

Beneath the Floorboards: *Whispers of the Enslaved at Marlpit Hall*



**Elizabeth "Betsy"
Van Cleaf, circa 1865**

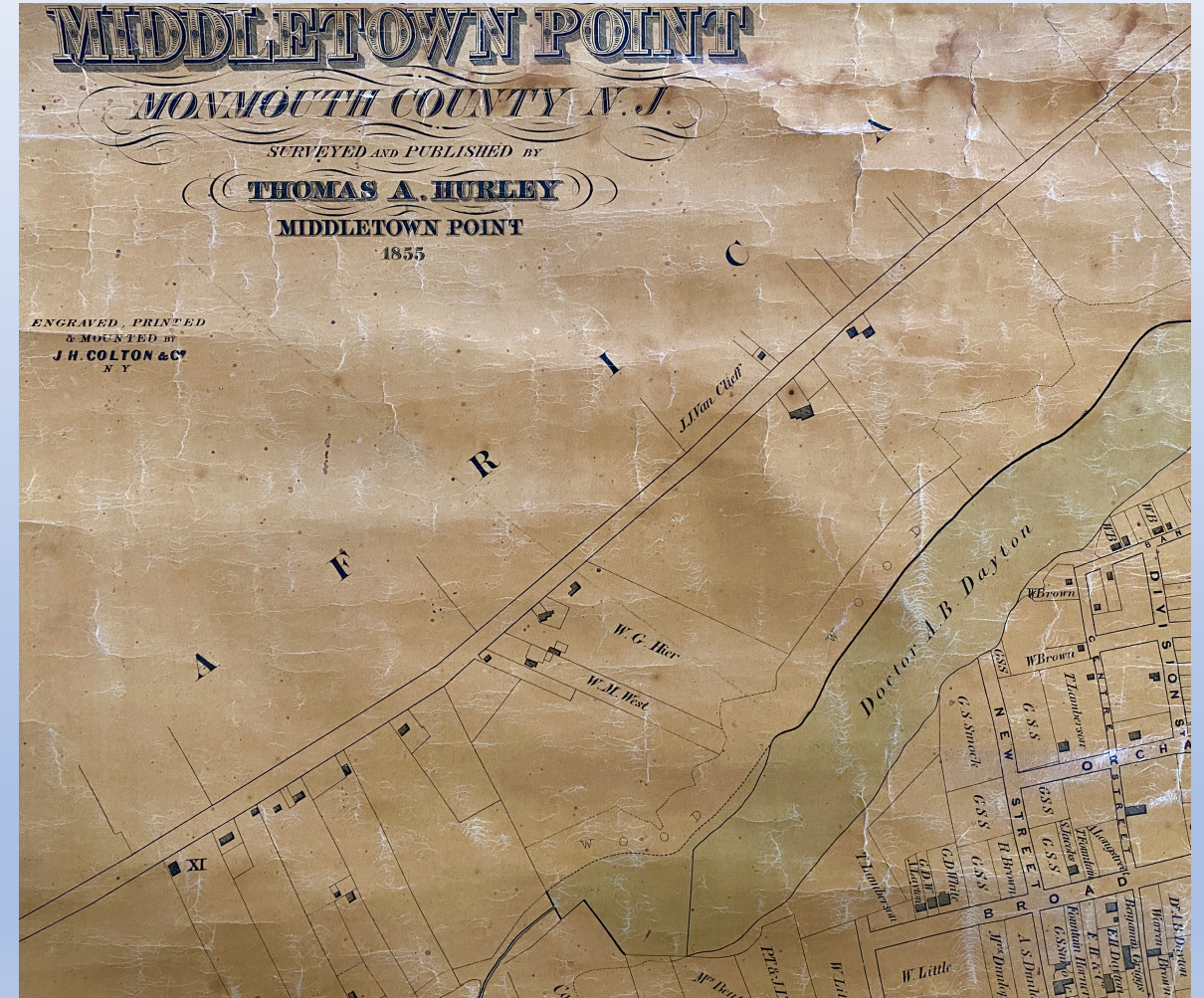
Telling the Narrative, at Marlpit Hall and beyond... (It Happened Here??)

