The People of Ferry Hill

Several members of the Blackford family—who built and ran Ferry Hill—kept diaries and records, providing detailed insights into their lives and business interests on the plantation. Among those who chronicled their experiences were plantation owner John Blackford, his son Franklin, and his daughter Helena's adopted son, Henry Kyd Douglas.



John Blackford

Family residents of Ferry Hill: John Blackford +Elizabeth Knode

Their children:

Mary Abigail Franklin John Hancock Jannett Yates Henry Van Swearingen William Moore Virginia Lafayette Helena (Helen) + Robert Douglas

FERRY HILL PLANTATION JOURNAL January 4, 1838-January 15, 1839

> Edited with An Introduction and Notes By FLETCHER M. GREEN

Historian Fletcher Green, who found John Blackford's diary

CHAPEL HILL

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in the attic of the Ferry Hill mansion, published selections as the Ferry Hill Plantation Journal. Previously, Green had edited and published selections from the diary of Henry Kyd Douglas, who was the stepson of Blackford's daughter, Helena. There are no records from the enslaved people at Ferry Hill, and no portraits of them remain. Most of what we know about those enslaved at the plantation is from what their enslavers wrote. John Blackford kept a journal that describes how harshly he treated them. At the time of his death in 1839, his workforce included 18 enslaved people: 5 men, 4 women, and 9 children.

When John Blackford died, his estate auctioned off 16 of those enslaved at Ferry Hill. Blackford transferred ownership of Edmund and Julius (in his will) to his son Franklin.

Reprint from Hagerstown Mail, November 29, 1839

PUBLIC SALE. WILL be sold at Public Sale, at Fer-ry Hill, the late residence of Col. John Blackford, dec'd., on the Potomac B vor, three miles from Sharpsburg, onposite Shepherdstown, on Thursday the 12th of December next, commencing at 9 o'clock, and continuing from day to day untit all is sold, - All the PERSONAL ESTATE of said deceased, consisting of

5 HORSES, 2 COLTS, 8 first-rate MILCH COWS, 1 Yoke of OZEN, 3 STKERS and 7 CALVES, 40 FAU HOGS, Brood Sow, and Stock Hogs, 50 head Soxon and Merino Stock Hogs, 50 head Soxon and Merino SHEEP, 3 Wagons, Ox Cart and Dray. Ploughs, Harrows, Cultivators, Wind mill and Roller, Hor-o Gears and other Farming Utensils. 30 Fons of Hay. WHEAT, RYE, CORN and OATS by the bushel, Grain in the ground, a large quantity of Hemp and Flax. Fencing Plank, Saw Logs and Locust Posts, Carriage, Barouche and Sleigh with Harness, one Cider Mill, and a set of Black-smith Tools, 2 Shot Gues, Vinegar by the barrel, a farge quantity of Pora-rogs, and a quantity of folled Linsey.-Also-A great variety of very valuable

Household und Kitchen Furniture, amongst which are, a large quantity of Beds with Manogany and Cherry Bed steads, a number of Maing my Tables, Sideboard, Secretary's, Sofa and Lounges, one Mantle and one 8 day Clock, 7 or 8 dozen Reed Battom and common Windsor CHAIRS, & large quantity of Brussels, lograin and Girth CARPETING some entirely new-Mantle and Pier Glasses, passage and other Lamps, Sil-ver Ware, and a large collection of val-vable Books, Williams's Ornomental Parlor Stove, two Frauklin Stoves, one Bussenid one Cook and in Stoves, one Pyramidal, one Cook and 6 close Stoves, with Pipe, Andirons and Fenders, a great variety of KITCHEN FURNI-TURE, and many other articles.

Also-Three NECRO MEN, four WOMEN, and nice CHILDREN, boys and girls, ranging from 18 months to 15 years of age-uot to be sold out of the State, nor to any traders or their agents. THE TERMS, will be made known on

the day of sale, when due attendance will be given, by JOHN MILLER,

O. J. SMITH, Nov. 29-18 Executors.

PUBLIC SALE.

Will be sold at Publix [sic] sale, at Ferryhill, the late residence of Col. John Blackford ... 12 December next, commencing at 9 o'clock, and continuing from day to day until all is sold.

... "Also"-three Negro men, four women, and nine children, boy and girls, ranging from 18 months to 15 years of age—not to be sold out of the state, nor to any traders or their agents.

We only know some of the names of those he enslaved because they appear on an inventory of property that his estate would ultimately auction off. While history has captured the story of John Blackford and his descendants, we do not know the fate of the people they enslaved at Ferry Hill.





Honoring those individuals whose lives our history has obscured, in hopes that we dignify their memory:

Known enslaved residents of Ferry Hill (1816-1864):

John Lewis Charlotte Edmund (Ned) Julius (Jupe) Daphney Murphy Will Enoch Hannah Isaiah Moll Bidle Malinna Maria 7 unnamed adults **Enslaved children** Caroline Mary Kate David George Ann John Warren Danny Jinny 3 unnamed children