenger* 18 (1852): 721.
81. James P. Holcombe, *An Address Delivered Before the Society of Alumni, of the University of Virginia, at Its Annual Meeting* (Charlottesville, MacFarlane & Fergusson, 1853); James P. Holcombe, *Sketches of the Political Issues and Controversies of the Revolution: A Discourse Delivered Before the Virginia Historical Society, at Their Ninth Annual Meeting, Jan. 17, 1856* (Richmond, The Society, 1856); James P. Holcombe, "Is Slavery Consistent with Natural Law?," *Southern Literary Messenger* 27 (1858): 401–421.
82. Matthew Fontaine Maury, *Address Delivered Before the Literary Societies of the University of Virginia, On the 28th June, 1855* (Richmond: 1855): 19.
83. "Another Cane for Mr. Brooks," *Richmond Enquirer*, May 30, 1856, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.
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89. See Kirt von Daacke, *Freedom Has a Face: Race Identity, and Community in Jefferson's Virginia*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012.
90. Journals of the Chairman of the Faculty of the University of Virginia, 1827–1864, Vol. 7, p. 134.
91. Minutes of the Faculty of the University of Virginia, Vol. 7, p. 80; Minutes of the Faculty of the University of Virginia, Vol. 3: 1830–1834, p. 325–326.
92. Minutes of the Faculty of the University of Virginia, Vol. 5, p. 392; Minutes of the Faculty of the University of Virginia, Vol. 5, p. 623.
93. Journals of the Business Transactions of Central College, Vol. 1, 1819–1821, April 4, 1820, p. 16; Papers of the Proctor of the University of Virginia, 1817–1828, Box 17, Accounts January–June 1820 (The Milley named here may have been a free woman of color known as Milly King).
94. Journals of the Business Transactions of Central College, Vol. 1, 1817–1822, May 2, 1820, p. 19–20; Ledgers maintained by the Proctor of the University of Virginia, 1817–1910, Vol. 1: 1817–1822, p. 24; Albemarle County Court Order Book 1821–1822, p. 24; Albemarle County Court Order Book 1822–1823, p. 32.
95. Journals of the Business Transactions of Central College, Vol. 2: 1819–1828, p. 282, 286, 316; Papers of the Proctor of the University of Virginia, 1817–1828, Box 18, Accounts July–December 1823. See also von Daacke, *Freedom Has a Face*, p. 16–22.

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98. Journals of Business Transactions of Central College, Vol. 2: 1820–1827, p. 412; Journal of Business Transactions of Central College, Vol. 3: 1828–1832, September 11, 1830, p. 89; Journals of Business Transactions of Central College, Vol. 4: 1832–1844, July 12, 1833, p. 77.
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100. Albemarle County Marriage Register 1806–1868, December 5, 1834, p. 59; Journals of the Business Transactions of Central College, Vol. 4: 1832–1844, September 21, 1836, p. 141; Financial Records of the University of Virginia Patron, 1832–1833, Repairs and Improvements, p. 160, 168.
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107. Journals of the Chairman of the Faculty of the University of Virginia, Vol. 13: 1861–1864, October 5 and 10, 1863, no page number.
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111. Journals of Business Transactions of Central College, Vol. 4, 1832–1844, p. 137, 141, 218; Journals of Business Transactions of Central College, Vol. 5, 1844–1851, p. 4, 9, 26, 44; Papers of the Proctor of the University of Virginia, Box 15, Disbursements 1847; University of Virginia Bursar's Accounts, 1851–1860, p. 54–55; Ledgers Maintained by the Proctor of the University of Virginia, 1817–1910, Vol. 1860–1861, p. 713, 742; Ledgers Maintained by the Proctor of the University of Virginia, 1817–1910. Vol. 1861–1865, p. 442, 555, 557.
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157. Letter, Arthur E. Peticolas to John Staige Davis, July 1, 1850, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library.
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The design for the Memorial to Enslaved Laborers features an open circular stone wall known as the "Freedom Ring" and an inner circle imagined as a gathering place.

Courtesy of Höweler + Yoon

# Initiatives of the President's Commission on Slavery and the University

## Creation of Advisory Boards

Shortly after the formation of the commission, it was determined that a formal means for gathering input from the local community was needed. The co-chairs formed a Local Advisory Board with twenty initial members from a broad array of local constituencies and organizations including several churches, the city of Charlottesville, the county of Albemarle, local schools, and the local chapter of the NAACP.

The co-chairs also discussed the value of gaining input from others who were involved, either presently or in the past, with similar efforts at other institutions—thus, the National Advisory Board was formed. Representatives include faculty members from the University of North Carolina Chapel-Hill, Brown University, the University of Alabama, Stanford University, Emory University, the College of William and Mary, George Mason University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the University of Central Florida.

## Hiring of Research Associate

In late-summer of 2014, with support from the President's Office, the PCSU hired Kelley Deetz as its post-doctoral research associate. Formerly an assistant professor of history and director of the Public History Program at Roanoke College, Deetz assumed the role of research associate for the PCSU with responsibilities including leading the research efforts of the PCSU as well as focusing on public outreach and commemoration.

## Community Coffees and Forum

During June and July of 2014, the PCSU's Collaboration with External Partners working group hosted three "coffee forums" at the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center to gain input from the local community, including members of the Local Advisory Board, on the direction of the PCSU's work. As a follow-up, a larger roundtable forum was held on September 27, 2014, also at the Heritage Center, with approximately 50 people in attendance. Facilitators led discussions in small groups seeking advice and input on appropriate means of memorialization. The roundtable forum was highly successful in terms of trust-building and relationship-building with community members. This positive effort led to sustained community engagement with the establishment of the PCSU Community Relations Task Force.

## *Unearthed and Understood*, Short Documentary Film

In 2014, the PCSU leadership hired filmmaker Eduardo Montes-Bradley to create a short documentary-style film about the commission and its efforts. The result is a seventeen-minute film

called *Unearthed and Understood*,<sup>1</sup> which was debuted at the commission's 2014 symposium. The film features numerous members of the President's Commission on Slavery and the University; prominent UVA faculty including Julian Bond, Rita Dove, and Larry Sabato; as well as President Teresa Sullivan herself. It provides an introduction to the commission's charge and goals, the history of slavery at UVA, and explores possibilities for the commission's work going forward.

### ***Universities Confronting the Legacy of Slavery Symposium***

The PCSU conceived of and planned a two-day symposium titled *Universities Confronting the Legacy of Slavery*, held October 16 and 17, 2014. On October 16, a reception and screening of *Unearthed and Understood* was held at the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center. After the reception and screening, attendees moved a few blocks away to First Baptist Church on Main Street, Charlottesville's oldest African American church. First Baptist Church's pastor Reverend Hodari Hamilton, Mt. Zion First African Baptist Church's pastor Dr. Alvin Edwards, and Zion Union Baptist Church's pastor Reverend Lloyd A. Cosby Jr. presided over a memorial service. Teresa A. Sullivan, President of the University of Virginia, made opening remarks and Delores L. McQuinn, 70th district, Virginia House of Delegates, was the keynote speaker.

Following the memorial service, participants were taken on charter buses to the site of the African American cemetery at UVA, where a gravesite commemoration was held, led by the PCSU co-chairs. Deborah McDowell (Alice Griffin Professor of English; Director of the Carter G. Woodson Center, University of Virginia) read a commissioned poem titled "Field Work" written by Brenda Marie Osbey. Attendees held luminary jars and processed by candlelight into the cemetery, led by Reverend Almeta Miller, who performed a libation and a benediction at the cemetery. Each of the sixty-seven discovered grave shafts were illuminated by a hanging lantern. Reverend Miller and the Mt. Zion First African Baptist Church Choir sang as the commemoration came to an end that evening. The memorial service and cemetery commemoration were coordinated through efforts of the PCSU leadership, the PCSU Community Relations Task Force, and the Office for Diversity and Equity staff.

The following day, the academic portion of the symposium was held on Grounds. The film *Unearthed and Understood* was screened in the Auditorium of the Harrison Institute and Small Special Collections Library. The documentary was followed by panel discussions. The first panel, "Universities Confronting the Legacy of Slavery: What Was Learned", explored past or ongoing efforts at institutions around the country to explore the legacy of slavery on their campuses and included members of the PCSU's National Advisory Board. The panel consisted of: James T. Campbell (Edgar E. Robinson Professor in United States History, Stanford University; Former Chair, Brown University Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice), Leslie M. Harris (Winship Distinguished Research Professor in the Humanities and Associate Professor of History, Emory University), Terry L. Meyers (Chancellor Professor of English and Co-Director of the Lemon Project, The College of William and Mary), Joshua D. Rothman (Professor of History and Director

of the Summersell Center for the Study of the South, University of Alabama), Kirt von Daacke (Assistant Dean and Professor of History, University of Virginia), and Craig S. Wilder (Professor of History, Massachusetts Institute for Technology).

Next, panelists discussed “Slavery and the Enslaved at UVA: What We Know” and focused on current knowledge at UVA related to slavery and the institution’s past. Participants were: Benjamin P. Ford (Principal Investigator, Rivanna Archaeological Services), Scot A. French (Associate Professor of History, University of Central Florida), Ervin L. Jordan Jr. (Associate Professor and Research Archivist, University of Virginia Library), Gayle Schulman (Independent Researcher), and Kirt von Daacke.

Following these two morning panels, symposium attendees were led by student members of the University Guide Service on guided walking tours of the Academical Village. The tours ended at the Lawn, where lunch was served and the keynote address was provided by Alfred L. Brophy, Judge John J. Parker Distinguished Professor of Law at the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill, and member of the PCSU’s National Advisory Board. Professor Brophy’s talk was “Proslavery Political Theory and Jurisprudence Before the Civil War at the University.”

