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UNCOVERING THE ENSLAVED PEOPLES OF LIBERTY HALL MUSEUM

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Abstract

The Department of History at Kean University and Liberty Hall Museum has started to research further into the issue of slavery on the property and the involvement of the families. This project aims to examine the letters and documents in the Liberty Hall Collection and the William Livingston Papers on microfilm. The information gathered will be used by professors, students, and museum educators. The Liberty Hall Collection includes 14,000 documents about the Livingston and Kean family; while the William Livingston Papers includes fourteen rolls of microfilm that are analyzed. Among team members, each document is inventoried that discussed enslaved people and was noted in a Google Doc. Each manuscript has to be read, noted, scanned and explained. While carefully following these steps, one begins to collect names and information about the enslaved people at Liberty Hall. This project is only the beginning of uncovering information about enslaved people on the property. By focusing on the language of the letters and carefully analyzing how people discussed enslaved people offers insight into how people interpret the inhumane act.

Keywords: Liberty Hall Museum, Slavery, William Livingston, Kean family, New Jersey History of Slavery, Untold Story

Introduction

The personal experience of enslaved peoples in America were seldom recorded. Too often they survive in the historical records of the men and women who owned them. People often know about Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, and Olaudah Equiano. These individuals were pioneers of not only abolishing slavery but also in telling the story of “ordinary” enslaved persons who received national recognition. History has ubiquitously been written in the perspective of the “white man,” and neglects to look at those who were in the background. While we know the story and life of Fredrick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, and Olaudah Equiano, there lacks recognition and study of enslaved peoples in Northern states, especially at Liberty Hall Museum located in Union, New Jersey.

Liberty Hall Museum is home to the first elected Governor of New Jersey, William Livingston. Livingston was a lawyer from New York who purchased the property in Elizabeth Town New Jersey in 1760. Livingston’s mansion was built between 1770-1772 and consisted of fourteen rooms. During the American Revolution, Livingston supported the patriots, served as governor of New Jersey, and would go on to sign the United States Constitution. After Livingston passes, he bestowed his son, Henry Brockholst Livingston, the property of Liberty Hall. Henry decided to sell Liberty Hall in 1798 to Lord Bolingbroke. The property would then be purchased by two other people before returning to the family of the Livingston-Keans. In 1811, Susan Van Brugh Livingston-Kean- Niemcewicz would send her son, Peter, to purchase the land deed of Liberty Hall. From this date forward, Liberty Hall Museum remained in the Kean family. The property would be passed down to the John Kean of each generation. The last

two residents, Mary Alice Barney Kean and Captain John Kean transitioned the Georgian style mansion into a museum in 1995. Through the transition of a family from Livingstons to Kean, Liberty Hall Museum underwent major changes. Today, Liberty Hall Museum consists of a fifty room Georgian style mansion with expressive gardens and nature paths. Although the house is overwhelmingly beautiful, one cannot help but wonder about the history of this historic landmark.

This research is dedicated to the enslaved peoples whose stories we hope to uncover. The goals and aims of this research are to understand and to share the history of enslaved persons on the property and in the Livingston and Kean families. In the process of analyzing this we will look at the 14,000 documents of the Liberty Hall Collection and the William Livingston Papers in the Massachusetts Historical Society. Methodologically, this paper is about how to recover the stories of enslaved people in family archives. Historically, it is about recovering the stories of enslaved peoples in these families and New Jersey. Through the family archives, one can begin to recover the stories of enslaved peoples and also see the transition of slavery during and after the American Revolution through its intersection with the Livingston and Kean families. The language and treatment of enslaved peoples will help to further recover the extent slavery was used not just on the property, but also served the family in other ways. This project is only the beginning of uncovering the truth about enslaved peoples at Liberty Hall Museum.

New Jersey History of Slavery

To begin uncovering slavery at Liberty Hall, one must understand the history of slavery in the state of New Jersey. The first mention of an enslaved person in New Jersey was from Sir George Carteret who specified his slave as a member of his family (Cooley 9). The earliest legislation on slavery was the Provision of 1668. This provision states that “any man shall

willfully or forcibly steal away any mankind he shall be put to death” (Cooley 10). This was to protect mainly the white race. Throughout the colony, local laws were put in place about slavery, such as West Jersey in 1676 by declaring to “be free from oppression and slavery” (Cooley 10). In 1714, the colony attempted to slow down the importation of slaves by placing fines of ten pounds per slave imported on individuals. However, this bill expired in 1721 and the importation of slaves continued to increase.

