

The Hewn-Timber Houses

Objective

Students will understand the living conditions of the occupants of the hewn-timber houses.

Procedures

1. Students will take a virtual tour of the hewn-timber houses using the CD. Class discussions of the lives of the occupants will be enhanced with down loaded pictures and information.
2. Students will travel to the hewn-timber houses and will write a story about the typical day of an inhabitant of either one of the cabins.

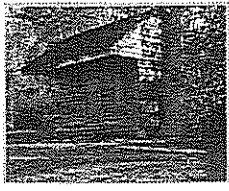
Evaluation

Stories will be graded

Source: [wysiwyg://15//http://www.fmarion.edu/~HTH/htb/p16.htm](http://www.fmarion.edu/~HTH/htb/p16.htm)



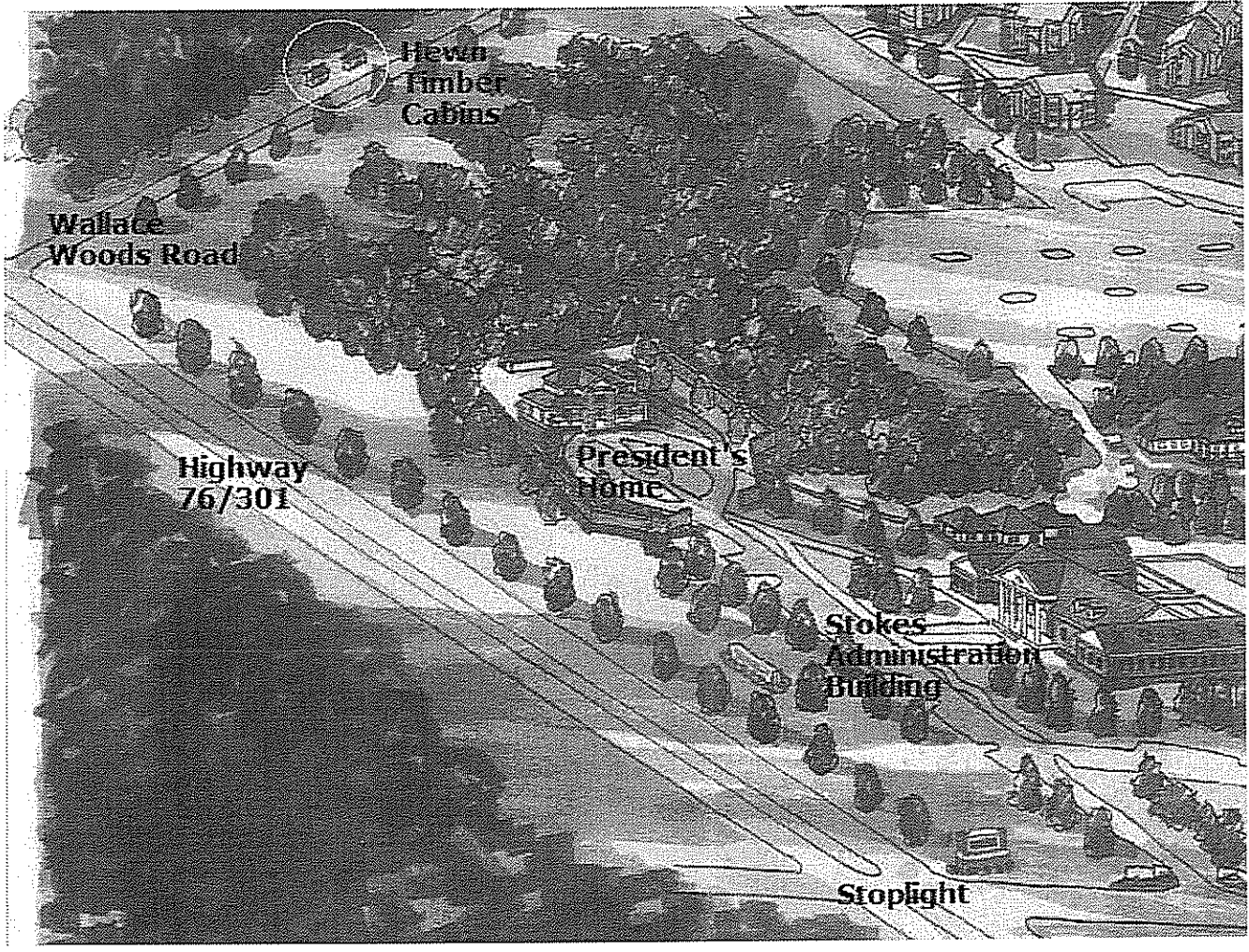
Present Location



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Figure 1. Map: Present location of hewn-timber cabins

The hewn-timber cabins are on Francis Marion University campus, on Wallace Woods Road, just two hundred yards from Highway 76/301.