Symposium events moved back to the auditorium for the last panel of the day, “Memorializing Slavery and the Enslaved.” The panel featured Autumn Barrett (Co-Director, Remembering Slavery, Resistance, and Freedom Project; Associate Director of the Institute for Historical Biology and Adjunct Faculty, The College of William and Mary), Kelley Deetz (Post-Doctoral Research Associate, President’s Commission on Slavery and the University, University of Virginia), Gertrude Fraser (Associate Professor of Anthropology, University of Virginia), Lynn Rainville (Research Professor in the Humanities, Sweet Briar College), and Chelsea Stokes (Chair of Memorial for Enslaved Laborers and Class of 2015, University of Virginia). Susan H. Allen (Associate Professor of Conflict Analysis and Resolution and Director of the Center for Peacemaking Practice, George Mason University) led a facilitated reflection for symposium participants in order to close out the day. A closing reception was held at the Fralin Museum of Art and John E. Mason (Associate Professor and Associate Chair in the Department of History, University of Virginia) provided remarks about the Gordon Parks exhibit. Approximately 350 people from all across the nation participated in the symposium.

## **2015 Founder’s Day Tree**

The University of Virginia recognizes April 13, Thomas Jefferson’s birthday, with various Founder’s Day activities each year. Since 1970, a tree planting ceremony has been part of the day’s activities. A tree is planted in order to recognize an individual who has made lasting impact on the design, planning, and maintenance of Grounds. The University President presides over a ceremony to honor the year’s awardee. On April 13, 2015, an American Ash tree was planted on the Lawn in front of Pavilion II in memory of the enslaved individuals who built and maintained the University of Virginia.<sup>2</sup>

## Universities Studying Slavery

The President's Commission on Slavery and the University (PCSU) in late 2014 created an informal consortium of Virginia colleges and universities interested in collaborating on coming to terms with past entanglement in human bondage. This support group, initially spearheaded by PCSU Postdoctoral Research Associate Kelley Deetz, was known as "Virginia's Colleges and Universities Studying Slavery" (VCUSS). The group first met at UVA's Morven Farm in July 2015. Participants from the University of Virginia, the College of William and Mary, Washington and Lee University, Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia University of Lynchburg, Norfolk State University, Roanoke College, Longwood University, Virginia Military Institute, and Sweet Briar College attended.

In late 2015, after PCSU co-chair Kirt von Daacke participated in a teach-in at Georgetown University and formally invited the school to join, the informal Virginia group became a formal PCSU project. When Georgetown University joined in November 2015, the informal Virginia group became Universities Studying Slavery (USS), a national consortium open to any school seeking to confront its own historical legacies. Membership became invitation-only, and USS expanded its focus to include schools reckoning with both slavery and racism in their institutional pasts. Today, under the leadership of Kirt von Daacke, USS includes forty-two schools internationally who have direct links to slavery, the slave trade, or the racist legacies of slavery. Member institutions include the University of Virginia, Brown University, the Citadel, Clemson University, the College of Charleston, The College of William and Mary, Columbia University, Dalhousie University (Canada), Davidson College, Furman University, Georgetown University, George Mason University, Hampden-Sydney College, Hampton University, Hollins University, James Madison University, Longwood University, Norfolk State University, Roanoke College, Rutgers University, Tougaloo College, Salem Academy and College, Sweet Briar College, University College Cork (Ireland), the University of Bristol (United Kingdom), the University of Cincinnati, the University of Glasgow (Scotland), University of King's College (Canada), the University of Mississippi, the University of North Carolina, the University of Richmond, the University of South Carolina, the University of the South-Sewanee, Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia Military Institute, Virginia State University, Virginia Tech, Virginia Union University, Virginia University of Lynchburg, Wake Forest University, Washington and Lee University, and Wesleyan College of Georgia. Several other schools are in the process of joining.

Since that first informal Virginia school gathering in 2015, the formal USS consortium has since met at Washington and Lee University, the College of William and Mary, again at UVA, Georgetown University, and at Hollins University. Tougaloo College in Mississippi will host the 2018 fall meeting. In each instance, the meeting has become both scholarly conference and institutional workshop. The growing Universities Studying Slavery consortium remains dedicated to organizing multi-institutional collaboration as part of an effort to facilitate mutual support in the pursuit of common goals regarding research, acknowledgement, atonement, and repair for historical entanglement in human bondage and complicity in the racist legacies of slavery. USS allows participating institutions

to work together as they address the complicated legacies of slavery in modern American society. USS continues to host semi-annual meetings to discuss strategies, collaborate on atonement and repair projects, and publicize research findings.

## 2016 Founder's Day Programs with Shannon LaNier

The PCSU's Community Relations Task Force, in collaboration with the Office of the Vice President and Chief Officer for Diversity & Equity, organized two events on April 13, 2016 in honor of Founder's Day. One of the objectives of the Community Relations Task Force was to engage and obtain input from a wide variety of stakeholders in the work of the commission. The group planned and executed a luncheon for UVA staff members, a large proportion of whom were employed by the Facilities Management, as it was determined that this group of UVA staff in particular had not been adequately engaged. The luncheon was also extended as a gesture of gratitude for the many members of Facilities Management staff who had helped greatly with several elements of the PCSU's symposium in October 2014. The invited guest speaker for the luncheon was Shannon LaNier, a descendant of Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings. Mr. LaNier shared his experiences as a multiracial descendant of Jefferson and invited the audience to think critically about Jefferson's connection with slavery. Approximately two hundred UVA employees attended the event.

The same evening, Mr. LaNier and Jane Feldman, co-authors of the book *Jefferson's Children: The Story of One American Family*, presented together at a community event at the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center. Approximately 60 members of the Charlottesville/Albemarle community as well as other Jefferson/Hemings descendants were in attendance that evening.

## Cornerstone Summer Institute

The Cornerstone Summer Institute—a week-long summer program for high school students modeled after the highly successful UVA Leadership on the Lawn camp—provides rising high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors with the opportunity to engage in historical investigation, archaeological excavation, and community engagement in order to learn and develop thinking skills that will prepare them for success in college and beyond.

Designed and run for its first two years by PCSU co-chair Kirt von Daacke and UVA alumnus Alison Jawetz, the Cornerstone Summer Institute encourages critical thinking while students learn about both the University's past and the modern-day legacies of slavery. Students explore the early history of the University by getting hands-on experience with archival records, by rolling up their sleeves on an archaeological dig where enslaved people lived and worked, and by learning—through community engagement—how the UVA story had an impact on the surrounding area. Students, in addition to collegiate skill-building, get the full UVA experience—living in dorms, eating in dining halls, meeting new friends, and exploring the Jefferson-designed school. The camp offers financial aid to students-in-need and works closely with the Virginia College Advising Corps to attract students from diverse backgrounds.

Guided by top faculty and a team of UVA students, participants explore the University as well as Charlottesville and area landmarks, including Thomas Jefferson's Monticello and James Madison's Montpelier. Every year, students leave the camp with a wealth of new knowledge, a passion for history, friends from across the country, and lasting memories. The focus, using UVA and Charlottesville's particular case as an example, remains insistently on how slavery and its legacies have profoundly shaped both American history and our lived present. The inaugural camp ran from June 26 to July 1, 2016 with 22 students participating. The 2017 camp ran June 25–June 30, 2017, with 35 students participating. The 2018 camp ran June 23–29, 2018 with 35 students.

This educational experience would not have come into being without the incredible energy and dedication of Alison Jawetz—her work will live on in the CSI experience and curriculum in future years as a new generation of UVA students continues to shape the camp yearly. The CSI has benefitted from the generosity of Montpelier and its archaeology team, Monticello, the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center, the Preservers of the Daughters of Zion Cemetery, as well as a host of other UVA faculty and Charlottesville–Albemarle community activists. It remains a truly collaborative project connecting UVA faculty, students, community partners, and the high school campers themselves.

## **“Slavery and Its Legacies” Course**

In 2016, the PCSU created a team-taught course examining the University and the surrounding community as a case study in understanding “Slavery and Its Legacies” in America. The course grew out of the commission's discussions about how disseminate information about slavery at UVA and how to use the commission's research to change the way students think about the built and lived environment on Grounds. The class was deeply informed by the path-breaking classroom work of Frank Dukes, Phyllis Leffler, and community members (including Karen Waters-Wicks and Charlene Green) in their 4000-level seminar “University of Virginia History: Race and Repair,” but was instead designed to target first- and second-year students as a larger introductory survey. A team of commission members, including Elizabeth Varon, Patrice Grimes, Derrick Alridge, Maurie McInnis, and Kirt von Daacke, ultimately shaped the resulting course.

The introductory course examines the history of slavery and its legacy at UVA and in the central Virginia region. It aims to recover the experiences of enslaved individuals and their roles in building and maintaining the University, and to contextualize those experiences within Southern history. The course is thus an exploration of slave and free black communities, culture and resistance, and an examination of the development of the University of Virginia. It puts the history of slavery in the region into political context, tracing the rise of sectional tensions and secession, the advent of emancipation, the progress of Reconstruction, and the imposition of Jim Crow.

The course is interdisciplinary in nature, drawing on a wide range of fields, such as art history, architecture, and archaeology. A major focus is on how we know what we know: on what archives

and other repositories of historical sources hold; on how they were constructed; on what they leave out or obscure; and on how scholars overcome the gaps, distortions, and silences in the historical record. The last weeks of the course focus on twentieth and twenty-first century UVA and Charlottesville, and on the issues of segregation and integration, reconciliation and repair; we connect current initiatives at UVA to represent the history of slavery with initiatives at other universities.

This course now runs yearly in the fall and is open to first- and second-year students. We thank the many faculty who over the years have agreed to give their time to lecture in the class: Louis Nelson (Architectural History), Max Edelson (History), Maurie McInnis (Art History), Frasier Neiman (Archaeology, Monticello), Alan Taylor (History), Kirt von Daacke (History), Elizabeth Varon (History), Alfred Brophy (UNC Law, PCSU National Advisory Board), Gary Gallagher (History), Grace Hale (American Studies/History), Patrice Grimes (Curry School of Education), Talitha LeFlouria (African and African American Studies), Preston Reynolds (Medicine), Claudrena Harold (History), Milton Vickerman (Sociology), Lisa Woolfork (English), Carmenita Higginbotham (Art History), Kelley Deetz (PCSU), and Lawrie Balfour (Politics).

The commission also created a capstone course, a more focused upper division Pavilion Seminar, that allows students to do their own research on any topic of UVA history that contributes to a more complete understanding of slavery and its many enduring legacies. Students in this course each spring contribute entries to a NewUVApedia, an online encyclopedia we are developing to preserve and make public the fascinating research students have done.

