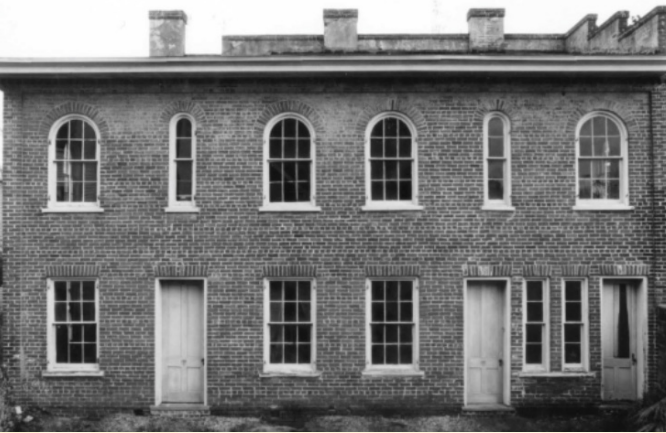
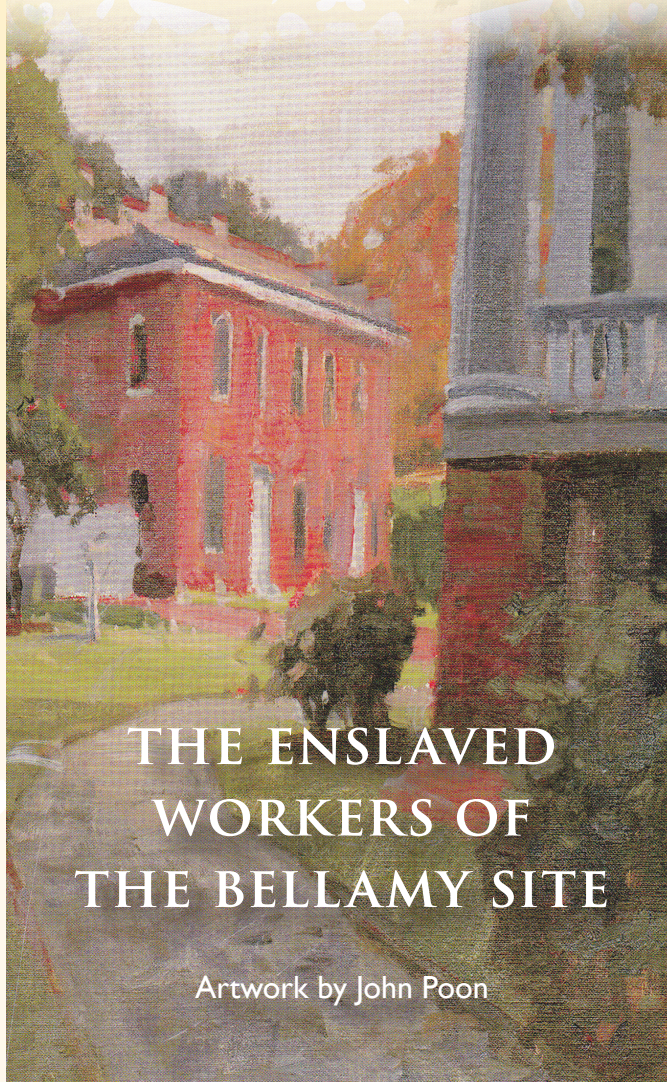


WILMINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA



The original slave quarters building, though now rare, was typical of urban slave quarters throughout the United States. A two-story brick building that is one room deep was common, but most slave quarters buildings were converted for other uses after the Civil War or let fall into disrepair and eventually demolished. The original slave quarters building at the Bellamy site underwent a complete restoration which was completed in 2014. The photograph above shows the building before the restoration process began.



## THE ENSLAVED WORKERS OF THE BELLAMY SITE

Artwork by John Poon

*“Sarah...our own old cook...had been left here in charge of the premises.”*

For more than 70 years, most of what was known about the enslaved men, women, and children who lived and labored on the Bellamy's Wilmington compound prior to the American Civil War came from *Back With the Tide*, the memoirs of Ellen D. Bellamy. She included the names and partial job descriptions of some, in quotes like the one above. When they fled the city in 1862, the Bellamys left as caretaker of their townhome Sarah, their enslaved cook and housekeeper.

Recent research efforts by Bellamy Museum staff have revealed biographical information about several of these enslaved workers who were previously only known by a first name in Ellen's book. While there is still much to uncover about Sarah, Joan, and Caroline, the lives of Rosella, Mary Ann, Guy and Tony are now better understood. Their biographical sketches are included here. The research also revealed two new names—Harriett and Charlotte Potter.

The help of organizations like Preservation North Carolina and the University of North Carolina Wilmington, along with the generosity of the Women's Impact Network of New Hanover County, has made this research and publication possible.



*This publication was made possible by a grant from the Women's Impact Network of New Hanover County.*



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## GUY NIXON

*"It was the duty of Guy, our butler, to pump [water] and fill that tank first thing every morning."*

**Guy Nixon**, born in North Carolina c. 1840, married Sarah Kelley (born c. 1846) on July 25, 1866. In 1870, the couple lived with Sarah's relatives in town, and Guy worked as a stevedore on the docks while Sarah kept house.

