

# SEEKING ABRAHAM

A REPORT OF FURMAN UNIVERSITY'S  
TASK FORCE ON SLAVERY AND JUSTICE

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Cover Image: Unnamed figure, likely Abraham Sims, standing outside of the Cherrydale House in 1900; Furman University Special Collections. A special thanks to Dr. Jeffrey Makala and Julia Cowart for their constant support in hosting conversations and their aid in finding evidence in Furman's archives, as well as the staff of Digital Collections for providing high-resolution copies of the evidence. The Furman University Libraries have created a digital collection of the primary source documents used in our research and work. It resides permanently at <https://libguides.furman.edu/legacy-of-slavery>.

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# OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

July 28, 2018

Last April, in concurrence with President Elizabeth Davis and the Furman Board of Trustees, I formed a Task Force on Slavery and Justice to examine the questions raised by a student, Marian Baker, in her opinion piece in the student newspaper. This report represents the findings of the Task Force's work over the past year and their recommendations for moving forward.

I would like to sincerely thank the Task Force members for their diligent efforts and open deliberation process. This work of collecting evidence, reviewing our values and history, consulting with students, staff, faculty, and alumni is truly in line with the serious academic endeavor represented by The Furman Advantage. Beginning with a survey of students' opinions last fall, attending multiple conferences (including the Universities Studying Slavery consortium, of which Furman is a proud member), hosting numerous academic and alumni speakers, and consulting with the nation's foremost experts, the Task Force's process has been a model for other institutions.

Many colleges and universities have taken on similar projects looking at their pasts. This project goes further by delving deep into an overwhelmingly southern, pro-slavery history and then confronting apathy with a proportional energy and redress. New campus rituals, landscape changes, and university commitments are holistic, sweeping, and minimally needed to make the pivot. This is something that our nation needs to do, and institutions of higher learning can lead the way.

Given the findings of this report, our work as an institution will not be done until every member of our community — academic and regional — has undergone a similar process. I hope we can give this the full attention and support it deserves. The ongoing process of "Seeking Abraham" and justice is the sort of work that is central to the liberal arts and sciences.

We must acknowledge and seriously wrestle with ways to address the disadvantages created by our past. We will do everything we can to ensure this report and its recommendations remain one of the highest priorities of our university.

Sincerely,



George Shields  
University Provost



University Provost George Shields



L-R: Kincaid Furman, Abraham Sims, Mary Glenn Davis Furman, James C. Furman. Furman University Special Collections and Archives.

# OUR VALUES

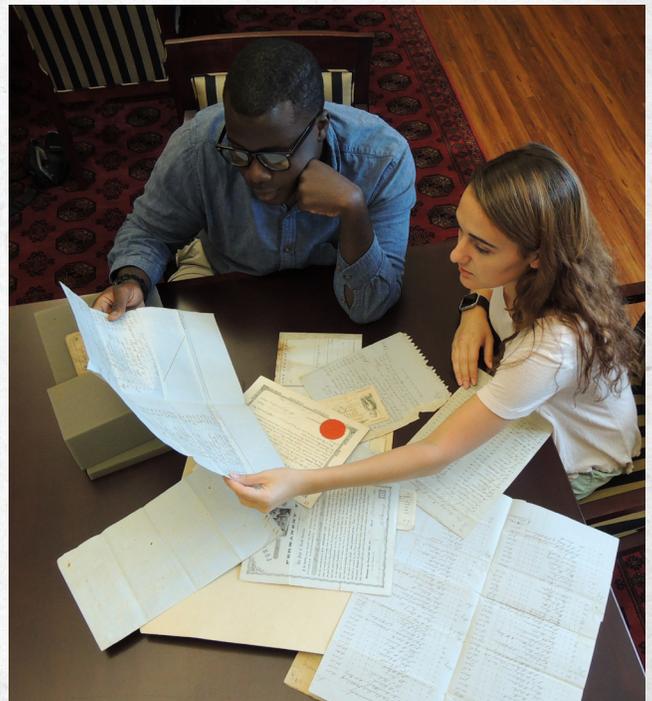
The image on the left was published by Task Force member Courtney Tollison in her 2004 photohistory, *Furman University*.

It was the only published proof of life among the dozens of enslaved persons held by the university's founders or of the thousands who labored to make the university possible.

"Seeking Abraham" is symbolic of our larger effort. Abraham is pictured by the front porch, between the two trees. To his right is the university's first president, James C. Furman, and his wife, Mary. In the driveway is a horse and buggy along with their son, Eugene Kincaid. If we take this image as an invitation to recenter Abraham in the university's past, then how might we look at the world differently? How might we think about labor alongside privilege as a central thread of a liberal arts mission? How might we think of Abraham as the link to better understand the known founders (represented by James C. Furman and his wife) and ourselves (represented as the heir)?

In answering those questions ourselves, the Task Force on Slavery & Justice resolved that the following values would guide our year of work:

- Create a more **participatory process** than has been used in the past to discuss Furman's history.
- Overcome isolation by some identity groups on campus, through telling a **shared history** and through **shared remembrance** of that past.
- Ensure that we are **authentic** and **honest** about our past.
- Make **intergenerational justice** a defining attribute of the Furman name.
- Educate the students, and the world more broadly, that the work of historical remembrance, especially regarding race relations, is an opportunity for **community advancement**.
- Be a **leader** relative to peer schools and community organizations on this issue, given our story.

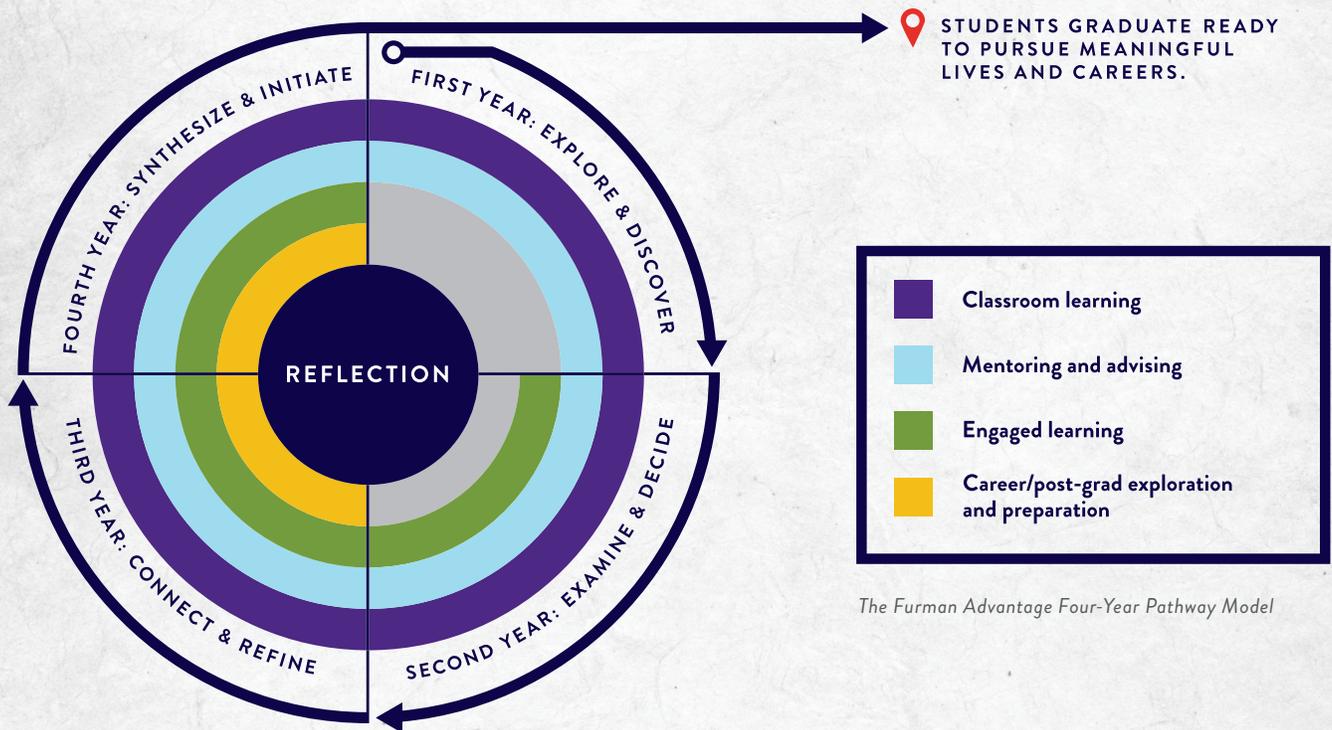


Andy Teye '19 and Marian Baker '17 analyzing evidence in Furman University Special Collections and Archives.

*participatory* community advancement *honest*  
*authentic* intergenerational justice *shared remembrance*

# OUR PROCESS

After surveying students' opinions, we first had Felicia Furman to campus who told us of her work with *Coming to the Table*, an organization that works to heal trans-generational harms. That model then merged with Furman's four-year pathway program to help us create a unique model for addressing historical harms and reckoning with discomforting pasts.

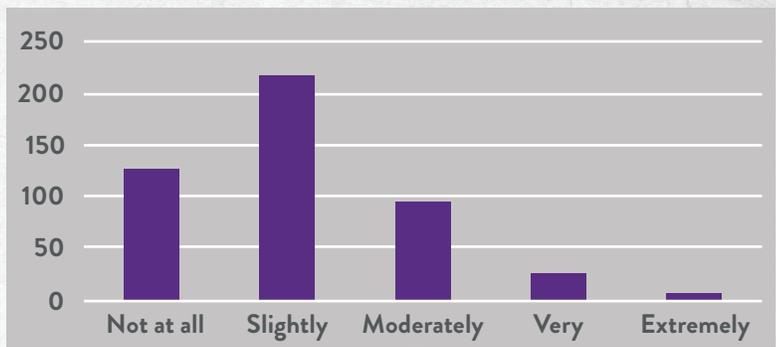


The Furman Advantage Four-Year Pathway Model

## 1. LEARNING OUR SHARED PAST

The first order of business is to **explore** and **discover** the past. Nearly two-thirds of students knew Furman's history and relationship with slavery "slightly" or "not at all." Less than one percent claimed to know it very or extremely well. This absence of a complete narrative is reflected in the landscape of Furman as well. University plaques and monuments only tell piecemeal stories about a particular donor here or particular president there. In many senses, the university's past was largely disregarded. When it came to African-American history at Furman, only the 2015 desegregation commemorative events made a dent. Still, no major spaces, buildings, or sculptures on campus commemorate a person of color—a demographic that was nearly half the population of the state.

## Q1 How knowledgeable are you about Furman University and its founders' relationship to slavery?



Survey distributed to all Furman students (n=462)

And yet African-Americans have, as this report will show, been a vital part of the university's history. From the rented slave labor to build the old campuses, to the freedmen and their descendants who served as groundskeepers and custodians, to the students and faculty who broke barriers, to the community leaders and alumni who have made the university proud—there is a dramatic story to tell, if we are willing to seek it out. There are also historical harms—trauma caused to persons of color—that have intergenerational effects and need our attention in order to heal and move forward.

Students used historical archives to begin this process. Students, primarily, uncovered the first evidence of slave labor to build the old campuses, transcribed and digitized Richard and James C. Furman's speeches and letters for the first time, and cleared African-American cemeteries where tombstones reveal this university history. Students inventoried the campus landscape asking who is represented, students collected oral histories, and students hosted speakers on modern forms of slavery globally. The Task Force is thankful for their work in uncovering hidden histories and historical harms.

We also met with consultants and community groups to better understand what we know. This included hundreds of short meetings, as well as visits to community archives and the homes of local historians. Discovery never ends, and is aided by the fact that a new freshman class will always enter the community to ask new questions and push new directions.

## 2. REFLECTING ON HISTORICAL HARMS, NARRATIVE, AND VALUES

From the beginning the Task Force had to **examine** and **decide** the central values and process that guide the work and recommendations. Especially in line with what education means using The Furman Advantage model, it would be important that reflection was integrated throughout the process. A publicly-accessible online forum was set up to allow Task Force members to dialogue about what they were finding, rather than just doing the historical work alone. The face-to-face and digital conversations allowed Task Force members to share their perceptions and hunches about each new finding.

Events on campus also became a space for reflection. By planning an early-November speaker series in the fall, along with panel discussions and public lectures in the spring, the "Seeking Abraham" project provided students and faculty a chance to take in the information as the Task Force was hearing it or finding it, giving us all time to examine the information for ourselves and decide from our individual conscience what was right or wrong, either about others in the past or within ourselves in the present.

One thing that was abundantly clear to us was an examination and decision gap along racial lines. Many white students, for instance, have never engaged in activism regarding race and have only "needed" African-American history when it appeared on an Advanced Placement (AP) exam. While nearly 65 percent of African-American students initially thought this work was important, only 37 percent of white students agreed. Black history was deemed "sad" and as something avoided, so that diversity or progress could be achieved in a post-racial future. Still, overall, 80 percent of students found the work important, either highly or moderately so.



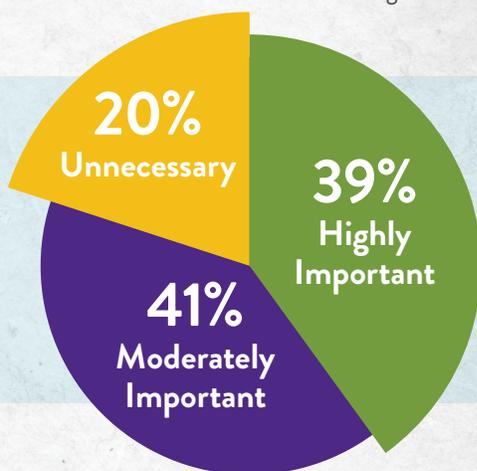
University Archivist Jeffrey Makala shows Felicia Furman her ancestors' letters in the archive.

So we were aware going in that for 20 percent of our student body, significant learning would be difficult. Still, we would try to make the case that unease or discomfort shows that there is history waiting to be uncovered, that tells a richer, deeper, more complex, but more spiritually rewarding, story.

And further, we needed to supplement the discovery of historical harms with exploration of the broader story of history. Abraham, although enslaved, was a man who lived into his old age beyond slavery, sent his children to school, learned to read and write, and whose tombstone lies in an African-American community of Brutontown—a community where Furman students volunteer to this day. Clark Murphy, although a leased slave, was respected for his ingenuity and beloved at the Greenville Woman’s College.

## Q2 Do you think it’s important to study, know, and make public the university’s past in relation to discomfoting subjects like slavery?

Results showing students’ initial attitudes on the project, on which future examination and decision can be based. (n=462)



Students take a moment of reflection after clearing brush out of a portion of Brutontown Cemetery, where Abraham Sims is buried, on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.



Painting of the Davis Plantation (Monticello, near Winnsboro, S.C.) that hangs in Cherrydale Alumni House.

Flattening the history of slavery or its legacies to be “uncomfortable” or merely “politically correct” makes the injustices of their own times more powerful and persistent into our own. There is so much life to celebrate, and the only bad decision is that the examination is unwarranted, or that the decisions made were fated by skin color or still are.

To that point, the historical findings in this report make clear that no matter your individual response, it can no longer be said that anybody was just “living in their times.” University founders were agential in the commotion of their times and chose distinctive, outlying paths relative to their peers, moral and immoral.

Another persistent myth of Furman historians was that all decisions were grounded in the university’s poverty—that campus moves, for example, were based solely in economic motives to “stay solvent.” While it’s true that funding was unstable, the first university president could marry into a wealthy plantation. A slave owner (South Carolina Baptist Convention president and future James C. Furman father-in-law, Jonathan Davis) could build an entire campus in Winnsboro almost entirely from his immense wealth, and then the decision could be made to move to Greenville primarily due to the uncomfortable number of black people living in Winnsboro, according to the writings of Furman President William McGlothlin. In other words, much of Furman’s history of movement and fundraising was racially-motivated, and nearly half of its antebellum wealth derived from slave labor—wealth that continues to build capacity for exploration and decision-making today.

### 3. “I HEAR YOU,” GRACE & DIALOGUE

Once we’ve come to some initial positions, we have to connect and refine. For the Task Force, this meant huddling around the table upstairs in the Library for over two hours each week of the summer to deliberate and choose our recommendations to the university.

In a broader sense, several things have to happen to make meaningful dialogue possible. First is that the space for exchange has to be made equal. It is impossible to have an honest dialogue if one group feels privileged over another. Black alumni frequently reported impostor syndrome in the oral histories. Although interactions were positive, they were made to feel they should just appreciate the opportunity of being among the majority white campus . . . as a guest, rather than belonging. That power dynamic makes genuine engagement nearly impossible. We have to think about space, access, and the campus landscape if we even want to have genuine dialogue.

Secondly, we have to think about the norms for how we go about talking. It can be meaningful just to talk about differences of experience, but we also usually need to discuss some shared art, artifact, or problem if the dialogue is to produce lasting change. In other words, we can validate one another’s feelings, but “reconciliation” can be weak if it only means resolving to be tolerant or merely “ok” with others. It may work in contexts of recent brutality or war crimes, but the Task Force has instead chosen “reckoning,” because it conveys an accounting for intergenerational injustices.

This poses questions for us that are the core of it. First, how do we identify shared values? Second, how do we reckon with difference, assuming shared needs or goals? Third how we reckon with different interpretations or explanations of the same exact news headline, piece of art, historical finding, or other meaningful, humanistic act? And fourth, how do we usefully deploy justice (typically meaning fairness and reciprocity) to judge one to be “right” or more “accurate,” based on the process of reckoning that came before?

Lastly, we approach these steps with grace: that individual conscience enriches us, making forgiveness and redemption possible. A telling moment happened near the end of this year-long process. Somebody outside the task force, steeped in university history, disagreed with a potential recommendation because of a lack of commitment to this process. The best response, on behalf of the Task Force, was just to say “I hear you,” and let that communicative gap be marked. The goal is not to immediately convert anybody’s viewpoint. Rather, we incentivize the journey of reflection and dialogue on our own time.

Although Richard Furman was wrong on the justness of slavery, his namesake can still be meaningful in regard to concepts of individual conscience and grace. Unlike his son, James C. Furman, who promoted racial interests with scare tactics that short-circuited reason and reflection, Richard offered his voice with humility. He led early Americans and Baptists with the idea of loose coordination and convening around shared goals, allowing a plurality of interpretations and efforts. Grace and charity toward difference and difference of judgment will always be the hallmark of a liberal education.



*Task Force members talk with black community leaders in the former Cherrydale House while hosting Rhondda Thomas, Clemson University.*



*Bill Leonard gives a frank lecture on Baptist theological support for slavery, and the continued practices that prevent the creation of a beloved community.*

## 4. REPAIR AS SYMBOLIC ACTION



*Chelsea McKelvey introduces an alumna speaker.*

And now it comes to our present moment on publication: July 28, 2018, the moment when we synthesize and initiate. This report is “symbolic,” in that it is “just words” and alone could never deliver full justice. But on the other hand, it is “action,” in that it calls something new and meaningful into existence and comes as a synthesis of multiple, participatory voices seeking justice. This is really the purpose of a university—to take mere ideas and words and create a process that formalizes them into a reality of new knowledge shared by multiple individuals and fields.

