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Shaping Our Campus: A History of Enslaved Labor in 18th Century Morningside Heights

Introduction

While on a tour of Columbia College, my student guide points out Buell Hall, the last remaining structure of the Bloomingdale Insane Asylum which stood in Morningside Heights from 1821 to 1889. As she explains that the hall is the oldest building on campus, I can't help but wonder about the history of our northern campus before the nineteenth century. As we continue our walk through Low Plaza, I recall the plaque installed my freshman year at Barnard to acknowledge the theft of land from the indigenous Lenape people of Manhattan in the seventeenth century.¹ But where can we find the missing link, that is, the history of the land our campus sits on and the people who lived there during the eighteenth century?

In this paper, I argue that Morningside Heights was a center of important agricultural and developmental shifts in the 1700s, a period of lingering Dutch influence, slavery, colonisation, and revolution, which shaped our modern campus in important ways. Specifically, I investigate the existence and scale of eighteenth-century enslaved labor and its effects on the land that now comprises Columbia's Morningside Heights campus. This research is particularly important as it explores and synthesizes a history that has been previously overlooked. While conducting this investigation I discovered many rich archival sources about the chain of ownership of the land (see Appendices A and B), or depicting the area's topography and the crops cultivated, but faced

¹ Woo, Ethan. "Plaque commemorating Lenape people unveiled after three years of advocacy." *Columbia Spectator*, 2016.

an equally notable absence of documents describing the lives of individuals on the plantations. However, the evidence I have uncovered does nonetheless provide key insights into history of the area in the eighteenth-century. The first step in my research was to reconstruct land ownership in the eighteenth-century to determine who was present, and at what time, in Morningside Heights. By examining court documents, maps, and land auction advertisements I was able to trace the transfer of land in Bloomingdale (the name of Morningside Heights in the period) between five key figures: Jacob De Key, Adrian Hoagland, Harman Vandewater, Nicholas De Peyster, and James W. De Peyster. Examining these characters individually is invaluable in charting the activities that occurred on the land and establishing a clear connection to the history of enslavement in New York.

Jacob De Key (1701-1733)

In December of 1700, John Miseroll of Bushwick purchased 200 acres of land in Morningside Heights granted by the New York City mayor on behalf of the colony. Only seven months later, Miseroll conveyed this same tract of land to Jacob De Key following negotiations in a New York Common Council meeting of July 12th, 1701.² These proceedings reveal that Miseroll had purchased the plot at a public auction (known as a Public Vendue) for £216. In court, De Key requested a £14 discount which the Council approved on the following conditions: that De Key commit to pay £100 when granted the land and another £102 in two month's time. Further, De Key agreed to pay additional fees should the city's surveyor count more than 200

² Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York 1675-1776. Volume 2.

acres in the land parcel. With these terms, the mayor conveyed the land to De Key for the sum of £237, making him the first to legally own *and* inhabit the site of Columbia's future campus.³

Very little is known about Jacob De Key. His name signals that he was of Dutch origin but there are no records of his professional life, his marriage, or even his death to be found. Only in the biography of another colonial New Yorker in James Riker's *History of Harlem* is he described as "Capt. Jacob De Key," suggesting that he was involved in the naval profession and likely in the transatlantic trade.⁴

The proximity of the Morningside Heights site to Harlem undoubtedly added to the appeal of this land, especially given the roots of Harlem in Dutch settlement and its continuing association with colonists of Dutch origin. In Riker's map of "Harlem Showing the Lands as in the Original Lots and Farms" from 1879, De Key's plot is shown to be one of the largest. The significant size and value of his property allows us to infer that he was an affluent man. Whether his funds derived from his activities as a ship captain, or from inheritance, marriage or other means, is unknown. After his initial purchase from Miseroll in 1701, almost nothing is known concerning De Key or his northern property until 1733 when Jacob's son Thomas posted this advertisement in an April edition of the *New York Gazette*:

In the Out Ward of the City of New-York, near to the seat of Mr. *De Lancey* called *Bloomendal*, there is to be SOLD a Plantation, with a very good Stone House, Barn, and Orchard, containing about four or five Hundred Apple Trees, and a Pear Orchard, with a great many fine Grafted Pears. The Land is very well Timber'd and Water'd; it has a very fine Brook very convenient for a Fish Pond; containing about Two Hundred and Forty

³ *Liber City Grants*, B: 28 as copied in Stokes. *Iconography of Manhattan*: 97.