## **Memorial to Enslaved Laborers**

As we address our past throughout the University's Bicentennial programs, it is crucial to tell an inclusive story of our founding and the University's historical relationship with slavery. To further honor the lasting impact of the enslaved laborers who played a fundamental role in building this University, the Board of Visitors approved the design and location for a Memorial to Enslaved Laborers. The memorial will feature a circular stone wall with the names of those enslaved inscribed on the interior. The circular wall, open on one side, will allow anyone to enter and read the inscribed names or sit on the stone benches for quiet reflection. The Memorial Design Team was selected after a national call for proposals and includes members Meejin Yoon (architect, designer, and principal of Höweler + Yoon Architecture), Mabel O. Wilson (Professor of Architecture at Columbia University), Gregg Bleam (Landscape Architect), Frank Dukes (Distinguished Institute Fellow at the Institute for Environmental Negotiation, UVA), and Eto Otitigbe (polymedia artist who creates sculpture, installation, and public interventions).

Situated in a highly visible area of the UNESCO World Heritage Site near the Rotunda, the memorial will serve as a necessary reminder of our history for all students, faculty, community members, and visitors from around the world. This project is a top priority of the Jeffersonian Grounds Initiative and should be complete by 2019. Construction and installation costs will come

to an estimated total of \$6 million. Although this memorial is a great feat in telling the story of enslaved laborers, the University plans to continue to expand their current efforts and interpretations of early life at UVA. Upon the completion of the memorial, options for a museum space will be investigated to provide further education around the history of slavery at the University.

### ***Universities, Slavery, Public Memory, and the Built Landscape Symposium***

As part of UVA's Bicentennial celebrations, the President's Commission on Slavery and the University partnered with The Slave Dwelling Project to host the symposium *Universities, Slavery, Public Memory, and the Built Landscape* on October 18–21, 2018. The symposium brought together members of the University, the community, and experts from other institutions to explore our historical relationship with slavery and set the stage for future work.

The symposium had a full registration list of 500 participants representing 61 colleges and universities, 21 states and the United Kingdom, and 17 museums and historic sites. Throughout the four-day event, participants were given a number of opportunities to address topics including racial healing, restorative justice, public memory, descendant stories, and memorialization. These topics were addressed through five plenary sessions and 34 breakout sessions covering a range of topics, an overnight slave dwelling experience on the Lawn, and a full day of field trips to Montpelier, Monticello, and Highland.

After the first day of the symposium, participants and community members gathered near the site of the African American cemetery to commemorate the enslaved laborers buried there. The service included opening comments from Dr. Marcus Martin and reflections from Reverend Alvin Edwards and Lynn Rainville on the importance of honoring the enslaved laborers and creating rituals of remembrance. Delegate Delores McQuinn then delivered the keynote address for the evening. Throughout the service, the Union Run Baptist Church Choir, led by Pastor Ricky White, performed a number of gospel songs and hymns. Prior to processing to the cemetery, poet Brenda Marie Osbey read her poem "Field Work" that was commissioned by the PCSU in 2014. Led by Reverend Almeta Miller, attendees processed through the cemetery for a libation ceremony near the graves of the enslaved laborers. The commemoration ended with a benediction and song.

Opposite is a list of the plenary and breakout sessions held throughout the symposium.

## Wednesday, October 18

PLENARY SESSION	Ghost Values and the Remains of Slavery
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## Thursday, October 19

PLENARY SESSIONS	Slavery and Its Legacies at UVA Institutions Confronting the Legacy of Slavery
BREAKOUT SESSIONS	Plantation Remix: Site-Performance as Intervention, Dynamic Memorialization, and Empathy-Building Transformation
	College Bound-Interracial and Racist Student Culture at Lane Seminar, Andover Theological Seminary, the University of Mississippi, and Columbian College (DC)
	Preservation and Restoration: Finding and Saving Historic Structures
	For Friendship, For Freedom, For Union: The JUEL Project and UVA Students
	Remembering Slavery at the University of South Carolina
	Cemeteries, Slavery, and History
	Retain or Remove? Memorialization of Slaveholders, Supremacists, and Segregationists at Clemson University
	Identification and Interpretation Challenges in Researching the Enslaved
	Workshop: Contacts, Collaboration, Classrooms, Courage! Making a Successful Slave Dwelling Project Visit
	Contextualizing UVA's Landscape of Slavery
	Voices of Descendants: A Conversation
	New Interpretation at Historic Sites
	Excavating Memories, Elevating Morality: Digging for Slaves at St. Mary's College
	Southern Schools, Slavery, and the Built Environment
	Slavery, Freedpeople, and the Landscape
	Contemporary Responses to Slavery at Universities

## Friday, October 20

PLENARY SESSIONS	Connecting with Community Universities and Reparations
BREAKOUT SESSIONS	<p>The Land, the Screen, the Page: Locations of Enslavement and Creative Arts</p> <p>Engaging the Community: Slavery and Breaking the Town/Gown Barrier</p> <p>Using Belle Grove Plantation to Educate Adults, University Students, and Elementary Students on the History of Slavery in the Shenandoah Valley</p> <p>Roots &amp; Remembrance at Sweet Briar: A Discussion with Descendants</p> <p>University of Virginia Student Voices: A 21st Century Perspective</p> <p>Slavery and Race at Northern Universities</p> <p>Slaves in the Classroom: Science, Medicine, Race, and Learning in 19th Century America</p> <p>Documents and Databases on Slavery in the Digital Era</p> <p>Confronting Slavery at Furman University</p> <p>Archaeological and Historical Contributions to Understanding the Landscape of Slavery at Virginia's Universities</p> <p>College Bound II: Making a Pro-Slavery Student Body at the University of Mississippi</p> <p>Challenges &amp; Obstacles to Preserving Sites Associated with Slavery</p> <p>Remaining Space and Place at the College of William &amp; Mary</p> <p>Valley of Dry Bones: Unearthing the Past at the University of Georgia</p> <p>Virginia Slave Housing: Spreading the Word</p> <p>Slavery, the Civil War, and Memory in the South</p> <p>Generations of Slavery: Tracing the Enslaved Across Time</p>

## ***Interpreting and Representing Slavery and Its Legacies in Museums and Sites: International Perspectives Conference***

The President's Commission on Slavery and the University also supported an important international conference on the interpretation of slavery at museums and historic sites. Sponsored in partnership with UNESCO, the conference was the first of its kind. The organizing committee drew together UNESCO senior leadership, the directors of a series of national and international sites and museums, and representatives from the National Park Service, the Smithsonian Institution, and US ICOMOS. The conference was jointly hosted at UVA by the University of Virginia and Thomas Jefferson's Monticello in reflection of our joint UNESCO world heritage nomination status.

The goal of the conference was to convene in the dome room a two-day curated conversation around the global impact of the slave trade and its legacies on historic sites and museums. Conversations touched on best practices for representation and interpretation as well as various strategies for considering the role of the arts, humanities, and advanced digital technologies in site specific public interpretations. The various sessions were recorded and the project leads plan to produce a handbook on new approaches that reflect the conversations from the conference. The conference was also framed around networking and the development of potential global partnerships between organizations and institutions. Beyond the two days of papers, participants also had the opportunity to travel to local historic sites and to participate in an excursion to the newly-opened Smithsonian Museum of African American History and Culture with a tour directed by senior manager Dr. John W. Franklin.

## **Rotunda Visitors Center**

In 2015, the PCSU appointed a Task Force to guide the development of narrative content and graphic exhibits related to the history of slavery at the early University for the new Visitors Center being planned for the renovated Rotunda East Oval Room. The exhibits contained entirely new information that had never been presented at the Rotunda. The Task Force reviewed and provided editorial guidance on the draft materials prepared by Riggs Ward Design to achieve three primary objectives of the new Rotunda Visitors Center:

1. Acknowledge that the labor of enslaved African Americans was essential to build and sustain the Academical Village.
2. Expand the historical narrative of the University's development to include the role of African Americans.
3. Motivate visitors to explore the University's Grounds, including sites that interpret free and enslaved African American communities.

The input from the Rotunda Interpretation Task Force played a vital role in the success of the new exhibits to present a more inclusive story about life in the early years of the University.

## Walking Tour Map

A Task Force of the PCSU was appointed in 2015 to formulate a self-guided Enslaved African Americans at UVA Walking Tour Map (see Appendix). The group developed the full-color map over the course of a year. Since its first printing, the map has been available to all Rotunda visitors.

## Gibbons House

In March 2015, the Board of Visitors voted to name the new first-year dorm building “Gibbons House” after William and Isabella Gibbons. The Gibbonses “were husband and wife, butler and cook, enslaved by different University of Virginia professors until 1865. After emancipation, Isabella became a teacher for more than 20 years. William became a well-known minister in Charlottesville and in Washington, D.C.”<sup>3</sup> The building was formally dedicated in June 2015 and, later that year, descendants of Isabella Gibbons were honored with a reception at Gibbons House. To teach first-year students about the namesakes of the building and the larger history of slavery at UVA, the President’s Commission on Slavery and the University (PCSU) established an educational exhibit in an alcove on the first floor of the Gibbons House dormitory. During the summer of 2016, similar panels were installed in front of the dorm building so that visitors without access to the dormitory are able to view the information as well.

## Skipwith Hall

Peyton Skipwith, 1800–1849, was an enslaved master mason who quarried stone for use in construction at UVA. Mr. Skipwith was owned by John Hartwell Cocke, a member of the UVA Board of Visitors. In 2017, Skipwith Hall was named and dedicated to honor Peyton Skipwith during a ceremony that took place on Founder’s Day outside the building. Several members of Mr. Skipwith’s family spoke at the dedication. The site of this building is believed to have been the location of the University quarry where Mr. Skipwith was a laborer. About thirty members of the Skipwith family attended the Founder’s Day dedication in 2017.