The most difficult part will likely not be initiating anything in particular, but instead synthesizing it into existing programs and rituals and then keeping them going for decades to come. In this way, the changes in the built landscape and endowment finances are important, as some of those set us on a pathway that is almost impossible to reverse. It will be impossible to see campus without this new layer of history added, if our recommendations are accepted. It will be impossible to look at the university’s finances without seeing the school’s priorities showcased. Throughout, we have been sensitive to the budget: serving the Task Force as an addition to our existing university roles and finding the least costly solution to create enduring impact.

Then in terms of educational programming and community engagement, it is up to us in the Furman community to see it through and live it, year after year. New, enjoyable rituals become important for these, so that taking part constitutes our identity—“We Are Furman” when we do them.

Every part of the organization can create the accountability for difficult action to get done, by creating the supportive environment that makes them possible. Thus, we hope offices around campus will be willing to enter into agreements that hold them accountable.

We hope this report offers the opportunity for a new beginning of many sorts, not least of which is a new foundation for shared history, exploration, and dialogue regarding who and what matters to Furman. Our recommendations show what we find it will take, minimally, for justice to take root in every person that intersects with the university.

Justice takes years, as each person takes on this process along their own pathway to instigate and sustain action. We have merely planted a seed for a kind of intergenerational justice that our current systems do not allow for.



# THE HISTORY

*Stephen O'Neill is a professor of history at Furman who studies South Carolina and the American South. He co-chaired Furman's 50th anniversary commemoration of its desegregation. This history on Furman and slavery was completed with the research help of Furman students Marian Baker '17, Andy Teye '19, Laura Bloodworth '18, and Yilan Luo '18.*

## **"FOR THE GENERAL GOOD OF THE CHURCHES": FURMAN UNIVERSITY AND SLAVERY**

The Reverend Richard Furman was the indispensable force in the creation of Furman University in 1826, even though he died a year before the founding of his namesake institution. The university stands as the crowning culmination of Furman's life-long quest to promote Baptist education in South Carolina. Richard Furman was also, during these same years, the most influential voice in justifying slavery on moral and biblical grounds for Baptists and others throughout South Carolina. Furman's defense of slavery and his support for Baptist education were, in turn, means to achieve a larger goal, namely, his life's transcendent mission to save souls, to spread the gospel, and to baptize adults as a symbol of their faith and God's grace. Richard Furman's abiding vision to promote salvation through the Baptist faith links Furman University and slavery. His role as the undisputed leader of Baptists in South Carolina, at a time when both slavery and church membership were growing in the state, and his public support for slavery based on scripture, gave the institution a sanction among Christians that helped to drown out questions on slave-holding that had lingered from the age of the American Revolution.

We know a great deal about Richard Furman's vision for saving souls, including his views on slavery. We know far less about Richard Furman's own slaves or the thousands of enslaved workers who labored, without pay and under coercion, on plantations and farms that funded the university in the decades before the Civil War. The United States Census establishes that nearly all the most important donors, leaders, and professors associated with Furman before the Civil War were slave-holders. Thus, slaves did the work of sustaining Furman University during some of its leanest years financially, not to mention supporting the professors and administrators in their livelihoods as planters and farmers. We also know that slaves supplied some of the physical labor to build the first Greenville campus of Furman University. To sum up, Furman is linked to slavery by the ideology of its founders; it is linked to slaves by their forced labor that, figuratively and literally, built the school and financially supported its founders. Those enslaved workers, in all but a few instances, remain anonymous.

## **EVANGELISM, EDUCATION, AND COTTON**

The ideology that linked Furman University with slavery was shaped primarily by three dynamics that coalesced in the decades before Furman was founded in 1826: 1) evangelism, the goal of spreading the gospel to bring salvation; 2) a mission to unify a divided Baptist denomination in South Carolina; and 3) the inexorable spread of cotton, and with it slavery, across South Carolina beginning in the 1790s. Richard Furman, pastor of Charleston's First Baptist Church from 1787 until his death in 1825, was the animating force behind the first two dynamics, promoting evangelism and healing the rifts among the Baptists. His tireless promotion of Baptist education and his pro-slavery position were two ways he worked to achieve those larger goals of saving souls and unifying the Baptists. And his quest to educate Baptists led directly to the founding of Furman University in 1826, one year after his death. Baptist support of slavery under Furman and the founding of the university sprang from the same well.



Picking Cotton in the Upstate of South Carolina. Greenville County Historical Society.

Furman recognized that his stance on slavery could determine the success or failure of his educational and spiritual efforts. Although he clearly struggled with questions about the morality of slavery, when pressed on the issue in public Furman crafted a strong defense of slavery based on his interpretation of scripture, on what he claimed were the institution's benefits to the enslaved, and on what can only be seen as practical necessities.<sup>1</sup> His defense merged his transcendent evangelical quest to save souls with a calculation of how to win the allegiance, for the Baptists, of a slave and cotton state, a state Furman feared might sooner give up God than slavery.

Furman linked practical means to holy ends most directly in an 1807 letter to a fellow Baptist who asked whether the church's leaders should even take slavery into consideration as a moral issue. Furman responded: "Yes, in a wise, prudent, and becoming manner. Perhaps we can do something *for the general good of the churches* and the benefit of the slaves . . . but it is my opinion that undertaking anything of this kind under the idea of leading to emancipation or representing the holding of Slaves to be a Sin, *would destroy the influence of the [Baptists] in the community at large.*"<sup>2</sup> (emphasis added) In other words, for the Baptists to declare slavery a sin or to support freedom for the enslaved would undermine Furman's life mission to spread the gospel, baptize pilgrims, and save souls. And moreover, for Furman, sure in his faith that baptism and the gospel were the way to everlasting life, slavery became a means by which heathens from tribal Africa could be acquainted with the gospel and, thus, through the grace of God, achieve salvation. For Furman and the South Carolina Baptists he so powerfully influenced, slavery was not something done *to* slaves. It was something done *for* them.

When Furman was ordained, on the eve of the Revolution, in 1774, Baptists in South Carolina were deeply divided. There were multiple fissures, but most ran along a geographic line that divided whites in South Carolina, not just Baptists, into backcountry and lowcountry. The division had cultural, economic, and political roots among all religious groups, but was particularly pronounced among Baptists because it reinforced other divisions. In the backcountry, Baptists identified as Separate or New Light Baptists—"separate" because they had broken with the orthodox congregations in the north before migrating through Virginia and North Carolina into the South Carolina backcountry near the Broad and the Congaree rivers.<sup>3</sup> New Light churches found new ways to preach and worship that challenged the Regular Baptists who predominated in the lowcountry's older, more established, and more conservative churches. Regular Baptists favored officially ordained clergy, educated laity, orthodox worship practices, as well as strict adherence to traditional gender, racial, and class hierarchies. The Regular Baptists in the lowcountry, like the white population

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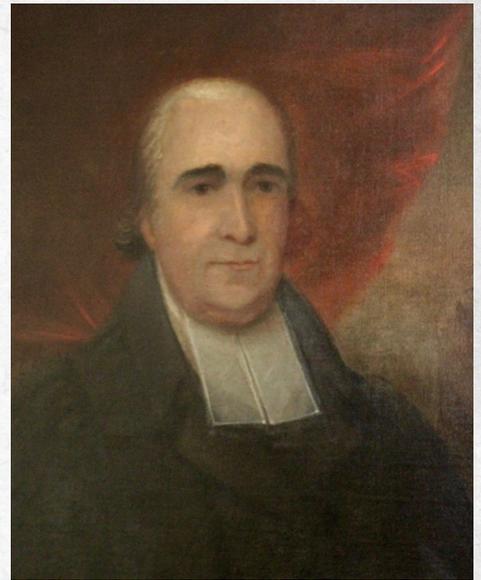
<sup>1</sup>Richard Furman to [unknown correspondent], 29 June 1807, Richard Furman Collection, Furman University Special Collections; Richard Furman, "Exposition of the Views of the Baptists, Relative to the Coloured Population in the United States, Richard Furman Collection, Furman University Special Collections. See also James A. Rogers, *Richard Furman: Life and Legacy* (Macon: Mercer press, 2001), 221..

<sup>2</sup>Richard Furman to [unknown correspondent], 29 June 1807, Richard Furman Collection, Furman University Special Collections.

<sup>3</sup>Floyd Mulkey, "Rev. Richard Mulkey, "Pioneer Baptist Preacher in Upper South Carolina," Southern Historical Association, *Proceedings*, 1945, p. 13; Rachel Klein, *Unification of a Slave State* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1990) 43-44; Joe M. King, *A History of the South Carolina Baptists* (Columbia: R.L. Bryan, 1964) 22,61, 69-70, 83.

generally in that area, strongly favored slavery as befitted a region made rich by rice culture wholly dependent on slavery.<sup>4</sup> The New Lights of the backcountry downplayed education for clergy and congregation alike, and, holding few slaves themselves before the cotton boom of the 1790s, saw slavery as a device that lowcountry aristocrats used to acquire wealth and political power at their expense. The New Lights did not see the need for ordained preachers; they embraced unorthodox worship practices, offering women and freed blacks positions as elders and deacons and allowing them the right to exhort or preach.<sup>5</sup>

By timing and circumstance, Richard Furman seemed destined to bridge the gap between Old Lights and New, between lowcountry and backcountry. In 1755, the year Furman was born in Esopus, New York, his father, Wood Furman, received a colonial land grant of 250 acres on the South Carolina frontier near the Wateree river, in a place called the High Hills of the Santee. Shortly after Wood's family joined him in South Carolina, they moved from the High Hills to Charleston, while keeping possession of the land in the backcountry. For the rest of his seventy years, Richard Furman would keep one foot in Charleston and the other in the High Hills of, what would become, Sumter County, South Carolina. It was in the High Hills, as a 15-year-old, that Richard Furman had his conversion experience under the inspiration of the New Light preacher Joseph Reese, a man Furman referred to thereafter as his "spiritual father."<sup>6</sup> As a newly-ordained minister in 1775, Furman's backcountry connections qualified him to serve as an emissary to a Tory militia camped on the Broad River above Columbia. Sent by revolutionaries in Charleston, his initial mission was unsuccessful, although he continued to recruit backcountry militiamen to the Patriot cause in subsequent years.<sup>7</sup> In 1787, when First Baptist of Charleston, the mother church of Baptists in South Carolina, selected Furman as pastor, his role as unifier began in earnest.



Richard Furman portrait hanging in Cherrydale Alumni House.

For the next thirty-eight years until his death, Furman worked to knit together Baptists in South Carolina, the South, and the nation.<sup>8</sup> In his effort Furman had one important element in his favor: agreement among both factions on evangelism as a primary mission of the church.<sup>9</sup> Furman and Baptists throughout the state recruited black and white; the unchurched, Methodists, and Presbyterian; anyone seeking a new life—and everlasting life—in the Baptist fold. However, on the matter of education, he faced

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<sup>4</sup>Klein, 2, 71, 44-45, 151-153, 277, 296-297; Joe M. King, *A History of the South Carolina Baptists* (Columbia: R.L. Bryan, 1964) 121, 141; see also Peter Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (Knopf: New York, 1974).

<sup>5</sup>Klein, 44-46, 110-113, 271-272. See also a letter from Mary Burn McDonald, Furman's mother-in-law, to Richard Furman. Writing from the Shoals of Ogeechee in the backcountry of Georgia: "Revd Thos (Thomas) Mercer has baptiz'd [baptized] upwards of thirty persons within a short time, most of them young people his place of residence is about 12 miles below that the Oconee on Buffalo [Buffalo] he baptiz'd [baptized] 14 at once there the beginning of last month & smaller numbers from time to time lately, many more appear to be in great distress at both places. Other Churches near there have also had several additions, they allow their women to exhort." Mary Burn McDonald to Richard Furman 14 October 1797, Richard Furman Collection, Furman University Special Collections.

<sup>6</sup>James A. Rogers, *Richard Furman: Life and Legacy* (Macon: Mercer Press, 2001), 18-22.

<sup>7</sup>Richard Furman, "Address on Freedom, a letter from High Hills of Santee explaining the colonists' side and pleading for peace," November 1775, Richard Furman Collection, Furman University Special Collections.

<sup>8</sup>Furman's struggle in bridging the cultural gap between backcountry and upcountry is revealed in a letter he wrote to his sister Sarah Furman Haynsworth in 1788. Haynsworth resided in the backcountry of the High Hills, and Furman had just accepted his position at First Baptist Church of Charleston. He wrote to his sister: "I find by Mr. Hampton's Account, that considerable offence has been taken at the Hills on Account of my dress and Appearance in Charleston as 'It may be, perhaps, that the Lord hath said unto them Curse David;' But this however I can say, my Appearance and Behavior here are accommodated to the prevailing customs, in no higher proportion than they were at the Hills to those prevailing there: It is the opinion and desire of my Friends, that I should appear as the other ministers of the City, in whose company I often have to appear on publick [public] occasions. And I acknowledge it is a principle I have long acted upon that it is proper to conform in a moderate degree, to the prevailing customs in the place where we live; provided the Thing in it self is not sinful; the reason is obvious: as it is the means of avoiding an odious singularity, and of conciliating the minds of Associates to a free and familiar intercourse." Richard Furman to Sarah Haynsworth, 29 October 1788, Richard Furman Collection, Furman University Special Collections.

<sup>9</sup>King, 16-21, 91, 70, 142-143; Rogers, 101-117; Donald C. Matthews, *Religion in the Old South*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 21-28, 34-38, 49-51; John Boles (editor), *Masters and Slaves: Race and Religion in the American South, 1740-1870* (Lexington: University of Kentucky, 1988) 19-57.



Richard Furman's High Hills Baptist Church, where he preached at 16 years of age.

disagreement along the old lines. The newly settled backcountry had practical reasons for downplaying educational requirements for ministers. With few existing schools and little money to start them, the backcountry would be at a great disadvantage if the churches required educated ministers. The lowcountry, with more settled churches and more wealth, favored education for ministers and laity alike, as well as the creation of the organizational structures to support it. Furman remained steadfast in the face of opposition or reluctance to promote education among the Baptists. In 1791, he persuaded churches in the Charleston Association to start an education fund controlled by a body called the General Committee. He had invited churches from the backcountry, organized under the Bethel Association, to participate, but they declined.<sup>10</sup> In a sermon given on the occasion of the establishment of the fund, Furman declared that only education could “furnish a necessary means to that end” of winning souls for Christ.<sup>11</sup> Over the next thirty-four years, Furman worked endlessly to train an educated ministry and to raise money for that purpose in the belief that education was the vital tool for spreading the gospel and saving souls.

In 1814, Richard Furman took another important step toward organizing the Baptists when he convinced church leaders from other states to establish the Baptist Triennial Convention for overseas missions. The national Triennial Convention met in Philadelphia, and like the General Committee in South Carolina, sought to create and fund an evangelical mission of the Baptist Church, but on a worldwide scale. Both demanded cooperation among individual church congregations that had a tradition of fiercely defending their independence. Furman's leadership reflected his success in building cooperation and unity without stifling the autonomy of individual churches. Furman was elected president in each of the first two Triennial Convention meetings, in 1814 and 1817.<sup>12</sup>

Finally, in 1821, Richard Furman took the lead in founding the South Carolina Baptist Convention, which in its initial meeting, under Furman's guidance, committed the denomination to establishing “a seminary of learning” that would evolve into Furman University. The Convention was conceived as a way to expand, to a statewide scope, the educational and evangelical mission first adopted by the Charleston Association's General Committee in 1791. In its inaugural meeting, held in Columbia, the state Convention endorsed the broad goals of the General Committee and drafted a Constitution that specified a number of “grand objects” of the new Convention, including “the promotion of evangelical and useful knowledge, by means of religious education” and “the support of missionary service to the destitute.” While the Convention pledged to “recognize the independence and liberty of the Churches of Christ,” it also adopted as an “object of primary importance” . . . “the organization & support of a seminary of higher learning in this State, for the gratuitous education of indigent pious young men for Gospel ministry.”<sup>13</sup>

Furman's efforts to build organizational infrastructure in order to foster education also paid dividends in terms of uniting old factions among state Baptists. By the late 1790s, the rift between the Separate Baptists and the Regular Baptists had receded. The terms fell out of use after 1800.<sup>14</sup> By that time, another force that helped to unify white South Carolinians, including Baptists and others, was well at work. The invention of the cotton gin in 1793, would, in short order, transform the economy and demography of the state and shift the very ground upon which Baptists and every other South Carolinian walked. The cotton gin extracted seeds from

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<sup>10</sup> W.J. McGlothlin, *Baptist Beginnings in Education: A History of Furman University* (Nashville: Southern Baptist Convention, 1926) 32-34, 41; King, 64-68.

<sup>11</sup> Rogers, 123.

<sup>12</sup> Harvey T. Cook (ed.), *A Biography of Richard Furman* (Greenville, SC: Baptist Courier Job Room, 1913) 29-31; King, 159, 168, 174, 181; Rogers, 157-158, 170-172, 175-180.

<sup>13</sup> King, 173; Rogers, 237-240.

<sup>14</sup> King, 149-150.

# THE STUDENTS

## QUINCY MIX '19 AND SHEKINAH LIGHTENER '20

We're excited for apathy to be replaced by engagement. Not many of our friends in the student body even know the university's namesake, Richard Furman, much less his views on race or how that could affect the university today.

Students are, like most of the nation, profoundly at a loss for how to respond to the tragedies of the last few years. The Charleston Nine Shooting took place at Mother Emanuel AME Church. Almost 200 years prior, our university's namesake condemned that same church as an arm of hostile Northern anti-slavery theology. It was important for us to see President Davis call for the state legislature to remove the Confederate flag, speaking directly against the ideology of white supremacy that bled into the university's founding.

Marian Baker's honest op-ed in *The Paladin* newspaper on October 26, 2016 opened this important conversation of our university's history and its relationship to present race relations. Eighty percent of the student body, a survey showed, think these kinds of conversations about history are important, even if they cannot fully trace the connections.

Now the task remains to get students invested in the past to hear these stories, and to inform and talk in ways that are not off-putting to busy students, most of whom can always say "this doesn't [directly] affect me."

In hosting over a dozen lecture and panel events this past academic year, the Task Force tried. Deeply personal family and civil rights histories (such as those presented by Felicia Furman, Bill Leonard, and Bobby Donaldson) left a

strong, palpable impression. Filmmaker Laura Kissel and Bon Appétit Chief Manager Maisie Ganzler made clear the contemporary injustices tied to human trafficking and labor in the global supply chain—good for students less interested in historical connections. Other programs failed to capture students' attention and reflection, or just drew small numbers by hitting a busy part of the semester. Hardly any student had the time to attend more than two events.



We'll have to see course projects and ongoing traditions for meaningful appreciation of the tireless work that ensured the survival and eventual prosperity of this institution. When the university can commit to objective historical scholarship, data collection, and open-minded dialogue that respects the concerns and questions of students, we see a real possibility of engagement. We're not there yet, but this report and its recommendations should be key.