KNOW all Men by These Presents that S. George Walker of Tracholt
In the County of Monmouth, in the Eastern Division of the Province of
New Jersey Yeoman, for and in Consideration of the sum of one Hundred
and Five Pounds current Money of the said Province to me In hand paid
and Received the Receipt & Delivery of these Presents, By Cornelius Covenhoven
of the County and Province aforesaid Yeoman, The Receipt whereof I do hereby
acknowledge & myself to be therewith fully & Entirely satisfied Contented
and Paid. Granted, Bargained, Sold, and by these Presents, in Plain &
Open Market; according to the just & Due Form of Law in that Case made &
Provided. Do Grant, Bargain, & sell set over & Deliver, unto the said
Cornelius Covenhoven His Heirs & Assigns for Ever, One Negro Man, named Thomas
One Negro Woman, named Jude and one Child — With all the wearing Apparel
Belonging to the said Negro Man, Woman, & Child, TO HAVE & TO HOLD the
said Negro Man, Woman, & Child & all & singular the Propriety & Appurte-
nancies to them Belonging unto him the said Cornelius Covenhoven, his
Executors Administrators & Assigns for Ever, AND the said George
Walker for my self my Executors & Administrators, the said Negro Man, Woman, &
Child & Bargained, Granted, sold unto the said Cornelius Covenhoven, his Exec-
utors & Assigns, against me the said George Walker, my Exec^{rs} and
Admin^{rs}; & Against all & Every other Person & Persons what so ever, shall & will
Warrant & for Ever Defend by these Presents; Which Negro Man, Woman, and
Child I the said George Walker have put the said Cornelius Covenhoven, in
Full Possession, by Delivering him the said Negro Man, Woman & Child at the Seal
Hereof, in Witness whereof I the said George Walker have hereunto set my
Hand & seal the Twenty Ninth Day of July in the Twenty Sixth year of His
Majesties Reign of Great Britain, 1752.

Sealed & Delivered
In the Presence of
Wm Williamson
William Covenhoven

George Walker

Bill of sale for “negro man Thomas, negro woman
Jude, and child” Cornelius Covenhoven, 1752



1855 Map showing community of “Africa” in
Matawan, NJ.

Slavery is hard history. It is hard to comprehend the inhumanity that defined it.

- Dr. Hasan Kwami Jeffries



Teaching **Hard History**

AMERICAN SLAVERY

(Teaching Tolerance – Southern Poverty Law Center), 2018

High School Students Struggle on even the most basic questions about slavery in America. Of 1,000 seniors polled...

- 32% recognized the 13th amendment as a formal end to slavery in the U.S.
- Less than half realized that slavery was legal in 13 colonies prior to the Revolution
- Few identified slavery as a principal cause of the Civil War. (Almost half of the respondents - 48 percent - said tax protests were the cause)
- Highest percentage of correct responses for any question was 67%

What are the Key Issues?

- Slavery Taught without Context
- American enslavement as an exclusively southern institution
- Rarely make connections to the present
- Even the history of slavery centers on the white experience



Family leaving Florida during the Great Migration, 1940

Beneath the Floorboards: Whispers of the Enslaved at Marlpit Hall

Middle School / High School Education Resource

Daily Life

The enslaved were deprived of freedom, but found ways to make their lives as meaningful as possible. Aside from daily work, they took comfort in their families and friends. They practiced religion, dreamed, danced, made music, laughed, loved, and formed bonds among themselves and the local community of free blacks and abolitionist whites. Read on to learn about the day-to-day activities and interactions of Monmouth's enslaved.

[Read on](#)



Deep Down in My Heart...

The Influence of African Music Then and Now

African rhythms came overseas with the first slave ship, and were passed down through generations of enslaved persons. Music was used for communication, celebration, in rituals and expressions of self. The most common type of African song was known as **call and response**. A singer would call out a line and a response was called back. This style can be heard in the music of today. Listen to the following audio clip to hear an authentic African call and response example, and then listen to the modern examples they follow. Can you think of any other examples of call and response songs today?