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Ms. Catherine's House



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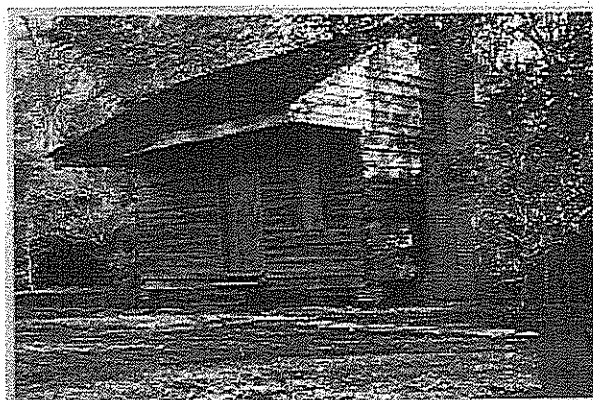
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Figure 2: Ms. Catherine's house

This cabin is called Ms. Catherine's because Ms. Catherine Waiters was one of the last people to live in it when it was a larger house, with two additional rooms in the rear. This photo shows it as it is today, returned to the size it was when first built in about 1836. (Photo 1997)



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Ms. Tena's House



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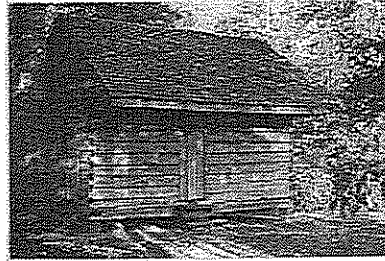
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Figure 3. Ms. Tena's House

Ms. Tena Waiters was one of the last people to live in this house, which was much bigger when she lived in it. This photo shows it as it is today—restored to its original 1836 appearance. The people who lived here in those early years endured the harsh conditions of slavery. They worked from daylight to dark. Then they ate their supper and returned to these cabins to sleep a few hours before beginning another day of work. (Photo 1984)



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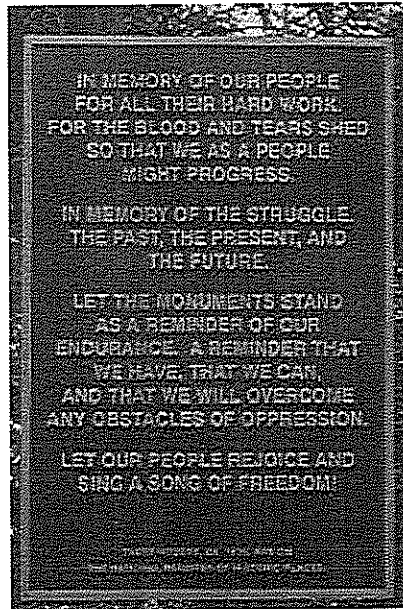
Sign at Houses



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Figure 4: Sign at house

Francis Marion University students held a contest to write a sign describing the significance of the hewn-timber cabins. This sign was written by Ms. Angel Payton of Mt. Pleasant, a 1993 graduate of Francis Marion University. (Photo 1997)