⁴ Riker, James. *History of Harlem (City of New York): Its Origin and Early Annals*: 437.

Acres of Land, and six Acres of Meadow, situate lying and being near *Bloomendal* as aforesaid. Whoever incline to purchase the farme, may apply to *Thomas Dekey*, now living on the Premises who will agree on reasonable Terms.

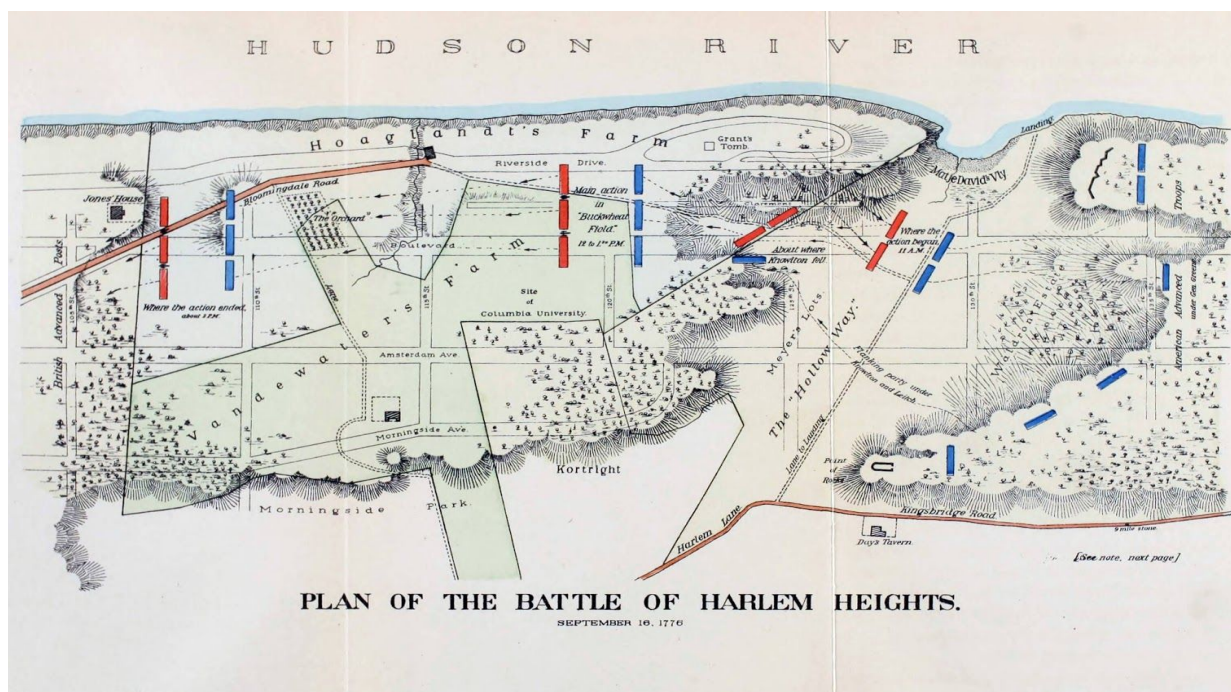
Thomas De Key's advertisement provides an excellent reconstruction of the plot's development over the previous thirty years of silence. By describing the various land features, -- an orchard, a barn, a meadow, timber, a very good Stone House, and a body of water -- De Key alludes to the wide range of labor necessary to cultivate and maintain a successful "Plantation" on previously un-colonized land. For example, as Morningside Heights' first landowner, Jacob De Key would need to clear forests, build shelters, and break sod before commencing any of the typical farm practices that would follow.⁵ With these necessary, yet hefty demands, it was highly likely that Jacob De Key relied on the labor of enslaved Africans and possibly Indians to develop his land into a profitable farm.