*"Being a black student leader at Furman I always assumed there was a dark historical past, ignored and forgotten. This Task Force delivered truth for me, and can now do so for the rest of the Furman community. It is time for collective, reparative action."*  
—Shekinah Lightener



*"Volunteering with a human trafficking relief organization brought modern-day sex and labor slavery to the forefront for me. I want to see the university put resources toward programming that continues to make this visible as a major global problem."*  
—Quincy Mix

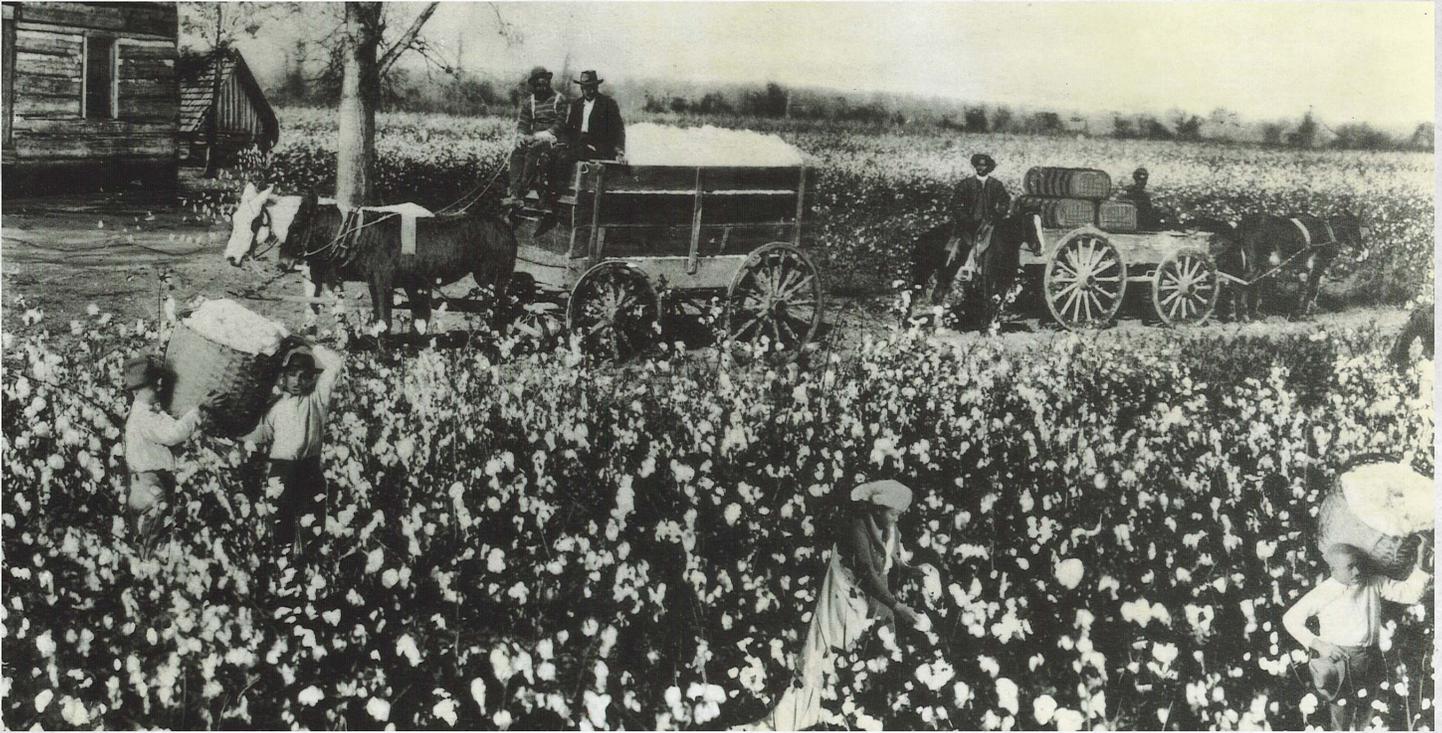


Figure 1. Upcountry Slavery. Greenville County Historical Society.

short-staple cotton mechanically and profitably. Short-staple cotton is a hearty variety that could be cultivated almost everywhere in southern states. The cotton gin made short-staple cotton and slavery profitable at a time when, otherwise, slavery might have remained somewhat isolated to the lowcountry rice lands and the Chesapeake tobacco country. In South Carolina, between 1795 and 1820, at the very height of Richard Furman's influence and ministry, cotton like a great white wave flooded through the Midlands into the Upstate—and with it, slavery. The implications for South Carolina history and southern history were immense. In 1790 South Carolina exported 9,840 pounds of cotton, long-staple variety grown on the Sea Islands; in 1800 the state exported 6,425,000 pounds. By 1810, the figure had jumped to 50 million pounds.<sup>15</sup> South Carolina was not alone in experiencing the cotton revolution. The South, as a whole, made a recommitment to slavery just as the Old Southwest of Alabama and Mississippi were being opened to white settlement.

Baptist congregants in South Carolina participated fully in the cotton revolution of 1793 to 1810. Yet even as Baptists bought slaves and grew cotton, with no official statewide synod or ruling body during this time before the founding of South Carolina Baptist Convention, there could be no official Baptist stance or policy on slavery. Some backcountry Baptist preachers in the state had spoken against slavery, and in 1799 one backcountry church, Cedar Spring, had referred a question to its association of “whether or not it is agreeable to the gospel to hold negroes in Slavery.”<sup>16</sup> And, indeed, New Light Baptists in Virginia and Kentucky had condemned slavery, while Methodists in South Carolina had also professed opposition.<sup>17</sup> Now, after 1800, with slavery spreading rapidly into the midlands and beyond the fall line of South Carolina, Baptists in the state longed for clarification on matters of faith and slavery. They inevitably looked to Richard Furman: as president of the Charleston Association and pastor of the already-historic First Baptist Church of Charleston, as well as the founder and only president of the General Committee for Education, he was the person who had done the most to organize and unify the church.

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<sup>15</sup> Walter Edgar, *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia: USC Press, 1998) 271; Klein, 247.

<sup>16</sup> Joe M. King, *A History of the South Carolina Baptists* (Columbia: R.L. Bryan, 1964) 127. See also H. Shelton Smith, *In His Image . . . Racism and Southern Religion, 1780-1910* (Durham: Duke, 1972) 47-55.

<sup>17</sup> Smith, 47-54 and Lacy K. Ford, *Deliver Us from Evil: The Slavery Question in the Old South* (New York: Oxford, 2009) 155-156.

# THE MONEY

ANDY TEYE '19 AND BRANDON INABINET (COMMUNICATION STUDIES)

We were the first to dig into the numbers at stake in the archival materials and consult faculty in the economics department about what we were finding. Although what we have to say will repeat some of the numbers found in the O'Neill history, we hope to humanize the dollar amounts by turning to the lives of the enslaved in this specific region.

The first finding was that between 1852 and 1853, payments of fifty cents a day (for attending to classrooms) as well as for \$31.15 over a 10-day period (for mixing mortar) were given to black men for doing hard labor. In the ledgers these men are referred to as “[white Greenville resident]’s boy,” and the university paid by the hour or the day for use of them. Not only were they getting paid a lower wage from the start (which is remarked about in the ledgers—the need to hire “Negroes” to save money on construction), but because of the possessive and diminutive title, even those meager wages probably landed in a slaveholder’s or landlord’s pocket.

In terms of the economic value of enslaved persons, the numbers come to us by way of a student journal of Belton Oscar Mauldin, from 1860 (microfilm, Special Collections). More importantly, the journal even indicates the participation of Furman’s own faculty. Furman faculty member and founder of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, James P. Boyce bought a person for \$4000 (\$114,100 today), although the journal expresses that “everybody” thought he overpaid. Twenty-four children, separated from their families, were also part of the auction, and ranged from 2 to 12 years old. They averaged \$1067

(\$30,436). It sickens the stomach to read the journal today. Notes like these are written right beside the student’s comments on the meals that day, the classes he attended, and church sermon he heard. In other words, practices like these were completely normalized as routine economic transactions, similar to how we might talk of filling up a tank of gas today.

Even though Greenville had a white population of only 1300 (half the size of our student body), an agricultural article published in the *Southern Patriot* newspaper (January 22, 1852) reported that enslaved persons in the Greenville area were worth approximately \$700,000 collectively (or \$22 million today). James C. Furman’s own slave holdings in Winnsboro (mostly gained through his marriage), when he moved to Greenville in 1850-1851, were 56 in number, meaning that he would have owned 1 in 5 of the enslaved persons in Greenville at the time, had he brought the entire plantation with him. He did not, but the sale of his enslaved alone could have totaled \$1.4 million in today’s money (\$850 [upcountry slave sale average] x 56 x \$29.54 [inflation] = \$1,406,104), which explains how he financed the building of the Cherrydale House.

So when we look at the beautiful downtown “Old Main” campus and Bell Tower replica today (for which James C. Furman needed to raise \$200,000 for endowment [\$5.74 million today]), or James C. Furman’s Cherrydale, it becomes clear how the those enslaved persons played the major role in making the university possible.



*I grew up poor and white in rural South Carolina, in a majority black area and with frequent talk about Sherman burning every house and every record to the ground. I’m ready for a new era in race relations, one where we stop focusing on the Lost Cause story and start focusing on the intergenerational devaluing process of slavery.*  
—Brandon Inabinet



*Coming from Ghana, where many of my ancestors were robbed to provide South Carolina’s enslaved population, I probably have a different vantage point. I was not only seeking Abraham, but also my ancestors’ stories once colonial forces unloaded them on the other side of the Atlantic.* —Andy Teye

## RICHARD FURMAN'S JUSTIFICATION OF SLAVERY

Richard Furman's answers to questions about slavery and indeed his most fully developed views on slavery are presented in two documents, one written in 1807 as a response to a critic at the annual meeting of the Charleston Baptist Association and the other a public letter, or exposition, on behalf of South Carolina Baptists to the governor in the aftermath the Denmark Vesey slave conspiracy of 1822.

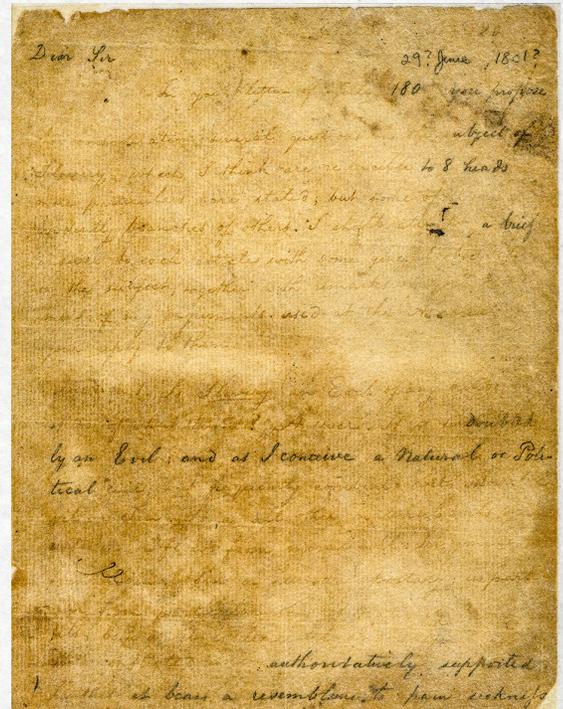
Several premises remain consistent in both statements:

- When Richard Furman defended slavery, he defended an idealized version of slavery, with mutual obligations that had to be met if slavery was to be lifted to a moral standard.
- Furman's mission of spreading salvation through the gospel included slaves. (Furman's letters indicate that he baptized more blacks than whites in his lifetime.) Thus, for Furman, freedom for slaves was about the next life, not this one.
- Furman believed slavery contained the potential for evil among both slaves and masters, but proper Christianity could redeem both master and slave.
- His vision, again an idealized one, would merge a slave-based economy in the South with a Christian community.
- Furman envisioned a family with master as guardian and father, and slaves as obedient children.
- Furman defended the right of slaves to learn to read, as a means to share the gospel and foster their religious growth.

In the 1807 letter,<sup>18</sup> Furman summarized his adversary's criticisms at the Charleston Baptist Association Meeting into a series of questions that he posed and then answered. I am paraphrasing except where there are quotation marks.

### *Is slavery an evil?*

**Answer:** Yes, but we must distinguish different types of evils. I conceive of it as a "Natural or Political Evil and frequently combined with a Moral Evil." Natural evils are those evils inflicted "immediately by the hand of God" without human agency and "bear resemblance to pain, sickness, or death." This seems to be a punishment for sin as "God may appoint Sinners to be slaves in a manner perfectly consistent with his justice." Political evils are those inflicted by human agency sometimes unrighteously but other times in a righteous manner. Slavery as a moral evil is always unrighteous and happens when masters are cruel toward slaves, but also when slaves show "disobedience, discontent, Sloth." But we must draw "a line of distinction between holding slaves and exercising cruelty towards them. The one appears lawful, the other cannot be so." In the end, slavery "is not a sin, or a Moral Evil. For God never did and never will authorize men to commit Sin."



Richard Furman's 1807 letter, the most significant finding of this historical report.

### *"Is it consistent with the American Revolution?"*

**Answer:** You might ask a politician or philosopher with better results, but slavery appears inconsistent with one article of the Declaration of Independence. On the other hand, "it must be that the article was meant in a restricted sense. For it cannot be conceived that they [sic] were designed to declare that children, idiots, or criminals should enjoy equal privileges of society with the rest of the community."

<sup>18</sup>Richard Furman to [unknown correspondent], 29 June 1807, Richard Furman Collection, Furman University Special Collections.

# THE PEOPLE: BRISBANE

LLOYD BENSON (HISTORY) AND FORREST STUART (FINANCIAL AID)

Surprisingly, those in South Carolina calling for the abolition of slavery outnumbered those arguing a proslavery position. We were impressed to find so many voices of dissent so close to Richard and James C. Furman and the origins of the university.

The 1822 conspiracy associated with Denmark Vesey, grounded in a struggle for religious autonomy as well as emancipation, was Charleston's most significant antislavery resistance effort. After Vesey's trial and conviction, he was visited by Richard Furman and two other white religious leaders. Vesey refused their call to repentance, dying as he lived, in protest against Furman's proslavery mission.

Future abolitionist David Walker was in Charleston during Vesey's ordeal. Relocating to Boston, his seminal 1829 abolitionist work *Walker's Appeal... to the Coloured Citizens of the World* fused a biblically-grounded prophetic antislavery with pride in African-Americans' role in building America and a call for 1776-style manly resistance against slavery. Walker's efforts, deeply shaped by his Charleston experiences, would catalyze the abolition movement's shift from gradualism to immediatism.

Born into a distinguished South Carolina slaveholding family, Sarah Grimké (1792-1873) and Angelina Grimké Weld (1805-1879) would become leading figures in the abolitionist and women's rights movement. As Sarah Grimké recollected, "I left my native state on account of slavery, and deserted the home of my fathers to escape the sound of the lash and the shrieks of tortured victims." Angelina Grimké's 1836 *Appeal to the Christian Women of the South* was a careful refutation of the biblical defense of slavery that was highly influential for the abolitionist movement.

Perhaps nobody in the Furman context moved so dramatically from defending to condemning slavery than did William Henry Brisbane (1806-1878). A classmate of James C. Furman's at Furman Academy, the young Brisbane never questioned slavery early in life, despite a chance reading of an abolition pamphlet in 1833 that caused twinges of conscience. Appointed editor of *The Southern Baptist and General Intelligencer* in 1835, Brisbane scourged slavery's religious critics. Conversion came refuting nationally-prominent Baptist educator Francis Wayland's "Personal Liberty" essay. Brisbane fell short. Wayland's arguments neutralized his zealotry. Arrested twice and threatened by a mob for his emerging antislavery views, in 1838 Brisbane sold his enslaved people to family members and sought refuge in Cincinnati, Ohio. His first publication, the "Speech of the Rev. Wm. H. Brisbane, Lately a Slaveholder in South Carolina: Containing an Account of the Change in his Views," (1840) was widely circulated in abolition newspapers, and his *Slaveholding Examined in the Light of the Holy Bible* (1847) became one of the movement's most influential texts. Brisbane offered a classic biblical refutation of slavery. Even more revealing was his litany of personal stories comparing the cruelty of the slaveholders he had known in South Carolina with their high social standing. For Brisbane, practice as well as theory showed slavery's inconsistency with Christian doctrine.

These five Carolinians show that Richard and James C. Furman could never take for granted that their own views were consensus. Both were well aware that many people in their own communities found slavery repugnant. Their efforts for Baptist education and the mission to the slaves have been understood in that context.



*In financial aid we always want to reduce financial barriers to attending, experiencing, and graduating from Furman. This historical context adds an important layer to understanding Furman's responsibility to its constituents and the drivers of need-based scholarship.*  
—Forrest Stuart



*As the resident antebellum historian at Furman, this process has taken some of my first "digital humanities" work in posting searchable texts of the Furmans' main proslavery arguments into great scholarship and powerful reckoning. I am proud of the university for doing what is right by the past I study every day.* —Lloyd Benson

### **What is the duty of Christians toward their slaves with regard to clothing, labor, and religion?**

**Answer:** To give them what is just and equal. “Where justice, humanity, benevolence are exercised by the masters within regard to Religion; and where slaves pursue or possess correspondent dispositions, pursue correspondent conduct, masters may become guardians and benefactors of the slaves. The slaves may enjoy as much satisfaction as if they were free, in many instances more, and be really happier than many who are accounted so. . .”

### **What is the duty of Christians in respect to the slave trade?**

**Answer:** Well, it is going to end here in a year. (Furman is referring to the provision in the United States Constitution that the nation must end its participation in the international slave trade by 1808.) “Let those who think they cannot give any encouragement to it by purchasing slaves” under the idea that it is a sin, leave others to their own conscience. Besides if slaves brought to the United States were not purchased by Christians, the slaves would fall into less benevolent hands.

### **Is it a sin, which churches should regard, for masters to rend asunder husbands and wives, parents and children?**

**Answer:** Yes, to do so “in wanton manner, or when there is not some urgent necessity;” or “when the children are very young.”

### **“Should our (Baptist) Association take slavery and the treatment of slaves into consideration?”**

**Answer:** Yes, “in a wise, prudent, and becoming manner. Perhaps we can do something for the general good of the churches and the benefit of the slaves . . . but it is my opinion that undertaking anything of this kind under the idea of leading to emancipation or representing the holding of Slaves to be a Sin, would destroy the influence of the Association in the community at large, expose it to censure, tend to civil commotion and insurrection, and be the means of rendering the condition of slaves more unhappy than at present both in what appears their religious privileges and bodily circumstances.”

In 1823, Richard Furman submitted a letter to South Carolina’s new governor, John Lyde Wilson, on behalf of the South Carolina Baptist Convention, formed just two years earlier. Presented as an “Exposition of the Views of the Baptists” on “the Coloured Population,” the ostensible purpose of the document was to request the governor proclaim an official Day of Public Humiliation and Thanksgiving for divine intercession in sparing the state from the dangers of a recent hurricane and the Denmark Vesey slave conspiracy. The Vesey conspiracy was an alleged plot by slaves in and around Charleston to seize arms and rally a massive uprising of blacks against whites. In the aftermath of the alleged conspiracy, the specter of a race war and a bloodbath gripped whites throughout the summer of 1822 and into 1823. The trial of Vesey, a free person of color, and 101 other defendants revealed a religious connection among the conspirators. Testimony alleged that the insurrectionists had met in a church and that scripture had been employed to inspire the rebels.<sup>19</sup> These details shaped Furman’s underlying motives in writing the letter and in making it public. He intended to assure the government and the population of South Carolina that the state’s Baptists stood foursquare behind slavery and to argue against those who, in the wake of the Vesey affair, demanded tighter control of slaves by the government and their masters, for some, to include proscriptions against the religious instruction of slaves.<sup>20</sup> Thus, Furman is both mounting a stout defense of slavery while also making an earnest plea to protect his Christian mission to the slaves.