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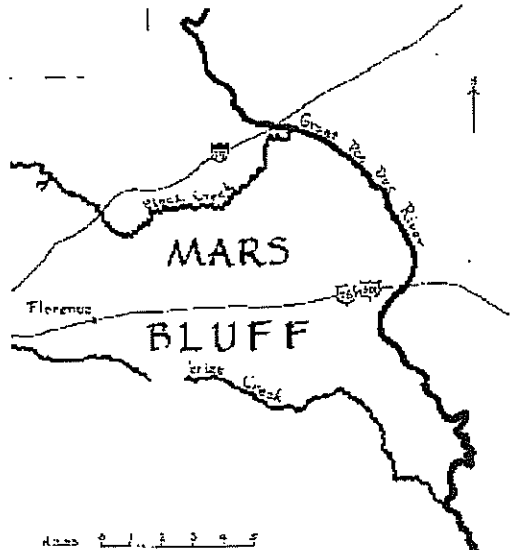
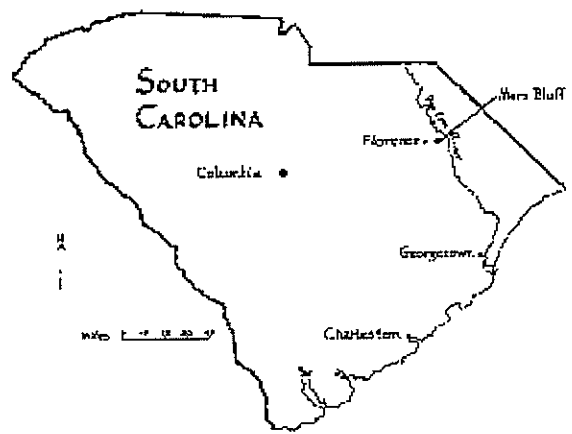
Map Showing Mars Bluff



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Figure 5. Map: Mars Bluff

The hewn-timber cabins were built in the center of Mars Bluff, a farming community that was settled well before the Revolution and became dedicated to cotton production after the cotton gin was invented in 1793. (Map by Dinah Bervin Kerksieck.)



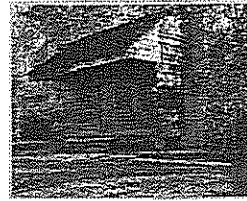
Maps courtesy of *African Americans at Mars Bluff, South Carolina*

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Amelia Wallace Vernon, *African Americans at Mars Bluff, South Carolina* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University, 1993). Reprint. Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1995), p. 13.



Original Location of Houses



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Figure 6: Plat: Original location of cabins

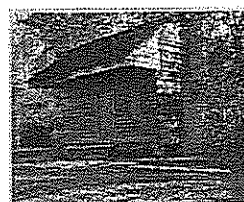
African Americans built eight hewn-timber cabins when J. Eli Gregg moved to Mars Bluff in about 1836. The cabins were in a cotton field on a sandy road called "the street" which, if it were still there, would run through the heart of Francis Marion University campus--from behind Stokes Hall, past the library, and through the gym. (Plat by R. A. Johnson, surveyor, for J. Eli Gregg, November 30, 1870.)



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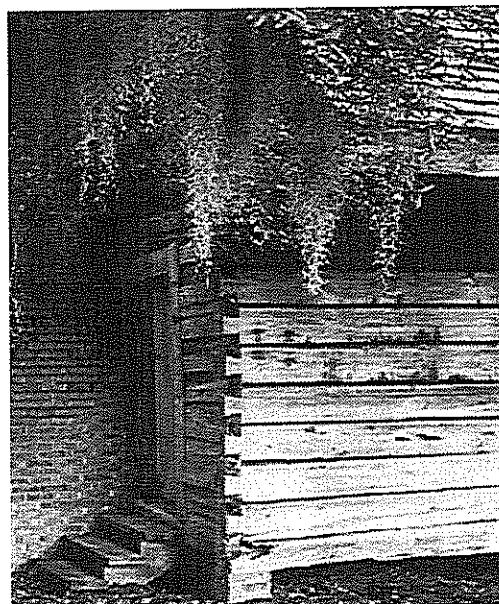
Dovetailing



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Figure 7: Dovetailing

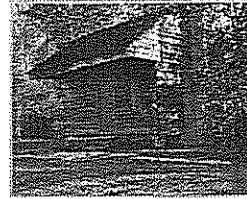
African Americans were brought to Mars Bluff to raise cotton, but in addition to raising cotton, they had to clear land and build buildings. The fine work seen in the dovetailing on these cabins is a testament to the builders. They obviously were skilled people who took pride in their work even though they were enslaved. (Photo 1993)