## Liberation and Freedom Day Commemoration

In 2017, the Charlottesville City Council declared that March 3 would henceforth officially be recognized by the City of Charlottesville as “Liberation and Freedom Day,” commemorating the day in 1865 when Union forces arrived and the 14,000 enslaved people in Charlottesville began to be freed. The Charlottesville City Council’s Blue Ribbon Commission on Race, Monuments, and Public Spaces drew attention to the importance of March 3, 1865 and this led to the declaration. Beginning in 2017, the Office for Diversity and Equity and the PCSU collaborated with the city and the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center to hold an annual Liberation and Freedom Day celebration on UVA Grounds, followed by a march from UVA to the Jefferson School. The day’s events begin with services at UVA, which include singing, prayers, and remarks by local religious

leaders and University officials. In 2017, the service was held in the UVA Chapel, and in 2018 it was held in the UVA Rotunda. The event also includes a ceremony to honor local freedom fighters. This important annual commemoration recognizes the role of slavery in the history of both Charlottesville and the University, as well as celebrates the joy of that day in 1865 when freedom began.

The design of UVA's Memorial to Enslaved Laborers incorporates the concept of Liberation and Freedom Day as well. Two paths intersect at the memorial entry: one leads to the direction of the North Star, which for the enslaved led to freedom, and the other aligns with the sunset on March 3, the day that Charlottesville and the University will annually observe this important event.

## Community Engagement

An essential component of the PCSU's work was engaging the community—listening and giving voice to, in particular, those who had been disenfranchised or otherwise removed from the University's narrative and experience. Given the extensive early history articulated in this report, deliberate and ongoing attention must be given to the African Americans in Charlottesville to acknowledge past wrongs, repair relationships, and build trust. The establishment of the PCSU's Community Relations Task Force (CR-TF) was a direct effort to begin what has been a lengthy process and must continue through the President's Commission on the University in the Age of Segregation (and beyond). The CR-TF included PCSU members, Local Advisory Board members, as well as other alumni and community members; student representatives were also invited. Chaired by PCSU Member and IDEA Fund trustee Tierney Fairchild, and staffed by Meghan Faulkner of the Office of the Vice President and Chief Officer for Diversity and Equity, this task force created meaningful and regular connections with the local community, as well as with key UVA community stakeholders (African American alumni, staff, and descendent communities). This task force met on a monthly basis at the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center from summer of 2015 until spring of 2018 and initiated and/or supported the following PCSU efforts:

**Community Forums.** The group organized several events open to the public and held at the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center to solicit input from the community on a range of topics.

**Black Alumni Weekend Panel Discussion, April 8, 2017.** The CR-TF, supported by the UVA IDEA Fund and the UVA Alumni Association, planned and implemented a panel on the establishment of the PCSU and its work to date. The panelists discussed the conception and design of the Memorial to Enslaved Laborers. A survey was also implemented to engage Black alumni and solicit their input on the most important efforts of the PCSU. The survey results informed the eventual design of the Memorial to Enslaved Laborers. The University's bi-annual Black Alumni Weekend welcomes alumni of all years.

### **Memorial to Enslaved Laborers Community Events & Ambassador Program.**

Prior to the Memorial Design Team's efforts, the CR-TF began to discuss memorialization with a community forum, student forum, and Black Alumni Weekend events. With the establishment of the MEL Design Team, the CR-TF worked closely on community outreach events at the Jefferson School and Mt. Zion First African Baptist Church, as well as co-sponsoring an alumni engagement event in Washington, DC. The CR-TF also helped initiate and implement the Community Ambassadors program that solicited feedback on the memorial design from over one hundred individuals and community organizations. The PCSU co-chairs gave presentations at multiple venues including UVA Lifetime Learning events for alumni, Farmington Country Club, Harvard University, Georgetown University, and Universities Studying Slavery symposia.

**Staff Events.** The group organized a Founder's Day "Lunch and Learn" event for UVA Facilities Management staff on April 13, 2016 in order to deliberately recognize this important stakeholder group. The keynote speaker was African American journalist Shannon Lanier, the sixth-great-grandson of Thomas Jefferson, UVA's founder. The CR-TF partnered with the UVA IDEA Fund to gift 50 copies of the book *Jefferson's Children: The Story of One American Family*, an anthology of Jefferson's living descendants written by Mr. Lanier, to event attendees. A survey was also distributed to those in attendance in order to solicit feedback on the PCSU's efforts.

**UVA Bicentennial Working Group.** The CR-TF with UVA Bicentennial organizers in the early stages of their planning in order to offer input and assistance. Members of the CR-TF were invited to join the Bicentennial Working Group to offer insights that would ensure the Bicentennial events were sensitive to and inclusive of the community.

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## **Endnotes**

1. <https://vimeo.com/106034278>
2. <http://officearchitect.virginia.edu/memorialtree/officialEnslaved.html>
3. <https://www.news.virginia.edu/content/gibbons-house-dedication-memorializes-former-slaves-successful-free-lives>





### **McGuffey Cottage**

All that remains of a row of outbuildings located to the west and rear of Pavilion IX, McGuffey Cottage was built as a work and/or residential space for the "accommodation of domestics."

## Recommendations for Further Study and Repair

**Construction of the Memorial to Enslaved Laborers.** Approved by the Board of Visitors in June 2017, the Memorial to Enslaved Laborers will honor the suffering of the enslaved people who built and maintained the University of Virginia during its early decades while also educating students, faculty, staff, and guests about this significant part of the institution's history. The memorial will serve as a gathering space for classes, performances, and events such as the annual Freedom and Liberation Day. The concept of the memorial serving as a gathering space echoes the African American tradition of meeting in clearings. The circular shape of the memorial references both the "ring shout," a tradition in some enslaved communities, and broken shackles, signifying freedom. The Memorial Design Team, led by architecture firm Howeler + Yoon, engaged with community members and University stakeholders to inform the design of the memorial. After receiving community feedback regarding the need for the memorial to express the horror of slavery, the design team commissioned artist Eto Otitigbe to compose and implement evocative elements on the exterior wall. The memorial will be situated in a prominent location within the UNESCO World Heritage Site on the "triangle of grass" near the Rotunda. Construction is expected to begin in September 2018 and end by early March 2019. Currently, University representatives are seeking philanthropic support for the Memorial.

**Renovation of McGuffey Cottage.** This renovation would convert McGuffey Cottage into an interpretive center highlighting the memorial's design features, providing historical context, and displaying relevant artifacts. The commission recommends designating McGuffey Cottage as an interpretive center because it is one of the few extant dwellings in which the enslaved worked and/or lived and is situated within the UNESCO World Heritage Site. As an exhibition space McGuffey Cottage would feature artifacts, documents, and interpretive panels about the history of enslaved labor at the University of Virginia. When ongoing research reveals relevant artifacts and historical documents, these would be incorporated into the revolving displays. The commission recommends the University designate McGuffey Cottage for this purpose and identify funds necessary to renovate it into a space suitable for exhibitions and use by the public.

**Conversion of a cellar room on the east side of the Lawn.** A converted cellar room on the east side of the Lawn would serve as an educational exhibit about the history of enslaved labor at the University. The room would feature a glass viewing panel in place of a door, similar to the Poe Room on the west side of the Lawn.

**Design and construction of distributed elements reminiscent of the memorial design.** This concept was proposed by the Memorial Design Team and would feature stone benches around UVA and Charlottesville composed of the same materials as the memorial

to Enslaved Laborers and designed to illustrate the broken elements of the design's ring shape, suggesting the scattered and displaced experience of enslaved families.

**Research endowments.** Much of the early history of the University remains unknown. An endowment will be needed to support research projects and emerging archeological techniques. Newly designed interpretive displays will be needed as the institution's understanding of its history advances. The commission recommends establishing an endowment in order to provide funding in support of UVA's evolving understanding of its early history.

**Climate-controlled storage space.** As more research is conducted, and as more research is conducted, the need for storage space increases. Currently, space is limited and historical artifacts are stored in a shared area on Millmont Drive with The Fralin Museum of Art, the UVA Bookstore, and the Surplus Department. More climate-controlled space is needed to store archeological resources. The commission recommends the University identify funding to construct space for artifacts, essential not only to understanding the institution's history, but also to teaching students about the process of conservation, archeology, history, and more. This space will need room for teaching and a lab for conservation work.

**Installation of interpretive panels at significant sites.** Additional signage is needed at sites significant to the history of the enslaved at the University; for example, the commission supports the installation of a panel at the site of the Anatomical Theatre, commemorating the lives of the enslaved, free blacks, and others whose bodies were used posthumously without consent for the education of medical students.

**Universities Studying Slavery.** In 2015, the President's Commission on Slavery and the University created Universities Studying Slavery (USS), a consortium dedicated to maintaining multi-institutional collaboration as part of an effort to facilitate mutual support in the pursuit of common goals around the core theme of schools confronting past entanglement in human bondage and racism. USS additionally allows participating institutions to work together as they address both historical and contemporary issues dealing with race and inequality in higher education and in university communities as well as the complicated legacies of slavery in modern American society. Under UVA's leadership, this group has grown to 37 member institutions in four countries, with schools continuing to join. The group continues to meet semi-annually to discuss strategies, collaborate on research, and learn from one another. In 2018, it has become a movement that continues to grow thanks to UVA PCSU leadership. To keep the movement going and make it a signature UVA creation, we recommend that the consortium be housed institutionally at UVA permanently. Creating staff, office space, and a budget for the organization, housed here at UVA, will ensure that the movement can continue to grow, develop programming, and display international intellectual leadership consonant with UVA's pursuit of excellence. This is doubly important as UVA prepares to launch a second commission that will investigate the complicated post-1865 history as it relates to race, racism, and segregation.

**Cornerstone Summer Institute.** The Cornerstone Summer Institute provides rising high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors with the opportunity to engage in historical investigation, archaeological excavation, and community engagement in order to learn and develop thinking skills that will prepare them for success in college and beyond. Designed by members of PCSU, the institute encourages critical thinking while students learn about both the University's past and the modern-day legacies of slavery. Students explore the early history of the University by getting hands-on experience with archival records, by rolling up their sleeves on an archaeological dig where enslaved people lived and worked, and by learning—through community engagement—how the UVA story had an impact on the surrounding area. Students, in addition to collegiate skill-building, get the full UVA experience: living in dorms, eating in dining halls, meeting new friends, and exploring the Jefferson-designed school. This camp is exceptional and will need permanent staffing to ensure its continued success. We recommend that CSI be staffed and funded (it will need a director, administrative support, and funds to offer scholarships to students with demonstrated need) as an ongoing summer education and outreach program.