[Next](#)



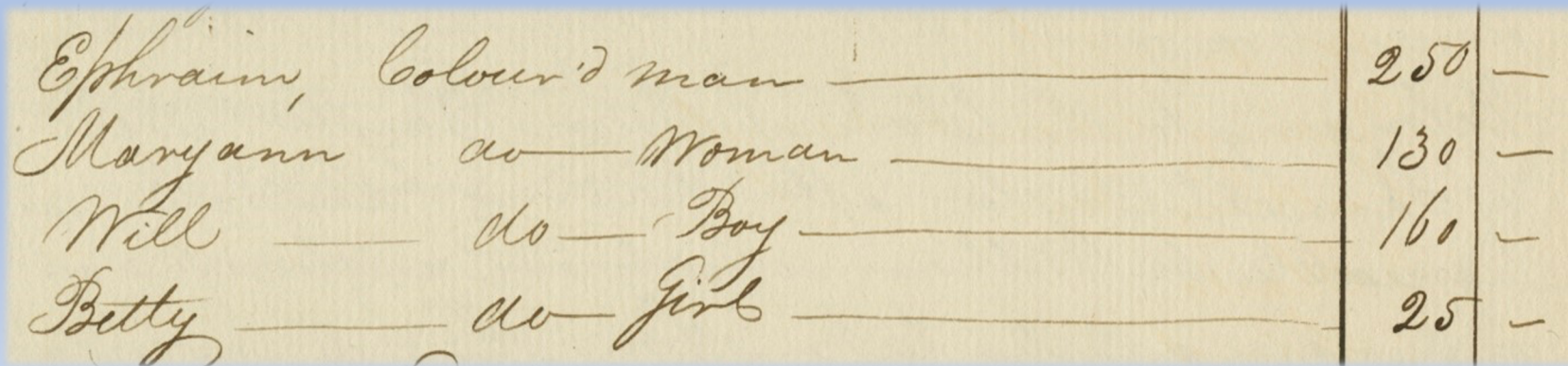
Forging Lives & Identities: “Everyday” Resistance & Resilience

- ❖ Cultural Expression: Language, Song
- ❖ Raising families
- ❖ Retained Religion & Spirituality
- ❖ Learning to read and write



Using Primary Source Documents to...

- Admit Limitations
 - Using the silence as a lesson
 - Not every story has to be groundbreaking
- Identify People
 - Names accentuate humanity
 - Emphasizing universals: love, loss, family, tradition
- Layer the narratives
 - Looking at objects and events from all perspectives



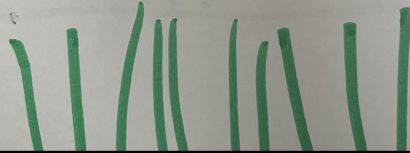
A handwritten inventory list on aged paper, likely from a family inventory. The list is organized into four rows, each with a name, a description, a numerical value, and a dash. The entries are: Ephraim, Colour'd man (250); Maryann do Woman (130); Will do Boy (160); and Betty do Girl (25). The word 'do' is used as a shorthand for 'do' or 'the same'.

Ephraim,	Colour'd man	250	—
Maryann	do Woman	130	—
Will	do Boy	160	—
Betty	do Girl	25	—

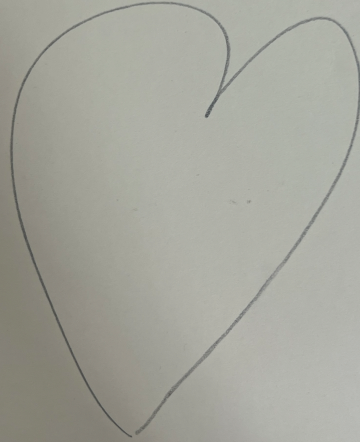
**Taylor Family Inventory of
Marlpit Hall, 1818**

Thank you for showing me
Marlpit hall! It was so
cool to see the place.
I especially liked the
upstairs. I wish I
could stay longer.

Sincerely, Austin

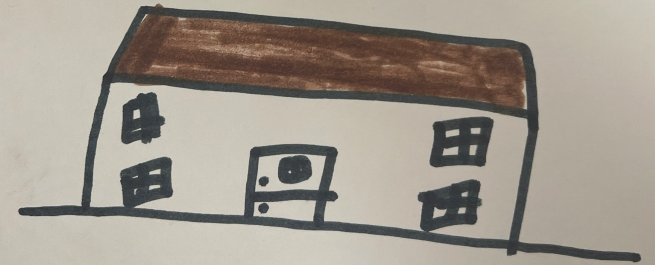


Thank you for giving us a
tour of Marlpit Hall.
My favorite part was when we
went upstairs.