The text below paraphrases, point-by-point, and quotes where appropriate Richard Furman’s assertions in the “Exposition of the Views of the Baptists, Relative to the Coloured Population in the United States.”<sup>21</sup>

• I write here on behalf of the South Carolina Baptists Convention regarding our request for a Day of Public Humiliation and Thanksgiving in response to divine protection from the recent hurricane and the Vesey insurrection; and with a “further communication . . . on the lawfulness of holding slaves—the subject being considered in a moral and religious point of view.”

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<sup>19</sup> Douglas R. Egerton, *He Shall Go Out Free: The lives of Denmark Vesey* (Lanham, MD: Rowan Littlefield, 2004) 100-125.

<sup>20</sup> Ford, 154-157.

<sup>21</sup> Richard Furman, “Exposition of the Views of the Baptists, Relative to the Coloured Population in the United States,” Richard Furman Collection, Furman University Special Collections.

# THE ALUMNI

## JONATHAN KUBAKUNDIMANA '16 AND COURTNEY THOMAS '15

Want to come back for Homecoming? On top of all the usual factors that make that decision hard, in the chaos of life, add to it that you are literally walking back to the plantation house on the hill over campus, or if you're a black male, you'll probably still be asked, "What sport did you play at Furman?"

If we want to talk about a "discomforting past," we need to also speak about the "discomforting present."

Most persons of color, including ourselves, have a good experience at Furman. We loved our faculty, as well as our active involvement in the growth of student diversity & inclusion initiatives. We graduated representing not just ourselves as individuals (as most white students do), but also as a kind of 'delegate' of our race, of our ancestors dreams, and of a global effort to create racial equality. The pressure is high to succeed.

This Task Force effort also gives us further hope. Rather than continuing to talk about a love of diversity and inclusion in the abstract, Furman has committed itself to the restorative power of truth-telling with this report. It has to go even further. Black alumni, given the reticence to return and give back as described above, need additional networking and trust pledged from the university. We also need to hold the university accountable on features of this report—the switch from an 'athletic-based' minority recruitment strategy to a need-based minority recruitment strategy, changing the campus landscape, hiring non-white faculty, and making the history accessible will be especially important.

The other half is honest listening. Furman has launched oral history projects to hear from alumni, staff, and community members about their experience of race at Furman. Just a few anecdotes from their experiences at Furman over last few decades prove the issues remaining:

- A framed image of "Mighty White Man," the horse *Sir Paladin* rode on the field in the 1960s, hung in the athletic complex. When reported to the Athletic Director, the AD pretended the image didn't exist and had it removed before the student could access the building again. Avoiding an apology or honest dialogue in favor of "good PR" is a frequently reported experience.



*As a survivor of the Rwandan genocide, I shared my story with campus and brought that struggle for humanity and justice to Furman. Furman seemed to appreciate what I did when I was there, as I excelled in the classroom and the university promoted my work. It then canceled the scholarship program for international students like me to attend in the future. I want to stay connected so decisions like that do not happen again. —Jonathan Kubakundimana*

- A student has to drive 30 miles across the Upstate, just to find sisterhood in a sorority with persons of color. The university fails to make a dramatic adjustment, like suspending *de facto* segregated student groups, because of alumni relations and donors. Feeling disempowered against wealthy alumni, who do not fully understand the issue or think taking action is mere "political correctness," is a frequent concern.

- Almost all schools had canceled classes and games on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, except Furman and one other southern school, whose home districts did not recognize the holiday. Forcing black players to play on that day, the athletes asked to at least wear black armbands and socks in honor of Dr. King. The coach responded that players will be suspended for doing so. Black student athletes continue to be the victim of excess exploitation, with the sense that "they should just be proud they get to attend Furman," rather than the honor going the other way.

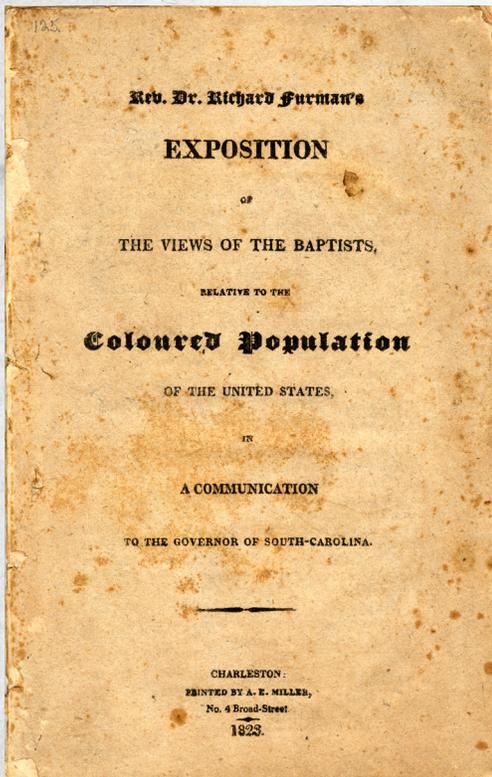
- Students of color who wanted to see archival materials related to slavery or discrimination were made to feel they could only talk about it with professional white historians who would decipher it for them. As one student put it, when he asked to see what the Furman founders had said about slavery, there was no book or source that could be provided; and then the archivist dissuaded the students from using primary materials because, they'd need to "wear gloves, appropriate clothing, and basically the whole surgical get-up," as one alumnus called it. As another alumnus put it, paraphrasing, "I didn't know Furman's history, but I knew that I didn't want to know it, because I knew there was somebody out there who didn't want me to know it."

Furman is not unusual in any of these respects. Every college in the US would have the same stories. And over and over again, students remarked on the positive experience for themselves personally. Furman will have to work hard to provide equity and access to ensure it is not just individuals overcoming the continued racial divides, but instead that Furman can say confidently that is a good community for persons of color—black student, faculty, and staff included. This report feels like it could be a major reset button after almost 200 years of history. What comes next defines our relationship with the institution for the rest of our lives.<sup>22</sup>



*As a student of politics from Columbia, South Carolina, and former Admissions staff member, I know the uphill battle Furman is undertaking in recruiting from poorly funded, poor-performing public schools. They are right in Furman's backyard. Furman and other South Carolina Independent Colleges & Universities (SCICU) need to leverage the history in this report to argue "enough is enough." Higher education cannot flourish here until the state creates more educational equity. —Courtney Thomas*

<sup>22</sup>We especially appreciate the participation in the oral history project by alumni Jason Grant '93, Latoya Mitchell Hodges '04, Paige Jones, III '01, and Shawn Reid '88.



The "Exposition" Letter that provided the major scriptural support of slavery in the state. Furman University Special Collections and Archives.

- Some opposed a public response because they said it might inspire a similar effort or be taken as a sign of weakness on the part of the white population, I say, no, silence and omission would send a worse message.

- Those slaves who wish us ill, should remember that they may outnumber us here but not as a whole in the United States; and if there were to be a race war, even the emancipationists would support law and order. Thus, any "attempt to raise an insurrection . . . must finally result in the discomfiture and ruin of the perpetrators: and in many instances pull down on the heads of the innocent as well as the guilty, an undistinguishing ruin."

- I speak for the state Baptist Convention on the matter of slavery as a religious and moral concern. Others have used religion and morality to attack slavery and in the process directly stir-up insubordination. But indirectly the results of linking scripture and Christianity to insubordination has prompted masters to deprive slaves of the right to worship.

- Let me say on behalf of the Convention: "the right of holding slaves is clearly established by the Holy Scriptures, both by precept and example." In the Old Testament, "the Israelites were directed to purchase their bond-men and bond-maids of the Heathen nations; except they were of the Canaanites, for these were to be destroyed." (Leviticus 25: 44-46).

- In the New Testament, during the Apostolic era, Greek and Roman lands "were full of slaves." And both masters and slaves were converted to Christianity "under the ministry of the inspired Apostles." Masters were never instructed to free their slaves. Paul writes to Timothy mentioning the obligations of Christian slaves and Christian masters to one another but does not include emancipation.

- "Had the holding of slaves been a moral evil, it cannot be supposed, that the inspired Apostles, who feared not the faces of men, and were ready to lay down their lives in the cause of their God, would have tolerated it for a moment, in the Christian Church."

- "In proving this subject justifiable by Scriptural authority, its morality is also proved; for Divine law never sanctions immoral actions."

- Nor does the "Christian golden rule, of doing to others, as we would they should do to us," apply. That rule does not hold up against "that order of things which the Divine government has established." Rather, the golden rule must be applied with "due regard to justice, propriety, and the general good."

- Just because a debtor desires to be forgiven of his debts, does not obligate the creditor to do so. An unequal relationship is not necessarily unjust. Rather the relationship may be unequal and still reflect justice and humanity. Should a father "obey the orders of his son?"

- Emancipationists "blend the ideas of injustice and cruelty" with the mere existence of slavery "and consider them as inseparable. But surely they may be separated. A bond-servant may be treated with justice and humanity as a servant; and a master may, in an important sense, be the guardian and even the father of his slaves. They become part of his family, (the whole, forming under him a little community) and the care of ordering it and providing for its welfare, devolves on him." The master assures the care of the infirm and able-bodied alike. The master assumes the social welfare responsibilities that the state incurs in other societies.

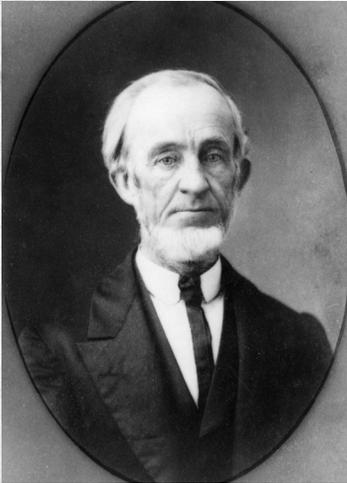
- “Africans brought to America were slaves by their own consent before they came from their own country, or fell into the hands of white men.” Slaves have assented indirectly to their own enslavement through their petty wars in Africa, through their efforts to enslave others among their enemies, “and by the indulgence of barbarous principles.”
- We as slave masters and Christians can do better in terms of uplift and Christian mission for slaves. It is true that “much cruelty has been practiced in the slave trade.” We have failed in some of our practices but that does not make slavery as an institution a moral evil or unchristian any more than the exercise of parental authority or dominion of husbands over wives. There will be divine retribution for those who abuse authority and act with cruelty.
- Whether the slave trade is “censurable” today does not diminish the pious and human motives that “brought into operation” the original efforts to purchase slaves. That fact is supported by scriptural sanction I have described, the justifications for obtaining slaves from Africa I have described, and the saving of human life resulting from the trade. The slaves, themselves, admit that their lives are better than other poor classes or than they would have been if they had remained in Africa.
- If it is true that slaves’ lives have been improved mentally and religiously by coming here from Africa, and if they have obtained salvation, “as many of themselves have joyfully and thankfully confessed, then may the just master and humane master, who rules and provides for his slaves, according to Christian principles, rest satisfied” that he is not “chargeable with a moral evil, nor acting, in this respect, contrary to the genius of Christianity.”
- It is equally clear that those who advocate emancipation based on Christianity need to be careful that they do not “by a perversion of Scriptural doctrine” setback the religious growth of slaves, and “produce sense of anarchy and blood,” all in the interest of achieving a state for the slaves that will not be any better than their present state, that is if northern free blacks are any indication.
- Some men, “respectable for intelligence and morals, sometimes say, that holding slaves is indeed indefensible, but that to us it is necessary, and must be supported,” in other words, they deem it a necessary evil. Would they say that “theft, falsehood, adultery, and murder” are necessary and must be supported? This argument is plausible but wrong for all the reasons I have presented here.
- We believe that Christianity begets generosity, benevolence, and blessings; however, true benevolence looks out for the best interests of its objects. And “[w]hile men remain in the chains of ignorance and error, and under the dominion of tyrant lusts and passions, they cannot be free.” Thus, emancipation of slaves, at present “would not be for their own happiness as a body; while it would be extremely injurious to the community at large in various ways.”
- Moreover, true benevolence and generosity must be “free and voluntary; no man has the right to compel another to the performance of them.” Would it be generous to force a creditor to release his debtor?
- However, if one day Africans become “qualified to enjoy freedom” and can obtain it in a way consistent with the peace of the community, “the Convention would be happy seeing them free,” just as we would like to see the poor and oppressed of every land free and happy; but that is unlikely. Men are “sinful creatures” in a “state of probation,” and God “disposes of them as he pleases,” bestowing blessings but also privation and trials with the intention to make afflictions and blessings work for their good if they embrace salvation and submit to God’s will.
- Now to an important point for the religious and for the citizens at large: “This is the religious interests of Negroes. For though they are slaves, they are also men . . . having immortal souls,” and destined for a religious reward. Their religious interest “is indispensable.” We cannot be indifferent to this. Many individual masters and denominations conscientiously regard this duty, but many neglect it.

- The Convention is unhappy that some people use the Bible to support emancipation. This makes servants insubordinate. Both those who believe this errant teaching and those who fear it, see its effect. We see the error inherent in the doctrine. Proper acquaintance with the Bible promotes “fear and love of God,” peace toward men, public security, and domestic peace in the State.
- It is pleasing to know that very few of the conspirators in the failed Vesey insurrection were members of regular churches. Those found guilty and executed claimed religious character yet were “grossly immoral” and “members of an irregular body which called itself the *African Church*” (the African Methodist Episcopal Church), and they were in contact with northern emancipationists.

In concluding his exposition, Richard Furman reiterates several points:

1. Slavery is justifiable according to the Bible and therefore consistent with Christianity, “in sentiment and conduct.”
2. Slavery in the United States and the slave trade that supplied it are also justified, though there has been much cruelty in the slave trade and toward slaves once they were here, but it is the perpetrators of this cruelty who are accountable for that.
3. Proper slavery, tempered with humanity and justice, is “a state of tolerable happiness,” equal or superior to what the poor, who are reputedly free, experience in other countries.
4. A “master has a scriptural right to govern his slaves . . . in subjection,” to demand reasonable services, and “correct them for neglect of duty, for their vices and transgressions.”
5. Masters do not have a moral or scriptural right to inflict cruel punishment or demand unreasonable services. And divine law commands that masters provide protection, conveniences, and necessities “proper to their condition as servants” and so far as he is able to afford them based on the slaves’ service.
6. Servants owe masters reverence, obedience, faithfulness, and care toward their service as an obligation to God and their Christian church.
7. Any “claims to freedom as a right” by a slaves are unjust, and efforts to attain it by violence or fraud are “wicked.” Efforts by others to promote freedom are unfriendly and unrighteous.
8. Masters are in control of slaves and thus have an obligation to provide religious instruction from proper sources that will not preach doctrines that corrupt slaves in ways dangerous to the peace of the community.
9. In a region where slaves are so numerous and under such direct control of their masters, government must legislate against insurrection and other villainous conduct but also against oppression and cruel masters. Government should guarantee the support of morality and religion among slaves to protect public peace and safety.
10. Religious privileges for slaves are consistent with the principles of gratitude and love but must also be seen as a matter of public security and in the self-interest of masters as well.
11. Those who want tighter control on religious instruction because of bad conduct will only alienate slaves from masters and the public good.

## JAMES C. FURMAN: PROFESSOR, SECESSIONIST



James C. Furman. *Furman University Special Collections and Archives.*

In his book *Furman University: A History* (1951), Robert Norman Daniel wrote, “Nothing could have been more appropriate than the choice of the name ‘Furman’ for the institution.” Daniel reasoned that for the entirety of the Reverend Richard Furman’s adult life “the education of young ministers had been the passion of his heart.” The author noted that Richard’s legacy of promoting “the work of the Kingdom” lived on not only in the university but also in the family and, indeed, in the ties between the two: “To the writer of this volume there seems to be particular fitness in the fact that the first president of the university was a son of Dr. Richard Furman with a full measure of his father’s vision and spirit. The institution today so far as it lives up to the ideals of its founders is the lengthened shadow of Dr. James C. Furman through whom preeminently those ideals were transmitted.”<sup>23</sup>

James Clement Furman was born in Charleston in 1809, the thirteenth of Richard Furman’s fifteen children who survived infancy.<sup>24</sup> As Daniel implies above, and as we have seen earlier in this essay, Richard Furman provided the impetus to found the school, but James C. Furman’s leadership shaped the direction of the institution through its critical decades. In 1830, James C. became the twelfth student to enroll in Furman Academy and Theological Institution. After an unsteady beginning in Edgefield in 1826 and 1827, the school had relocated to the High Hills of the Santee near Stateburg, not far from the original Furman-family land grant. When James enrolled, his brother Samuel was one of two professors at the school. After completing his theological studies in 1832, in quick order James C. Furman was ordained, got married to Harriet Davis, and took a job as minister of Welsh Neck Baptist Church in the Pee Dee region of the state. In addition to his duties as pastor, Furman accepted a post as financial agent of the Furman Theological Institute (the original name of the school having been altered slightly), which required him to ride throughout the state raising subscriptions or pledges for donations to fund the fledgling school.<sup>25</sup> In 1837, the school moved again to Winnsboro in Fairfield County and briefly added a manual labor component to the curriculum. The new site was near to the plantation of James C. Furman’s father-in-law, the Reverend Jonathan Davis, a Baptist minister and chairman of the Furman Board of Trustees, who owned more than seventy slaves and used that wealth to build the campus.<sup>26</sup> In 1844, the board of the school selected James C. Furman as senior professor. Even as a professor, Furman continued to ride the circuit throughout the state raising money for the school. He was instrumental in the institution’s third relocation in 1850, a move to Greenville that also prompted another name change to Furman University.<sup>27</sup>

James C. Furman’s public statements on slavery had a different, harsher tone than his father’s words. They reflected a vastly different political situation in the state and nation than that his father had faced. James’s views also reflected a shift in attitudes toward slavery in the South that occurred after the abolitionist movement in the northern states had gained momentum and volume in the 1830s. Richard Furman had reasoned with fellow Baptists or fellow slave-holders. James C. Furman, who first addressed slavery publicly in the white-hot weeks after Abraham Lincoln’s election in 1860, challenged the manhood and honor of his listeners and conjured threats to the virtue of their daughters and wives. He spoke, not as his father had, on the question of slavery’s morality. That issue had been decided in the minds of most southern whites decades before, thanks to leaders like Richard

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<sup>23</sup> Robert Norman Daniel, *Furman University: A History* (Greenville: Furman University, 1951) 15.

<sup>24</sup> Rogers, 198.

<sup>25</sup> King, 187-194; Harvey Tolliver Cook, *The Life and Work of James Clement Furman* (Greenville: Alester G. Furman, 1926) 19-45.

<sup>26</sup> W.J. McGlothlin, 80; U.S. Census, 1840.