**African American scholarship programs.** It is vitally important to think creatively about how the University can promote diversity, attract more African American students, and expand its commitment to an already robust need-based program. Although the Ridley Scholarship Fund and its associated scholarship funds (Hoel-Perkins, Holland-Blackburn, et al.) are privately funded and housed in the Alumni Association, the leadership team and staff managing those programs are paid by the University. We advocate for expanding staffing for the Ridley, Hoel-Perkins team as part of a concerted effort to greatly amplify fundraising for those funds, to offer more annual scholarship slots for African American students, and to increase the yield rate. Although the University is currently barred by a 4th Circuit Court decision from using race as a factor in admissions, UVA should still make a visible commitment to increasing the number of African American students who enroll. In addition, the commission recommends further investigation of the establishment of a scholarship fund, similar to the Hoel-Perkins Scholarship which is need-based, designated for descendants of the enslaved community, and administered by the Ridley Scholarship Fund.

## Continued Community Outreach and Engagement

One of the most impactful aspects of the work of the PCSU has been the engagement of the community. The PCSU Community Relations Task Force has been a focal part of the PCSU's efforts to listen and build bridges to further meaningful connections and dialogue between the University and its many stakeholders, especially those who have felt disenfranchised, distrustful, and invisible. In order to build upon the work of the PCSU's Community Relations Task Force, the PCSU recommends these important actions that will uphold our commitment to the values of trust, inclusion, and repair across the community.

**Continue the Community Relations Task Force.** Create and/or continue a version of this task force as part of the President's Commission on the University in the Age of Segregation (PCUAS). There should be some carryover in membership in order to maintain the trust that has been built in the community.

**Continue communications.** Ensure that the local community continues to learn about the PCSU and the upcoming work of the PCUAS, and also has a means of giving feedback and staying involved.

**Provide appropriate community relations personnel** at the institutional level to maintain community engagement and ensure an ongoing, robust feedback loop. Continue to regularly engage a set of Community Ambassadors and Community Forums with facilitated dialogue on topics of import to UVA and the local community.

**Support the establishment of an Oral History Initiative at the University.** This project would include a "Getting Word"-type element (based on Monticello's model) to gather the stories from descendants from slaves in and around UVA. This Oral History Initiative would also be relevant for the PCUAS and the Community Relations Task Force should help in the identification of individuals with powerful stories. This effort would build upon the recent work of UVA's Bicentennial Commission, which has included grants to WTJU and Virginia Humanities, with support from the UVA IDEA Fund, the Alumni Association, and other related stakeholders.

**Hold an annual Founder's Day (April 13th) event for UVA staff.** The event would serve as a form of appreciation, and would also continue to recognize UVA's early history. There could be a rotating focus each year and/or a different department could be invited each year.

**Reunions.** Include the Enslaved African Americans at UVA Walking Tour Map and U-Guides Tours as part of all Reunions. Create a standard Alumni Association package that includes the maps and offers tours, both at Class Reunions and at Black Alumni Weekend. This should be part of the programming that the Alumni Association provides each year.

**Offer community scholarship opportunities.** Identify a set of School of Continuing and Professional Studies and Alumni Engagement learning experiences that can be offered free for community members. Establish a community scholarship fund for community members to access for fee-based programming, including executive education, professional development, and continuing education. Partner with the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center and other community locations for delivery and outreach.

**Create a University-level staff position** dedicated to outreach to and engagement with descendants of those enslaved at the University of Virginia. UVA and the PCSU have already initiated such efforts, connecting with descendants of William and Isabella Gibbons in 2015 and of Peyton Skipwith in 2017, but there is much more work to be done. Creating such a position is in keeping with the work of historic sites nationally over the past few decades, including our important local partners Monticello, Montpelier, and Highland, as well as fellow university studying slavery Georgetown University.

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## Summary

Following the Virginia General Assembly’s 2007 resolution of “profound regret for the Commonwealth’s role in sanctioning the immoral institution of human slavery,” the University of Virginia’s Board of Visitors issued a similar statement and approved the installation of a plaque to honor the service of enslaved and free laborers who built the University. While the plaque was a step in the right direction, many viewed it to be insufficient recognition of the enslaved laborers’ contributions. In 2013, President Sullivan created the President’s Commission on Slavery and the University charging it with exploring and reporting on the University’s historical relationship with slavery and enslaved people. Over the past five years, the commission has researched the African American community at UVA prior to 1865, led memorialization and renaming efforts on Grounds, consistently engaged the broader Charlottesville and Albemarle community, and formed a consortium dedicated to encouraging other schools to research and acknowledge their own difficult pasts. The commission has also created symposia, curricula, and educational materials on slavery at UVA. In addition to detailing the commission’s initiatives and presenting its recommendations, this report provides a history of the lives of enslaved and free people of color at the University. We hope the report will be meaningful to the community, not only the information about this significant aspect of the University of Virginia’s history but also its recommendations for addressing the legacies of slavery. The memorial represents just one important piece of the PCSU’s much broader slate of initiatives that focus on public acknowledgment, atonement, community engagement, and education. Our hope is that our work to date represents the beginning of something much more comprehensive.

ENSLAVED AFRICAN AMERICANS at the University of Virginia



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ENSLAVED AFRICAN AMERICANS at the University of Virginia

Mobile Web App & Audio Tour Instructions

Visit <http://SlaveryVirginia.oncall.com> or scan this QR code to access our mobile web app and audio tour. No download is needed.

You may also dial 434-326-4111 and follow the instructions for the audio tour.

This mobile web app and audio tour is made possible by a partnership with the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities.

University of Virginia  
President's Commission on Slavery and the University



**UVA Walking Tour**  
Enslaved African Americans at the University

The University of Virginia utilized the labor of enslaved African Americans from the earliest days of its construction in 1817 until the end of the American Civil War. Most of the University's first enslaved laborers were rented from local slave owners and worked alongside whites and free blacks in all the tasks associated with constructing the Academical Village. When the first students arrived in March 1825, enslaved African Americans worked in the pavilions, hotels, and the Rotunda, maintained classrooms, laboratories, and the library, and served the daily needs of the students and faculty, especially in providing cooking and cleaning services. This self-guided tour is an introduction to some of the significant people, places, and events that shaped the early history of African Americans at the University of Virginia. For further information see [slavery.virginia.edu](http://slavery.virginia.edu).

**Key**

- Use open to the public
- Interior viewing only, building not open to the public
- Historic location only
- Historic marker
- Parking

**Front cover:** Sally Cornhill Cole was an enslaved maid and seamstress who worked for Professor Thomas Howell Key in Pavilion VI (shown) between 1824-1827. Professor Key emerged for her matriculation upon his departure from the University in 1827. Cole remained in Charlottesville until her death in 1873.

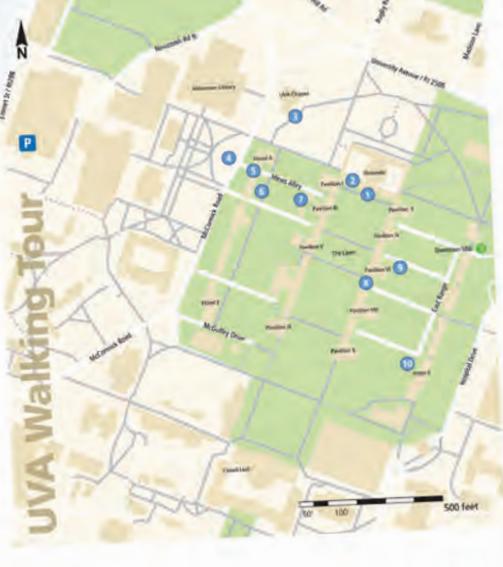
**Back cover:** Henry Martin

**1 Henry Martin**

According to oral history Henry Martin was born at Marlinton on July 4, 1825—the day Jefferson died. He was sold to the Cart Family at Jefferson's estate sale in 1827 and until 1847 remained enslaved at a property in Albemarle County in 1847, the Cart Family sold Martin to Mrs. Delany Carr, who after a boisterous general emancipation in 1865, Martin hailed coal, delivered wood, and worked as a domestic laborer at the boarding house in Lexington. He kept a job with the University as porter and bell ringer, which he noted about in a letter to College Sports, a student publication that asked to report on his life story. Martin reportedly worked at 4 a.m. to 10 p.m. during the first week of weeks were spotted in the Rotunda file of 1895. "I was as near to that bell as to my God," Martin said in a 1914 interview. By his retirement in 1930, Martin had become a UVA icon. The historic newspaper commented, "He was kept generally to more alert than any living man."

**4 Anatomical Theater**

Following a complaint from Fulton K. student and professor of medicine Hubert Durgenton that his front room was an "unacceptable center" for dissecting cadavers, Jefferson designed a new building in 1824 featuring a grand amphitheater for observing dissections that stood for a period of time in front of where Altschuler Library is today. A student dissection lab was added later. Nineteenth century medical faculty and students commonly visit the corpse of recently freed African Americans from the state. Jefferson gave cadavers known as "Anatomical Lawns" to the University from Captain George Spotswood specifically for 25 or more cadavers per session. An enrollment man testified during the 1870s that the University had a "large number" of African American burials to meet the University's demand for 25 or more cadavers per session. Because of these dissections, the University community referred to him as "Anatomical Lawns," which is a reference to whether Lewis left by death or sale, but by 1880, Lewis no longer appears in University records.



**1 The Rotunda and Bricks on the Lawn**

One of the most controversial legacies of enslaved labor was the bricks that cover the Academical Village. Enslaved laborers dug the clay, helped fire the bricks, hauled them to Grounds, and then to build this University. The brick-making began in the summer of 1817, and the enslaved laborers working on this task were a diverse group of men, women, and children. An enslaved man named Charles was responsible for digging the clay and managing the kiln with the help of six enslaved boys rented out from John H. Cocke in 1822. Enslaved laborers named Cook, Lewis, Nelson, and Sandy were also assigned to the brickyard, and worked long hours for the kilns. Enslaved laborers also constructed the trench lines on the lawn, leaving the laborers highly skilled at construction, carpentry, stone cutting, and landscaping, who were forced to work alongside free black and white laborers, contributed to some of the most intricate design work seen in the details of the architecture on Grounds. In 1823 as part of Rotunda construction, five tons of sand to the University during a four-week stretch. For his translation efforts, he was paid \$179.