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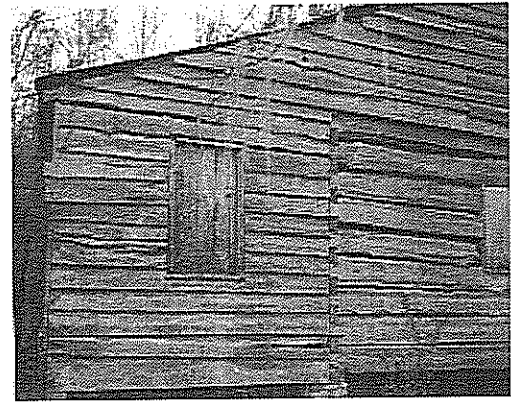
House with Addition at the Back



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Figure 9: House with addition at the back

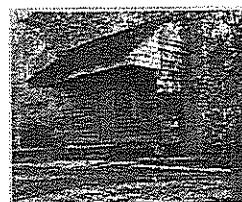
Emancipation brought few changes. The people who lived in the cabins were no longer slaves but they had little opportunity to move, so they stayed in the same cabins. In the years after emancipation, the cabins were moved to scattered locations on the farm and rooms were added. This photo shows the most common addition, a "shed room" at the rear of the cabin. This small addition was divided into two rooms, a kitchen and a bedroom. (Photo ca. 1970s)



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Alex Gregg



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Figure 10: Alex Gregg

The remarkable thing is that through all those years of enslavement and oppression, the African Americans led lives of exemplary dignity. This picture of Alex Gregg speaks volumes. After all those years of oppression, he still held his head in this proud way and his face still radiated wisdom and integrity. (Photo ca. 1930s)



Photo is courtesy of *African Americans at Mars Bluff, South Carolina*

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Amelia Wallace Vernon, *African Americans at Mars Bluff, South Carolina* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University, 1993. Reprint. Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1995), p. 8.



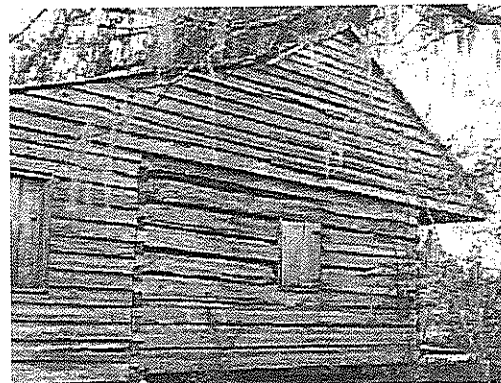
Ms. Catherine's House with Addition



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Figure 11: Ms. Catherine's house with addition

This house was the home of Catherine and Archie Waiters from 1934 to the 1950s. At that time, the house had four rooms, two in the hewn-timber part and two in the addition. In the early 1950s, the Waiterses moved from this small house to Ms. Tena's larger house. (Photo 1984)



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Ms. Tena's House with Addition



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Figure 12: Ms. Tena's house with addition

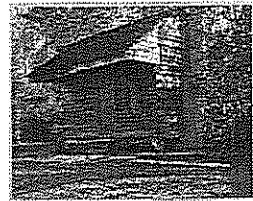
Ms. Tena's house is seen here behind the farm pond that later became Francis Marion University pond. Otis and Tena Gregg Waiters, Archie Waiters's parents, lived here from the 1920s until the widowed Ms. Tena moved away in the 1950s. This was one of the hewn-timber cabins that had never been moved from the street; however, several rooms had been added so it was more than twice its original size. (Photo ca. 1960)



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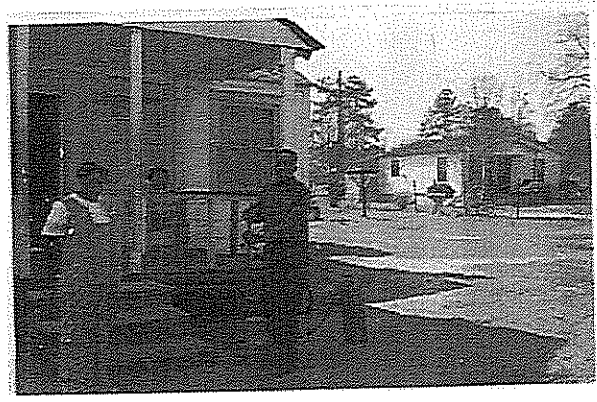