<sup>27</sup> Alfred Sandlin Reid, *Furman University: Toward a New Identity, 1925-1975* (Durham: Duke Press, 1976) 8-9. The name was changed for the final time, to-date, in 1866 to Furman University.

Furman. The question for James C. Furman, and for his audience, was what recourse South Carolina should take in response to Lincoln's election. For thirty years South Carolina had been the most aggressive state in defending slavery in national politics. Upon Lincoln's victory, most counties in the state favored secessionist candidates as delegates to the December Secession Convention. In Greenville County, however, the outcome of the vote for delegates was not as certain. Unionists, those who opposed secession, were numerous and had strong leadership, including James P. Boyce, a former Furman professor, and Benjamin F. Perry, newspaper editor, legislator, and future governor.<sup>28</sup>

We have two extant records of James C. Furman's arguments for secession during this crisis, a letter published on November 22, 1860 and a speech, of which only a partial draft survived. The speech was given before a raucous crowd at the Greenville Courthouse that same day. Both pronouncements were designed to appeal to non-slave-holding whites, of which there were many in Greenville, by animating the specter of black equality after emancipation. James C. Furman urges non-slave-holders "to make common cause with us," the slave-holders, lest they prove themselves "unworthy of the name of free men." What follows are excerpts from James C. Furman's "Letter to the Citizens of the Greenville District," published in the *Southern Enterprise* newspaper November 22, 1860. It was co-authored with Thomas Arthur, William H. Campbell, and William M. Thomas.

- "A false opinion, which contradicts common sense, contradicts all history, contradicts the Bible, has rooted itself into the Northern mind. It is taught in their schools and colleges; it is enforced in their pulpits; it is the Gospel of Northern fanaticism. – That false opinion is, that every man is born free and equal."
- "The larger class [of northerners], however, are for holding on to the Constitution . . . through the interference of Abolition emissaries, while no new States will be admitted but such as are free – and then, by a vote of Congress, their great idea will be carried out – universal emancipation will be declared. – Then every Negro in South Carolina, and in every other Southern State, will be his own master; nay, more than that, will be the equal of every one of you. If you are tame enough to submit, Abolition preachers will be at hand to consummate the marriage of your daughters to black husbands! Nay, nay! we beg pardon of South Carolina women for such a suggestion. If their fathers and their brothers have not the spirit to break loose from a government whose elected Chief Magistrate aims to establish such a state of things, the daughters of South Carolina would die for shame at the dishonor of the men."
- "We detest Abolitionism because it trespasses upon our rights of conscience. It does not allow us to judge for ourself [sic] the morality of slaveholding. . . and it demands that we shall not obey the dictates of our own conscience, or else shall feel the weight of Northern displeasure. . . . An Abolitionist has vastly less regard of the slaveholder's right of conscience, than a slaveholder has for the same right in his slave."
- "And we *abhor* Abolitionism for its atrocious impiety. It stigmatizes as a gross sin what God guards in the very Decalogue as a sacred right. 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's \* \* \* man servant, nor his maid servant.' It assumes to understand religious duty better than an inspired Apostle. He sent a runaway slave back to his master. *The Abolitionists* encourage him to run away. . . . The tirades against slaveholders -- not for the abuse of their relationships as masters, but for the relationship itself -- is an outrage on the authority of God's word."
- "Men of Greenville, show yourselves men. Many of you are Baptists. They know the relation which the churches and associations sustain to each other. The churches are the smaller bodies, and the associations are the larger; yet the churches make the association, and if at any time an association should interfere with the rights of a church, that moment that Church would secede."
- "Self-respect, honor, the safety of our wives, our children, and our slaves themselves, whose well being is inseparably connected with the welfare of their masters all conspire to urge you to sustain the State in the high position which, if she is true to herself, she must assume."

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<sup>28</sup> McGlothlin, 78; Harvey Tolliver Cook, *The Life Work of James Clement Furman* (Greenville: Alester G. Furman, 1926) 194; Kibler, 338.

# THE PEOPLE: MURPHY

LAURA BAKER (LIBRARY) AND MICHAEL JENNINGS (CHIEF DIVERSITY OFFICER)

Although the project was begun with knowledge of Abraham, a story even more directly linked to the institution is Clark Murphy. He was not as “hidden” as Abraham, by shrubs in a photograph or by a lack of secondary work.<sup>29</sup> In fact, he was in plain sight in poems, campus yearbooks, and photographs. But he remains hidden in the living memory on campus.

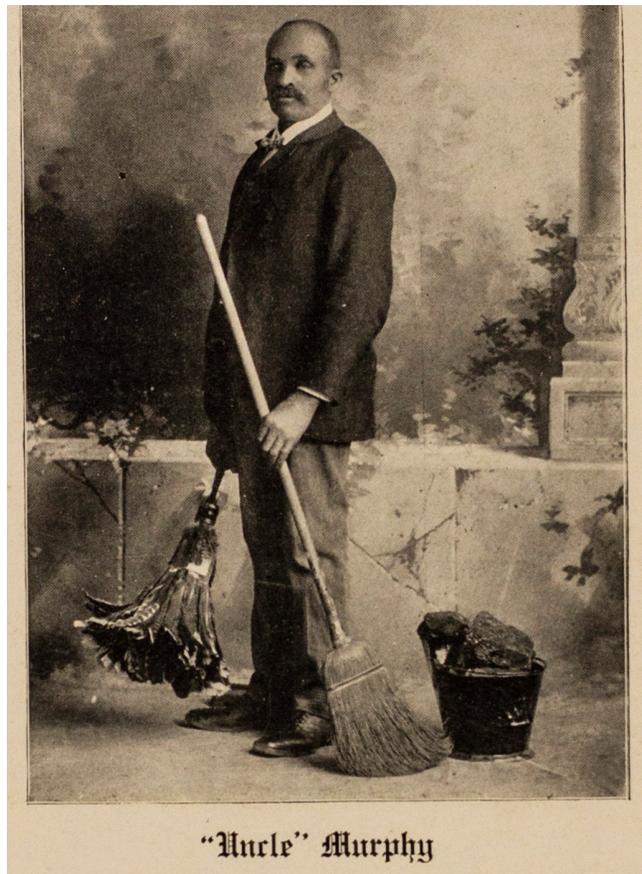
A first oversight is that many in the Furman community are unaware that the men’s campus (Furman) merged with the Greenville Woman’s College (GWC). Most legacies of the GWC have been erased—its traditions, its emblems, its accomplishments. (Although, around the Lakeside Housing on campus, the vestiges still exist—the seal, the bricks from its campus, and the names of its leaders.)

The second erasure comes from Clark Murphy’s status. Unlike Mary or Charles Judson, the sister and brother Northern sages of Greenville who ran the GWC, Clark Murphy was “just” its janitor, groundskeeper, and general repairman. Leased to campus in slavery, Clark Murphy came to Greenville Woman’s College from Cross Anchor in Spartanburg County. After the Civil War, he elected to serve the school over three decades more.

Multiple yearbooks from GWC herald the fact that he carried wood to heat all the women’s rooms throughout the night; he swept; he ran personal errands; and he brought in the mail and news of the day. “Uncle Murphy,” as the young women called him, saw generations of students and was the one person who could remember every student who attended. A student wrote a poem centered on Murphy, whose passing was a special loss and whose ringing of the GWC bell was her most fixed memory of their college years.

Clark Murphy’s life and remembrances tell us that some of the most meaningful experiences of college are not in a classroom with faculty or even student activities, but instead with the post office, facilities, or technology staff. He also reminds us of the need to commit resources to those staff who serve these largely “unsung” roles on campus.

For the purpose of this report, he also marks the hypocrisy of James C. Furman, who was Murphy’s employer when he was



leading the Woman’s College (during the Civil War). James C. Furman fanned the flames of secession multiple times with worries about freed black men marauding the streets, “robbing” white men of their white wives and daughters. In an area where very few white families were wealthy enough to hold significant numbers of enslaved persons, the fear of lusting black men freed to carnal urges was enough to switch pro-Union Americans into pro-slavery secessionists, who would fight for the Confederacy. Despite this, Murphy kept working and serving white students’ education.

It marks a dramatic point of departure for Furman to honor people like Murphy in its history.



*Murphy’s story reminds me of the importance of collecting and preserving artifacts, especially African-American artifacts, which allow researchers to tell a more complete, truthful story. —Laura Baker*



*I’m relatively new to Furman but have realized the frenetic energy to compete as a top liberal arts college can triply burden minority staff and faculty. The situation of folks like Clark Murphy have to be ever-present in our minds as we think about both what it means to serve Furman and what it means to reward that service. —Michael Jennings*

<sup>29</sup> A special thanks to Judy Bainbridge for her consultations and her book that brings Clark Murphy to life. Judith Townsend Bainbridge, *Academy and College: The History of the Woman’s College of Furman University* (Mercer University Press, 2001), 88 & 98.

- “As your fellow citizens, we shall be grievously disappointed if you do not make common cause with us. The negro is not your equal, unless the Bible be untrue, or you prove yourselves unworthy of the name of free men. The Abolitionists are not our masters, and though they have ‘assumed the Government,’ yet they cannot exercise it over you without your submission. Men of Greenville, will you submit?”

Now suppose this accomplished  
Four hundred thousand negroes  
turned loose without masters. -  
Fields uncultivated - barns empty  
hordes of hungry, thieving marauders  
prowling over the country. Say  
nothing of shocking scenes to which  
brutal lust will lead - we have only to  
look to regions where the manifes-  
tation experiment has been tried in  
order to foresee the ruin that must  
come upon the whole South. - etc

James C. Furman Secession Speech. Furman University Special Collections and Archives.

In the speech made at the Greenville Courthouse, James C. Furman spoke against the north’s constitutional violations and against its assault on the rights of southern property, both in slaves and in money, through unfair tariffs. Yet, he reminded his audience that there was “another right dearer to an honorable mind than the right of property.” Thus, appealing to southern honor, he characterized northern abolition petitions submitted to Congress as “an insult to the South” and an “indignity in the evil hour.”<sup>30</sup>

Other portions of the speech are included below.

- “You know and I know that left to themselves, our slaves are tractable, docile, and affectionate class of dependents. And yet this simple-minded people may be alienated from their master. What are the measures of precaution you have found yourselves bound to take?”

- “Now suppose this [the end of slavery] accomplished. Four hundred thousand negroes turned loose. Fields uncultivated, barns empty, hordes of hungry marauders prowling over the country. Say nothing of the scenes brutal lust would lead.”

- “Let not the poor white man think he has no interest. Every other man shares in a benefit from any other man who makes the community in which he lives richer.”

Furman’s rhetoric hit its mark. A student, Belton Oscar Mauldin, noted switching sides from pro-Union to secessionist after hearing his college president speak.<sup>31</sup> And on December 20, 1860, James C. Furman was one of the 169 delegates in Charleston to vote unanimously for South Carolina to secede. Throughout the war and beyond, there is no evidence that James C. Furman ever regretted his action in leading South Carolina toward war or that he revised his views about slavery and the issues that led to war. When the university shut down during the war, Furman briefly assumed the presidency of the Greenville Female College before resigning to serve as pastor to several Baptist churches in the area.

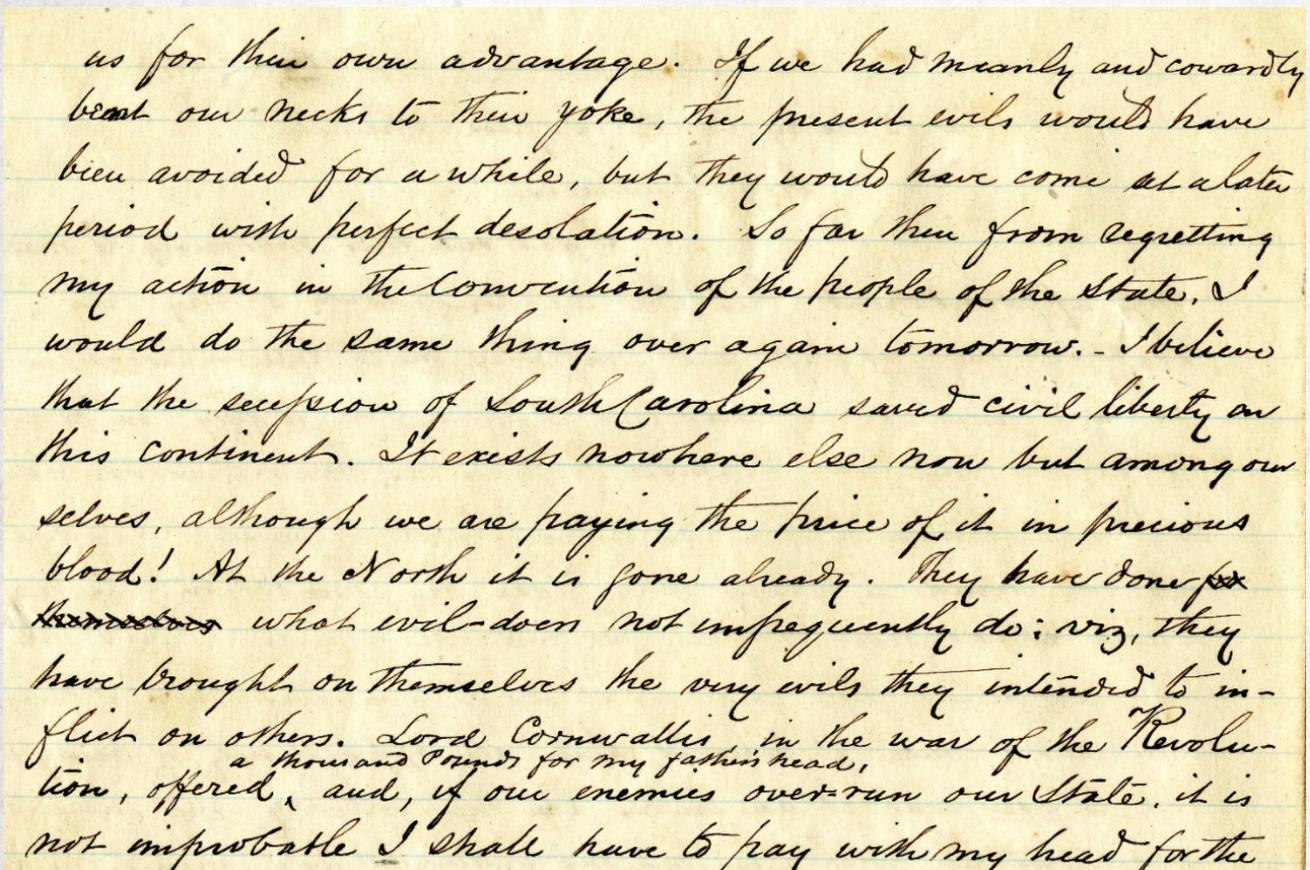
In October 1863, after the bloody summer of battles at Gettysburg, Vicksburg, Chancellorsville, and after eight straight months of brutal fighting near Charleston, Furman had a falling-out with one of his congregations, Brushy Creek Baptist Church, over James C. Furman’s role in the blood-letting. In a letter to the congregation, Furman announced he was stepping down because of criticism from the church. Writing a letter to the congregants announcing his resignation, he took issue with those who blamed him for his role as Greenville’s leading secessionist. You “regard me as instrumental in the evils of the war that now rages on our soil.” Furman indicated that he was sorry to hear that but would assume no responsibility, pointing instead to the “bloody and deceitful men who have attempted our subjugation and have come against us with fire and sword.” He went on, “So far from regretting my action in the

<sup>30</sup> Cook, 194-204.

<sup>31</sup> Mauldin Journal, November 17, 1860.

convention . . . I would do the same thing over again tomorrow. I believe that the secession of South Carolina saved civil liberty on this continent,” and “after-generations will thank the men who saved popular liberty from extinction.” The irony of linking the war that freed the slaves with liberty saved in this way was no doubt lost on Furman.

Furman assured his flock at Brushy Creek that he would offer “No expression of penitence.”<sup>32</sup> And, he never did.



us for their own advantage. If we had meanly and cowardly  
beast our necks to their yoke, the present evils would have  
been avoided for a while, but they would have come at a later  
period with perfect desolation. So far then from regretting  
my action in the Convention of the people of the State, I  
would do the same thing over again tomorrow. - I believe  
that the secession of South Carolina saved civil liberty on  
this continent. It exists nowhere else now but among our  
selves, although we are paying the price of it in precious  
blood! At the North it is gone already. They have done ~~for~~  
~~themselves~~ what evil does not infrequently do; viz, they  
have brought on themselves the very evils they intended to in-  
flict on others. Lord Cornwallis, in the war of the Revolution,  
offered <sup>a thousand pounds for my father's head,</sup> and, if our enemies over-run our State, it is  
not improbable I shall have to pay with my head for the

James C. Furman Letter to Brushy Creek Baptist Church. Furman University Special Collections and Archives.

## SLAVES AND THE BUILDING OF FURMAN

Slaves built Furman University in two ways. They were hired from their masters to work on the construction of a new campus in Greenville after the trustees voted in 1850 to move the school from Winnsboro. “Hiring-out” of slaves by owners was a common practice in South Carolina and throughout the South. Typically, wages were paid to the masters not the slaves, although slaves sometimes hired themselves out and split the money with their masters. The second way that slaves “built” Furman was through their labor that earned capital to fund the building of the Greenville campus on the banks of the Reedy River. Listed below is the evidence of individual slaves constructing the buildings on original Greenville campus. Below that is a list of Furman’s most important leaders and donors in the slavery era. The number of slaves attributed to each reflects census numbers from the decade or decades that correspond to the time the person was affiliated with the institution.

- On November 1, 1852, in a report to the Board of Trustees, Dr. H. W. Pasley, who was both a member of the Furman Board of Trustees and Executive Agent to the board in charge of construction, reported: “In the erection of the other buildings (besides ‘the College Building’ later called ‘Old Main’ and still later, in 1921, renamed Richard Furman Hall) I would suggest the propriety of hiring negroes at the commencement of the year, as it is very difficult to get white men to continue long at the time, and negroes

<sup>32</sup> James C. Furman to Brushy Creek Baptist Church, 18 October 1863, James C. Furman Papers, Furman University Special Collections.



