

Hallowed Grounds Tour

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Overview

Like other early American institutions of higher education, slavery played a significant role. This self-guided alternate campus tour hopes to shed light onto the lives, experiences, and legacy of the many unsung men, women, and children who lived, worked, and even died at the University of Alabama.

From the construction of the initial buildings to the destruction of the campus on April 4, 1865, enslaved people performed much of the labor at the University of Alabama. They served on construction crews for all university buildings, maintained the grounds and facilities, cooked, laundered, performed janitorial duties and did other assorted tasks.

Viewed as property either owned or leased by the university, enslaved men, women and children labored, survived to the best of their buildings, and helped to build the campus. The legacy of institutional slave past shaped the Jim Crow segregation campus, Civil Rights Movement pioneers, and post-desegregation campus.

This tour showcases the names of the enslaved, the surviving spaces where they labored, their connections to buildings named after individuals who upheld the institution, and hopefully shed light on their campus experiences. In addition to sites of slavery, several tour stops explore this legacy for the present-day campus community.

Tour Stops

Marr's Spring

Enslaved African American Connections: Unknown men and boys

Year: 1831

As the main water source, enslaved workers carried water-filled buckets from Marr's Spring to the main academic buildings, dormitories, and later barracks.

Maxwell Hall (Observatory)

Enslaved African American Connections: William, Briggs, Johnson, Sam

Year: 1844

Enslaved men helped in the construction of the building in 1844, the mounting of the telescope and a late 1850s addition. Enslaved persons performed primarily janitorial duties and other assorted tasks onsite. Sam assisted Prof. Barnard in his scholarly research and teaching. William, an enslaved master carpenter, was hired specifically for the construction of the dome. While the building survived the destruction of the campus, the majority of the instruments and equipment were rendered inoperable.

Woods Hall

Year: 1867-1868

Built between 1867 and 1868, this building was named after Alva Woods, the first university president, and was the first building constructed after the Civil War. His administration saw the first significant usage of enslaved people at the campus. Originally called the "barracks," the citadel-style building served as a dormitory, classrooms and a dining hall. It was constructed using both salvaged bricks from the buildings that were destroyed in the Civil War and new bricks. It reflects the postwar rebirth following its destruction by federal forces, Confederate defeat, destruction of slavery, and emancipation.

Garland Hall

Year: 1888

Built in 1888, this building is named after the third university president, Landon Cabell Garland. He was the last president to employ his own personal enslaved property, University-owned, hired out, and impressed enslaved laborers at the university before and during the Civil War.

Clark Hall

Year: 1884

Located on site of the former Lyceum, the building is named after Willis G. Clark, a University trustee from 1876 to 1898. His "History of Alabama" traces the development of education in the state of Alabama from its antebellum origins to the extension of public schools to all Alabamians, white and black after the Civil War. His tenure reinforced racial hierarchy and access to higher education that lasted until campus desegregation.

Manly Hall

Year: 1885

Built in 1885, the building is named after the second and longest serving university president Reverend Basil Manly. As a large slaveholder, he oversaw the construction of the President's Mansion and the original outbuildings. He employed his own enslaved property, University-owned, and rented laborers throughout the campus. Manly also advocated the religious defense of slavery as an institution. In 1861, he gave a prayer at President Jefferson Davis's inauguration. Ironically, it currently houses the Department of Religious Studies and the Department of Gender and Race Studies.

B. B. Comer Hall

Year: 1908

Braxton Bragg Comer attended the University during the last year in which the institution of slavery was employed. He was forced to leave before federal troops destroyed the campus. He served as the governor of the state of Alabama. He is known for deriving personal wealth from his family's interests in the Comer Farm and Eureka Mines that employed convict-leased labor (predominantly African American), his opposition to child labor laws, and efforts to disenfranchise black and poor white Alabamians.