**2 Enslaved Labor Practice**

In February of 2007, the University's Board of Visitors approved the installation of a stone memorial in the back passageway of the passage under the south entrance of the Rotunda. The memorial reads: "In honor of the several hundred women and men, boys, boys and enslaved, whose labor between 1817 and 1865 helped to realize Thomas Jefferson's design for the University of Virginia." The memorial was part of an effort led by President John C. Calhoun III to honor the University's "original labor force," which included enslaved workers.

**5 Hotel A**

Hotels catered to the East and West Barges. These buildings were rented to hotelkeepers, each of whom covered many people who were expected to prepare meals and provide cleaning for the students. On a daily basis, the enslaved would bring fresh water to the students and send their fees. They regularly cleaned the rooms and public spaces of the Academical Village. In addition, in the basements and gardens, they prepared the meals that were served to students in the 1820s. The work required an extensive labor force. In 1820, the Company who operated Hotel A owned twelve people who may have lived in the basement and in outbuildings in the gardens. At any time, the University employed enslaved people living and working in the Academical Village was between 10 to 150 in the decades before emancipation. In the course of carrying out their responsibilities, free and enslaved African Americans interacted with white students in the hotel dining halls, student dormitory rooms, and throughout the Academical Village on a regular basis. On occasion, these daily interactions could end on a physical level. Faculty records document that students resorted to physical violence upon the bodies of free and enslaved laborers for a variety of "offenses," including insubordination, impertinent language, or a perceived lack of attention to duties. One such incident involved a student named Jackson who was a student laborer of the enslaved workers and Col. Mason judged by faculty to be at fault, their actions very likely to be expected.

**3 The University Gardens**

Over the decades, dozens of buildings were added to the campus including embassies, law centers, clinics, woodshops, and garages. Enslaved by work and thus largely hidden from the University community, these spaces provided a place to labor for large, local, and nearby, and perform the many other tasks expected of the enslaved community. These were the common road while Lucket away from the view of the central lawn. By the twentieth century, most of these buildings were torn down and only a few remain. In the mid-twentieth century, the Garden and the University Gardens were reconstructed and maintained by enslaved laborers and, in later years, Thomas Farnsworth and Robert Batten, free black tradesmen.

**7 The Mews**

The building now known as the Mews was built around 1830. It is one of the few surviving original outbuildings. Built as a central kitchen, it also provided accommodations for some of the professor's enslaved laborers. These kitchen quarters were modified after emancipation into dormitories, which were usually detached and situated near the main house. These buildings and the enslaved cooks and domestics were integral to the formal functions of the University's community, providing meals and domestic service to the professors and their families. The building has since been enlarged and was renamed "The Mews" when Professor Platt moved here in 1929.

**8 East Lawn Basement Rooms**

The basement rooms served many different purposes over the decades. Some were living quarters for enslaved laborers, others were used by professors. Professor occupancy occasionally entered these rooms by breaking through common walls, which allowed a direct passageway from the basement to the inside of the pavilion. In later years, the basement rooms could be used as auxiliary work spaces.

Many of these rooms show evidence of improvement to make them more habitable. All were whitewashed and some had plaster ceilings. Despite these improvements, most of the rooms still had dirt floors, no windows and no fireplaces.

Some rooms were rented out to businessmen such as Jack Kennedy, a member of the Charlottesville free Black community, who applied for one of the cellar rooms to be used as a barber's shop for the accommodation of the students. The faculty approved because they hoped the students would have fewer reasons to be absent. In another room (Larkin Room 24), enslaved laborers constructed a large kitchen, which was used as a still part of the University's water supply and the production system. The cellar was connected to another space, and together, all of which were used as auxiliary work spaces.

**9 Pavilion VI and Garden**

Pavilion VI and IV were places where William and Isabelle Gibbons, who were both enslaved at UVA, lived and worked. Owned by different faculty, they were able to maintain family connections and receive visits despite the constraints of slavery. Mr. Gibbons was owned by Professor Henry Howard and later worked for Professor William H. Ricketts in Pavilion VI. Mr. Gibbons was a domestic servant in the household of Professor Francis Smith in Pavilion V and VI. Although their marriage had no legal standing, William and Isabelle Gibbons presented their union and raised their children while living in slavery. Legal restrictions and the strong opposition of white society severely limited access to education for Virginia's slaves. William Gibbons learned to read by carefully observing and listening to the white students around him. His daughter, Rosa, recalled that she could not have learned to read and write, "unless my mother taught me secretly."

**10 The Crackerbox**

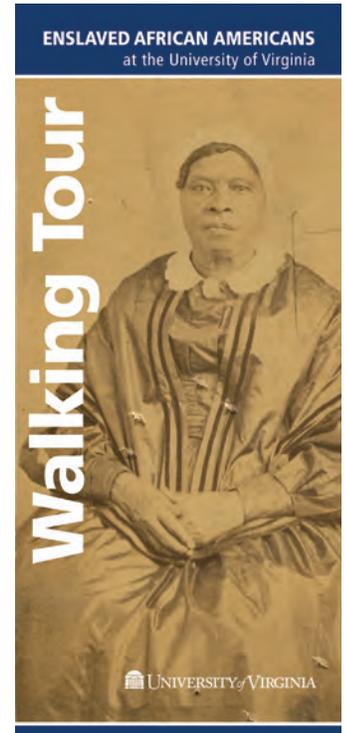
One of the few surviving outbuildings within the Academical Village, the "Crackerbox" is a two-story structure named for its small size and rectangular shape. Built between 1825-1826, the structure stands today in the rear yard of originally constructed as a detached kitchen with westerly space in to upper story. Historian George Spotswood, including 13 enslaved people and three free black women, to house it in 1826. The Board of Visitors approved the construction of a new room addition to the north end of the Crackerbox, perhaps to accommodate his large enslaved labor force. Others living within Robert Ricketts' household were Edward, an enslaved man who, Mary Edmund and James Munroe, and the other people owned by Rose, likely moved one or two households, or as dormitory servants, serving students and faculty. On one occasion, Professor George Spotswood in 1827 for a period of time. Edward was hired to Rose and his family left the University in 1834 and opened a boarding house for students on Main Street. A Bury that the people they lived continued to serve the Rose as their boarding house establishment.

# Appendix

## UVA Walking Tour

### Enslaved African Americans at the University

The University of Virginia utilized the labor of enslaved African Americans from the earliest days of its construction in 1817, until the end of the American Civil War. Most of the University's enslaved laborers were rented from local slave-owners and worked alongside whites and free blacks in all tasks associated with constructing the Academical Village. When the first students arrived in March 1825, enslaved African Americans worked in the pavilions, hotels, and the Rotunda; maintained classrooms, laboratories, and the library; and served the daily needs of the students and faculty, especially in providing cooking and cleaning services. This self-guided Walking Tour is an introduction to some of the people, places, and events that shaped the early history of African Americans at the University of Virginia. For further information, please see [slavery.virginia.edu](http://slavery.virginia.edu).



Front cover

Sally Cottrell Cole was an enslaved maid and seamstress who labored for Professor Thomas Hewitt Key in Pavilion VI (site 9) between 1824–1827. Professor Key arranged for her manumission upon his departure from the University in 1827. Cole remained in Charlottesville until her death in 1873.

#### Key

-  Site open to the public
-  Exterior viewing only, building not open to the public
-  Historic location only
-  Historic marker
-  Parking



## 1 The Rotunda and Bricks on the Lawn



One of the most overlooked legacies of enslaved labor are the bricks that cover the Academical Village. Enslaved laborers dug the clay, helped fire the bricks, hauled them to Grounds, and laid them to build this university. The brick making began in the summer of 1817, and the enslaved laborers working on this task were a diverse group of mostly men, but included at least one woman and several children. An enslaved man named Charles was responsible for digging the clay and manning the kiln with the help of six enslaved boys rented out from John H. Cocke in 1823. Enslaved laborers named Dick, Lewis, Nelson, and Sandy were also assigned to the brickyard, and worked long hours by the kiln. Enslaved laborers also carved out the terrace levels on the lawn, creating the unique landscape that you see today. Many



of the enslaved laborers were highly skilled at construction, carpentry, stone cutting, and blacksmithing, and were forced to work alongside free black and white laborers to contribute to some of the more intricate design work seen in the details of the architecture on grounds. In 1823, as part of Rotunda construction, free man of color Robert Battles hauled over 176,000 bricks and a few tons of sand to the University during a five-month stretch. For his Herculean efforts, he was paid \$170.

## 2 Enslaved Labor Plaque



In February of 2007, the University's Board of Visitors approved the installation of a slate memorial in the brick pavement of the passage under the south terrace of the Rotunda. The memorial reads: "In honor of the several hundred women and men, both free and enslaved, whose labor between 1817 and 1826 helped to realize Thomas Jefferson's design for the University of Virginia." The memorial was

part of an effort led by President John Casteen III to honor the University's "original labor force," which included enslaved workers.

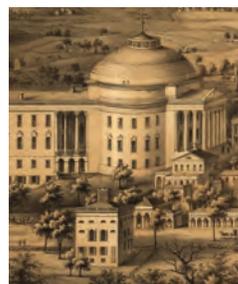
## 3 Henry Martin



According to oral history, Henry Martin was born at Monticello on July 4, 1826—the day Jefferson died. He was sold to the Carr family at Jefferson's estate sale in 1827 and until 1847 remained enslaved at a property in Albemarle County. In 1847, the Carrs hired out Mr. Martin to Mrs. Dabney Carr, who ran a boarding house just north of the University. Until the general emancipation in 1865, Martin hauled coal, delivered wood,

and worked as a domestic laborer at her boarding house. In freedom, he took a job with the University as janitor and bell ringer, which he wrote about in a letter to *College Topics*, a student publication that asked to report on his life story. Martin routinely awoke at 4 a.m. to tend to his responsibilities. It was Martin who rang the bell to spread the alarm when the first wisps of smoke were spotted in the Rotunda fire of 1895. "I was as true to that bell as to my God," Martin said in a 1914 interview. By his retirement in 1909, Martin had become a UVA icon. The student newspaper commented, "He was known personally to more alumni than any living man."

