

Silhouettes Enslaved People

Hagar

Along with Venus, Hagar (alternately spelled “Hager”) spent most of her life enslaved to William Blount’s wife Mary. Mary’s father Jacob Grainger left Hagar to Mary when he died, and historians believe Hagar served as Mary’s wet nurse. Mary brought Hagar into her marriage to William as part of her dowry, and subsequently Hagar followed Mary to the family’s new home in Knoxville.

At Blount Mansion, Hagar would probably have spent most of her hours attending to Mary’s personal needs, which might have included assisting with bathing and dressing, preparing the fires, and warming the bed with a bedwarmer. She might have slept inside the mansion, on a matt on the floor, to be available whenever Mary wanted her.

Upon William and Mary Blount’s deaths, Hagar, then in her sixties or seventies, was inherited by their young daughter Barbara.

Venus

Little is known about Venus (alternately spelled “Venice”) other than that she was bequeathed to Mary Blount by Mary’s father Jacob Grainger, and that Mary brought Venus into her marriage to William Blount as part of her dowry. Historians surmise that Venus lived close to Mary Blount throughout the remainder of Mary’s life, possibly in the now-vanished slave quarters on the Blount Mansion grounds.

Jack

As William Blount’s personal slave, Jack held an important position in the Blount household—though he remained in bondage. Jack was the only person to accompany Blount on his journey over the mountains from North Carolina to assume the governorship of the Southwest Territory in 1790. Jack’s role at Blount Mansion would have been much like that of a butler, and his responsibilities would likely have included serving meals, tending to guests, moving and setting up furniture, as well as seeing to the Governor Blount’s personal needs.

Jack was the son of Hagar.

Cupid

Cupid was a highly-skilled builder, and enslaved craftsman who William Blount hired out to construct bridges and structures. It is possible that Cupid directed the construction of Blount Mansion as well. Cupid was married to the Blount’s enslaved cook Sall, though their marriage was not recognized under the discriminatory laws of the day—and was the father of Nann and Issabella.

After William and Mary Blount’s deaths, their son William Grainger “Billy” Blount inherited Cupid and Sall. He sold them, along with one other slave, to another white owner on August 27, 1806.

Sall

Sall was the Blount family's enslaved cook—a difficult, dangerous job that required working long hours beside a fire in Blount Mansion's detached kitchen. Documentary evidence indicates that Sall was married to Cupid—though their marriage was not recognized under the discriminatory laws of the day—and that Nann and Issabella were their daughters. The family likely slept and kept all of their belongings in a loft above the kitchen.

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Nann

Nann was one of two daughters of the Blount's cook, Sall, and her husband Cupid, a skilled construction worker. The two girls probably worked alongside their mother, helping with cooking as well as housework such as laundry, housecleaning, and babysitting.

Issabella

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