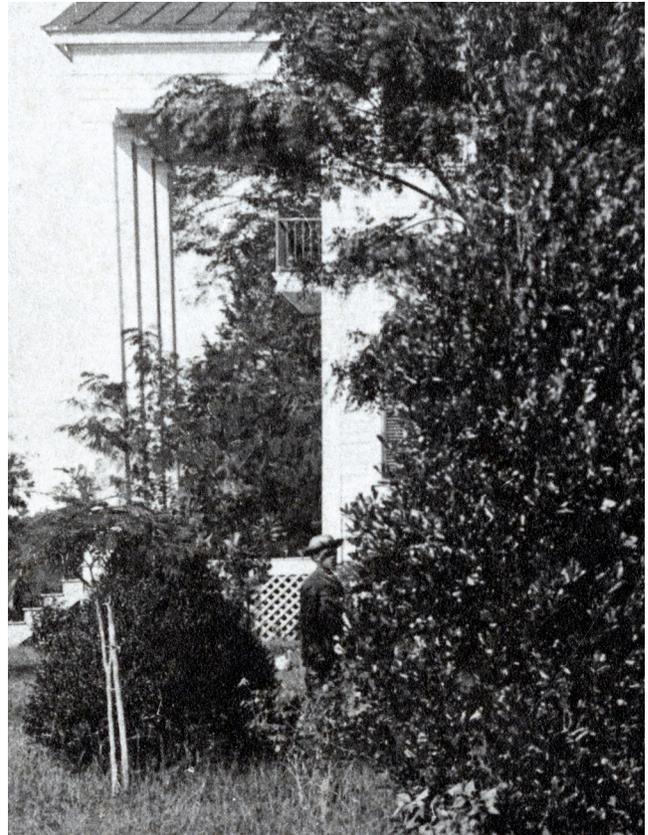
# THE PEOPLE: ABRAHAM

TERESA COSBY (POLITICS) AND COURTNEY TOLLISON (HISTORY)

The photograph of James C. Furman's home Cherrydale, taken in 1890 and preserved in Furman's Special Collection and University Archives, provided the only information we had of him. On the back was written, "Abraham, an ex-slave, for many years a family servant, shown between bushes below porch." Though it is not much, it is a valuable link to a past challenging to discover. The Furmans left little trace of their enslaved; thankfully, in the 1960s, James's granddaughter Margaret Fitzhugh Goldsmith provided this brief reference. This proof of Abraham's existence inspired us to seek more.

In the search for Abraham, we combed the archives. He appeared in Census Bureau records by 1900, though the purpose of those records was to count, not provide stories. City Directories only provide addresses (under the "Colored department," separate from white listings), and land records reveal only the name of the land owner. We learned that he was born in August 1839, and that he married a woman named Madora, commonly known as Dora, with whom he had six children. By 1900, Abraham had learned to read and write, and his occupation was listed in the census of that same year as a cook. Land records reveal that he owned a home on Paris Mountain Road in Brutontown, a historically African-American neighborhood near downtown Greenville. We can even trace his walk to work, the blocks up modern Poinsett Highway to "the Big House" of Cherrydale. He is buried in the cemetery at Brutontown, where the spelling of his last name switched from Syms, as it was recorded in the census, to Sims, as it appears on his gravestone. Now overgrown with trees and kudzu, the Task Force hopes to host a service event in which we clear and clean Abraham's gravesite.

Nowhere yet, and likely nowhere ever, will we be able to access Abraham's voice and perspective. In contrast, we have thousands of pages of archived, preserved writings from Richard, James, and other members of the Furman family dating from the mid-1700s. This past year, as part of our effort, a History major transcribed hundreds of pages of Richard Furman's speeches and personal and professional letters; she developed an intimate knowledge of his



beliefs, personal preferences, and character. His voice is abundantly accessible; Abraham's is not.

This is not a unique story. It is one of the 12.5 million souls taken from the shores of Africa for enslavement, the 10.7 million who survived the journey, and the 3.2 million persons of African descent who were still working in America when Furman moved to Greenville in 1851. It is the story of Abraham Sims.



*In the creation of American law, southern arguments for counting enslaved as three-fifths persons meant the creation of Slave Schedules to the U.S. Census. Most slaveholders, including the Furmans, failed to even write the names of enslaved, just noting age and sex. These mechanisms, alongside probate documents, often in the legal act of denying persons of color family and wealth, have now become some of our most important records. —Teresa Cosby*



*For those of us on the Task Force, Abraham Sims has assumed heightened status; he is a representation of the servants and employees who have served the university painstakingly, but about whom we know little. Discovering more details about him, and taking steps to honor him and others like him, largely forgotten in the historical record, is a privileged responsibility. —Courtney Tollison*

- In a different record, also on January 1, 1853, John McGrady and John M. Walker were “paid approx. \$17 for Boy” in a “delayed transaction.”<sup>39</sup>
- Henry Williams and Walker McGrady again were paid on February 5, 1853 “for work by boy” for 84 days with a payment of \$45.88.<sup>40</sup>
- In April 1853, records note a payment of \$36 for thirty-six days “for work by boy Elias” on Professor James S. Mims’s house during February and March.<sup>41</sup>
- In an undated transaction, Professor P.C. Edwards was paid for the “hire of boy at \$10 per month” and for the “board of boy for \$2.50 per month.”<sup>42</sup>

Below is table of prominent donors and leaders in Furman’s antebellum history. The list was compiled based on the archives in Furman’s Special Collections as well as published histories of the university.<sup>43</sup> The numbers of slaves is taken from the U.S. Census, Manuscript Returns and Slave Census, South Carolina, 1830, 1840, and 1850.

Name	1830	1840	1850
James C. Furman	8	8	56
William B. Johnson	13	6	8
Basil Manly, Sr.	3	9	12
Col. Abner Blocker	45	Not found	Not found
Charles D. Mallary	4	Not found	Not found
Joseph B. Cook	40	Not found	Not found
Jesse Hartwell	7	5 (Alabama)	11
John Landrum	15	13	15
Richard M. Todd	8	2	6
Timothy Dargan	59	Deceased	
Samuel Gibson	3	3	2
Elred Simkins, Sr.	107	37	Not found
Thomas Gillison	145 (1820)	Not found	Not found
James Griffith	22	20	Deceased
Samuel Furman	42	24	62
John Belton O’Neal	3	86	83
John B. Miller	44	41	34
Josiah B. Furman	0	20	Deceased
Abraham D. Jones	120	91	164
Jonathan Davis	108	72	Not found
Charles M. Furman	8	23	12
N. W. Hodges	Not found	2	Not found
Col. I. D. Wilson	Not found	Not found	68
Entzimnger, Christian	Not found	Not found	62
H. W. Pasley	Not found	Not found	10
Y. J. Harrington	31	56	Deceased

<sup>39</sup>Treasurers Transaction Booklet, 1853, in Historical Old Campus Box, Historical Documents, 45/005-A, Furman University Special Collections.

<sup>40</sup>Treasurers Transaction Booklet, 1853, in Historical Old Campus Box, Historical Documents, 45/005-A, Furman University Special Collections.

<sup>41</sup>Treasurers Transaction Booklet, 1853, in Historical Old Campus Box, Historical Documents, 45/005-A, Furman University Special Collections.

<sup>42</sup>Treasurers Transaction Booklet, 1853, in Historical Old Campus Box, Historical Documents, 45/005-A, Furman University Special Collections.

<sup>43</sup>McGlothlin, Daniel, and Reid.

# THE CAMPUS

## CHELSEA MCELVEY '19 AND CLAIRE WHITLINGER (SOCIOLOGY)

That a space has such a dramatic impact on your identity is hard to realize at first. While most of that effect is probably, on Furman's campus, the exposure to beauty and the joy of nature, another major component is remembrance: the portraits, plaques, art, and place names denote fundamental values.

If this is not self-evident, just look at the uproar caused at other campuses. Just miles from our campus is Clemson—a place where alumni have decried the opportunity to return “Tillman Hall” to “Old Main.” As of this report, they continue to force employees (most egregiously, African-Americans) to work in a building named for one of the major lynching advocates in history.

It continues further down the road in Greenwood, Columbia, or Charleston. Most notably, a statue of John C. Calhoun, the nation's seventh vice president and staunch proponent of slavery, sits atop a 115-foot pedestal along Calhoun Street overlooking the city. It is one block away from Mother Emanuel Church, where in 2015 a white supremacist committed an act of terror murdering nine worshippers inside of the church during a Bible study. Its steeple, standing for two millennia of Christian history and then acolytes who worshipped or preached there, like Denmark Vesey, David Walker, Daniel Payne, Booker T. Washington, and Martin Luther King, Jr., is merely equivalent or less in Charleston's eyes than the soaring reverence of slavery's champion.

On Furman's own campus, Task Force work has shown that no permanent representations of African-Americans appear on the entire campus—not in the over sixty buildings, nor the over two dozen sculptures or hundreds of donor portraits and plaques. And, in listening to stories from students, alumni, and faculty, we heard again and again the feeling that people of color were “welcome guests,” but never really felt a deep sense of “belonging” on campus.

Memory is always partial, and so some “complete” sense of justice in situations like these is impossible. Scholarship in collective

memory shows that historical patterns of social inequality reveal themselves directly in the landscape, and people's sense of self-worth and security are formed by this lived experience.

And yet change is possible. Native Greenville son, Joseph Vaughn, integrated Furman in 1965 at the peak of the civil rights movement in the South. Although his life was cut short at only 45, his story is one that models courage to overcome and break barriers of space, sacrificing his own experience of comfort and belonging to create one for others in the future. That sense of full belonging still has not come to Furman, fifty years later, for people of color; a sculpture of Vaughn central to campus could move towards that goal. Heading into the library, his presence could help give life to our feelings of vulnerability, courage, and commitment as we take the same step with our education.



*As a student of color, representation matters to me. I proposed the Vaughn statue in hopes that Furman's students will challenge themselves to confront this history. I am also from Charleston, and hope the momentum from places like Furman can reverberate across the state.*

—Chelsea McElvey



*My Qualitative Methods Seminar conducted in-depth interviews with fellow students on their perceptions of the slavery and justice Task Force in the spring of 2018. Students expressed concern about landscape changes, both that we'd change something deeply meaningful to them that would unsettle them, as well as that Furman would do “nothing,” and not make the campus more welcoming to the community's diverse identities and accomplishments. Our shared space is deeply meaningful.* —Claire Whitlinger

## SLAVES AND THEIR “ABSENCE” IN THE FURMAN PAST

Author James A. Rogers, in a 1985 biography commissioned by Furman University and funded by the Furman family, found Richard Furman’s “own treatment of his slaves was in the best tradition of a kind master.”<sup>44</sup> Perhaps it was so; however, Rogers offers no evidence and the hundreds of surviving letters in personal and professional correspondence of Richard Furman reveal very little about day-to-day interactions between Richard Furman and his slaves, and indeed very little about the slaves at all. It is a curious omission for a letter writer as effusive as Richard Furman. His letters, whether to family members, acquaintances, or business associates, are filled with rich descriptions of every sort about the weather, the state of the roads, the changing seasons, family news, triumphs and tragedies, sickness and death, restored health and folk remedies, and updates of how many souls have been baptized by Furman himself or by preachers in the churches he visits. “Negroes” were indeed included in the baptism count that he included in almost every letter, thus reflecting Furman sincere hopes for the salvation of slaves through the gospel and baptism. Despite this hope for the salvation of slaves under his guidance, Richard Furman sold slaves who were under his control. The nine slaves sold in 1799 belonged to his father’s estate. He and his brother Josiah cooperated in the sale after a decade of struggling to pay a mortgage they had taken out on the slaves and some real estate.

Several exceptions to the general absence of African-Americans in Richard Furman’s correspondence are noted below.

- In 1816, Furman issued a veiled threat (but not beyond what a caring father might write) to his slaves in a letter to his wife Dolly: “I am sorry you have so much Trouble and Vexation [vexation] from the bad Conduct of the unfaithful Servants you refer to; and hope, if it please God that I return in Safety, I shall be able to do something effectual towards removing the Evil.”<sup>45</sup>
- In 1814, while traveling north to Philadelphia for the first Triennial Convention of Baptists, Furman added a PS in a letter to his wife Dolly, again in the vein of a stern but caring father: “Tell the Negroes I wish them well, & shall be glad to hear a good Account of them for their own Sakes.”
- Furman’s concern with the religious lives of his own slaves is reflected in a letter to sister Sarah Haynsworth in June 1808: “At present I can write but little; it being at a late Hour of the Night; the Complaint in my Breast making against my writing much; and having to rise early in the Morning to converse with Negroes on their religious Concerns - the next Sabbath being our Communion Season.”<sup>46</sup>
- Later in the same letter Furman, in his language, includes slave Bob as part of his family: “Mrs. Furman has been for some for a considerable Time in a poor State of Health, but is now considerably better; one of the Children is quite unwell; but the rest of the Family, through Mercy, are pretty well; except the Boy Bob, who has been laid up from Service for several Weeks.”<sup>47</sup>
- Furman’s attention to the tally of communicants baptized always included blacks but also always differentiated black baptisms from white, sometimes in subtle language that seemed to value white more than black: “I believe I informed in my last that we had 17 Persons Baptised [Baptized] at the Communion season in Sept; I have now to add, that 10 more were baptized in Decr. [December] All of these last but one, however, were Negroes.”<sup>48</sup>
- According to the federal census, Richard Furman owned six slaves in 1790 and seven in 1800. There is no listing of slaves for him in 1810, and in 1820 one is listed. These numbers are misleading because Richard worked, managed, and profited from slaves owned by his father’s estate and by his mother.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Rogers, 226.

<sup>45</sup>Richard Furman to Dolly McDonald Furman, 15 November 1816; Richard Furman Collection, Furman University Special Collections.

<sup>46</sup>Richard Furman to Sarah Haynsworth, June 1808; Richard Furman Collection, Furman University Special Collections.

<sup>47</sup>Richard Furman to Sarah Haynsworth, June 1808; Richard Furman Collection, Furman University Special Collections.

<sup>48</sup>Richard Furman to Wood Furman 11, January 1808; Richard Furman Collection, Furman University Special Collections.

<sup>49</sup>U.S. Census, 1790, 1800, 1810, 1820.

• The names of Furman's slaves appear but rarely in his letters. They include Billy,<sup>50</sup> Bob,<sup>51</sup> Jack,<sup>52</sup> Tom,<sup>53</sup> Minda, and Nancy.<sup>54</sup> Tony and Maria, Chloe and Sarrah (a man), appear to have been owned by his mother or the estate of his father, but Richard had use of them on his plantation in High Hills.<sup>55</sup>

• In 1799, Richard Furman and his brother Josiah, who resided near the High Hills in Sumter County, sold nine slaves owned by his father's estate to satisfy mortgages that the brothers had taken out on the land and slaves ten years before. Both brothers struggled financially throughout the 1790s. In 1797, Richard wrote Josiah, "I now proceed to advertise the Property of the Estate for sale. Copies of the Advertisements I enclose for your inspection. . . You will please set up an Advertisement at some publick [public] place in your Neighborhood respecting the Sale of the Negroes." They avoided that crisis, but by 1799 Richard wrote to his sister Sarah, "Tomorrow is fixed on for the sale of nine of my Negroes, for payment of the bond I gave to Fisher and Edwards, as the lands are not sold, nor a present prospect of it, and as Mr. Price is in possession of a judgment and determined to have the money. As Negroes had lately commanded a greater price than formerly, am in hopes they may discharge that bond."<sup>56</sup>

James C. Furman's personal day-to-day treatment of his slaves is similarly inconclusive. Except as the object of baptism, slaves are rarely mentioned. However, James Furman's concern for the status of one slave, Caroline, becomes clear in his letters exchanged in 1848 with William Bailey. Bailey had recently moved from Winnsboro, where Furman was then residing, to Georgia. The move had torn apart the marriage of Furman's slave Caroline and Bailey's Francis. Despite the fact that Furman reported that Caroline, his slave, was "depressed beyond measure" without Francis, "more so, probably than she would even by his death," Caroline's interests as a human being are subordinated to the obligation that Furman and Bailey have as slave masters to follow God's law. Furman reminded Bailey that:

- "there develops upon us as Christian masters a very solemn responsibility where the conjugal relationship is sundered, God's law is violated, and in as much as the slave is an involuntary agent, the responsibility must rest on others." Then Furman went on to link Christian treatment of slaves by their masters to God's protection of slavery from abolitionism: "persuaded as I am of the scriptural warrant for slave-holding, I have no fear that Providence will not interpose for its protection from the violence of fanaticism, provided we who hold the slaves honor God's law, in the exercise of our authority."<sup>57</sup>

In late 1852, Furman faced a similar choice of measuring abstract principle against basic humanity when a financial pledge he had made to his church in Winnsboro forced him to consider selling some slaves. He wrote to James S. Mims, a fellow professor at Furman:<sup>58</sup>

- "Fairfield Church has requested me to pay up my bond [of] \$1700. . . and this throws upon me a difficulty in a matter of ways and means that I have to meet. Whether I can succeed in borrowing or shall have to sell some negroes is yet uncertain."<sup>59</sup>

There is no evidence that Furman followed through with selling his slaves to pay his pledge.

A final example from a letter by Mary Davis, James C. Furman's second wife and a sister of his deceased wife Harriet Davis, provides some measure of insight on James C. Furman's treatment of slaves. The recipient is Mary's brother Nathan Davis, who has gone west to seek fortune in the gold mines. Mary compares her husband James C. Furman with her father, the Reverend Jonathan Davis, who has become increasingly difficult since a riding accident had left him handicapped. The letter reveals more about Davis, a

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<sup>50</sup>Richard Furman to Sarah Haynsworth, 4 October 1802; Richard Furman Collection, Furman University Special Collections.

<sup>51</sup>Richard Furman to Sarah Haynsworth, 16 January 1817; Richard Furman Collection, Furman University Special Collections.

<sup>52</sup>Richard Furman to Dolly McDonald Furman, 2 November 1814; Richard Furman Collection, Furman University Special Collections.

<sup>53</sup>Richard Furman to Wood Furman, 11 January 1808; Richard Furman Collection, Furman University Special Collections.

<sup>54</sup>Richard Furman to Wood Furman, 15 July 1809; Richard Furman Collection, Furman University Special Collections.

<sup>55</sup>Sarah Haynsworth to Richard Furman, 23 November 1789; Richard Furman Collection, Furman University Special Collections.

<sup>56</sup>Richard Furman to Josiah Furman, 3 April 1797; Richard Furman to Sarah Haynsworth, 4 March 1789; Richard Furman Collection, Furman University Special Collections.

<sup>57</sup>James C. Furman to William Bailey, 18 December 1848.

<sup>58</sup>Information on Mims from Daniel, 37-38.

<sup>59</sup>James C. Furman to Bro. Mims, 31 January 1852.

former chairman of the university's Board of Trustees, than Furman himself; although Furman's image as a master does benefit from the comparison:

- “You know father has for years managed brother Furmans planting interests, they differed in their ideas of the management of the slaves, as would naturally be expected with such apposite temperaments. Brother F often endeavoured [sic] to persuade father to more gentleness—and expressed his belief of the religious obligations of slaveholders. Father persisted in his own ways and knowing brother F's heart as perhaps few others do, I saw the pain it caused him, and lamented myself that father did not take a more (according to my understanding) scriptural view of the matter. You know his natural disposition—his trials have been very great—and they have affected his tone of mind he is more irritable and suspicious towards his neighbors, children, and servants. The plantation negroes became dissatisfied—seemed to give him a deal of trouble—perhaps they were disobedient—I don't know about that—at any rate father thought so—and had expressed in the family his determination to resort to severe measures—we were distressed with his complainings, and wished he could be relieved from the care of the property. Such was the state of things when brother F came here to spend a part of his holydays [sic] of course father gave him the particulars—and again I saw how it oppressed his heart, but he did not seem disposed to interfere more than to express to father his opinions—as formerly—and to as little affect [sic] . . .”<sup>60</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Richard Furman and James C. Furman, father and son, stand alone among those who shaped the identity of Furman University in the decades before the Civil War. Richard championed Baptist education throughout his life and built the institutional structures that gave birth to the university. James nurtured the school from struggling seminary in a rural backwater to respectable college in a growing city. But Richard Furman and James C. Furman also stand alone as university leaders who, more than any others, shaped public opinion in South Carolina in support of slavery and, in the case of James, in support of secession. Looking back from the perspective that history affords us, we cannot venerate their accomplishments without acknowledging and, indeed, reckoning with their failings: they used the ideals of liberty to enslave others and words of the scripture to justify slavery, a practice that on its face contradicted basic humanity and Christ's essential message in the gospel. Richard's scriptural defense of slavery, on behalf of South Carolina Baptists, grew out of the same practical goals that gave birth to the university: to create best conditions for Baptist churches to thrive, in his words “to do something for the general good of the churches.” Furman University stands as a testament to the vision and efforts of Richard and James C. Furman, but it also bears the tainted legacy of their influential public pronouncements on race and slavery. The work of the Task Force invites the Furman community to face the complicated history of the university with honesty and courage. It does so in the belief that a clear view of the past provides the surest path forward and in the hope that the findings of this history and the recommendations that rest on it will steer a course of greater justice in Furman's future.