## 4 Anatomical Theater



Following a complaint from Pavilion X resident and professor of medicine Robley Dunglison that his front room was an "unacceptable venue" for dissecting cadavers, Jefferson designed a new building in 1824 (featuring a tiered amphitheater for observing dissections) that stood for a period of time in front of where Alderman Library is today. A student dissection lab was added later. Nineteenth century medical

faculty and students commonly stole the corpses of recently buried African Americans from nearby cemeteries for use in their classrooms. By the late 1840s, the University was competing for cadavers with two other medical schools in the state. Professional grave robbers known as "Resurrectionists" were hired in Richmond, Alexandria, and Norfolk. These men primarily targeted African American burial sites to meet the University's demand for 25 or more cadavers per session. An enslaved man named Lewis was hired by the University from carpenter George Spooner specifically to clean up after the cadaver experiments. Because of these duties, the University community referred to him as "Anatomical Lewis." During his time at UVA, Lewis lived in several locations including behind Pavilion VII. It is unknown whether Lewis left by death or by sale, but by 1860, Lewis no longer appears in University records.

## 5 Hotel A



Hotels intersperse the East and West Ranges. These buildings were rented to Hotelkeepers, each of whom owned many people who were expected to prepare meals and provide cleaning for the students. On a daily basis, the enslaved would bring fresh water to the students and tend their fires. They regularly cleaned the rooms and public spaces of the Academical Village. In addition, in the basements and gardens, they prepared the

meals that were served to students in the Hotels. This work required an extensive labor force. In 1830, the Conways who operated Hotel A owned twelve people who may have lived in the basement and in outbuildings in the gardens. At any time, the population of enslaved people living and working in the Academical Village was between 90 to 150 in the decades before emancipation. In the course of carrying out their responsibilities, free and enslaved African Americans interacted with white students in the hotel dining halls, student dormitory rooms, and throughout the Academical Village on a regular basis. On occasion, these daily interactions could and did turn violent. Faculty records document that students resulted to physical violence upon the bodies of free and enslaved laborers for a variety of 'offences,' including insolence, impertinent language, or a perceived lack of attention to duties. For example, Mr. Rose complained to the faculty when a student kicked one of his enslaved workers and Col. Moon objected when a student threw a knife. Even when students were judged by faculty to be at fault, their actions very rarely led to suspension.

## 6 The University Gardens

Garden 3



Over the decades, dozens of buildings were added to these spaces including: smokehouses, kitchens, privies, woodsheds, and quarters. Enclosed by walls and thus largely hidden from the University community, these spaces provided a place to butcher hogs, cook, do laundry, and perform the many other tasks expected of the enslaved community.

These were the primary spaces where the enslaved community worked, lived, and communed while tucked away from the view of the central Lawn. By the twentieth century, most of these buildings were torn down and only a few remain. In the mid-twentieth-century, the Garden Club of Virginia redesigned the gardens to their present appearance.

## 7 The Mews



The building now known as the Mews was built around 1830. It is one of the few surviving original outbuildings. Built as a detached kitchen, it also provided accommodations for some of the professor's enslaved laborers. These kitchen quarters were modeled after plantation kitchens, which were usually detached and situated near the main house. These buildings and the enslaved cooks and

domestics were integral to the formal functions of the University's community, providing meals and domestic service to the professors and their families. The building has since been enlarged and was renamed "The Mews" when Professor Pratt moved here in 1923.

## 8 East Lawn Basement Rooms



The basement rooms served many different purposes over the decades. Some were living quarters for enslaved African Americans owned by professors. Pavilion occupants occasionally annexed these rooms by breaking through common walls, which allowed a direct passageway from the basement to the inside of the pavilion. In these cases, the basement rooms could be used as auxiliary work spaces.

Many of these rooms show evidence of improvement to make them more habitable. All were whitewashed and some had plaster ceilings. Despite those improvements, most of the rooms still had dirt floors, but no windows and no fireplaces.

Some rooms were rented out to businessmen such as Jack Kennedy, a member of the Charlottesville Free Black community, who applied for one of the cellar rooms to be used as a barber's shop for the accommodation of the students. The faculty approved because they hoped the students would have fewer reasons to go to town. In another room (under Room 24), enslaved laborers constructed a large cistern, which was once a vital part of the University's water supply and fire protection system. The cistern was connected to wooden pipes and trenches, all of which were constructed and maintained by enslaved laborers and, in later years, Thomas Farrow and Robert Battles, free black tradesmen.

## 9 Pavilion VI and Garden



Pavilion V and VI were places where William and Isabella Gibbons, who were both enslaved at UVA, lived and labored. Owned by different faculty, they were able to maintain family connections and become literate despite the constraints of slavery. Mr. Gibbons was owned by Professor Henry Howard and later worked for Professor William H. McGuffey in Pavilion IX. Mrs. Gibbons was a domestic servant in the

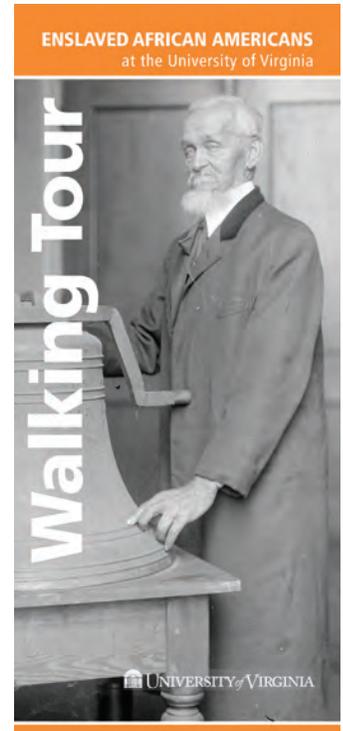
household of Professor Francis Smith in Pavilions V and VI. Although their marriage had no legal standing, William and Isabella Gibbons preserved their union and raised their children while living in slavery. Legal restrictions and the strong opposition of white society severely limited access to education for Virginia's slaves. William Gibbons learned to read by carefully observing and listening to the white students around him. His daughter Bella recalled that she could not have learned to read and write, "unless my mother taught me secretly."

## 10 The Crackerbox



One of the few surviving outbuildings within the Academical Village, the "Crackerbox" is a two-story cottage named for its small size and rectangular shape. Built between 1825–1826 the structure stands today in the rear yard of Hotel F. Like the Mews, the Cracker Box was originally constructed as a detached kitchen with residential space in its upper story. Hotelkeeper John N. Rose brought his

household, including 13 enslaved people and three free black women, to Hotel F in 1829. The Board of Visitors approved the construction of a one-room addition to the north end of the Crackerbox, perhaps to accommodate his large enslaved labor force. Others living within Rose's household were Edmund, an enslaved man owned by Rose's son William, and James Munroe who belonged to Rose's wife, Mary. Edmund and James Munroe, and the other people owned by Rose, likely served one of two capacities: as hotel servants preparing, serving, and cleaning up student meals; or as dormitory servants providing services to students and cleaning their rooms. On occasion, Rose leased his slaves for short periods of time. Edmund was hired to Professor George Blaetterman in 1832 for a period of two months. Rose and his family left the University in 1834 and opened a boarding house for students on Main Street. It is likely that the people they owned continued to serve the Roses at their boarding house establishment.



Reverse cover

Henry Martin

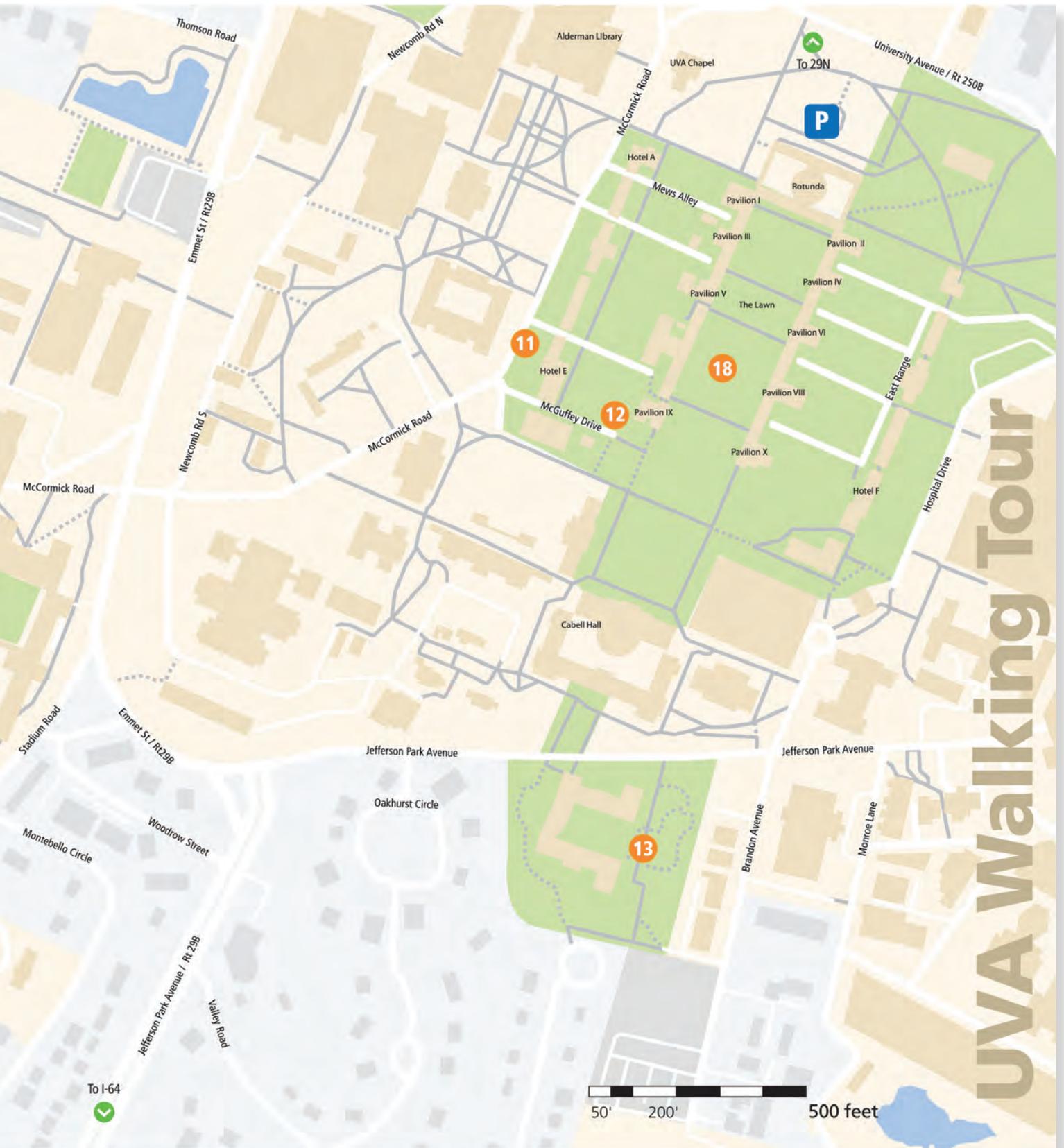
Walking tour reverse.