Given the absence of records pertaining to Jacob De Key or descriptions of life on his Plantation in this period, it is impossible to establish for certain how he proceeded to develop his land. It is however possible to turn to the records relating to a geographically, socially, and economically similar farm just outside New York City in Montgomery County, New Jersey for inferences about the labor practices that occurred in the early years of Morningside Heights. Initially, De Key's laborers, like those on the New Jersey farm, had to do the skilled and unskilled work needed to build his house, his barn, plant his orchard, and many other preparatory tasks needed to establish the property. As the plantation developed, the responsibilities of the laborers expanded to include tending to animals, grafting apple and pear trees, harvesting grains,

⁵ Hodges, Graham Russell. *Slavery and Freedom in the Rural North: African Americans in Monmouth County, New Jersey, 1665 -1865*. Madison House, 1998: 44.

and transferring hay from the meadow, all while continuing their duty to clear land for future developments.⁶ It was during this early period that De Key's enslaved laborers laid the groundwork for Columbia University's physical campus, which would come to occupy this cleared farmland in less than 200 years time.

Harman Vandewater and Adrian Hoagland (1735-1784)



Plan of the Battle of Harlem Heights by Henry Phelps Johnston (1879).

In 1735, brothers-in-law Harman Vandewater and Adrian Hoagland purchased the De Key tract and divided it between them. Hoagland inhabited the western portion, bordering the Hudson River in what is present-day Riverside Park, while Vandewater occupied the east in what

⁶ *Ibid.*: 45-46.

became known as “Vandewater Heights” in the American Revolutionary War.⁷ Both Vandewater and Hoagland were descended from prominent Dutch families in New York. Harman Vandewater was the son of Benjamin Vandewater and Engeltie Harmans of Brooklyn. Adrian Hoagland married their daughter, Harman’s sister, Engeltie in 1722 before remarrying in 1760 to Catherina Catalang. Hoagland’s father was William Dircksen Hoagland of Flatbush, a carpenter like his son.⁸

Professionally, Harman Vandewater (1695-?) was the Tax Collector of the Bowery Division of the Out Ward of New York City. In this role, Vandewater was responsible for collecting taxes mandated by the King and the Mayor of New York from all the residents within his district. In 1737, this included the enforcement and collection of a tax on forty-three slaves from twenty-four slaveowners.⁹ He was ordered to “lay a duty on the goods and a Tax” on “all of the Negro, Indian or Mulato Slaves within the Bowry Division of the Out ward of the City of New York Male and female from fourteen to fifty years of Age.”¹⁰ In a reiteration of this act, Mayor Paul Richard informed Vandewater that he will receive a compensation of “nine pence on every pound” for the tax of “one shilling a head.”¹¹ Furthermore, Vandewater was granted explicit permission to put a slave up for auction, collect the value of the tax, and return the remainder, should his owner refuse to pay the charge:

...in case any such owner or possessor of any slaves or slaves mentioned in the list hereunto Announced shall deny neglect or refuse to pay the said on Demand, then you are

⁷Johnston, Henry Phelps. *The Battle of Harlem Heights, September 16, 1776; with a Review of the Events of the Campaign*. New York, 1897: 46.

⁸Hoogland, Daniel. *The Hoagland Family in America*: 175.

⁹*Head or Title of the Tax Role*, February 13, 1737. Harman Vandewater Collection NYHS 1737-1738.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹*Letter from Paul Richard to Harman Vandewater*, February 21, 1737. Harman Vandewater Collection NYHS 1737-1738.

hereby Authorized and required (pursuant to the Directions of the said Act to [illegible] him her or them by his her or their goods and Chattells so denying, neglecting or refusing to pay ... for the space of four Days if not Redeemed in that time to make sale thereof at public vendue to the highest bidder, and out of the produce thereof to Deduct the said Tax and Charges and Return the Overplus (if any be) immediately to the Owner.¹²

While there remains to be found any direct evidence of Vandewater's personal slave ownership, it is evident that he was actively involved in the perpetuation of an economy based on the possession and sale of slaves. Moreover, the wealth acquired from his position as a tax collector allowed him to purchase the land that would become our school and build a house on present-day 114th street.¹³

