

Sarah Wooten—Lady Farmer

Online Exhibit Panel Project

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SCHEDULE 2.—Productions of Agriculture in
Carolina enumerated by

THE NAME	TENURE			ACRES OF LAND				
	Owner	Rents for share of produce	Mills for share of produce	IMPROVED		UNIMPROVED		
				Tilled, (including fallow and grass in rotation, (whether pasture or meadow))	Permanent meadows, pastures, orchards, vineyards,	Woodland and forest	Other unimproved, (including old fields, out-lying woods)	No.
<i>Wooten Moses</i>	1			30		180		
<i>Hood R. O.</i>	1			50		75		
<i>Woot Walker</i>	1			15				
<i>Hogan L. D.</i>	1			50		125		
<i>Boyd Simon P.</i>	1			20		12		
<i>Quattlebaum J. W.</i>	1			15	15	185	60	
<i>Wooten Sarah</i>	1			30		140	30	
<i>Boffman Bette P.</i>	1			60				
<i>Frost James B.</i>	1			15				

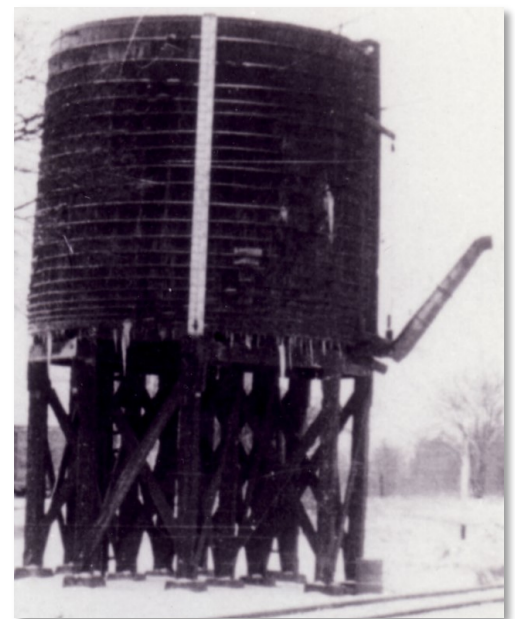
Historic records can reveal some neat things about Blythewood’s history. In 1879, the federal government made a census of all agricultural products being grown by farmers. Published in 1880, the Agricultural Census shows the names of early residents of the area, such as Moses Wooten, J.D. Hogan, Simon Hood, J.W. Quattlebaum, and Sarah Wooten, among others.

Sarah Wooten was about 39 years old at the time. Her husband Oliver had passed away in 1872, leaving her a widow who owned about 200 acres, 30 of them tilled (ready for planting). The crops she grew included sweet corn, oats, cotton, and sweet potatoes, which were the same crops as most of her neighbors in Blythewood. She probably also had a small plot for vegetables for her family. In the 1880 U.S. Federal Census, Sarah was listed as the head of the household, which included two sons and four daughters. Her children ranged from 8 to 19 years old. Farming was her occupation, and her two teenage sons were farm laborers with her.

There was an additional household member listed in the census. The Wooten family was white, and Sarah managed the water pump for the railroad stop for many years. An African American boy, only 10 years old and named Cloud Ransom, lived with the Wootens and worked at the pump house. The pump was powered by an ox and later a horse, so little Cloud may have attended to the animal. Since this is fifteen years after the end of slavery, it was likely an arrangement of work in exchange for room and board with the Wooten family.

Several of Sarah’s neighbors hired laborers, mostly African American, to help for multiple weeks on their farms, probably during the labor-heavy times of planting and harvesting. However, Sarah did not hire anyone in 1879. She relied on herself and her children for the farm work, with only one mule to help. Sarah also had a milk cow and six other cows, but that one milk cow produced 50 pounds of butter in one year. Sarah would have had to churn that by hand. She kept five pigs and 10 chickens for eggs.

Apparently, Sarah never remarried, and she remained a farmer throughout her life. As of the 1910 U.S. Federal Census, she was about 70 years old with two grown daughters and a hired man living in her household in Blythewood. She passed away in 1916 and is buried in the cemetery at Sandy Level Baptist Church. An independent lady who was rare as a female farm owner and water pump manager in the late nineteenth century, Sarah was an important part of the history of Blythewood. *Resources: Federal Census, https://peoplelegacy.com/sarah_elizabeth_hays_wooten-3z7h2j*



Old water tank in rare snow storm, photo by Hudnalle McLean, Sr., courtesy Jim McLean