-Kay, Gr. 3B

It was so fun learning
all of the cool stuff
at that house.



Paige R Grade 3



Thank
you!

Thank you

So
much



The Seven: The Mannequin Component of *Beneath the Floorboards: Whispers of the Enslaved at Marlpit Hall*

February 23rd 1840
Recd of Hendrick B Conover one of the
creators of John W Holmes the sum of seven
pence for mending shoes for the sick and
folk be long to the assiste Hendrick B Siches
8.00/6

Recd February 23rd 1841
of Hendrick B Conover one of the creators
of John W Holmes the sum of two dollars
fifty pence full for mken a tate hood
Cate for one of his Buland boys
\$2.50 Elisabeth Bennett

March 5th 1841
Recd of Hendrick B Conover one of the creators
of John W Holmes eight dollars & sixty two and half pence
for seven an work done for the peple that be long to
the assiste
\$ 8.62 1/2 Ellen Siches



...A Pair of purple colored trowsers...

Burlington, Luzerne county, June 24, 1794.

TEN DOLLARS Reward.

RAN away from the subscriber, living in Middletown, Monmouth county, State of New-Jersey, on the 16th of May last, a Negroe man, named Tom, 35 years of age, about 5 feet 8 or 9 inches high, well set, full face, large eyes, can read and write a little; had on, and took with him, a blue worsted coat, snuff-coloured velvet jacket, and fustian trowsers; said Tom has changed his name, and called himself David: it is suspected he is in Philadelphia, or between there and Newtown, as he crossed the river Delaware about three miles above Burlington. Any person who secures said Negroe, so that the subscriber may get him again, shall have the above reward, and all reasonable charges, paid by **DANIEL KETCHAM.**

N. B. He having drawn a 50 dollar prize in a lottery, which he had with him, by means of which he may procure other clothes.

RAN away, on the fifteenth of May last, from the subscriber, in Monmouth county, state of New-Jersey, a **NEGROE MAN**, aged about twenty-two years; this country born; a short fellow. Had on when he went away a short light coloured over jacket; a pair of purple coloured trowsers; an old shirt; old felt hat, &c. He has a remarkable scar on his chin. Whoever apprehends said Negroe and secures him in any jail so that his master may have him again shall have the above reward, paid by me

June 6, 1785.

JOHN TAYLOR.

BLACKLEDGE, in Plymouth township, Philadelphia county.

RUN away, last night, from the Subscriber, living in Monmouth county, East New-Jersey, an indentured servant man, who calls himself **WILLIAM KELLY**, he is a yellow fellow, part Indian, and part Negroe, about 40 years of age, a well made strong fellow, about 5 feet 8 or 9 inches high; had on, when he went away, an old beaver hat, a homespun light-coloured cloth jacket, under ditto of the same, striped flannel shirt, old leather breeches, old yarn stockings, and old shoes; has a large scar on the outside of his right leg, cut by a scythe, is much given to drink, and is very talkative. Whoever takes up and secures said servant, so that his master may have him again, shall receive Forty Shillings reward, and reasonable charges, paid by **June 15, 1769. JOS. SALTAR. §**

Lancaster County, June 4, 1769.

Reward, if not insisted, paid by me **JOHN MITCHELL.**

Middletown, Monmouth County, East New Jersey, Aug. 1, 1757.

RUN away from the Subscriber the First of January, twelve Months past, a Negroe Man, named Cato, who has since his Elopment changed his Name several times: Had on when he went away, a Pair of Buckskin Breeches, fine brown Linen Shirt, a plain made whitish Camblet Coat, dark Yarn Stockings, new Shoes, and a Wool Hat. He is a stout well set Fellow, understands Husbandry in all its Parts, an excellent Hand with a Scythe in Grass or Grain, speaks English as well as if Country born, and pretends to be free. Underneath his Right-shoulder Blade he was branded in Jamaica when a Boy with the Letters BC, which are plain to be seen. He plays poorly on the Fiddle, and pretends to tell Fortunes. It is supposed he has a forged Pass. Whoever secures the said Negroe, so that his Master may have him again, shall receive a Reward of **FIVE POUNDS**, and reasonable Charges, paid by **RICHARD STILLWELL. ¶**

Philadelphia, July 29, 1757.

street, shall receive Twenty Shillings reward.