Guy was a literate enslaved worker, learning to read and write despite NC laws which forbade it. It was the discovery of his signature at the Bellamy site that revealed his last name "Nixon." After emancipation, Guy was acquainted with a prominent, white physician, J. Francis King. King witnessed Guy and Sarah's marriage in 1866 as well as bought property with Guy in 1876.

*Guy's signature on his and Sarah's 1866 marriage certificate.*

By 1877, the couple moved into a home on Market St. between 4th St. and 5th Ave., possibly in a converted slave quarters being used as a rental property. Guy worked as a porter and Sarah as a cook. In 1880, Guy was a shoe maker and Sarah was keeping house again. There are no records of Guy and Sarah having children, and no documentation of the couple is known after the 1880 census.

## ROSELLA SIMMONS

*"One of our women, Mozella, was such an expert spinner that her yarns were too fine and even for our looms."*

**Rosella (Rosannah) Bellamy**, born in South Carolina c. 1822, married Alonzo Simmons (born c. 1830) on March 29, 1866. Prior to emancipation in 1865, Rosella was the enslaved laundress for the Bellamy family. Ellen Bellamy likely misspelled Rosella's name in her memoirs as "Mozella."

Simmons, Alonzo	37	M	B	Laborer	✓
"Rosella	48	F	B	Laundress	
Potter, Harriett	18	F	B	Laundress	
Nixon, Sarah	42	F	M		
Potter, Charlotte	15	F	B	going to school	

*1870 census listed Alonzo as a "Laborer" and Rosella as a "Laundress."*

The 1870 census for Rosella and Alonzo, shown above, revealed two names, Harriett and Charlotte Potter, who were likely Rosella's daughters. Alonzo was not their biological father, but on Harriett's 1873 marriage certificate, she listed as her parents "Alonzo and Rosella Simmons." Wilmington's 1860 slave census listed three young girls as living in the Bellamys' slave quarters with the enslaved women, but the girls' names and families were unknown. Harriet and Charlotte were likely two of those young girls.

Rosella died sometime before 1880 as Alonzo was living alone on the 1880 census and marked as "widowed."

## TONY BELLAMY

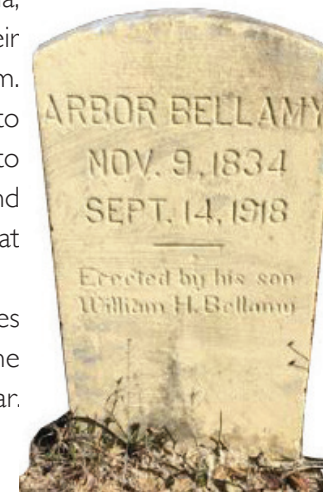
*"...in a little while my mother came with Tony, an old slave and handy man..."*

**Tony Bellamy**, born in North Carolina c. 1825, married Arbor Sullivan (born 1837) prior to emancipation. Tony and Arbor likely lived on Dr. Bellamy's Brunswick Co. plantation, and Tony came to Wilmington when maintenance was needed at the mansion.

Tony and Arbor had two children born into slavery, Kate (c. 1853) and Solomon (c. 1854) and three more children born after emancipation: Betsey (c. 1867), Sarah J. (c. 1869), and William H. (c. 1872). Tony kept the surname "Bellamy" after gaining his freedom which was not uncommon.

In 1870 Tony was a "Laborer" while Arbor was a "Laundress." By 1880, they lived on the 700 block of Red Cross St. According to censuses, several of their children could read and write, implying they received some education.

Tony died prior to 1889, and Arbor then moved to Philadelphia, PA, to live with their youngest son, William. Arbor moved back to Wilmington prior to her death in 1919, and she was interred at Pine Forest Cemetery. Notice the mistakes on her headstone including her death year.



## MARY ANN NIXON

*"We took none of the servants back, except Mary Ann..."*

**Mary Ann Nixon**, born in North Carolina c. 1846, was the only former enslaved worker of the Bellamys who stayed on as a paid servant for any duration after emancipation. In 1870, she was still living in the slave quarters building as a 24-year-old "house servant."



*An upstairs sleeping chamber in the slave quarters that became a servant house after the Civil War.*

Ellen's memoir suggests Mary Ann moved to Pittsburgh, PA, in the late 1880s to work as a nanny for the family of Wilmingtonian Nathaniel Hill Burgwin. The Burgwin family moved back to Wilmington after Hill's death in 1898, and Mary Ann likely returned with them. Ellen stated Mary Ann died in Wilmington sometime in the 1920s or 1930s at an advanced age.

A Mary Ann Nixon married William Jackson on December 14, 1871, in Wilmington. She was a "cook" who worked for Carolina Shipyard until her death in December 1919. There is no way to know for sure if she was the same Mary Ann Nixon who was a former slave and servant of the Bellamys. Additional research will hopefully yield more information about Mary Ann and the other enslaved workers of the Bellamy mansion site.