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

00:05

William Brown had a number of businesses,

00:07

a carpenter shop

00:08

in which furniture was made for neighboring colonists,

00:11

a ferry that transported people

00:13

and goods back and forth

00:14

across the South River to Annapolis,

00:16

and a tavern where people could spend the night,

00:19

 eat, drink and play games.

00:21

Sall and Elizabeth were two girls

00:23

who lived and worked here.

00:25

They had very different experiences

00:27

of life in Brown's tavern.

00:29

We have no surviving portraits of either girl,

00:31

so we've chosen to represent them

00:32

 with this portrait of a different household.

00:35

Elizabeth was William and Susanna Brown's second child.

00:39

She and her five siblings

00:40

were young when the tavern was being built.

00:43

When she was around 12 years old,

00:45

 the tavern opened

00:46

and the family moved into the top floor.

00:49

Elizabeth's brother was sent off

00:50

for fancy and expensive education in Scotland

00:53

when he was just 10 years old.

00:55

Elizabeth and her four sisters

00:57

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.

01:05

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

01:14

because it was similar to the task

01:16

of running a household.

01:18

While there was more to cook,

01:19

more to clean, and more laundry to attend to,

01:22

women were already expected

01:23

to manage those household chores.

01:25

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

01:30

in order to help keep accounts for the tavern.

01:33

In 1760, when Elizabeth was 12,

01:36

an enslaved girl named Sall

01:38

was around 10 years old.

01:40

She was sold away from her mother to William Brown,

01:43

 and was forced to work in his tavern.

01:46

William Brown forced many enslaved people

01:48

to work at his tavern, carpentry shop and ferry.

01:52

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,

02:03

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

02:07

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

02:10

James Dick gave him a 500 pound loan,

02:14

a large sum of money.

02:15

However, if Brown failed to pay back the loan,

02:18

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.

02:26

Sall was only 15 when this deal was made.

02:29

William Brown viewed her as his property

02:31

and did not consider her as a person

02:33

close in age to his own daughter.

02:35

The center of the tavern was the main room,

02:38

travelers and people from the community

02:40

gathered together and enjoyed themselves.

02:43

Elizabeth and Sall would have had

02:44

very different experiences in this space.

02:48

Elizabeth would have eaten here,

02:49

played games and talk to guests.

02:52

Sall would have also been in this room

02:53

frequently throughout the day,

02:55

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,

03:03

clean up after them, lay the fires

03:06

and mop the floors.

03:08

She would not have been allowed

03:09

to participate in the pleasures of this room.

03:12

Sall probably spent most of her time downstairs

03:15

in the working quarters of the house.

03:17

This is where the kitchen is.

03:19

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

03:24

There is no sink or running water,

03:25

but there is a basin.

03:29

Sall would have had to walk to the well

03:31

over and over again throughout the day

03:34

to ensure that there was enough water

03:36

for the mopping dishes, laundry, cooking and bathing.

03:41

While Elizabeth or her mother

03:43

 might have made decisions about what food

03:45

would be made that day,

03:46

they would not be the people making the food.

03:49

We don't know who did most of the cooking

03:51

but Sal certainly helped

03:52

and when she was old enough,

03:53

she may have been forced to do all the cooking

03:55

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

04:04

and denied her freedom,

04:05

there were ways that she could resist her enslavers.

04:08

She could purposefully do a bad job

04:10

doing the work she was required to do.

04:13

If she were cooking,

04:14

she could have burned the food,

04:15

made it too spicy,

04:16

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

04:19

Enslaved people made many choices

04:21

about how to resist their oppressors.

04:23

They had to be careful to do things

04:25

that wouldn't get them in too much trouble.

04:27

There was always a threat of violence,

04:29

so they took calculated risks.

04:32

Sall would have slept in this room off the kitchen.

04:35

All the enslaved people

04:36

would have been forced to squeeze into this room together.

04:39

The conditions are damp and uncomfortable

04:41

with rough mattresses on the floor and old blankets.

04:45

Elizabeth had much different sleeping arrangements.

04:47

Susanna and William Brown

04:49

slept in a bedroom like this one.

04:51

The curtains around the bed

04:52

are made of expensive material

04:54

and this space looks clean and comfortable.

04:56

In her early years,

04:58

Elizabeth would likely have slept

04:59

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

05:03

As she grew older,

05:04

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

05:07

Both Sal and Elizabeth were similar in age

05:10

and grew up in the same household,

05:11

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

05:15

As they grew up,

05:16

their lives continue to be different.

05:18

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

05:21

Sall remained at the tavern for several more years.

05:24

Unfortunately, William Brown could not pay back

05:26

the 500 pound loan from James Dick.

05:28

And to settle his debts,

05:29

he auctioned off Sall

05:31

along with the other enslaved people,

05:32

the furnishings and the tavern building.

05:35

Despite being a person with her own hopes,

05:37

dreams and desires,

05:38

Sal is treated as property.

05:41

We wanted to share the stories

05:42

of Sal and Elizabeth

05:43

to show you how incredibly different

05:45

life could be for two people

05:46

in the same household during the colonial era.

05:49

Though they shared many of the same spaces

05:51

and were part of the same household.

05:53

The lives of Sall and Elizabeth

05:54

could not have been more different.

05:57

Their stories serve as an example

05:59

of just how varied people's experiences

06:01

in the colonial era could be.