<sup>60</sup>Mary Davis Furman to Nathan Davis, 4 April 1853.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

*In order to repair the historical harms illustrated through objective historical scholarship and reflection by members of the Task Force and campus community more broadly, we recommend the following actions to be taken by the university, to begin to reckon with the past, repair the harms, and create increasing justice in each generation.*

## JUSTICE IN THE CAMPUS LANDSCAPE

*Furman has moved to five campuses over its nearly two centuries of existence, leaving behind the visible legacies of slavery, except in a few instances such as the precious gift of Cherrydale Alumni House and the Bell Tower bricks. This history has shown that enslaved people constructed the historic campuses, but their race barred them or their descendants from reaping the rewards of that labor—despite Richard Furman’s promise of literacy and education—until 1965. Similarly, race still provides a de facto limit to any permanent acknowledgment or representation of African-Americans on university grounds. If not for slavery, this lack of representation would be impossible, especially in a state where African-Americans have been nearly half of the population. For the following recommendations, it will be assumed that the Office of the Provost will assume responsibility for these changes to the campus landscape. Proposed text for all markers can be found in Appendix A.*

**1. WE RECOMMEND** that a statue of Joseph Vaughn be installed at the spot of the iconic photograph in which he approaches the James B. Duke Library, capturing Vaughn’s enthusiastic commitment to education. The statue should be life-size and incorporate a material that allows onlookers to see themselves in Vaughn. January 29th, the day of his enrollment (in 1965), should be the date of the sculpture dedication and thereafter should be commemorated as Joseph Vaughn Day to celebrate and encourage active student engagement and challenging the status quo. The sculpture will mark the dedication of the first permanent representation of a person of color on Furman’s campus, marking a commitment toward more.



*Joseph Vaughn’s image superimposed on a contemporary view of campus, exactly where he appeared in the 1965 photograph and where the sculpture is recommended for placement.*

**2. WE RECOMMEND** that two roads at Furman should be named for the university’s first female African-American undergraduate students, who started Furman in 1967. The entrance road to Furman should be named for Lillian Brock-Flemming, the university’s first African-American female trustee, and who became the university’s “Link to the Greenville Community.” Similarly, the road that connects McAlister Auditorium and the Daniel Music Building should be named for Sarah Reese, renowned opera singer.



*The campus main entrance road that should be named for Lillian Brock-Flemming.*



*The road surrounding McAlister Auditorium and Daniel Music Building that should be named for Sarah Reese.*

**3. WE RECOMMEND** the naming of the space near Cherrydale Alumni House for Abraham Sims, whose image inspires our work toward justice and recognition, and construction of a raised reflecting pool memorial in front of Cherrydale, honoring our shared history and all those who labored to create the university. It will be important that the fountain is slightly raised to disrupt the seamless link between the plantation and campus, with a black granite material to symbolize the individuals whose names we do not know and water symbolizing the new life in education that springs from their labor. Small plaques along the perimeter will present recovered enslaved names of founders and donors. Initial plaques will name Abraham Sims (a freed slave of James C. Furman) and Clark Murphy (beloved groundskeeper of Greenville Woman’s College). In a new tradition each year, freshmen will dip their hands into the water, symbolizing their new connection to the university and its past.



*The suggested change to the lawn in front of Cherrydale Alumni House, incorporating a black granite fountain.*

**4. WE RECOMMEND** raising the profile of Mary and Charles Judson to an academic building, namely the Humanities building currently named for James C. Furman; meanwhile, the central dorm currently named for them would become Clark Murphy Hall. Regarding the first choice, Mary and Charles were the central academic and administrative minds of the early universities from which the university descends, Mary in a broad range of fields at the Greenville Woman’s College (GWC) and Charles in math and astronomy at Furman University. Both were also prodigious, progressive intellectuals. Mary founded and helped fund the first female literary societies in South Carolina and the first program of calisthenics for women in the American South. She taught a broad array of classes that, as a first-wave feminist, she believed women should have to function equally in society. Similarly, Charles was the only early Furman professor (and interim president) not to hold persons in slavery, and who donated



*The central housing unit of Lakeside, where Charles Murphy should be honored.*



*The plaque noting some of the Judson’s academic leadership, currently at Lakeside, which would be moved to the academic building housing the Humanities.*



*Mary Judson, whose accomplishments will deserve more honor on the new Judson Hall dedications.*

privately to keep the Greenville Woman's College open through the Civil War. Clark Murphy is described elsewhere in this report, but is appropriate for the central dorm of the Lakeside Housing suite that symbolizes the Greenville Woman's College. It will be the first building on campus named for an African-American person, and is additionally important as an honor to all those who labored, both in slavery and free, for the university without fair pay or accolade.

**5. WE RECOMMEND** raising general understanding of Furman's history that integrates its relationship with slavery:

a. Pursuing a County Size Historical Marker through the South Carolina Department of History & Archives giving an overview of the institution's history, placed in the location of the sculpture of Alester G. Furman, Jr. (which should be placed beside the plaque on the building named in his honor, with the smaller, historically incorrect plaques removed).

b. Creating two displays, one in the Admissions office and one in the first floor main area of the Duke Library (on the wooden walls beside Circulation and Reference), to show artifacts of Richard Furman and the university's past. Displays should be curated by the university archivist to include items such as the portrait of Richard Furman; his robe, glasses, or books; a copy of the Exposition letter on slavery; a brick from the downtown Bell Tower; and photographs and text that help show how these artifacts relate to a shared history and the university mission and values today.

**6. WE RECOMMEND** context for unnamed labor through:

a. Bronze historical plaques added at the Janie Earle Furman Rose Garden, Bell Tower Circle, and Lakeside Circle, marking the bricks as historical objects from Furman's old campuses, some of them created and mortared by rented slave labor.

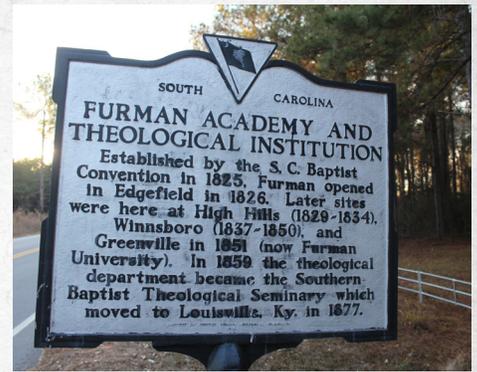
b. A sign matching the Lake Revitalization signs to explain the history of the Furman Bell Tower with historic images and explanation of its labor and construction.

**7. WE RECOMMEND** context be added to appearances of Richard and James C. Furman to locations around campus, including:

a. A bronze sign created next to the Richard Furman statue at Benefactors' Circle, to include the relationship between current university philanthropy and Richard Furman's life.

b. A small curatorial glass plate noting the artist and medium, applied next to the portrait of Richard Furman in Cherrydale Alumni House, noting his significance and views on slavery.

c. Two medium-sized curatorial glass plates noting the artist and medium, applied next to the portrait of James C. Furman in Cherrydale Alumni House, noting how his substantial significance to Furman is undermined by racial fearmongering.



The existing County Marker at the Sumter County site, showing the size and shape of the marker that should be installed on campus.



The Alester G. Furman, Jr. statue, edited into the photograph beside the entrance that correctly identifies him.



Janie Earle Furman Rose Garden.



Bell Tower with the size and shape of signage we recommend.

d. A large curatorial glass plate (entitled “Walked With God and Served Mankind?”), applied beside the stained glass window of James C. Furman in the Administration stairwell, and also curate the historical marker that currently appears outside James C. Furman Hall (which will be moved to this stairwell for historical preservation). Similar to the plates in Cherrydale, these will also mark his substantial significance to Furman, undermined by his hypocrisy to those ideals, revealed in this report.

**8. WE RECOMMEND** the creation of a Campus Oversight Committee that makes future decisions about campus acquisitions when they impact campus inclusivity and space. The committee’s goal would be to balance (1) the historical value of campus and its artifacts and (2) donor or administrative requests, with (3) the goal to constantly increase inclusivity in the built landscape. Serving the Provost, the committee would likely be composed of the Assistant Vice President of Facilities, Special Collections Librarian & University Archivist, a faculty member of History, a faculty member with relevant expertise in another department, Donor Relations Specialist (ex-officio), and Post-Baccalaureate Fellow for Inclusive History (ex-officio).

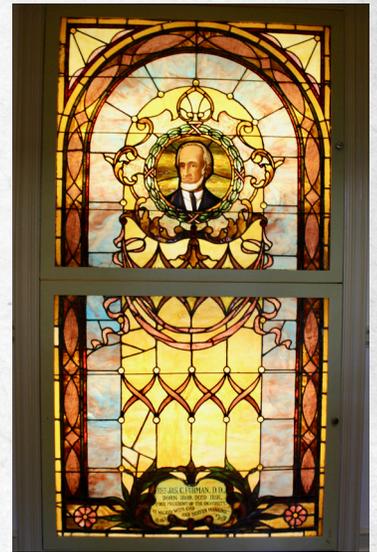
## JUSTICE IN UNIVERSITY FINANCES

*The findings of this report show that enslaved and freed men helped build the early university, and most founders and donors owned substantial numbers of enslaved persons, whose labor contributed an average of \$57 of the \$159 per capita income of all free whites in South Carolina, or 35.8% of all wealth creation in the state (Ransom 2001). Meanwhile, Furman University was able to establish itself based on this slave-based economy, with gifts totaling \$6.5 million (today’s value), providing for the original Italianate campus built downtown.*

*Over generations, the wealth gap actually grows instead of shrinking, especially given the multiplier effects of private education (like a Furman education), investment (like our endowment), and real estate (like our campus). This results in the fact that today every \$100 in wealth held by white families is matched by just around \$5 in African-American family wealth.*

*The financial gains of slavery did not end in 1865. While it is estimated that 10.7 million individuals were taken from Africa to be enslaved in the Americas, it is estimated that as this report was written and published, at least 16 million people globally worked in forced labor, 4.1 million people worked in state-imposed forced labor, and 4.8 million people were forced into human trafficking and sexual exploitation (U.N. International Labor Organization, 2017). Scholars and filmmakers visiting campus over the past year reminded us of the fact that our participation in the global economy, especially through the endowment, can perpetuate those practices, unless the university screens in favor of companies that work to remove slavery from their practices and supply chains. If not for the racialized history of slavery and the economic system it has built since, these injustices would be impossible. Therefore,*

**1. WE RECOMMEND** that the Office of Financial Aid apply \$1 million in need-based financial aid to students who have, by virtue of their identity, been beset by systematic, intergenerational social disadvantage and discrimination. Specifically, given the history revealed in this report, we ask that the Joseph Vaughn Scholarship be expanded to this amount and target African-American students in geographic proximity to the historic locations of Furman University across the region. Lastly, we recommend that \$3 million (representing the 35.8 percent of antebellum donations, the portion drawn from slave labor based on statewide averages) of the endowment be restricted in perpetuity for this purpose, championing donor generosity to complete a full permanent endowment for this program. Further, that the university initiates a plan, under the direction of the Chief Diversity Officer, to examine retention and support efforts for students of color. This should be part of a broader effort to engage outside expertise focused on supporting the study and improvement of campus climate with the intent of creating actionable recommendations including, but not limited to, summer bridge programs and pathway programs designed to serve the specific needs of students of color.



James C. Furman stained glass window in the Administration Building.

**2. WE RECOMMEND** the President continue the practice of studying and publicly reporting salary categories at the university annually, ensuring the lowest full-time salary level can be defined as a livable wage in the Greenville metropolitan area.

**3. WE RECOMMEND** that the Vice President for Finance and Administration pursue an investment strategy that requires all investment managers to publish their ESG strategy and for those strategies to be made public through the Investment Office website and/or Audited Financial Statements. The Investment Committee of the Board of Trustees should adopt such language in its Core Beliefs (Part III) of the Investment Policies, amplifying its current encouragement to staff and consultants to consider options.

## JUSTICE IN EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

*Our survey to students at the outset of the previous academic year (2017-2018) showed that very few (7 percent) had a grasp of Furman's history or relationship with slavery. Of course we hope that some events hosted over the previous year have changed that number, but a broader change in the landscape, funding, and community work of the institution have to be tied in with our primary mission: education. If not for the discomfort of slavery within the American story and the Lost Cause anthologizing that supports white supremacy, then this kind of knowledge gap about the university's history would be impossible. Therefore,*

**1. WE RECOMMEND** programs that energize students along a four-year pathway of understanding the university's shared past and how it relates to our diverse student body today, including:

### EXPLORE AND DISCOVER:

- Admissions Ambassadors robustly trained to answer questions regarding the university's history, as this is many individual's first and only point of contact with that history.
- First-year rituals and educational materials that draw attention to the university's history, including tribute to shared history and hidden labor, both named and unnamed. The full Desegregation Report and Seeking Abraham Report should be made available to all students.

### EXAMINE AND DECIDE:

- Oversight by the Collaborative for Community Engaged Learning to ensure faculty-led opportunities to uncover the school-to-prison pipeline and discrimination in education and housing in the local community, with the goal of working with communities in the Upstate to identify and address needs. Additionally, the office should coordinate Furman access to local prisons, so that students see and understand firsthand the proximity and effects of mass incarceration.
- Alternative Spring Breaks that involve public memory work, including cemetery cleanup and documentation, improvement of signage and recognition on regional historical sites, oral history interviews, and travel to comparative sites of historical significance.

### CONNECT & REFINE:

- Creation of a long-term Post-Baccalaureate position using The Furman Advantage funding to serve the Special Collections Library and University Archivist in continuing this work of creating inclusion from the university's history, including: energizing student activities, training Admissions tour guides, conducting inventories of existing campus artifacts, preparing inclusion reports for each decision of the Campus Oversight committee, and organizing continued activity with and following best practices of the Universities Studying Slavery consortium.
- Exploration of partnership with historically black colleges and universities, including videoconferencing courses and research, semester exchange programs, and extending honors to faculty on those campuses.

- Integrated modules in Four-Year Pathway advising, and opportunities for curricular and co-curricular intergroup dialogues, enabling students to deepen their understanding of structural racism and its present-day impact.

## SYNTHESIZE & INITIATE

- A \$1,000 grant, named for Joan Libscomb, from the Student Government Association awarded to the current student who commits to fearless speech and action in the name of pluralism, justice, and equality. This serves as a reminder of Libscomb’s willingness in 1955 to speak out against Jim Crow and segregation of African-Americans from university life, even as the university confiscated all copies of *The Echo* literary magazine. The grant should be applied to the project or grant of the student’s choosing, as an encouragement to continued advocacy on behalf of those whose voice has been silenced, erased, or denied power.
- Earmark The Furman Advantage funding for faculty-led student research projects that impact the Upcountry History Museum Furman University, especially including technology and exhibits that allow for sharing personal stories, family histories, and intergroup dialogue.

**2. WE RECOMMEND** continued attention and educational efforts toward matters uncovered this year by the Task Force, including:

- The university Provost commission a further Task Force to study and report publicly the injustices since the abolition of slavery, specifically focused on listening to former staff and alumni. The university should commit, in advance, to the option of returning gifts to any donor whose intent is judged to have created an environment of discrimination or intimidation on campus.
- The university President, working with the Director of Libraries, commission multiple works as we approach the university bicentennial, including:
  - A new, complete university history that incorporates Task Force findings and best scholarship into its narrative.
  - An edited volume of new scholarship and alumni stories that represent the diversity of experiences at the university.
  - A publicly-accessible collection of stories and accounts of persons who worked long-term on staff for the university.

## JUSTICE IN THE COMMUNITY

*Furman students have been actively engaged in the community with a helping hand. Especially in the 1930s under President Bennette Geer and since the 1970s with CESC/Heller Service Corps, those efforts have become some of the more visible identifiers of the institution. Yet, while Furman is good at sending “out,” in the path of its mission heritage, it has not been as good about bringing the broader community into its everyday life. And in fact, the move of the campus to its suburban space can be seen, at least in part, to be a flight from the “problems” that the community brings—of crowding, of resource depletion, and of visible inequality. The university needs to reimagine what it means to live within the community, rather than sending its evangelists “out” to help. If not for slavery and segregation, the institution would not be as removed from the minority experience of the region. Thus,*

**1. WE RECOMMEND** that the university President should review the current mission, vision, and values, as well as the motto, to determine alignment of the findings and recommendations of this report, and consider re-adopting the older motto of the institution (from the Greenville Woman’s College): *Palma Non Sine Pulvere*.<sup>61</sup>



Seal of the Greenville Woman’s College with the old motto, *Palma Non Sine Pulvere*.

<sup>61</sup>The motto *Palma Non Sine Pulvere* (translates “Rewards not without Dirt”) was written by Mary Judson for the Greenville Woman’s College in 1876. It references an idea by Roman poet Horace, who was literally saying “No Palms Without Dirt,” but whose meaning in its time would have been “No Honors/Accolades/Glory Without Labor/Perseverance/Effort/Grit.” It is meant to be a playful acknowledgment of all the work that goes into learning, and in line with this report, it speaks to both rigor as well as the hidden labor to make the educational mission of the institution successful.

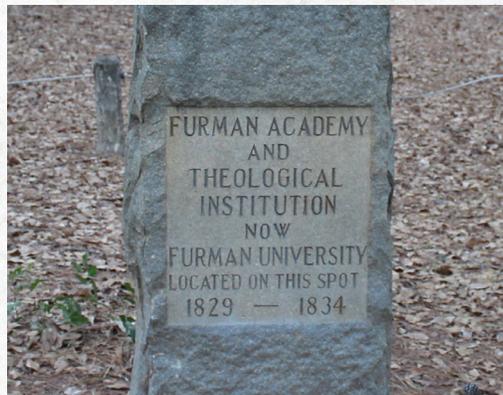
**2. WE RECOMMEND** to run a Summer Scholars program that gives two-week residence to rising high school juniors, that opens the university archive toward both receiving and giving back history erased by slavery and the legacies of slavery, working alongside the International African-American Museum (IAAM).

**3. WE RECOMMEND** that the Provost, Dean, and faculty make their top priority the hiring of faculty who will be the most meaningful response to this report. Theatre, Music, and Art departments should each have faculty who can research, teach, and perform African-American stories and song, whether historical or contemporary. Working with the administration, relevant departments (especially in the Humanities and Social Sciences) should similarly make one hire each to empower the African-American and Diaspora Cultures Interdisciplinary Minor, so that an independent department could be formed by 2026. Starting immediately, Fine Arts departments should partner with minority-owned or -produced performance. Similarly, Humanities at Furman should train and build a fellows program that can offer official consultations on historical monuments and civic spaces, as well as advise and mentor reconciliation and justice projects at churches, alumni and civic group, and governmental bodies in the region.