One of the largest slave ports of the colony of New Jersey was located in Perth Amboy. The earliest record of slaves being imported in Perth Amboy’s custom house was in 1726 with one hundred and fifteen from the West Indies (Moss 293). Most New Jersians treated their slaves as weaker servants and claimed they were an “important element in economic life of the colony” (Cooley 12). Another slave-trading port was in Elizabeth Town, New Jersey. Regularly, there were newspaper advertisements printed trying to auction off enslaved peoples. According to an advertisement dated April 27, 1752, Cornelius Hetfield of Elizabeth Town was trying to sell his slaves. Hetfield was a prominent member of the Presbyterian Church and president of the Board of Trustees (Pilhower 13). Hetfield’s advertisement stated “A likely parcel of negro boys and girls from twelve to twenty years of age who have all had the smallpox. To be sold by Cornelius Hetfield in Elizabeth Town” (Parcel). By including this advertisement, insight into the local history of Elizabeth Town can be viewed through the involvement of slave trading. By the year 1750, African Americans made up 7% of New Jersey’s population. In 1775, 10,000 Africans, who were enslaved, lived in New Jersey. Residents of New Jersey who owned enslaved peoples used them as farmers or housekeepers (Fryer). New Jersey struggled to diminish the importation of enslaved peoples due to the high demand and not producing adequate legislature.

As a result of struggling to reduce the importation of enslaved peoples, the New Jersey Act of 1786 was passed. This legislature banned the slave trade and encouraged the masters to manumit slaves between the ages of twenty-one to thirty-five without bond (Gigantino 73). Those that continued to import slaves paid a high penalty of “50 pounds for bringing slaves into New Jersey who had been imported from Africa since 1776 and a penalty of twenty pounds for all others imported” (Cooley 18). This act was the beginning of gradual emancipation in the colony of New Jersey. Although the act of 1786 allowed gradual emancipation, it also “levied fines against masters who abused their slaves...this section of law spearheaded abolitionists and helped the slaveholders defend slavery as they claimed that their slaves lived as a protected class of servants” (Gigantino 74). At the time of manumission, the enslaved person had to be observed by overseers to ensure they would become productive citizens. However, by including the fines against slave owners it allowed them to justify the use of slavery by claiming to protect their servants. Although this act seemed to produce a positive outcome for some enslaved peoples, New Jersey did not fully emancipate all slaves until the Thirteenth Amendment was passed in 1866.

William Livingston and Enslaved Peoples

But how did the Livingstons and Keans of Liberty Hall fit into this context? And what can their family papers tell us about enslaved persons in New Jersey? Looking at the documents of Liberty Hall, one can begin to make that distinction. Researching Livingston’s involvement in slavery was challenging due to the utilization of terminology in describing an enslaved person. The terms used to classify an enslaved person were “servant” and “negro.” While reading Livingston’s letters, it was difficult in determining the status of the person mentioned. This is due to Livingston referencing individuals as “servants” and not being distinct whether or not they

were enslaved. In a letter dated 1 May 1786, Livingston writes to John Jay and states “My Servant Henry...” (Livingston 248). By labeling Henry, a servant, Livingston made it unclear whether or not Henry was a servant or enslaved person.

However, one can suspect that Henry was an enslaved person by reading a letter to his wife, Susannah, on 19 February 1786. Livingston tells her that their “servant” “Henry wants to be sold because he could not work. I suppose that [Welksky] has been again at her old trade of carrying tales” (Livingston 242). By stating that Henry wanted to be sold allows one to infer that he was enslaved. Livingston did not end up selling Henry because a few months later he ran away. The same letter dated 1 May 1786, to Jay, Livingston wrote “My servant Henry has thought fit after stealing my eggs and oats for three months past to prepare himself for the jaunt to go this morning a maying. I mean that he is run away & has left me utterly destitute of servants” (Livingston to Jay 248). By reading the letter to his wife Susannah and Jay we discover a possible slave of Livingston. Within the same letter to Jay, Livingston was in search of another “servant” to tend to his farm. Livingston asked Jay if he could find a laborer to work for at least a month or so “at almost any wage” (Livingston 248). It appears that Livingston was searching for a new servant, possibly an African American, or pay someone to do his farm work. By reading the letter, Livingston seemed desperate in finding someone to tend to the farm and will pay any price. Importantly, this letter was written after the New Jersey Act of 1786 with the penalty in place for any new importation of enslaved peoples in the colony. Therefore, Livingston had to ask his close associates to assist in finding more “servants.”