Adrian Hoagland (1699-1772) was a respected carpenter and family man.¹⁴ Like Jacob De Key, there is very little documentation of his life in Bloomingdale. However, similarly to De Key's land advertisement, Hoagland's Last Will and Testament in 1771 offers some insight into the geographical and architectural properties of the land: "after my Decease, all my Lands, Swamps, Meadows, Buildings, and Improvements [are] to be sold by my Executors."¹⁵ His Lands, Meadows, and Buildings are undoubtedly extensions of the work of Jacob De Key's laborers. Although there are no slaves mentioned in his will, Hoagland would certainly have had or hired laborers to maintain and cultivate his farm.

Despite the lack of an explicit reference to his personal slave ownership, Adrian Hoagland was indisputably from a slave-owning family. In fact, his relation of the same name

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Documents of the Assembly of the State of New York, Volume 24: 547.

¹⁴ *The Hoagland Family in America*: 168.

¹⁵ Adrian Hoagland's Last Will and Testament, February 26, 1771.

(Adrian Hoagland) was a prominent figure in the New York slave conspiracy of 1712. He was murdered on April 6, 1712 by his slave Robin in a revolt that killed eight others and wounded many more.¹⁶ Adrian was known as an “eminent merchant, a large land holder, and an energetic citizen.”¹⁷ Perhaps because of his reputation, the Supreme Court for the Province of New York declared the most extreme punishment for Robin: “Judgement that the Defend. Be carryed from hence to the place from Whence he Came & from thence to the place of Execution & there be hung in Chains alive & so to Continue without any Sustainance untill he be dead.”¹⁸ While this revolt and subsequent penalty occurred in New York City proper and not in the northern Bloomingdale, the Hoagland family connection to the cruel treatment of enslaved people is evident.

The Hoagland and Vandewater families ran their Morningside Heights estates for nearly fifty years. Over this period, both farms saw considerable action in the American Revolutionary War. On September 16, 1776, George Washington led the American Continental army to success in a battle that stretched across our campus’s site. Henry Phelps Johnston, a Battle of Harlem Heights scholar, eloquently described the event and its importance:

It was a stirring open-field affair, coming as a surprise and a check upon the enemy’s pride, and calling out that recuperative power and manly courage of the as yet untrained Continental, which, with added experience, will stand him in good stead all through the Revolution. Not since Lexington and Concord, seventeen months before, had he enjoyed a chance of the regulars. At Harlem Heights it was to be on a smaller scale and less disastrous to the invader, but on the other hand with more form as an action, and on more

¹⁶ *The Hoagland Family in America*: 26.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Supreme Court of Judicature of the Province of New York v. 80*. 1947: 22.

even terms as it progressed for a mile up and down hill and over fields and fences and through lanes and orchards.¹⁹

