

THE LIFE & LEGACY OF HUGH CARR



RIVER VIEW FARM

Ivy Creek Natural Area
Charlottesville, Virginia

A LEGACY OF EDUCATION

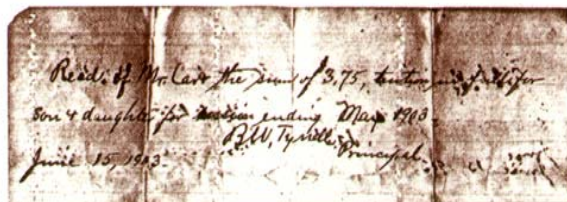
"Dad wanted us to have a college education and he saw to it that we did. He would have sold his cows so we could go."

Peachie Carr Jackson

Education played an integral role in the life and legacy of Hugh Carr. Having spent his youth in slavery, Carr's enduring dream was to see his children educated. Five of his daughters earned advanced degrees and chose as their life's work to "teach and lead their people". His oldest daughter, Mary Carr Greer, imparted the gift of education to African American children throughout the county as principal of the Albemarle Training School. Greer Elementary School is named in her honor.

Her husband Conly Greer taught both adults and children modern farming practices as well as principles of leadership. Carr's grandchildren went on to distinguished careers in medicine, education and administration.

River View Farm is now the Ivy Creek Natural Area, devoted to ecological education and land preservation, allowing Carr's dream to live on.



"Rec'd of Mr. Carr the sum of \$3.75 tuition in full for son & daughter for session ending May 1903
B. W. Tyrrell
Principal"
June 15, 1903

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For more on the Carr-Greer history,
please visit our website at

www.ivycreekfoundation.org/FamilyHistory.html



HUGH CARR

The Ivy Creek Natural Area was once the home of Hugh Carr, born into slavery ca. 1840 in Albemarle County. The earliest reference to him is in the records of the First Baptist Church of Charlottesville where, on November 18, 1860, Hugh was presented for baptism by his owner, R.W. Wingfield of Woodlands plantation. Five months later, the Civil War began.

Emancipation and the breakup of the plantation system at the end of the war in 1865 was a watershed event in Albemarle County. For Hugh, a young man who could neither read nor write, it was the start of a new life founded in freedom. On Christmas Day, just weeks after ratification of the 13th Amendment abolished slavery forever, Hugh, having taken the surname Carr, married 18 year old Florence Lee at the home of her parents in Albemarle County.

Like many former slaves, Carr hired himself out to local farmers, often receiving a share of crops in payment.

One surviving contract reveals that in 1869 he agreed to labor on A.A. Sutherland's farm in return for shares of tobacco, wheat, oats, corn, hay, fodder and potatoes. In 1875, Hugh Carr contracted with J.R. Wingfield to "give his whole time & attention & bend all his energies & exercise all the forethought he can" as farm manager on the Woodlands plantation. For one year's work, he was paid \$150 and provided with flour, bacon, corn and firewood, plus a house and garden for himself and his mother.

While working for others, Carr began to purchase land of his own. In 1870 he paid John Shackelford \$100 in "part payment" for a 58 acre tract that would form the core of River View Farm and that 100 years later would become the Ivy Creek Natural Area. Carr continued to add to his farm, acquiring over 125 acres by 1890.



RIVER VIEW FARM

Here, Hugh Carr and his second wife, Texie Mae Hawkins, lived, farmed, and raised six daughters and a son: Mary Louise, Fannie, Emma, Peachie, Hazel, Virginia and Marshall. For Hugh and Texie Carr, education of their children was as important as feeding and sheltering them. From their earliest years, the children attended the Union Ridge Graded School, a segregated primary school established shortly after Emancipation.

*is 31st day of Dec., 1913.
Hugh X Carr
mark.*

NEVER HAVING LEARNED TO READ OR WRITE, HUGH CARR SIGNED DOCUMENTS WITH HIS "MARK," AS IN HIS 1913 WILL (ABOVE.)



TEXIE MAE HAWKINS

They continued their education at Piedmont Industrial Institute in Charlottesville, which offered post-elementary training for African American children. When Texie Mae died in 1899, Carr was left to raise his young children, ages 2 to 15 years,

Working together, the family realized Carr's dream of education for all the children. Five earned advanced training or college degrees, becoming teachers and community leaders.

Hugh Carr's oldest daughter, Mary, and her husband Conly Greer acquired River View Farm following Carr's death in 1914. During their 42-year stewardship of the land, they expanded the farm to over 230 acres. After Conly died in 1956, Mary Carr Greer sustained the farm with the help of hired hands. Although she sold portions of the land in her later years, the core of River View Farm remained intact at her death in 1973.