## UVA Walking Tour Enslaved African Americans at the University

This self-guided tour introduces some of the people, places, and stories related to early African American life at the University of Virginia. Between 1817 and 1865 the University relied on the labor of enslaved African Americans, whose presence was undeniably central to the building and functioning of the University of Virginia. This walking tour is an initiative of the President's Commission on Slavery and the University, a group committed to acknowledging and memorializing the lives and legacies of enslaved laborers at UVA.

To learn more visit [slavery.virginia.edu](http://slavery.virginia.edu)





## 11 Mrs. Gray's Kitchen



In 1829, the Board of Visitors approved the construction of a one and a half story 'office' with two rooms to the rear of Hotel E. Built between 1829–1830 and referred to as Mrs. Gray's kitchen, this structure would have served as both residence and work space and was operated chiefly by enslaved laborers. Mrs. Gray expanded the kitchen structure when she added an 'apartment for the lodging of servants' in 1844. John

and Cornelia Gray operated the hotel between 1825–1845, providing food and services to students in adjacent dormitories.

Census records document that a total of 13 enslaved individuals resided in the Gray household in 1830. One of these individuals was the dormitory servant William, a young boy. In early 1834, several white students boarding with Mrs. Gray had complained that William was "impertinent" and that he did not "attend well" at the rooms. Under pressure from the faculty, William was "withdrawn" from serving the student dormitories. In late 1835, Mrs. Gray complained to the faculty that a student boarder, William W. Harris, "struck her servant William in her presence" and that Harris behaved in a very rude and insulting manner to her. Harris replied stating that "he would do so [strike her servant] whenever it pleased him." Faculty reviewed the complaints and testimonies and concluded that William was "highly offensive in manner, & impertinent in language to Mr. Harris & is habitually as in his conduct to others." William was subsequently removed from any attendance on the students.

## 12 McGuffey Cottage



McGuffey Cottage is all that remains of a row of outbuildings located to the west and rear of Pavilion IX. These were built as work and residential spaces, including one built as early as 1831 for the 'accommodation of domestics.' George Tucker, a professor of Moral Philosophy, was the first resident of Pavilion IX, occupying it between 1825 and 1845.

Census records document that he owned two men and two women in 1840. In addition to supporting his own family, Tucker also rented out his slaves to the University as needed. In 1828, Anthony was rented out by Tucker for five months performing labor for the University. In 1840, Tucker's slave Isaac was rented for a month and assisted a stonemason while building walls surrounding the Academical Village.

## 13 Catherine Foster Site



University staff discovered several grave shafts during the expansion of a parking lot east of and adjacent to Venable Lane in 1993. Archival research identified the historic parcel containing the graves as belonging to Catherine Foster, a free black woman who purchased the property in 1833. Subsequent archaeological research conducted on the property identified a total of 32 graves as well as an early nineteenth century house and landscaped yard. As free laundresses and seamstresses, owning property adjacent to the University during the antebellum period was a significant asset for "Kitty" Foster and her daughters and grand-daughters. During the postbellum period the area surrounding the Foster residence became known as Canada, a predominantly African American, owner-occupied neighborhood. The 21/8 acre



historic parcel remained in the Foster family until 1906. The memorial adjacent to the South Lawn complex commemorates the Foster residence, the larger landscape, and the cemetery believed to contain members of the Foster family and adjacent Canada community.

## 14 Gooch Dillard Grave Site



The land upon which the Gooch Dillard dormitory stands was originally part of Piedmont, a 290-acre plantation acquired by Reuben Maury in 1809. Piedmont was passed down through the Maury family until its acquisition by the University in 1947. As Maury's plantation holdings grew, so did the number of enslaved people he owned. In the decades between 1820 and 1860, Maury owned between 25 and 62 enslaved individuals.

Prior to the construction of the Gooch Dillard dormitory Mrs. Alice H. Clark, a Maury descendant, recalled the location of a cemetery containing the remains of enslaved who lived and worked on the Piedmont plantation. In 1982 University archaeologists conducted limited testing in the area adjacent to the proposed dormitory construction site. Although only nine graves were identified, it is believed that the cemetery is much larger and may contain the graves of many more individuals.

## 15 Gibbons House



The Board of Visitors voted in March 2015 to name the new first year dorm building “Gibbons House” after William and Isabella Gibbons. The President’s Commission on Slavery and the University (PCSU) established



an educational exhibit in an alcove on the first floor of the Gibbons House dormitory to teach first year students about the namesakes of the building

and the larger history of slavery at UVA. The building was formally dedicated in summer 2015 and later that same year, descendants of Isabella Gibbons were honored with a reception at Gibbons House.

## 16 Skipwith Hall



Peyton Skipwith, 1800–1849, was an enslaved master mason who quarried stone for use in construction at UVA. Mr. Skipwith was owned by John Hartwell Cocke, a member of the Board of Visitors. The site of this building is believed to have been the location of the University quarry where Mr. Skipwith was a laborer.

## 17 University Cemetery



In 2012, Archaeologists discovered 67 mostly unmarked grave shafts, which likely contain the remains of both enslaved and newly freed African Americans. The graves were left undisturbed. In 2014, the PCSU



organized a formal service at the First Baptist Church, followed by an evening vigil led by renowned Reverend Almeta Ingram-Miller and a

choir singing the gospel song, *Walk Together Children, Don't You Get Weary*. Ingram-Miller led the community in a libation ceremony to celebrate, honor, and remember those buried in the cemetery.

## 18 Violence Against Enslaved Individuals



In the course of carrying out their responsibilities, free and enslaved African Americans interacted with white students in the hotel dining halls, student dormitory rooms, and throughout the Academical Village on a regular basis. On occasion, these daily interactions could and did turn violent. Faculty records document that students resorted to inflicting physical violence upon the bodies of free and enslaved laborers for a variety of “offences,” including insolence, impertinent language, or a perceived lack of attention to duties.

In particular, enslaved individuals working for hotelkeepers in the dining halls and dormitories faced the greatest threat. Failure to change a plate at the dinner table or perceived negligence in preparing a dormitory room or changing bed linens could result in a violent interaction. Enslaved individuals who did not speak to white students with respect and deference were also putting themselves at risk of violence. Student-on-slave violence at the University included strikings and beatings, as well as threats of whippings and even sexual assault. This physical punishment was carried out with or without the assent of the master. Complaint against a slave for an offense could lead to their removal from duties, or even from the University. Furthermore, even when students were judged by faculty to be at fault, their actions were only reprimanded and very rarely led to suspension.

### Photography

- Front
- cover Minor, Southall and Venable family photographs, 1860–1900, Accession #10100-d, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville va.
  - 2 UVA Magazine [uvamagazine.org/articles/unearting\\_slavery\\_at\\_the\\_university\\_of\\_virginia](http://uvamagazine.org/articles/unearting_slavery_at_the_university_of_virginia)
  - 3 Holsinger Studio Collection, c. 2890–1938, Accession #9862, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville va.
  - 4 Details: E. Sachse, Engraver. View of the University of Virginia, *Charlottesville & Monticello, taken from Lewis Mountain*, 1856. Casimir Bohn, Publisher, Richmond, Virginia. Broadside 1856. B64. Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville va.
  - 5 ‘East Range.’ [It is actually West Range] RG-30/1/10.011. UVA Prints 01667. University of Virginia Visual History Collection. University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville va.
  - 6 Anne Chesnut
  - 7, 8 Kelley Deetz
  - 9 Rivanna Archaeological Services, llc (2014)
  - 10 Kelley Deetz
- Reverse
- cover Holsinger Studio Collection, c. 2890–1938, Accession #9862, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville va.
  - A ‘Jefferson Statue.’ Rufus W. Holsinger, April 4, 1914. Holsinger Studio Collection, Call #MSS 9862. Retrieval ID – X03164B4. Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville va.
  - C Top: Rivanna Archaeological Services, llc (2005)  
Bottom: The Catherine “Kitty” Foster Family and Canada Community Park, Photo: Jane Haley
  - E Bottom: Isabella Gibbons, n.d. Courtesy Trustees of the Boston Public Library
  - F Top: ‘Cemetery, University of Virginia.’ Rufus W. Holsinger, March 9, 1917. Holsinger Studio Collection, Call #MSS 9862. Retrieval ID: X04909AB. Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville va.  
Middle: Benjamin Ford, principal investigator at RivannaArchaeological Services, explores the dig north of the University Cemetery. Photo: Cole Geddy [uvamagazine.org/articles/unearting\\_slavery\\_at\\_the\\_university\\_of\\_virginia](http://uvamagazine.org/articles/unearting_slavery_at_the_university_of_virginia)  
Bottom: Dan Addison



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## Colophon

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President's Commission  
on Slavery and the University