

# Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace

Juliette Gordon Low was born on October 31st, 1860—the second child of William (“Willie”) Gordon from Savannah, Georgia and Eleanor (“Nellie”) Kinzie Gordon from Chicago, Illinois. Juliette’s family enslaved a number of people before the Civil War. Though Juliette herself was only four years old when slavery was abolished, she carried many of the prevailing attitudes about race into adulthood and the wealth created by generations of enslavement provided her the lifestyle and leisure to found the Girl Scout movement. It can be difficult to acknowledge these disturbing facts about our founder’s history. Juliette Gordon Low was not perfect, but she cared about girls and created a girl-led Movement to help them grow into leaders who could change the world. The women who followed her furthered that vision to include the first Black Girl Scout troops. They fought to give every girl the same opportunities. How will you continue their work to make the world a more just place for all people?

## Facts about slavery in Juliette Gordon Low’s Family

-Juliette’s father-in-law, Andrew Low, was a cotton factor. This means he made his money by arranging the sale of cotton grown by enslaved people. This is the source of Juliette’s husband, Willy Low’s, inheritance. Her father also worked as a cotton factor.

-When Juliette was born in the house on Oglethorpe Avenue in 1860, the Gordons enslaved 21 people on the property. Eleven of the 21 were under 18 years old.

-After slavery became illegal with the end of the Civil War, the Gordons employed a number of formerly enslaved people as paid servants in their home, along with white servants.

-Juliette had family members on both sides of the Civil War. While her father and his relatives fought for the Confederacy, her mother’s brothers and uncles fought for the United States. In 1862, Nellie’s uncle General David Hunter (Juliette’s great uncle) re-captured Fort Pulaski for the US with the aid of Nellie’s brother Arthur (Juliette’s uncle) and issued an order freeing all the enslaved people in Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina. Lincoln later rescinded (canceled) the order.

### Additional Resources for Volunteers and Parents:

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/frameworks/teaching-hard-history/american-slavery>

<https://gpb.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/teaching-the-civil-war/t/slavery-abolition/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ain9g5Gsv98>  
(Two incidents of minor profanity)

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/home.html>

### Further Reading for Girls

***The 1619 Project: Born on the Water* by Nikole Hannah-Jones and Renée Watson. Illustrated by Nikkolas Smith.**

***Stamped (For Kids): Racism, Antiracism, and You.* by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi. Adapted by Sonja Cherry-Paul. Illustrated by Rachelle Baker.**

## Important Terms

**Abolition / Abolitionists** – the movement to end slavery or the people who fought to end slavery

**Bequeath** – to leave to another person as an inheritance. When slavery was legal, enslaved people were bequeathed as property.

**Emancipation** – the fact or process of being set free

**Enslaved person** – a person held in bondage

**Enslaver** – a person who held another human being in bondage, historically referred to as owners or masters

**Free Blacks** – people of African descent who, although not treated as equal to white citizens, were not legally enslaved

**Hiring Out** – when an enslaver leased an enslaved person to another person

**Industrial Slavery** – the use of the labor of enslaved people for industrial enterprises like the railroad, factories, brick making, etc.

**Inventories** – list of people enslaved by a particular person, usually for the purposes of inheritance, taxes, or insurance

**Manumit** – to legally free an enslaved person

**Pass** – written permission allowing an enslaved person to travel beyond their enslaver's property

**Plantation** – rural agricultural holding where enslavers forced enslaved people to perform agricultural labor for profit

**Plantation Slavery** – the use of the labor of enslaved people in agricultural production

**Self-liberated person or Escapee** – an enslaved person who has escape bondage, formerly referred to as runaway

**Slave Trade** – the capture, sell, or purchase of enslaved people

**Slavery** – the practice or system of holding human beings in bondage

**Urban Slavery** – the use of the labor of enslaved people in a city, including domestic labor, craftsmanship, or other endeavors