Steward's Hall/Gorgas House

Enslaved African American Connections to Site or Building Namesake: Ben, Moses, William, Andy, Schooler, Pierce

African American Legacy Connections: Unknown black man featured in photograph with Amelia Gorgas and her son William Crawford Gorgas

Year: 1829

As the first building on campus, enslaved people worked on its construction as well as all other campus buildings later erected. Students lost use of the building as the Campus Dining Hall after repeatedly threatening and inflicting violence on faculty and administrators. This similar behavior and worse was routine among enslaved workers in the dining hall who served and cleaned up after the rowdy students and replaced damaged furniture. The converted building was then employed as a residence, lodgings for students and visitors, and student recitations on the first floor. After the conversion, enslaved individuals continued to work in the building up until the destruction of the campus. Currently, it serves as a museum dedicated to the life and work of the Gorgas family, with particular emphasis on Amelia Gayle Gorgas.

Morgan Hall

Enslaved African American Connections to Site or Building Namesake: Unknown men and boys

Year: 1911

Prior to the construction of the current building, a two-story brick kitchen that prepared food for the Campus Dining Hall (Steward's Hall/Gorgas House) was located here. Enslaved people prepared the food. They also carried buckets of water to the building and then moved food to the dining hall for service. John Tyler Morgan, the building namesake, was a former Confederate general, who worked to extend Jim Crow across the nation, advocated for the forced African American migration, and rose to leadership in the Montgomery chapter of the Ku Klux Klan. Currently, the lobby showcases art from the Paul R. Jones African American Art Collection. The original building plaque has been removed during the 2019-2020 academic year.

Guard House/Little Round House

Enslaved African American Connections: Neal, Crawford, Gabe

Year: 1862

Built in 1862, this small building provided shelter to cadets on sentry duty during inclement weather. It also served as the headquarters for the Drum Corps, which consisted of rented slaves beginning shortly after its construction. Neal, Gabe and Crawford (Crawford replaced Neal in 1864) assisted with cadet drilling, provided music, and alerted cadets when federal forces approached the university in the early morning of April 3, 1865. In 1961, the UA yearbook featured this building on its cover and section breaks as a symbol of massive resistance to desegregation. It currently has a historical marker. This Civil War era slave cabin is now no tailgate zone during football season.

Little Round House Marker

Enslaved African American Connections: Neal, Crawford, Gabe

Year: c. 1990s-2000s

Marker text reads: "Constructed as a guard house for the Alabama Corps of Cadets during the early 1860's, the Little Round House provided shelter from inclement weather for cadets on sentry duty. Until 1865, it also housed the University Drum Corps, which was composed of rented slaves. One of the few University buildings not destroyed by Union forces when the campus was burned in 1865, this building became the office of the University surgeon in 1871, and was used later by non-military students as a residence. In 1888, the building became a storage area for University records and in 1933 the Jasons, a men's honor society, was permitted to use it as headquarters. In 1990, the building was converted into a memorial for all honor societies of the University."

Oliver-Barnard Hall

Enslaved African American Connections: Sam, Luna, Morgan

Year: 1889

Built in 1889, this building is named after Frederick Augustus Porter Barnard, an antebellum faculty member. Barnard frequently employed Sam and Moses in his scholarly research. He is also noteworthy for his use of Luna and other enslaved women on campus. The latter has been the focus of university historians and other scholars studying institutional slavery and its complex legacies.

The Mound (Franklin Hall)

Year: 1887; Franklin Hall (1835-1865)

Enslaved African American Connections: Arthur, William, Anderson

Enslaved servants worked in all of the dormitories (barracks, 1861-1865). Enslaved men serving students at Franklin Hall often slept where it was possible in the stairwell, hallway, and even on the surviving front stoop. Franklin Hall (1835-1865) was one of the buildings destroyed by federal forces on April 4, 1865. Unsalvageable bricks were placed in the memorial to the antebellum campus, slavery, and Confederate defeat.

Gorgas Library (The Rotunda)

Year: 1939

Enslaved African American Connections to Site or Building Namesake: Silas

Immediately south of the Gorgas Library steps, flagstones denote the lower half of the Rotunda's foundation. William Nichols designed the Rotunda to serve as the library. Destroyed by federal forces, later remembrances often detailed the concerted attempts to save the building. In 1935, university historian James D. Anderson recounted the efforts of the librarian and "Silas Pratt, a colored slave" to save the Rotunda from destruction in a play entitled, "Destruction of the University of Alabama Library: An Episode of the Civil War." On June 8, 2020 UA officials removed two Confederate plaques (Shockly's Escort Company of Cavalry and Storrs Cadet Troop) from the main entrance of this building.