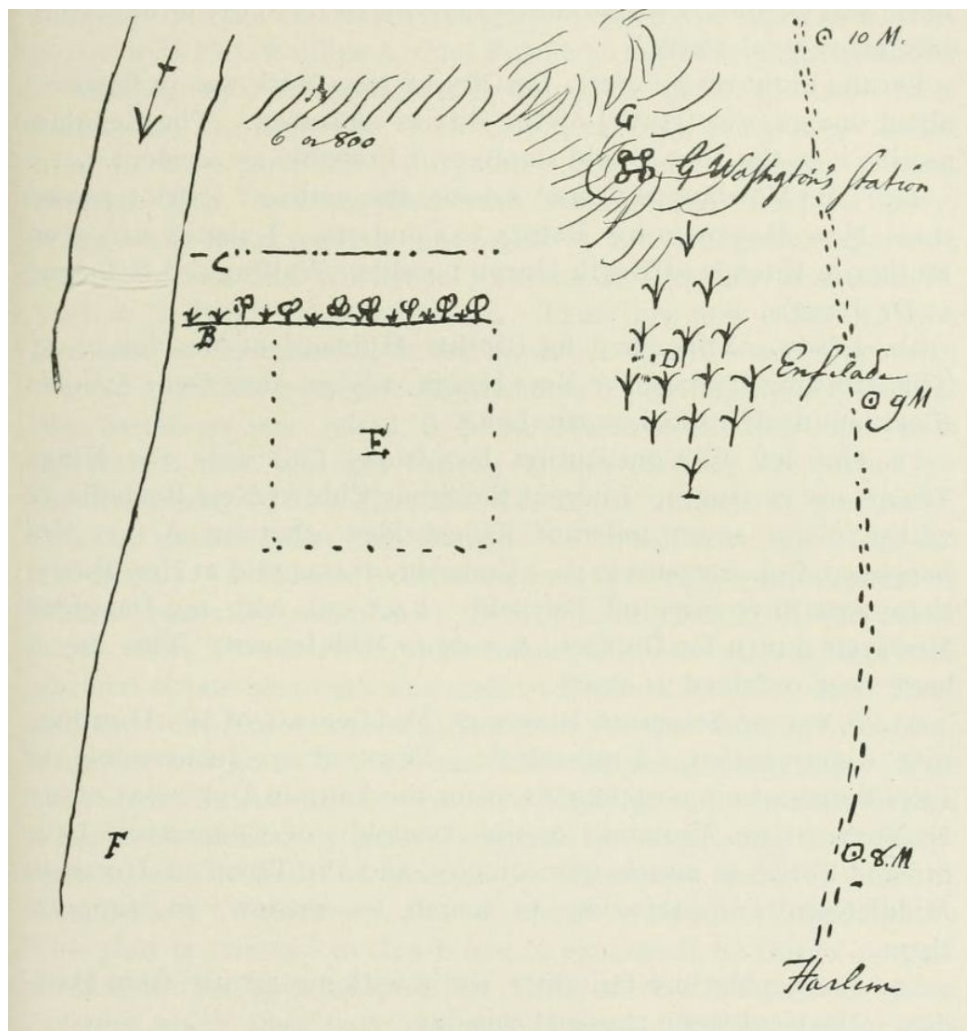
The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles, 7th President of Yale College, offers some further insight into the movement of soldiers in Bloomingdale during the battle. Dr. Stiles composed several sketches in his diary to accompany his written accounts. In the following sketch, Stiles designates the northern side of Hollow Way as “A,” “B” and “C” as fences, “D” as “No Field pieces,” the buckwheat field where Barnard College now stands as “E,” the previously described orchard as “F,” and George Washington’s station as “G.”²⁰ In the battle, Stiles records that there was an action for one and a half hours in the buckwheat field (“E”) before the enemy fled and attempted to rally in the orchard (“F”). But, as they arrived at the orchard they “were so closely pursued that they stood but a few minutes when the rout became general.”²¹ He continues to state that the orchard was important in bringing “the action down to the line of One Hundred and Eleventh Street, between the Boulevard [Broadway] and Riverside Drive.”²² Like the descriptive property advertisements, Dr. Stiles’ account of the battle offers a means of reconstructing the topography of Morningside Heights in the eighteenth century. These accounts are crucial to understanding the existence and experiences of all people living and interacting with the land that became Columbia University.

¹⁹ Johnston: v.

²⁰ The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles March 1776-1784, Volume II. New York, 1901: 65

²¹ Ibid.

²² Johnston: 116.



Sketch of the Battle of Harlem Heights by Ezra Stiles (1776).²³

As the earliest surviving map of the land, Dr. Stiles' sketch provides valuable glimpses into the decision of Jacob De Key and his successors to establish farms on the land. For example, because of its close proximity to the Hudson River, Bloomingdale Road, and Harlem Lane, the landowners had the opportunity to transport their produce by land or sea to buyers in New York

²³ The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles, March 1776-1784 Volume II: 65

City and beyond. Additionally, the soil in the area must have been fertile in order to support the growth of both an orchard and a buckwheat field. According to *American Husbandry* (1775):

Every planter and even the smallest farmers have all an orchard near their house of some acres, by means of which they command a great quantity of cyder, and export apples by ship loads to the West Indies.... Buckwheat is everywhere sown, and a few crops are supposed to pay the farmer better, at the same time that they find it does very little prejudice to the ground, in which it resembles pease.²⁴

The fact that both orchards and buckwheat fields were popular amongst colonial American farmers because of their ability to grow easily without depleting the land, suggests that Jacob De Key and his successors may not have had an extensive background in farming, opting for simpler crops with a high yield. This decision itself suggests a desire to cultivate commercially, for profit and not for personal use. Dr. Stiles' map underscores that the purchase, clearing, and settlement of the site that would become Morningside Heights was a strategic, economically-driven decision.