Two years later, the Nature Conservancy bought the remaining 80 acres of River View Farm, recognizing its ecological significance in the face of encroaching urbanization. By 1981, with the help of the newly-formed Ivy Creek Foundation, the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County received a federal grant to purchase the property as well as adjacent parcels. Today, the 215 acre preserve is operated jointly as the Ivy Creek Natural Area.



LEFT TO RIGHT: VIRGINIA, EMMA, HAZEL AND MARY CARR

MARY CARR GREER 1894 - 1973

Even as a child, Mary Louise Carr shared her parents' commitment to education, eventually becoming a prominent educator in Albemarle County.



At the age of 16, she began a life-long career dedicated to the education of African-American children by earning a certificate from the Piedmont Industrial Institute which qualified her to teach. Several years later, she was able to continue her education at Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute in Petersburg, now Virginia State University. On return from college, she joined the faculty at Albemarle Training School, located near her home at River View Farm. At that time, ATS students were offered a basic elementary education followed by two years of training in either vocational agriculture, domestic science or industrial education.

Though Mary Carr Greer taught domestic science, she had further ambitions for herself and her students. She attended summer schools at Hampton Institute as well as Fisk and Cornell Universities which qualified her to teach English, history and government. In 1931, Mary Carr Greer became the third principal of Albemarle Training School and oversaw a period of both physical and academic growth for the school. During her tenure, she initiated a formal high school curriculum and pushed for the creation of a single city-county high school for black students.

A year after Greer's retirement in 1950, Albemarle Training School merged with the city's Jefferson School at the newly opened Jackson P. Burley comprehensive high school in Charlottesville. In 1979, Albemarle County memorialized Greer's dedication to education with the opening of the Mary Carr Greer Elementary School.

Cemetery

When Hugh Carr wrote his will in 1913, he designated a quarter-acre plot next to the house as a graveyard for his descendants. Today, three headstones memorialize Hugh and Texie Mae and Marshall Carr, and Mary Carr and Conly Greer. In addition, there are eight to ten unmarked graves and two obelisk-shaped fieldstones resembling African burial markers.

Field north of Barn

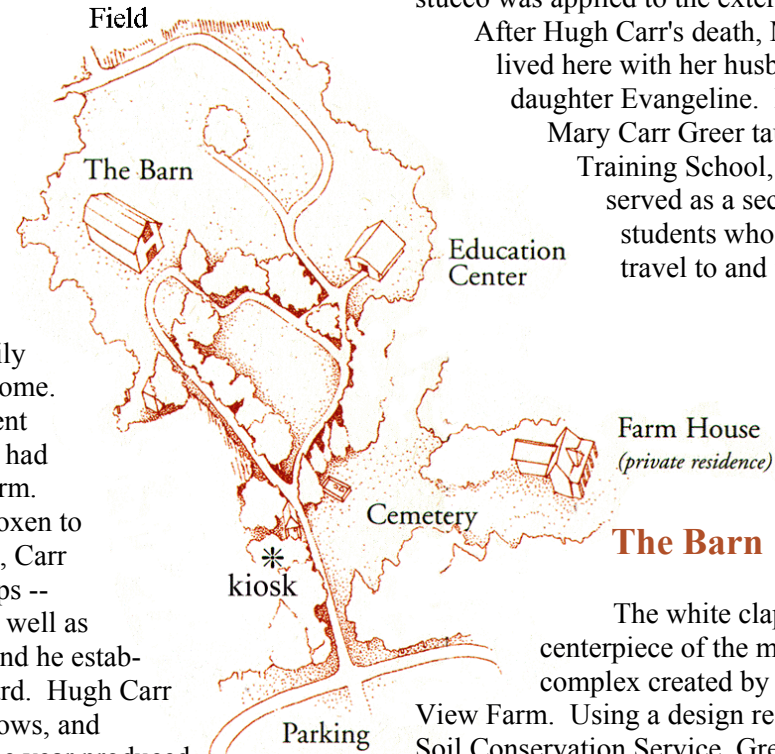
The fields of River View Farm provided Hugh Carr and his family with both food and income. Census records document that in 1880 Hugh Carr had a diversified 80-acre farm. Using both horses and oxen to clear and plow the land, Carr grew three primary crops -- wheat, corn and oats as well as potatoes and tobacco, and he established a half-acre orchard. Hugh Carr also kept swine, milk cows, and poultry, which that same year produced 25 pounds of butter and 500 eggs.

Under Conly Greer's care, River View Farm continued to produce corn, wheat, and hay to feed the livestock. Drawing on the knowledge gained as an extension agent, Greer applied the latest agricultural techniques, such as rotating his crops and paying strict attention to soil and water conservation in planting his fields. River View Farm became a model in the county and farmers visited frequently to observe Greer's methods. Like his father-in-law, Greer turned his fields with a horse and plow. He did not acquire a tractor until shortly before his death.