The Waiterses Bought a Home



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Figure 13: The Waiterses bought a home
 In the late 1950s the Waiterses bought a house of their own. The photo shows the Waiterses and their daughter-in-law at their home on Chinaberry Road, about a mile north of the hewn-timber houses in which they had lived. In the background is a neighbor's house. (Photo 1976)



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After Hurricane Hugo



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Figure 15: Ms. Catherine's house after Hurricane Hugo

The South Carolina State Museum, in the 1970s, and the Smithsonian Institution, in the 1980s, wanted Ms. Catherine's house, so it was moved to the south end of the campus waiting to be taken to Columbia or to Washington. However, in 1989, when Hurricane Hugo dropped three pine trees on the cabin, no one wanted it. Finally, both cabins were moved to the permanent site donated for them—repaired and preserved very near to their original locations. (Photo 1990)

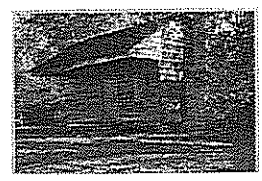


End of "History" section. Next section is "[19th Century Life.](#)" [Click to continue.](#)

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Gourd Dippers



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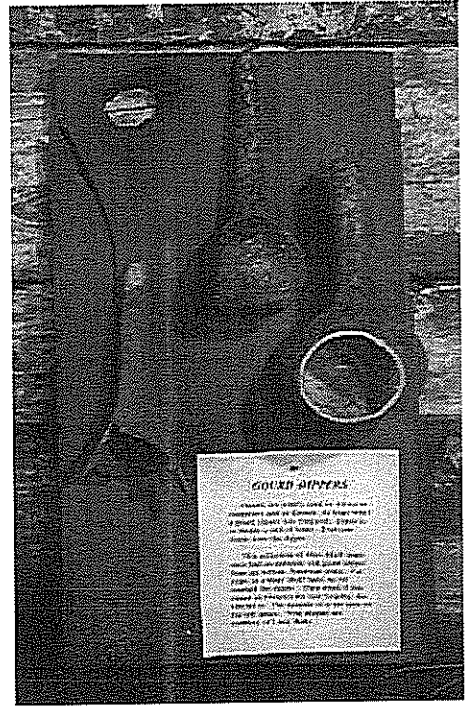
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Figure 18: Gourd dippers

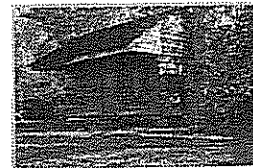
Gourds were widely used in Africa as containers and as dippers. This custom was brought to Mars Bluff and gourd dippers were commonly used for drinking water. The remains of an old dipper are seen on the left above. The other dippers date from 1994, courtesy of Lang Beaty. (Photo 1994)



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Well Bucket



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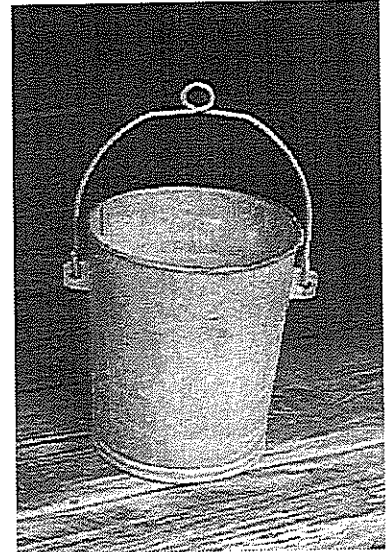
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Figure 19: Well bucket

This narrow bucket with the characteristic loop in the handle was used for drawing water from a well. Many early well buckets were made of wood. It is possible that in the earliest days all of the cabins on the street got water from a single well. (Photo 1998)