Nicholas and James W. De Peyster (1784~1815)

William Hoagland and Benjamin Vandewater, executors of their father's estates, held on to the properties for a time before placing them for auction in 1784 and 1785. William, Adrian's last remaining executor, advertised an auction for his inherited plot on July 3rd in the New York

²⁴ *American Husbandry*. London, 1775: 1, 98-103; reprinted in Ernest Ludlow Bogart and Charles Manfred Thompson (eds.), *Readings in the Economic History of the United States*. New York, 1927: 32-4.
<http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/watkins/middlecolonies02.htm>

Packet (Appendix A). In the advertisement, his land is described as “a Noted and valuable Farm,” containing “about 150 acres of excellent land” and a “valuable orchard of grafted fruit” making it “in every respect one of the best situations on the island.”²⁵ The language of this auction, and especially the adjectives (“noted” “valuable” “excellent” “best”) used in this advertisement, serve to emphasize the features of the land, including the range of agricultural products and potential for future development, in order to entice buyers. It also suggests that Hoagland’s estate was so prosperous that it possessed a “notable” reputation throughout New York City. The appealing advertisement served its purpose well, as this “valuable Farm” was sold to Nicholas De Peyster on July 23rd, 1784 for £1,100 pounds sterling, fewer than three weeks later.²⁶

Nicholas De Peyster (1740-1821) was a New York-based merchant who spent the latter half of his life on the Bloomingdale farm.²⁷ According to a 1785 survey from Casimir Goerck, New York City’s land surveyor, Nicholas De Peyster’s property did not actually extend onto Columbia’s modern campus. Instead, his property, like Hoagland’s, contained most of Riverside Park, one half of the famed orchard (shared with his brother James), and some of the land closer to today’s 110th street.²⁸ There is no evidence of any direct slave possession, however De Peyster would have to follow similar farm and labor practices to his predecessors in order to run a prosperous plantation.

Nicholas De Peyster’s brother James W. De Peyster (1745-1812) purchased the neighboring tract of land from Benjamin Vandewater in 1785. James W. De Peyster was a

²⁵ *The New York Packet and the American Advertiser*, June 24, 1784.

²⁶ *Liber Deeds 41 p.434* as cited in New York Supreme Court on Appeal Vol 1. 1921: 558.

²⁷ Belknap, Waldron Phoenix. *The De Peyster genealogy*. Boston, 1956: 70.

²⁸ Goerck, Casimir. A Plan of Mr. Nicholas and James W. De Peyster’s land at Bloomingdall, October 12, 1785. NYHS.

merchant like his brother and much of his family. According to a 1786 directory of New York, he “imported an assortment of dry goods, Holland sheeting and Holland Geneva in cases, and a quantity of best Holland powder in quarter casks” from his store on Queen Street.²⁹ Prior to purchasing and moving to his Bloomingdale Estate, De Peyster spent many years residing in Curaçao, a Dutch Caribbean island, developing his business and starting his family.³⁰ Curaçao was established as a center for the Atlantic Slave Trade by the Dutch West India Company in the mid-seventeenth century.³¹ Several shipments of enslaved Africans were even transported to New York from the Caribbean island throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Then, in 1791, only six years after De Peyster had abandoned the it, a month-long slave revolt began.³² Although I have yet to find evidence that De Peyster participated in this *trade* of enslaved Africans while in Curaçao or New York, there is indisputable evidence that he owned slaves while inhabiting Morningside Heights.

“3 Slaves”

In 1790, the very first census of the United States was conducted. In the New York City, Montgomery Ward section, James W. De Peyster is registered as the “Head of Family” with a household of: 1 “free white male of 16 years and upward including heads of families,” 1 “free white male under 16 years,” 2 “free white females including heads of families,” 1 “all other free

²⁹ Advertisement from New York’s first Directory (1786) copied in Valentine’s Manual of Old New York. 1916: 29.