A month after Livingston’s letter to John Jay asking for assistance in searching for another “servant,” Livingston wrote to the New York Manumission Society. The letter dated 26 June 1786 was the first mention of Livingston’s participation in the manumission society.

Interestingly, Jay, was a founding member of the society, yet was helping Livingston search for another “servant.” By assisting Livingston, it contradicts Jay’s purpose and involvement of the society because of using slave labor. Livingston wrote:

I would most ardently wish to become a member of it, and provided that I can succeed in this my wish, according to the rules of the society respecting their mode of election, I can safely promise them that neither my tongue nor my pen, nor purse shall be wanting to promote the abolition of what to me appears so inconsistent with humanity and Christianity, and so inevitably perpetuating of an indelible blot, with all the nations of Europe, upon the character of those who have so strongly asserted the unalienable rights of mankind...(Livingston 255)

Livingston’s reason for joining the New York Manumission Society was to combat the inhumane use of slavery. Although Livingston wanted to combat the institution of slavery, Livingston held onto his enslaved peoples until he died in 1790. This action contradicts his mission and reason for joining the society.

Although the differing perspectives of slavery was clearly seen in the political sphere; it was also an issue among families. By having opposing beliefs on the use of slavery between family members further proves the point that slavery was a difficult matter to handle. In October of 1787, Livingston drew up a “Bill of Manumission” for his enslaved peoples. In the bill, it stated that,

I William Livingston of the Borough of Elizabeth in the country of Essex & State of New Jersey, in consideration of my regard for the natural liberties of mankind, & in order to set the example as far as my voluntary manumission of Slaves, may have any influence on others have manumitted emancipated and set Liberty & Do

by these presents manumit emancipate & set at Liberty a certain Negro woman slave called Bell and also her male child called Lambert both born in my family in a state of slavery & do hereby release acquit...(294)

Although this bill offers prove that Livingston was planning to emancipate two slaves, sources such as *Lord Stirling Colonial Gentleman and General in Washington's Army* by Alan Valentine disagrees. Valentine wrote "William Livingston owned slaves when governor of New Jersey during the revolution, and was one of the few who, in 1786, gave them up for ethical reasons. He did not free them, he sold them" (Valentine 39). Valentine's statement raises questions among historians over what Livingston actually did to his slaves. In 1788, Livingston urged the General Assembly to draw up a document that enforced the manumission of slaves. However, he withdrew his proposal saying "times were too critical" to handle such an issue (Moss 298-299). In contrast to Valentine's viewpoint, Simeon F. Moss believed Livingston was personally disgusted by slavery and set his slaves free during the American Revolution (Moss 299). However, the letter to John Jay in 1786 contradicts this because Livingston was complaining of his "servant" Henry running away and was in search of another one. Valentine's work contradicts Moss's statement by saying and Alan Valentine's Lord Sterling's work also challenges Moss's statement by saying Livingston got rid of them after the American Revolution. These gainsaying perspectives produce difficulties in trying to uncover the truth. Livingston claimed to give up his slaves for ethical reasons. However, if Livingston did not give up his slaves, but sold them it goes against the purpose of joining the New York Manumission Society. By selling the slaves, Livingston placed them in someone else's hands to control their

life. To be an individual that promoted manumission and individual liberties and sold his slaves is hypocritical.

By 1790, Livingston tried to eliminate the use of enslaved peoples on his property at Liberty Hall. However, his daughter, Catherine (Kitty), tried to encourage him to purchase more. In a letter from Catherine to Livingston on 20 January 1790, Catherine was planning to travel from Baltimore to Liberty Hall with her slaves, Jenny and James, and was hoping for her father to allow them to come. She tried to convince her father by explaining their abilities. Catherine wrote “Jenny is steady & orderly, she is a good kitchen Woman, she has been my cook, washes, & irons well. James can take care of horses & work in the garden” (Catherine 413). At the time, Livingston planned on emancipating his slaves after he died. By reading this letter, Catherine did not follow in her father’s footsteps of ending the use of slaves but continued to extort their labor abilities. In another part of the letter, Catherine seek to convince her father to buy more slaves. Catherine wrote

you may depend on it you would live more comfortable with a set of sober orderly blacks then such whites as you are under necessity of hiring, I can sincerely say that it is you & Susan’s peace & comfort I have in view, & not my interest for I can hire out every one of them here & unless you dismiss your Whites instead of adding to your happiness I should increase your trouble. I will not make any arrangement respecting the disposition of any of them, till you & Susan have taken matter into consideration. (413)

Analyzing the family relationship and the varying perspectives on slavery offered insight into the struggle of society. In Colonial America, especially in southern states, slavery was considered a “necessity” due to needing laborers to tend farms and plantations.