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Early Mattresses

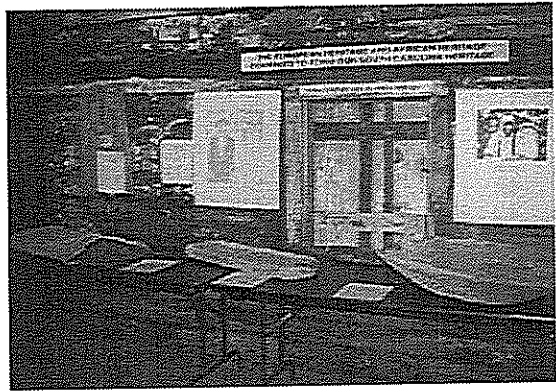


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Figure 20: Early mattresses

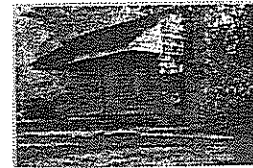
Mattresses would have been the earliest "furniture" in these cabins. Probably the first mattresses were made of bagging stuffed with pine straw. The burlap bag stuffed with pine straw, seen above on the left, was made in 1994 to show how mattresses were commonly made. Photo 1994)



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Food Trays



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Figure 21: Food trays

As a boy, Archie Waiters had seen, in Ruska Gregg's home, a food tray that African Americans had eaten from when all cooking was done in a single kitchen prior to emancipation. Waiters said that the trays were placed on either side of a long table.

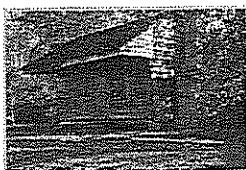
Here are three trays made in 1991 by Otis Waiters and Richard Waiters, attempting to reproduce the tray that their father had described. Probably the tray on the left is closest to the one that Waiters described. It is interesting to note that Charles Ball, a slave who was brought to South Carolina from Maryland, commented that he had not seen people eating from trays until he got to South Carolina. (Charles Ball, Slavery in the United States, [1836; rpr. New York, 1969], 85). (Photo 1998)



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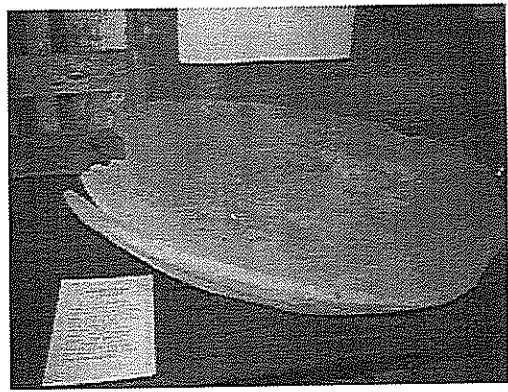
Wooden Food Container



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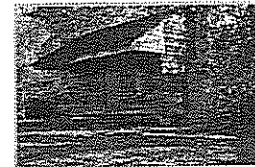
Figure 22: Wooden food container
 No one can say for sure when or for what purpose this large wooden tray was used. It is known to have been stored in Gregg's old dairy building since the 1930s, perhaps longer. Its size (24" x 40") suggests that it was used to prepare a large quantity of food. (Photo 1994)



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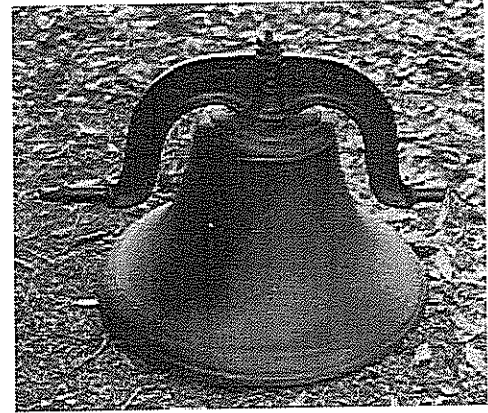
Bell



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Figure 23: Bell

This bell bears the date 1886. Even after emancipation, a bell was rung before sunrise, and the people kept on working from daylight to dark. Waiters said that it was not necessary to ring a bell in the evening because everyone knew to work until dark. Waiters said that this little bell hung in the back yard of the Gregg/Wallace home. It was used to call the overseer. The big bell that called the workers was at the mule lot and it could be heard for two miles. (Photo 1994)

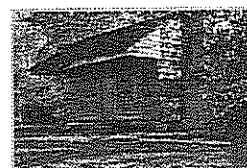


[This is the end of 19th century life. The next section is 20th century life. Click to continue.](#)