Farm House

It is likely that Hugh Carr constructed this two-story farm house himself soon after his marriage to Texie Mae Hawkins in 1883. The original house was one room deep, with a center passage and two exterior end chimneys. This plan, popular in the Upper South, was known as an "I-House." Over time, an ell-wing addition was constructed, and stucco was applied to the exterior of the home.

After Hugh Carr's death, Mary Carr Greer lived here with her husband Conly and their daughter Evangeline. During the years that Mary Carr Greer taught at Albemarle Training School, the farm house served as a second home for many students who lived too far away to travel to and from school each day.



The Barn

The white clapboard barn was the centerpiece of the modern, efficient farm complex created by Conly Greer at River View Farm. Using a design recommended by the Soil Conservation Service, Greer built the barn in the mid-1930s from wood harvested from his land and sawn into lumber by a portable sawmill. The barn has a center aisle that allowed horses to pull wagons the entire length of the barn. Flanking the aisle are stabling areas for horses, milking stanchions for cows, and a pig farrowing sty. Hay was brought from the fields by horse-drawn wagons to the barn, and hoisted into the vaulted second-story loft by a system of ropes and pulleys still visible today. ATS alumni still recall the large horses -- Maude, Duke, Haile Selassie and Queen of Sheba. The tin gambrel roof of the barn remains a familiar landmark to passers-by on Earlysville Road.

CONLY GREER 1884 - 1956

After marrying Mary Carr in 1913, Conly Greer brought to River View Farm a degree in agriculture and an attachment to the land that rivaled that of Hugh Carr's. Born in Crumpler, N.C. in 1883, Greer studied at Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute, and applied the knowledge he gained there to expand and improve River View Farm. In 1918, Greer was hired by the Virginia Agricultural Extension Division, then a segregated institution, as Albemarle County's first black extension agent. His responsibilities included visiting black farmers throughout the county to teach productive agricultural techniques and modern farming practices, such as contour farming to prevent soil erosion.

Through his untiring work with 4-H, Greer instilled pride in a generation of young African Americans, teaching them not only the practical skills of agriculture and conservation but also the principles of leadership. He particularly enjoyed having his grandchildren and nieces and nephews visit River View Farm each summer, where they drove the horses, churned butter and explored the farm.



Mary Carr (center)
and Conly Greer (right)

ON THE TRAILS OF IVY CREEK NATURAL AREA

HISTORIC ROADS

Throughout the natural area are the remnants of both public and farm roads, many of which led to the village of Hydraulic Mills. Look for the beautiful stone retaining wall on the **Red Trail** above Martin's Branch.

FREESTANDING STONE FENCES

Stones cleared from the land were used to build fences or walls. These often marked boundaries between fields or properties. The long stone wall on the **Red Trail** near the intersection with the **Orange Loop** is cited on several 19th-century land plats.

GREER LANDFILL SITE

In addition to his farm and extension work, Conly Greer made trips into town in the early mornings to collect food and refuse from University and Hospital cafeterias, which he used to fatten his hogs. Later, he contracted with the Monticello Hotel to haul away its garbage. One landfill is located just off the **White Trail** on a steep slope. Pottery shards and other artifacts may be seen on the land; please leave these in place.

FARM SPRINGS

Springs provided a source of clean drinking water and storage for perishable foodstuffs. To improve accessibility, springs were frequently cleaned out and built up. One example is off the **Blue Trail**.

OVERLOOK TO HYDRAULIC MILLS

A thriving mill community known as Hydraulic Mills was located on Ivy Creek at the confluence with the Rivanna River. Once a central commercial and social community for the African American neighborhood of Union Ridge, Hydraulic Mills is now under the Reservoir. There is an overlook at the end of the field off the **Blue Trail**.

THE VILLAGE OF HYDRAULIC MILLS

Hydraulic Mills, located just north of River View Farm at the juncture of Ivy Creek and the Rivanna River, played an important role not only in the life of Hugh Carr, but in local history as well.

John Perry built the mill in 1818, from which he supplied much of the lumber used to build the University of Virginia. By the mid-19th century, Hydraulic Mills had become the head of navigation for the Rivanna River, and the mill complex included a grist and merchant mill, a miller's house, a cooper's shop, a storehouse, a blacksmith's shop, a country store and, briefly, a silkworm industry. Farmers from throughout northern and western Albemarle brought wheat and tobacco to be processed here and sent down-river by bateaux to Richmond and beyond.

A devastating flood in September of 1870, however, ended river navigation in Albemarle County forever.

In the mid-1880s, Rawlings Sammons, a free black miller before the Civil War, bought the property. It became the commercial and social center for the growing African American neighborhood known as Union Ridge.

In 1966, the newly constructed South Fork Rivanna Reservoir flooded the junction of Ivy Creek and the Rivanna River, erasing all vestiges of this once vital community center.