However, looking at the Livingston's who lived in the northern state of New Jersey owning slaves was not a necessity, but a privilege. This was evident in Gigantino's work when he stated, "Slavery in the North never attained the same position in the economy as it did in the Caribbean, the Chesapeake, or the Low Country since the North remained a society with slaves rather than a slave society" (Gigantino 1). Northern states did not need to use enslaved peoples for economic reasons, but more out of convenience. By owning slaves, the Livingston's, especially Catherine, felt a certain level of prestige. Reading Catherine's letter to Livingston showed her attitude toward enslaved people by looking at her criticism of them.

Usually, enslaved peoples were not able to read and write. This brings up the question of how do we know about them? To discover the history of enslaved peoples on any property or area, one must begin with historical records and documentation. Livingston's involvement with enslaved peoples was proven difficult to discover. Since Livingston only mentioned "servant" or "African" a handful of times, one must dig deeper. The *Papers of William Livingston* on microfilm offered more evidence of enslaved people. In the microfilm, there was one document that discussed receipts and purchases. On one receipt, we see the list of items Livingston purchased. One item dated December 1771 was "one negro man named Dien" (Hyde). Livingston spent seventy pounds to purchase Dien. Also, within the receipts, one sees the documentation of Livingston purchasing clothes and food for his slaves. He wrote how much he spent, but not who specifically got it. Livingston's involvement with enslaved people is difficult to uncover fully because of the limited resources. The history of Livingston's enslaved peoples exists primarily in his letters and papers. One can infer Livingston's evolving attitude and beliefs on slavery by analyzing his association in the New York Manumission Society.

Kean Family and Enslaved Peoples

The history of enslaved people at Liberty Hall Museum did not end with William Livingston but continued with the Kean family. Liberty Hall Museum experienced a transition between the Livingstons and Keans in 1811. In 1786, Susan Livingston Kean Niemcewicz married her first husband, John Kean of South Carolina. At the time, the Keans were wealthy businessmen from slave trading and plantation work. Susan and John had one son, named Peter. In 1811, Susan sent her son Peter on a mission to purchase her uncle's property, Liberty Hall, from Thomas Setler. Although the deed was in Peter's name, everyone knew Susan ran the property.

Throughout the letters and documents from the Kean family, they used the terms "blacks," "negroes," and "slaves" to describe the use of slavery. For most of United States history and the rest of the world, identifying one's "race" played a key role in how one was treated in society. Those who were from the white Anglo-Saxon "race" were treated with respect and dignity (Orelus 574). However, those with the slightest darker skin tone were considered black and treated poorly. In Peter Kolchin's article "The New History of Race in America", he focused on David J. Roediger's book *The Wages of Whiteness* and stated "the white working class in the United States emerged in a slaveholding republic, its members came to define themselves by what they were not; slaves and blacks" (Kolchin 155). In an effort to bring more people to the New World, white Europeans became indentured servants. Indentured servants served for a limited amount of years to work off the debt of travel to the New World. The immigrant works for the colonist that paid for their voyage as payback. The immigrant can be sold to another master or exchanged because they are considered negotiable property. The indentured servants were treated with more respect than African slaves by being fed, clothed,

educated, and did not experience abuse. This was to help promote more immigrants to journey to the New World. Although indentured servitude was a form of labor used in the New World, it does not compare to African slave labor because it (indentured servitude) “was his labor which was owned and sold, not his person” (Jordan). To distinguish indentured servitude from slavery, one must look at the overall treatment of the individual, their “race,” and whether or not they were set free. This can be difficult to differentiate in historical documents because one’s status can be unclear. This was evident in Livingston’s case when analyzing Henry because it is not defined clearly what his status was, but one can infer. Although Livingston’s use of slavery was difficult to determine, the Kean’s family left a trail of records and evidence of slave labor.

