Chelsea- WBH as Tavern

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**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

tavern, tobacco, enslaved, societal, people, colony, servants, convict, objects, taverns, colonial period, mix, archeological, advertisements, indentured, ads, newspaper, clay pipes, access, small towns

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Welcome to the William Brown House and Tavern

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built around the year 1760.

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Let's take a look inside.

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So what is a tavern exactly?

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Well, it's a mix between a modern restaurant and a hotel

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where people from all walks of life

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from community or abroad could come together

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to catch up with associates,

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make business or trade deals,

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or join friends for meals and drinks.

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This tavern was owned by Mr. Brown,

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but considering he would be occupied with his many business arrangements,

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we can assume his wife Susanna would be managing the tavern.

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This can include booking rooms, ordering food and supplies,

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brewing ciders and ales, working at the bar to serve drinks or

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managing the servants and enslaved people working in the tavern.

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We see a lot of interesting objects on this tavern table

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such as wine glasses, money and playing cards.

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I'd like you to think about what these items are,

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but more importantly,

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who would have been able to use them?

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Were enslaved people using them?

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Indentured or convict servants?

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How about women?

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Clay pipes were cheap to make and purchase in the colonial period

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and are one of the most found objects

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in archeological digs.

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They were used by a very broad group of people

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from every level of society to smoke tobacco,

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even children as young as 10 to 12 years old.

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Tobacco was a major cash crop from Maryland

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to be sold throughout the colonies,

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overseas to England and beyond.

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Most of the land in the colony around London Town

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was used to farm tobacco

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and it required a lot of people to maintain,

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so much so that by 1776, over half of the population,

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of London Town All Hallows Parish

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was made of a mix

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of free and enslaved people of African descent.

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While only those in higher societal position

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reap the financial benefits of growing tobacco,

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most people had access to use it for leisurely purposes.

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Another significant item

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I would like to discuss

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would be the newspaper.

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However with this object,

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I'd like to focus on how

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it could have been used

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to interfere with people's access

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to physical environments such as the tavern room itself,

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or choices they can make in their everyday lives

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like what they could wear.

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Let's take a closer look.

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In a typical colonial newspaper,

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you might find some current, local or international news,

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trade advertisements from local merchants

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or employment ads.

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We often come across advertisements with the headlines like

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$20 reward for the return of two runaway convict servants.

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Like the one shown here,

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these ads would typically go into great detail

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about how the escaped indentured, convicted or enslaved people with look

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including their hair color, skin color,

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distinguishable marks or disabilities,

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and every bit of clothing that they could be identified by.

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This would make it very difficult

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for people to get away from their owners.

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There were a lot of things that could interfere

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with the choices people made for themselves in the colonial period,

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most of which are still prevalent today

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such as economic or societal status,

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gender, age or race.

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Considering a tavern was a place for news of these runaways,

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was well known and shared,

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it was very likely that people who were trying to escape

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would be recognized and quickly returned.

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These small towns became a network of surveillance

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over people they perceived to be their property.

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Some of those in bondage would take the risk of being caught.

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However, some could have also gotten retribution

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through small day to day acts of resistance,

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such as burning food, breaking tools, or faking illnesses

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to slow down the production of goods and services.

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Taverns across the colony

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were an integral part of their communities,

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as well as a constant reminder of forced servitude for others.

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They serve as a hub for people

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to discuss and debate current social and political topics

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of the time amongst those who had access to do so.

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And lastly, while taverns and ordinaries were a place

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for entertainment and leisure,

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they were also an establishment

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used for the reinforcement of an oppressive societal hierarchy.