UDC Memorial Boulder

Enslaved African American Connections: Countless Civil War impressed and hired out enslaved laborers

Year: 1914

The coerced labor of enslaved people proved essential to the university during the Civil War. Their contributions, though, were not included in the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) memorial erected in 1914 on the quad. Originally, this memorial sat up on a mini-mound closer to the library with a low brick enclosure at the base. Renovations of Gorgas Library forced its relocation to its present location and design. On June 8, 2020, UA officials removed the plaque and then entire on UDC monument the next day to an undisclosed location.

The Quad

Year: 1831

Enslaved African American Connections to Site or Building Namesake: Unknown men and boys

Enslaved men and boys regularly crossed this greenspace in their movements around campus. Enslaved women's movements were restricted and limited. More importantly, large teams (and rarely named men and teens) maintained the manicured appearance of the lawn. Their labor represents the majority of the "unknown" enslaved laborers.

Presidents' Mansion and Original Outbuildings

Enslaved African American Connections: Mary, Sabra, Lydia, Binkey, Archy, William "Boysey"

African American Legacy Connections: Henderson Johnson, Jeremiah Barnes, Cornelius Garland, Claiborne Garland, Dan Spencer

Year: 1841

Built in 1841 both Presidents Manly and Garland employed their own slaves in the Presidents' Mansion. They also rented out others for service at the mansion, especially when entertaining. The four original outbuildings remain. Two outer buildings were originally used as the quarters for the personal slaves of Manly. The one closest to the mansion was employed as the kitchen. The other contained the well and was used as a washroom. During the events leading up to the destruction of the campus, President Garland employed enslaved cooks and servants to gather necessary food and supplies for the retreat from Tuscaloosa to Marion, Alabama. According to university lore, Mrs. Garland and several enslaved servants (but not all) prevented its destruction. For the majority, they celebrated emancipation. Henderson Johnson, Jeremiah Barnes, Cornelius Garland, Claiborne Garland and Dan Spencer are among those who built significant religious, educational and political institutions in Tuscaloosa during Reconstruction.

Nott Hall

Year: 1922

Constructed in the early 1920s, it is named after Josiah C. Nott, a physician and racial theorist from Mobile, Alabama who served as one of the founders of the Medical School in Mobile. He is more known for racial theory works, including the *Types of Mankind*. In this 1854 publication, Nott promoted a belief in polygenesis (multiple and separate evolutionary origins) as a justification for slavery, racial subordination, and white supremacy. After the Civil War, Nott did not change his views on African Americans. He felt that they as well as other inferior races lacked the capacity to learn and would remain intellectually deficient. He attempted to reclaim the former medical school from being used as a school for black children in Mobile. His efforts failed. The Medical School became one of the premier schools for black children in the state of Alabama.

Smith Hall

African American Legacy Connections: Autherine Lucy

Year: 1910

After the Civil War, there were multiple mounds, including the Franklin Hall mound. Smith Hall was located on and near several mounds. Students were upset during the construction of the building. Even though Smith was a beloved faculty member, construction eliminated several mounds for backfill. Students also deemed it too expensive as a result of the geological artifacts and equipment it contained. On February 6, 1956, Autherine Lucy attended class on the second floor as a mob gathered outside the front entrance. She escaped but UA officials expelled her on February 28, 1956. Currently, the UA Museum of Natural History is housed in the building.

Tuomey Hall

Enslaved African American Connections: Moses

Year: 1888

Built in 1888, this building is named after Michael Tuomey, an antebellum faculty member. Moses served as a field aid during his geological mapping tour of the state. As faculty, Tuomey regularly made

decisions regarding the labor, hires, purchases and sales of enslaved people.

Madison Hall footings and marker

Enslaved African American Connections: Unknown men and boys

Year: 2015

The footing and marker highlight the remains of Madison Hall. Enslaved workers helped in the construction of this building and then worked in the building up until April 4, 1865. Marker text reads: "This plinth identifies the southeast corner of Madison Hall, constructed in the late 1850s. Madison Hall was used for classrooms, administrative offices, dining and as a residence hall. It was destroyed when the Union Army burned the campus in April 1865. This site was excavated in 1975 as part of the University's Bicentennial.