**4. WE RECOMMEND** that Facilities Services establish a budget line for historic investigation and preservation at sites impacted by Furman history, including the areas of the four previous campus locations, as well as the church and plantation communities of Richard and James C. Furman and their enslaved. Projects include ground-penetrating radar to mark enslaved and freed mens' graves, the creation of historical markers, and educational programming and signage for local residents at those sights.



Edgefield marker



Sumter County marker



Winnsboro marker

## DOING JUSTICE

*It is easy for reports like these to be lost as mere ideals, rather than action points. To avoid that problem, we have tried to give as pragmatic and clear of instructions as possible, to have laid groundwork with many of the associated offices, and to have thought through responsibilities and budget constraints wherever possible. We have tried to fulfill this report with the sense of duty and obligation for transformation as the times warrant. If not for slavery, we would not be able to enjoy the privileges of our positions, nor connect with the amazing stories of perseverance and love we've encountered. We are indebted to this shared history. Thus,*

**1. WE RECOMMEND** the coming months (August to October) incorporate important conversations, and recommendations should be discussed within all relevant campus offices with any final commitments and remarks on feasibility. In the meantime, QR codes should be posted, allowing the campus to use smartphone technology to read about the history of the site or proposed programming. In addition, findings should be integrated into links from the university history and timeline online, brochures and handouts produced by university communications, alumni, and admissions.

**2. WE RECOMMEND** that this report should be circulated by the university president, and deliberated and voted on by the Board of Trustees. The Trustees should, in their fall meeting assembled, vote on a resolution that acknowledges the university’s historical harms, reckons with its injustices, and recommends actions found in this report. The chair of the Board of Trustees and university president will publicly communicate the university’s plans following that vote. At that time, relevant personnel on campus will consult with the Chief Diversity Officer to create a specific timeline and accountability system to ensure approved recommendations are completed in a timely fashion.

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The archive still holds so many possibilities for connecting each generation of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community. Each generation leaves behind a set of credits and liabilities for the future generation to take their own pathway. We continue to research, seek out evidence, and collect oral histories to document and illuminate aspects our shared history. In a university, and in the democratic society it brings into existence, that is how we cherish our past.



*As someone who truly believes in the idea that our future is guided in large part by our past, I see the work of the Task Force as integral to Furman’s growth and relevance in an inclusive, connected global society. —Deborah Allen*



*I’m excited that we have “opened the archive” for so many here at Furman through this process, especially so we can hear the stories of those who felt marginalized, and treat them with the dignity and honor they deserve. We still have so much shared history to explore. —Jeffrey Makala*

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*Furman’s Daniel Chapel*

# CONCLUSION

James C. Furman’s romantic quotation on a campus plaque instigated this process. While he was indeed key to the university named for his father and committed to its survival, he failed to see below the deck of the metaphorical ship of the university—the worth of the hundreds who built it and provided the crew.

The impact of undergoing this process itself is substantial. Slavery is America’s open wound, and for so many African-Americans, the effects of slavery continue to permeate life, causing deep, multi-generational harm. However, this is also true for every person living in this country, faced with the vestiges of atrocity.

Our committee began this process unsure of what we would uncover, and it became apparent that our devotion to truth telling and atonement, in an effort to begin healing the wounds of our past, was of utmost importance. The care and consideration taken throughout all the research, discussion, and eventual written recommendations was a cornerstone in ensuring that this process was handled with integrity and care.

Now that we hold this knowledge, our hope in reconciling past injustices is that we will do the work in a way that is equitable, just and participatory of both the Furman and surrounding community.

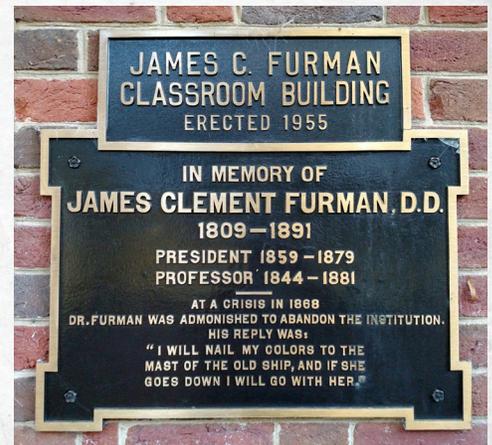
The recommendations that involve changes to the campus are a particularly explicit way of conveying who we are as an institution, as our landscape is a reflection of our values. It is a minimal entry point into a shared future.

The recommendations that involve finances signal our moral priorities in the budget—a focus on avoiding new debt on families already indebted through slavery, on ending wealth accumulation off current slavery in the global system, and of creating equity through our pay. Basic economic engines of inequity are the most difficult to change, as proven by the endurance of brutal slavery, and we need intense commitment to these three targets.

The recommendations that involve education create an integrated, continual, curricular and extra-curricular process for living and learning in the changed world created by the other recommendations. Access to and truth-telling from the archive need to be key ideas shared in most of the educational endeavors of the university.

And the recommendations that involve community enlarge the sphere of our concern, so that we begin to heal holistically and with all the communities we have impacted in our history. If we do that, we become better in the process.

None of our recommendations entail the erasing of those people and aspects of our past we would choose not to honor in 2018. We have chosen responsibly contextualizing certain components, while introducing and raising others into a shared history for all. Only when we create equity and pursue justice can we all live into The Furman Advantage.



*The James C. Furman plaque quotes him as saying, “I will nail my colors to the mast of the old ship, and if she goes down I will go with her.”*

## APPENDIX A. TEXT FOR CAMPUS SPACES

**Joseph Vaughn Statue Marker:** On January 29, 1965, Joseph Vaughn became the first African-American undergraduate student at Furman. Two years later, in 1967, Lillian Brock-Flemming and Sarah Reese joined him to become the first African-American women. This statue honors their commitment to education, their willingness to challenge norms, and their example at Furman and throughout the pathways of life. The university also pays tribute to all those persons of color who were denied admittance or otherwise precluded from attaining the full privileges of a Furman education. The African-American experience is this nation's central lesson of resilience, courage, and strength, despite overwhelming odds created by institutions like ours. May we all be educated by that past, in order to always stand up against injustice wherever we see it.

**South Carolina County Historical Marker:** Founded in 1826, Furman University is the oldest private university in South Carolina. The school is named for Richard Furman (1755-1825). Furman was pastor of the First Baptist Church in Charleston, S.C., and became the first president of the Triennial Convention, the first national body of Baptists in America. His views on revolution, slavery, and other important matters of the era made him the most significant Baptist minister in the early United States. The institution was formerly known as the "Furman Academy and Theological Institute," and was located in Edgefield, High Hills of Santee, and Winnsboro.

[Obverse side] In 1851, Furman University was opened in downtown Greenville in a beautiful Italianate building with iconic Bell Tower, overlooking the Reedy River. After a century of operation, the campus broke ground in 1953 for the current 750-acre campus near Travelers Rest, South Carolina. Desegregation occurred in 1965 with the entry of Joseph Vaughn. The University and South Carolina Baptist Convention separated in 1992. By the late twentieth century, it had become one of the top liberal arts colleges in the nation through the intellectual rigor and diversity of its faculty and students on its residential campus.

**Janie Earle Furman Rose Garden Bronze Marker (8x10):** The bricks underfoot in the Janie Earle Furman Rose Garden likely come to us from the downtown campus of Furman University. Furman's original campus, built in the 1850s and situated above the Reedy River (current location of Falls Park), was designed by Edward C. Jones of Jones and Lee, famed Charleston architects who also designed Old Main at Wofford College and many other historic structures in the U.S. South. Building the dozens of buildings on the Old Campus required digging clay from the Reedy River, baking bricks, and applying mortar, accomplished by hard labor, enslaved and free. This marker and the garden serve as a reminder of all the hidden labor that goes into the very existence and everyday operations of the university.

[Small lettering, lower] Erected in 2018 by the university in recognition of its shared history, part of the Seeking Abraham project, with funds from the Office of the Provost.

**Bell Tower Circle Bronze Marker (8x10):** The bricks in Bell Tower Circle were recovered from the Old Main Building, which had Furman University's first Bell Tower, demolished in November 1964 after a fire made the historic structure unsafe. The evidence points to the building and its bricks being made from the clay of the Reedy River--dug, baked, and mortared by African-Americans, as "it was difficult to get white men to remain on their jobs long" proving that "in the long run Negro labor would prove cheaper." Special Collections has a receipt from April 20<sup>th</sup>, 1852 demonstrating the use of "Negroes in making the mortar" of Old Main. Such details help us understand the contributions of unnamed individuals in the early development of Furman University.

[Small lettering, lower] Erected in 2018 by the university in recognition of its shared history, part of the Seeking Abraham project, with funds from the Office of the Provost.

**Lakeside Housing Circle Bronze Marker (8x10):** The bricks in Lakeside Housing Circle come from the David M. Ramsay Fine Arts Building on the Greenville Woman's College, a site later occupied by the Greenville Little Theatre on Heritage Green. The Greenville Woman's College was known for its phenomenal music and arts programs, and the Ramsay Fine Arts building, completed in 1922, was the premiere venue for cultural performances in the Greenville area.

[Small lettering, lower] Erected in 2018 by the university in recognition of its shared history, part of the Seeking Abraham project, with funds from the Office of the Provost.

**Bell Tower Signage (12x24):** The Furman Bell Tower is a replica of the Italianate icon from Furman's original campus, part of the building first called "Old Main" and later "Richard Furman Hall." The building was constructed in 1852 when the university moved from Winnsboro, South Carolina (the third campus site) to Greenville, and sufficient funds had been raised.

Vardry McBee sold the land to the university with a guarantee that an iconic university would be built on the city's prized bluff overlooking the Reedy River (now the South Carolina Governor's School, with Falls Park below). The structure was designed by Edward C. Jones of Jones and Lee, famed Charleston architects who also designed Old Main at Wofford College and many other historic structures in the U.S. South around the same time. To create the beautiful building, James C. Furman had to "ride the circuit" fundraising from Southern Baptists across the state who had made their wealth primarily through slaveholding, with a few invested in gold mining.

The clay bricks were weak and after inspection in the 1950s, it was determined that the old Bell Tower would not be able to be rebuilt on the new campus, although you can find the historic bricks in the traffic circle just behind you, demolished in 1964.

The replica that stands here still contains bells from the old campus. The bells were installed to mark the time to change classes, in an era when most students and faculty did not have a way to keep time otherwise. But another tradition started while the university was closed during the Civil War, when residents would ring the bells to celebrate Confederate victories. When Furman students returned after the war, they continued to ring the bells to mark athletic victories, following this Confederate tradition.

The bricks and mortar in the original Bell Tower and Old Main were dug, baked, and mortared, by enslaved and free labor. The Bell Tower is thus not only an steadfast reminder of the Renaissance roots and our liberal arts values, but also of the university's past injustices and hope for an inclusive future in the U.S. South.

[Small lettering, lower] Erected in 2018 by the university in recognition of its shared history, part of the Seeking Abraham project, with funds from the Office of the Provost.

**Richard Furman Benefactors' Circle Sign (8x10):** Richard Furman (1755-1825), namesake of the university, was an ambitious intellect, pastor, and persuasive leader of the Revolution against Britain. In the early republic, he participated in politics both state and national, and is most known for his Biblical support of slavery, that setup the foundations of the Southern Baptist Church. He pastored First Baptist Church in Charleston, S.C., and became the first president of the Triennial Convention in 1814, the first national body of Baptists in America. Our gifts and contributions to the university acknowledge his educational commitments and arguments for individual conscience, even as we struggle to create earthly justice and equality he never realized possible in his life."

**Richard Furman Portrait Caption (6x6):** Richard Furman, namesake of the university, was an ambitious intellect, who taught himself most fields of the liberal arts and began preaching at High Hill Baptist at only 16 years old. During the American War of Independence, he wrote persuasive letters for the rebellion that led British General Charles Cornwallis to put a bounty on his capture. In the early republic, Furman represented the views of religious liberty, the public participation of religious leaders, and Federalist position for a strong national government in both state and national politics. He became pastor of the First Baptist Church in Charleston, S.C., the most important Baptist church in the U.S. South and became the first president of the Triennial Convention in 1814, the first national body of Baptists in America. A slave owner himself, his articulation of the Biblical support of slavery were clear in the nineteenth century, even while he argued for the individual conscience, soul freedom, literacy and eventual emancipation for enslaved persons.

**James C. Furman Portrait Caption (12x18):** James C. Furman (1809-1891), son of the university's namesake, built the Cherrydale Plantation home that now serves as the University's Alumni House. The home was built for his wife, Mary Glenn Davis, who was raised on a massive white-columned plantation, Monticello, near Winnsboro, South Carolina. The home was converted from a simple farmhouse into the exquisite plantation home you see today in order to mark their status in the small-but-emerging Greenville community. The home, formerly located at Cherrydale Point, was moved to this location on March 7, 1999. The plantation was worked by 25 enslaved persons in 1860, and grew a wide range of crops at the foot of Paris Mountain, including apples and even cherries.

After serving several different Baptist churches' pulpits in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, James C. Furman's primary interest became the financial survival of the university. Throughout his life he "rode the circuit" to various Baptist churches and wealthy congregants' homes, to try to encourage them to give money, often in backcountry towns where education was not highly prioritized. With sometimes as few as two to four faculty, James served as professor of theology and rhetoric of the institution. He oversaw its transition from Winnsboro to Greenville, the purchase of the land overlooking the Reedy River by the denomination from Vardry McBee, and the building of "Old Main" and the Bell Tower.

[Second Glass Plate]

Despite all these significant accomplishments for providing materially for the university, James' views on race and slavery dramatically negate our ability to celebrate him. Hate-filled, emotional anti-abolitionist speeches helped to turn this area of the state from pro-Union to pro-secession in 1860. His students were let out of class to attend the lynching of African-American men and abolitionists. He threatened that losing the war would result in the slavery of white southerners at the hands of Yankee tyrants, and the marrying off of southern women and children to black men. This kind of rhetoric fed racial resentments harbored by poor non-slaving-holding whites, the predominant populace of this area. Even after closing the university during the war, seeing it lose most of its value, and seeing numerous sons of Greenville die, James C. Furman was unrepentant for his views, with area churches asking him not to preach from their pulpit due to his political excesses.

When the South emerged from the war, he worked hard to overturn Reconstruction politics for a white supremacist South and fundraised for the institution on a "Southern civil rights" agenda—that education was the only way to preserve southern honor in a devastated South. He also remained steadfastly opposed to women's rights and suffrage in the late nineteenth century, arguing against Mary Judson's course of liberal education for women. His portrait remains here not as a point of honor, but as an opportunity to learn history so that we might not repeat it. Furthermore, by being transparent with this history, we might rededicate this home to the generosity of the enslaved persons and Furman family members to this day who have given abundantly and selflessly to the life of the university, as well as to *all* who might enter this space and use it for an inclusive and equal Furman community.

**James C. Furman Stained Glass Window Caption (24x48):**

"Walked With God and Served Mankind?"

James C. Furman (1809-1891), son of the university's namesake, is essential to the existence of Furman University today. For the last fifty years of his life, James C. Furman built and oversaw, in various guises, the fate of the institution—its floundering in Winnsboro, its ascent to the beautiful bluff above the Reedy River in Greenville, its closure during the Civil War, and its struggle to emerge into Reconstruction and beyond.

His life should serve as a reminder that even presumably "good men," who serve the causes of education and spiritual uplift, can leave horrendous stains on the community they serve.

After serving several different Baptist churches' pulpits in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, James C. Furman's primary interest became the financial survival of the university. Throughout his life he "rode the circuit" to various Baptist churches and wealthy congregants' homes, to encourage them to give money to

fund student attendance, often in backcountry towns where education was not prioritized. With sometimes as few as two to four faculty, James served as professor of theology and rhetoric of the institution. He suffered through the disrepute of the institution in Winnsboro, where students drank too much and burnt the university to the ground, killing one student. He guided the board's vote to transition from Winnsboro to Greenville. He facilitated the purchase of the land overlooking the Reedy River from Vardry McBee. And he taught in the temporary structure known today as the "Old College" during the building of "Old Main" and its landmark Bell Tower, with fundraising over \$200,000 (or \$6 million, in 2017 dollars).

Despite all these significant accomplishments for providing educationally and materially for the university, and his talent as an orator, James' views on race and slavery dramatically negate our ability to celebrate him. He owned 25 enslaved persons in 1860. This might be a narrow commentary on racialized exploitation if this were all, despite the barbaric violation of humanity to contemporary eyes. Yet his hate-filled, emotional anti-abolitionist speeches helped to turn the upcountry of South Carolina from pro-Union to pro-secession in 1860. His students were let out of class to attend the lynching of African-American men and abolitionists. He threatened that losing the war would result in the slavery of white southerners at the hands of Yankee tyrants, and the marrying off of southern women and children to black men. This kind of rhetoric fed racial resentments harbored by poor non-slaving-holding whites, the predominant populace of this area. Even after closing the university during the war, seeing it lose most of its value, and seeing numerous sons of Greenville die, James C. Furman was unrepentant for his views, with area churches asking him not to preach from their pulpit due to his political viewpoints.

When the South emerged from the war, he worked hard to overturn Reconstruction politics for a white supremacist South and fundraised for the institution on a "Southern civil rights" agenda—that education was the only way to preserve southern memories and southern honor in a devastated South. He also remained steadfastly opposed to women's rights and suffrage in the late nineteenth century, arguing against Mary Judson's course of liberal education for women.

These facts were not hidden from those who eulogized and commemorated him in glass, bronze, and portraiture spread over our campus today. In the first University Founders Day, in 1920, a speaker praised James C. Furman, whose name would be placed on a campus building, saying that "He early imbibed the doctrine of States' Rights, and found the amplest support for the establishment and maintenance of slavery. . . . Dr. Furman believed in the Constitution of the United States and in its sanction of slavery, expressed and implied, in States' Rights and in the doctrine of secession as the logical corollary thereof." In other words, his ability to give logical merit to the economic exploitation already underway made him a hero, even into the nadir of racism in the twentieth century.

Each memorial representation tries to say something different about this past: that his Christian faith is more important than his works here on Earth, or even that his racism or hostility to social improvement warrant our acceptance or support because they fed his interest and power in education.

In October 2016, a Furman student offered her voice in the student newspaper that none of these reactions were acceptable and that the university ought to act forcefully and swiftly, especially in the context of the continuing violence and inequality visited on African-Americans by white supremacists. The University commissioned a Task Force on Slavery & Justice that researched this history and led to substantial recommendations for justice in campus landscape, university finances and scholarship, education, and community advancement. The project was called "Seeking Abraham," in honor of one of the freed slaves who worked for James C. Furman.

Artifacts like these are kept not to celebrate but to inform: to tell us how badly we can misrepresent our own past in order to advance our own, particular interests. And they serve as a reminder to examine our own lives, to overcome our own biases and prejudices, so that our own life's work is remembered in a better light