³⁰ *The De Peyster genealogy*: 76.

³¹ *Slavery In New Netherland*. The New Netherland Institute.

<https://www.newnetherlandinstitute.org/history-and-heritage/digital-exhibitions/slavery-exhibit/slave-trade/>

³² Oostindie, Gert. "Slave Resistance, Colour Lines, and the Impact of the French and Haitian Revolutions in Curaçao." In *Curaçao in the Age of Revolutions, 1795-1800*, edited by Oostindie Gert and Klooster Wim, 1-22. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctt1w76v9f.4>.

persons,” and 3 “slaves”.³³ Finally, after examining eighty-five years of Morningside Heights land ownership in the eighteenth-century, there is irrefutable evidence that enslaved laborers existed in our neighborhood.

HEADS OF FAMILIES—NEW YORK.

NEW YORK CITY AND COUNTY—Continued.

NAME OF HEAD OF FAMILY.	Free white males of 16 years and upward, including heads of families.	Free white males under 16 years.	Free white females, including heads of families.	All other free persons.	Slaves.	NAME OF HEAD OF FAMILY.	Free white males of 16 years and upward, including heads of families.	Free white males under 16 years.	Free white females, including heads of families.	All other free persons.	Slaves.	NAME OF HEAD OF FAMILY.	Free white males of 16 years and upward, including heads of families.	Free white males under 16 years.	Free white females, including heads of families.	All other free persons.	Slaves.	
NEW YORK CITY, MONTGOMERY WARD—con.						NEW YORK CITY, MONTGOMERY WARD—con.						NEW YORK CITY, MONTGOMERY WARD—con.						
McDonnell, Duncan	3	1				Copp, William	1	2	3			Milley						
Svan, Charles	1	1				Barckblaine, George	1	1				Patton, Jacob						
Vanderlip, Elias	1	1				Conroit, Peter	1					Christopher, Juliana		1				
Wilson, Ann			3			Banker, John	1		4			McCormick, William	2					
Campson, Matthias	1		1			Allen, Lattin			4			Lydaick, Margaret	1		1			1
Barbery, Jacob	1					Moss, Daniel	1	1	1			Birke, Andrew	2		1			1
Scott, Seymour	1		5			Jobs, Elizabeth			3			Wright, Susanna					4	
Lippincott, Hannah			2			James, John	1	2	3			Royse, Elizabeth						
Chevalier, Elias Josephus	1			1		Arden, Charles	1		1		3	Chaplain, Seabury	1		1			
Johnston, John	2	1	2			Little, Jonathan			2			Obinck, Ernest	2	2	2			1
Caswell, George	1	1	1			Lockkey, Robert	2	3	2			Dicks, Daniel	2	2	2			
Vannoy, Jacob	1	1	4			Moore, Elizabeth			3			Custals, William	1		1			
Lewis, Jane			1			Martin, John			3			Bior, John	1		1			
Minecks, John	1		4			Jarvis, Matthew	2	2	3			West, Moses	1	1	1			
Robertson, Henry	2	1	1			Gillin, James	1		1			Willet, Samuel	1	1	1			
Tabels, John	2		2		1	Betty				3		McDonald, William	1	3	1			
Buxton, John	2		2			Walters, John	1		5			Cato	1		1		3	
Miles, George	1	2	4			Harvey, William	2	2	2			Ackley, John	1		2			
Andre, Bartholomew	1	1	1			Onderdonck, John	1	2	3		1	Mercer, Andrew	3	3	4			
Williamson, Jane			3			McKight, John	1	2	6		2	Newel, Andrew	3	2	4			
King, Ann	1	4	1			Van Wagomen, Herbert	2	2	2		3	Mann, Edward	1		7			
Joyce, Benjamin	1	1	1			Eddy, Thomas	1	1	6		1	Weaver, Jane			2			2
Ogilvie, John	1	1	1			Cady			1			Deat, Hugh	1	2	2			
Ogden, James	1		1			Ludlow, Peter	1	1	2			Moorwood, Edmund	1		2			
Ogden, John	1		2			Weethy, Thomas	1	1	2			Sills, Mary	1	4	1			
McKinkess, Deborah	1	2	4			Roberts, William	2	1	3			Van Arden, David	1	3	1			
Kirby, Peter	1		2			Douglass, William	3	1	2			Whitman, Henry	2		2			
London			2		2	Cady, Benjamin	3		1			Chapley, George	1		1			
Dakden, Joseph	1	1	2			Baker, Delucena	3	1	5			Hollowday, Catharine			5			
Thomas, Richard	1		1			Byrne, Edmund	1	1	2			Forbus, Alexander	1		1			
Hone, Philip	1		1	1		Ilysen, John Conroit	1		1			Adams, Adam	1	1	1			
Hart, Jacob	1		3			Kelly, George	1		2			Smith, Thomas	3	2	5			
Abraham, Isaac	1	2	3			Now			3			Trapp, Henry	3		4			1
Adams, John	1	1	1			Brower, Joseph	1		1		1	Dusling, Peter	4	1	2			
Platt, Nicholas	4		2			Rhinslander, Philip	1		1		1	Hornbrook, William	3	2	4			
Fiere, Robert	1	1	2			Itutt, John	1	1	4			Dunbar, Daniel	2		2			
Brown, Thomas	1	1	1			Scott, Rachel			3			De Peyster, William	4		2	1	3	
White, Catharine	1	1	1			Vannilya, Hyall	1	1	2		2	De Peyster, James W.	1	1	2	1	3	
Homes, John	1	2	1			Jin			2			Dunscumb, Daniel, Jr.	1	1	1		2	
						Shad, James	1		2			Hirring, Soti	2		4			