UDC Tiffany Memorial Stained Glass Window (Mary Harmon Bryant Hall)

Enslaved African American Connections: Countless Civil War impressed and hired out enslaved laborers

Year: 1925

After being located in the original Gorgas library (1925-1939) and current Gorgas library (1939-1993), the UDC Tiffany Memorial Stained Glass window is currently located in W. S. Hoole Special Collections on the second floor of Mary Harmon Bryant Hall with other research materials on the role of slavery and its legacy at the university. Tiffany Studios of New York stained glass memorial window created by the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) in 1925.

Cemetery and Slavery Apology Marker

Enslaved African American Connections: Jack, William "Boysey"

Year: 2006

Owned by Manly, two enslaved individuals are buried near the cemetery next to the Biology building. After dying from "bilious pneumonia," President Manly described Jack in his diary as "an African, a Methodist, honest, and faithful, and was buried there on May 5, 1843." President Manly also recorded William's arrival with his mother and later death from whooping cough on November 22, 1844. Following a coalition movement spearheaded by law professor Al Brophy, the University apologized for slavery in 2004 and erected this apology marker in 2006.

Marker text reads: "Buried near this plaque are Jack Rudolph and William "Boysey" Brown, two slaves owned by University of Alabama Faculty, and William J. Crawford, a University student who died in 1844. Rudolph was born in African about 1791 and died May 5, 1846, from "Bilious pneumonia." Brown was born April 10, 1838, and died November 22, 1844, from "whooping cough." Jack Rudolph and Boysey Brown were among the slaves owned by the University of Alabama and by Faculty. Their burials were honored and recognized by the University of Alabama on April 15, 2004. The Faculty Senate apologized for their predecessors' role in the institution of slavery on April 20, 2004. This plaque honor those whose labor and legacy of perseverance helped to build the University of Alabama community since its founding."

Foster Auditorium

African American Legacy Connections: James Hood, Vivian Malone

Year: 1939

On June 11, 1963, Gov. George Wallace attempted to prevent desegregation. His efforts failed. Vivian Malone and James Hood desegregated the university. Currently, a plaque briefly details the history of the day on the front entrance.

[Malone-Hood Plaza](#)

African American Legacy Connections: James Hood, Vivian Malone, Autherine Lucy Foster

Year: 2010

On June 11, 1963, Gov. George Wallace attempted to prevent desegregation. His efforts failed. Vivian Malone and James Hood desegregated the university. Currently, a plaque briefly details the history of the day on the front entrance.

[Autherine Lucy Clock Tower](#)

African American Legacy Connections: James Hood, Vivian Malone, Autherine Lucy Foster

Year: 2010

This brick tower honors three UA Civil Rights Movement pioneers-Vivian Malone Jones, James Hood and Autherine Lucy Foster. The four plaques include a brief history, quotes, and two images of each pioneer. It is situated on Hood-Malone plaza. In addition to site, a scholarship, historical marker, and several portraits, UA awarded Autherine Lucy Foster with a honorary doctorate during the 2019 Spring Commencement exercises.

[Autherine Lucy Foster marker](#)

African American Legacy Connections: Autherine Lucy Foster

Year: 2017

In addition to site, a scholarship, honorary doctorate, several portraits, and the Autherine Lucy Clock Tower, this historical marker acknowledges a UA Civil Rights pioneer, UA awarded Autherine Lucy Foster with a honorary doctorate during the 2019 Spring Commencement exercises. Marker text reads: First African American to enroll at the University of Alabama following successful litigation under the historic 1954 Brown v. Board of Education ruling. She began classes on February 3, 1956; however, after three days of tumultuous demonstrations, on February 6th, she was suspended and later expelled by the University's Board of Trustees. The expulsion was rescinded in April of 1988. In December 1991, Ms. Lucy completed her requirements for her Master's in Elementary Education. This achievement was the culmination of her original dream to attend The University of Alabama and paved the way for countless others to fulfill theirs. Autherine Lucy's courage made The University of Alabama truly "one for all."

[John H. England Jr. Hall](#)

African American Legacy Connections: Hon. Judge John H. England Jr.

Year: 2019

First institutional building named after an African American pioneer of the Civil Rights Movement. The residence hall is named after one of the first African Americans to graduate from The University of Alabama School of Law,