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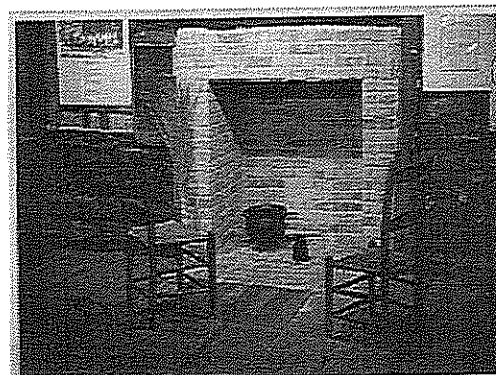
Fireplace, Pot, Iron, and Broom



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Figure 25: Fireplace, pot, iron, and broom

Ms. Catherine always had a stove that she used for cooking, but Archie Waiters recalled that, when he was a child, his grandmother Maum Florence used a pot like this to "cook in the fireplace—peas, collards, chicken, anything." Ms. Catherine made this house broom in the old-time way, using a narrow strip of soft cloth, tightly wrapped around the upper portion of the broomstraw. (Photo 1994)



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Table, Chairs, and Crate



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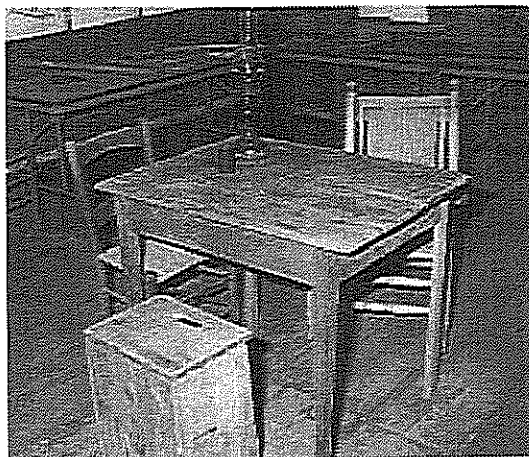
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Figure 28: Table, chairs, and crate

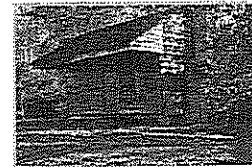
The Waiters had twelve children and not nearly twelve chairs, so some people sat on wooden crates. Fortunately, at that time, many things were shipped in crates, so sturdy crates were easier to find in those days than they are now. (Photo 1998)



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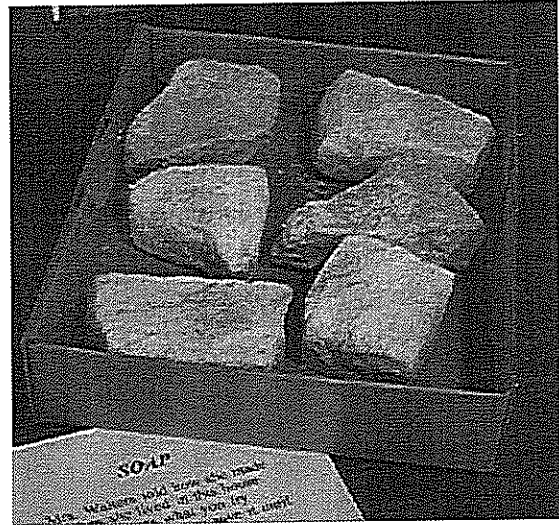
Soap made by Ms. Catherine



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Figure 48: Soap made by Ms. Catherine

Ms. Catherine told how she made soap when she lived in this house: "Old scrap grease what you fry chicken and fish in, you save it until you get a gallon or two gallons. Then you get four boxes of lye and just about three gallons of water and put it in the wash pot. Then you just stir it and stir it and it will jell." The soap pictured here was made by Ms. Waiters in 1994. (Photo 1994)

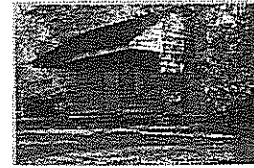


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Amelia Wallace Vernon, *African Americans at Mars Bluff, South Carolina* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University, 1993. Reprint. Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1995), p.60.



Wooden Trunk



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Figure 63: Wooden trunk

The hewn-timber houses had no closets and few places to put anything, so trunks--no matter how ancient--were prized pieces of furniture. (Photo 1998)



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