RUN away from the subscriber, living at Middletown, in East New-Jersey, the 9th of January last, a Negro man, named Cato, alias Toby, aged about 30 years, a lusty well set fellow, full faced: Had on when he went away, a plain made bear-skin coat, with flat metal buttons, a white woollen vest, wool hat and cap, a brown tow shirt, buckskin breeches, wool stockings, a pair of pumps with large brass buckles; he was branded when a boy, in Jamaica in the West Indies, with B (and I think) C on his left shoulder blade; he is a sly artful fellow, and deceives the credulous, by pretending to tell fortunes, and pretends to be free, speaks English as well as if country born, and plays on the fiddle; it is thought he is gone towards the cedar swamps, and that some base person has given him a pass. Whoever apprehends the said slave, and secures him, so that his master may have him again, shall receive Forty Shillings reward, and reasonable charges, paid by **RICHARD STILLWELL.**

Philadelphia, March 22, 1766.

20 Dollars Reward.

RUNAWAY from the subscriber in the township of Freehold, county of Monmouth and state of New-Jersey on Sunday last the 20th inst. a Young **NEGRO MAN** named **YAF**, about five feet eleven inches high and stout made, of yellow complexion, about twenty years of age, had on and took with him a brown cloth coat a grey coat, a pair of blue cloth trowsers, a pair of tow and linen do, a pair of laced shoes, and a toram hat. Said Negro is addicted to drinking spiritous liquors.

The above reward will be paid together with reasonable charges, on delivery of said Negro to the subscriber, or on his being safely lodged in any goal in this state.

AARON REED.

July 23^d, 1826.

82-31.

From Scrap to Garment: Tom's Knee Breeches



Assembling the Garment Kits

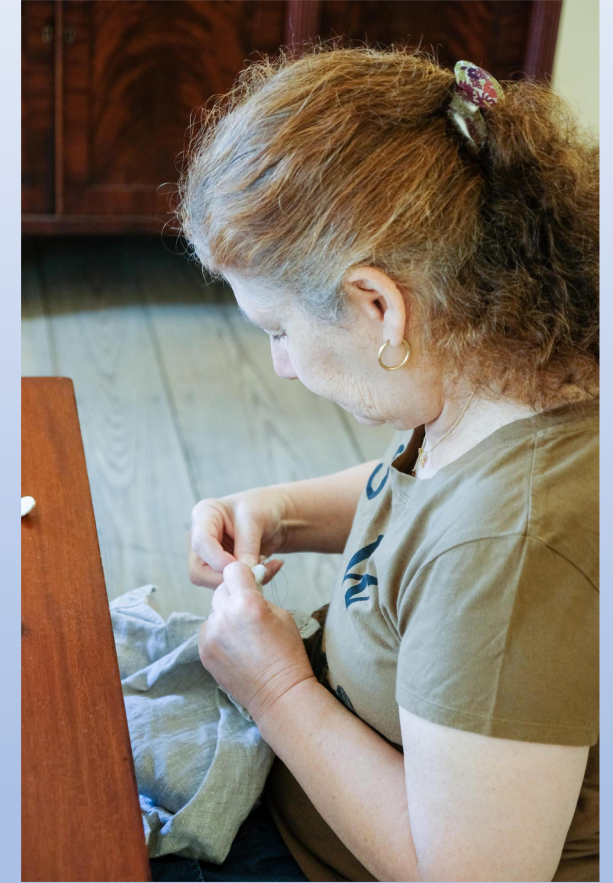


Dressing Day

Saturday, October 16, 2021



Finishing Touches





The Seven: from left to right, Tom, William, Hannah, Ephraim (seated), York, Elizabeth, Clarisse



**Members of the Monmouth County
Historical Association Sewing Group**

Shards of Jacob's Ladder: The Quilt by Michelle Lewis and Gloria Douglas



The Jacobs ladder pattern was used for this quilt. The colors selected were inspired by a box found under the floorboard in the room where the enslaved people slept. The box contained broken pieces of different shades of blue, brown and off-white china. Those colors were chosen to represent the enslaved people. Yellow was added to give the blues and brown some color.

This quilt was machine pieced and quilted by Michelle Lewis of Neptune New Jersey, September 2021