Throughout the records of the Kean family, the status of Kean’s laborers was evident. To create a timeline of John and Susan Kean’s involvement of enslaved peoples, John will be analyzed from 1788-1795 and Susan from 1799-1805. Peter’s father, John Kean, passed away in 1795, long before Liberty Hall was purchased by Susan. However, the history of enslaved persons at Liberty Hall in the Kean era must begin with Kean slave ownership in South Carolina. Indeed, through the countless letters and documents sent from John to Susan, one can begin to uncover the names of slaves and how involved the family was in the use of slavery. In Jonathan Mercantini’s article “John and Susan Kean And the Culture of Slavery in the New Nation,” he writes “As a member of South Carolina’s political and economic elite, John Kean owned slaves; indeed, by definition, he had to” (Mercantini). John Kean was too young to remember his biological father because he passed when John was only two years old. Samuel Grove, who was Kean’s stepfather, owned a merchant firm (Mercantini). When Samuel Grove died in 1788, Kean inherited one hundred and sixteen slaves; however, Kean owned slaves before 1788. In 1778, Kean purchased twenty-six slaves from John F. Grimke of South Carolina for \$15,000. The

names of the enslaved people include: Cato, Sampson, Guinea Peter, September, June, Eoinborough, Sancho, December, Primus, Oera, Losher, Kate, Abby, Flora, Minna, Moll, Peter, Venus, Lettice Doll, Hannah, Ben, Joe, Venus, Maricane, and Bess (Mercantini). Unlike the evidence of enslaved people for Livingston, Kean provided a detailed record of his involvement with enslaved peoples.

One of the most interesting documents of the Liberty Hall Collection is the Bill of Lumber in the unknown year of the 1700s. On one side of the document, we see how much Kean paid for lumber. However, on the other side, Kean provided a detailed account of his slaves. He wrote how many were sold, dead, remained, and how many gave birth. The name of the remaining slaves includes: Scipio, Clarinda, Flora, Phillis, Dinah, Sam, Abram, Phebe, Cloe, Tisse, Grace, Phaber, Patty, Cretia, Will, Dye. The women slaves that gave birth included Flora (2), Dinah (2), Cloe (1), Grace (4), Phaber (1), and Cretia (4) (Bill of Lumber). On the top left corner of the document, John has a count of ten slaves sold and four dead. If one looked closely at the bottom of the left corner, one sees more calculations of how many were sold and left. At one point, it appears that John Kean had sixty-two slaves, but possibly had to sell them for financial reasons. Also, John could have kept coming back to this document and calculate his enslaved peoples.

One enslaved person that appeared in various letters between John and Susan was Cesar. Cesar was the son of Celia, a slave that John owned. Celia performed various housekeeping tasks, while Cesar was out in the fields. On 9 December 1787, John Kean writes to Susan “Mr. Caesar behaves tolerably well, I have not been obliged to flog him above a half dozen times” (Kean). This letter exposes the harsh reality of the treatment of slaves. The term “flogging” means to be hit repeatedly with a whip or stick. In the process of uncovering the untold story of

enslaved peoples, this is an important component to bring into perspective because it sheds light on the type of exposure the people had. In movies such as *12 Years a Slave*, the audience sees how owners whipped and degraded their slaves. In *12 Years a Slave*, one sees the slave being whipped and feels sorry for the person, but there is more behind the scenes. In the letter exchanged between John and Susan Kean, one sees the tone of the owner toward their slave. John Kean complained about Caesar's poor behavior and how he constantly needs to be punished. This adds to the harsh reality of the extent enslaved people had to live with.

It is important to recognize the type of business that not only John was associated with, but also Susan. According to Dr. Jonathan Mercantini, "A preliminary search through her [Susan] personal correspondence and business records reveals a woman who was fiercely independent. Slavery helped her maintain that independence" (Mercantini). After John Kean's death, Susan Livingston Kean Niemcewicz continued to use the labor of enslaved peoples in the state of New Jersey. In 1799, Susan purchased two slaves from Robinson Thomas. The bill of sale states "the Township of Elizabeth state of New Jersey for the sum of one hundred and seventy five dollars, in hand paid, have and do bargain and sold, to Susan Kane, he Executors Administrators and Signs, a Black woman by the name of Betty, with a child about nine months old, to have and to hold, to her...." (Robinson). Although Susan purchased the two enslaved peoples before they move to Liberty Hall, it showed that even women were involved in the business. Susan would go on to purchase other slaves, such as Sarah, a boy and girl with no names, and Eve. In the Liberty Hall Collection, the year 1805 was supposedly the last time Susan purchased a slave, Eve, before moving to Liberty Hall.

