claire- Sall and WBH

Sun, 9/13 7:56AM • 6:12

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

tavern, elizabeth, sall, enslaved, brown, william, sal, slept, household, room, work, forced, susanna, cooking, loan, experiences, floor, carpentry shop, running, guests

00:04

By the 1760s

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William Brown had a number of businesses,

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a carpenter shop

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in which furniture was made for neighboring colonists,

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a ferry that transported people

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and goods back and forth

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across the South River to Annapolis,

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and a tavern where people could spend the night,

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eat, drink and play games.

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Sall and Elizabeth were two girls

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who lived and worked here.

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They had very different experiences

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of life in Brown's tavern.

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We have no surviving portraits of either girl,

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so we've chosen to represent them

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with this portrait of a different household.

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Elizabeth was William and Susanna Brown's second child.

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She and her five siblings

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were young when the tavern was being built.

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When she was around 12 years old,

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the tavern opened

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and the family moved into the top floor.

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Elizabeth's brother was sent off

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for fancy and expensive education in Scotland

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when he was just 10 years old.

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Elizabeth and her four sisters

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did not get such a good education.

01:00

However, it is very likely that they learn

01:02

to help their mother manage the tavern.

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William Brown had so many different businesses

01:07

we think his wife Susanna

01:09

was in charge of the tavern.

01:11

In the colonial era,

01:12

it was common for women to run taverns

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because it was similar to the task

01:16

of running a household.

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While there was more to cook,

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more to clean, and more laundry to attend to,

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women were already expected

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to manage those household chores.

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Elizabeth might also have learned how to read, write, and do simple math

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in order to help keep accounts for the tavern.

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In 1760, when Elizabeth was 12,

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an enslaved girl named Sall

01:38

was around 10 years old.

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She was sold away from her mother to William Brown,

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and was forced to work in his tavern.

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William Brown forced many enslaved people

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to work at his tavern, carpentry shop and ferry.

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These enslaved people included Jacob, Harry,

01:55

Samson, Delilah, Jen,

01:58

Bett and Osborne.

02:00

William Brown spent so much money on the outside of the building,

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he didn't have the money to finish making the inside look nice.

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So he asked for a loan from a local businessman named James Dick.

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James Dick gave him a 500 pound loan,

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a large sum of money.

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However, if Brown failed to pay back the loan,

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James Dick would take Brown's land, the tavern, the furniture in it,

02:23

and four of the enslaved people working there,

02:25

including Sall.

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Sall was only 15 when this deal was made.

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William Brown viewed her as his property

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and did not consider her as a person

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close in age to his own daughter.

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The center of the tavern was the main room,

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travelers and people from the community

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gathered together and enjoyed themselves.

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Elizabeth and Sall would have had

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very different experiences in this space.

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Elizabeth would have eaten here,

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played games and talk to guests.

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Sall would have also been in this room

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frequently throughout the day,

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but she would not have experienced

02:56

this room in the same way as the tavern guests or Elizabeth.

03:01

Sall would have been forced to serve people food,

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clean up after them, lay the fires

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and mop the floors.

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She would not have been allowed

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to participate in the pleasures of this room.

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Sall probably spent most of her time downstairs

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in the working quarters of the house.

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This is where the kitchen is.

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They have a hearth, but no stove, oven or microwave.

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There is no sink or running water,

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but there is a basin.

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Sall would have had to walk to the well

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over and over again throughout the day

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to ensure that there was enough water

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for the mopping dishes, laundry, cooking and bathing.

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While Elizabeth or her mother

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might have made decisions about what food

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would be made that day,

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they would not be the people making the food.

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We don't know who did most of the cooking

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but Sal certainly helped

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and when she was old enough,

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she may have been forced to do all the cooking

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for Brown's family of seven,

03:57

all the enslaved people working in the house

04:00

and all the tavern guests.

04:02

While Sall was forced to do many difficult things

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and denied her freedom,

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there were ways that she could resist her enslavers.

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She could purposefully do a bad job

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doing the work she was required to do.

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If she were cooking,

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she could have burned the food,

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made it too spicy,

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or sent it up to guests when it was cold and unpleasant.

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Enslaved people made many choices

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about how to resist their oppressors.

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They had to be careful to do things

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that wouldn't get them in too much trouble.

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There was always a threat of violence,

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so they took calculated risks.

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Sall would have slept in this room off the kitchen.

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All the enslaved people

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would have been forced to squeeze into this room together.

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The conditions are damp and uncomfortable

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with rough mattresses on the floor and old blankets.

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Elizabeth had much different sleeping arrangements.

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Susanna and William Brown

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slept in a bedroom like this one.

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The curtains around the bed

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are made of expensive material

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and this space looks clean and comfortable.

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In her early years,

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Elizabeth would likely have slept

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in her parents’ bedchamber in a crib like this one.

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As she grew older,

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she would have slept in a bed in a room with her sisters.

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Both Sal and Elizabeth were similar in age

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and grew up in the same household,

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but their experiences of life in the tavern were very different.

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As they grew up,

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their lives continue to be different.

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Elizabeth got married and left to set up a house of her own.

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Sall remained at the tavern for several more years.

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Unfortunately, William Brown could not pay back

05:26

the 500 pound loan from James Dick.

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And to settle his debts,

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he auctioned off Sall

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along with the other enslaved people,

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the furnishings and the tavern building.

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Despite being a person with her own hopes,

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dreams and desires,

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Sal is treated as property.

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We wanted to share the stories

05:42

of Sal and Elizabeth

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to show you how incredibly different

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life could be for two people

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in the same household during the colonial era.

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Though they shared many of the same spaces

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and were part of the same household.

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The lives of Sall and Elizabeth

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could not have been more different.

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Their stories serve as an example

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of just how varied people's experiences

06:01

in the colonial era could be.