After John Kean passed away in 1795, Susan married a Polish count by the name of Julian Ursin Niemcewicz in 1800. In Gigantino's work, slavery was essential to Susan, and

“Niemcewicz remained puzzled as to slavery’s place in American society” (Gigantino 64). Niemcewicz thought that after the American Revolution, everyone would have the inalienable rights and freedoms promised in the *Declaration of Independence*. Niemcewicz questioned American’s support of slavery in a “free and democratic republic” (Gigantino 64). Susan’s use of enslaved people opposes Niemcewicz’s anti-slavery attitude. Niemcewicz’s view on the institution of slavery makes one question how did he overlook Susan’s use of enslaved peoples when he married her?

During the time of Livingston, sources question whether or not he freed his slaves or sold them when he passed. However, during Susan’s time, there is evidence of her granting “freedom” to two of her slaves. In 1804 the state of New Jersey began to enact gradual emancipation laws. The law stated that slaves born after 1804 were guaranteed freedom at the age of twenty-one for females and twenty-five for males. Among the documents in the Liberty Hall Collection, on 5 May 1829, Susan drew up a bill of emancipation for Peter and Sarah Van Horne (Niemcewicz). Peter and Sarah Van Horne were allowed “freedom,” but had to continue working for Susan. Susan stated Peter and Sarah Van Horne will be paid a salary of \$100 each year (Mercantini). The lives of Peter and Sarah Van Horne did not experience the freedom they would have hoped for. They still had to tend to Liberty Hall’s land and perform various tasks for Susan. Mercantini argued that Susan was “act[in] in spirit of the law” (Mercantini). In comparison to Livingston, it was difficult to determine the life of his enslaved peoples after his death. However, Susan offers a clear thought of what happened to her enslaved people after emancipation laws were put in place.

Conclusions

Throughout this research, difficulties arose in uncovering the history of enslaved people in family archives. The time of Livingston was challenging in determining the status of enslaved people. One can observe this in the various letters and documents Livingston left behind. A dominant factor that played into uncovering Livingston's use of enslaved people was him residing in the northern states. Due to Livingston's location, enslaved peoples were not used at the capacity of southern states. Also, Livingston's terminology impacted the research by using phrases such as "servant" and "negro" only a handful of times throughout his letters and papers. This can be seen in the letter to John Jay dated 1 May 1786 discussing Livingston's "servant" Henry. Livingston made it difficult to differentiate the status of Henry because we did not know what his "race" was. Henry could have been a white indentured servant or an enslaved person. However, one can infer the status of Henry when Livingston stated that he ran away. By analyzing this statement, one can suggest that Henry was an enslaved person. Livingston also proved to be a contradiction in his support of manumission and owning slaves. Livingston did join the New York Manumission Society and was an advocate of emancipation for the enslaved peoples, but at the same time, Livingston owned slaves. This contradiction sends a mixed message of who Livingston was. Was Livingston another paradox of the American Revolution and values of freedom? Or did he genuinely want to emancipate the slaves? These questions are still raised after this research was conducted.

In comparison to Livingston, John and Susan Kean were the opposite. John, who was born and raised in South Carolina partly made his wealth in the slave-trading business. Susan would follow in John's footsteps because she realized the value of enslaved people's labor. The Kean family provided the status of their "servants" by using the terms "negro" and "black" to describe them. The Kean family provided insight into the difference between southern and

northern slavery by looking at the terminology, treatment, and use of the enslaved people. This can be viewed in the letters John sent to Susan describing Cesar's punishment of being flogged. Livingston did not note how he reprimanded his enslaved peoples, while the Kears did.

Liberty Hall Museum contributes a growing perspective of those who were enslaved not only on the property but also the history within the families. The history of the property and Elizabeth Town (modern-day Union, NJ) brings awareness to the enslaved people that were not able to document their experience. While this research was only the beginning of the story of enslaved peoples of the Livingstons and Kears, there is more that needs to be uncovered. Comparing the Livingstons and Kears' involvement in slavery allows one to analyze the different viewpoints of enslaved people. To further the research of enslaved people at Liberty Hall Museum one should continue digging deeper into the Livingston and Kears family history. One should begin by researching the exact number of slaves Livingston owned because it is still in question. This information can be gathered by looking at the Essex County archives and will help provide more insight into Livingstons involvement with enslaved peoples while living at Liberty Hall Museum. To continue the analysis of the Kears' use of slavery, one can look at the family connections in South Carolina after John passes. In the Liberty Hall Collection, there are letters between Thomas Grimke and Peter Kears after John passes that can provide more perception into the relationship of enslaved peoples. Although the Livingstons and Kears have different attitudes and beliefs on the institution of slavery, using family and state history allows one to begin to uncover the untold unwritten perspective of enslaved peoples.

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