James W. De Peyster in the New York City, Montgomery Ward Census (1790).³⁴

Perhaps even more striking than the realization that enslaved people lived in Morningside Heights is the fact that they labored in the exact location that students now take their classes. Comparing Casimir Goerck’s 1785 survey to Henry Phelps Johnston’s Plan of the Battle of Harlem Heights reveals this direct relationship between enslavement and Columbia’s campus. According to the maps, James W. De Peyster’s portion of De Key’s original land grant

³³ First Census of the United States, New York: 121.

³⁴ Ibid.

encapsulates all of Barnard College and Columbia's campus between modern 120th and 115th street to the north and south, and Broadway and Amsterdam Ave to the west and east. In particular, the buckwheat field in the northwestern portion of his territory is the site of Barnard College's first building, Milbank Hall, erected in 1897. This is clear evidence that enslaved people harvested grains on the land now occupied with classrooms and professors' offices.

The realization that the only reference to enslaved bodies in Morningside Heights in the eighteenth century is found in a national census, only ten years before the century's end is crucial. While there are undeniably many missing documents concerning De Key, Hoagland, Vandewater, and the De Peysters, this absence seems almost insignificant when compared to the complete invisibility of enslaved people from more than eighty-five years of records. The fact that the slaves' names, ages, gender, and histories are never recorded, perpetuates a narrative of erasure. In spite of this erasure, their existence marked Morningside Heights and deserves to be acknowledged, included in any history of the site, and memorialized.

Conclusion

Whether through careers built on slave tax collection, construction of plantation homes and barns, or through roots in the transatlantic slave hub of Curaçao, it is clear that the lives of the inhabitants of Morningside Heights in the eighteenth century were bound to enslaved labor. It is also evident that this history masks the lived experiences of laborers on the plantations due to the nature of the sources that were preserved. Drawing on rich archival survivals, it is not difficult to locate and reconstruct the land from the owner's perspective. However, Columbia University's campus was unmistakably sculpted by the hard labor of enslaved Africans in this

period. Even the simple act of clearing the woods to cultivate farmland had a lasting effect on the structure of our university. Columbia owes its existence in Morningside Heights to the efforts of enslaved laborers who toiled to prepare the land for its evolution into a campus.

Appendix A: Transcriptions of Manuscript Documents

Harman Vandewater Collection NYHS 1737-1738

Head or Title of the Tax Role

City of New York }

A true Exact and Compleat List of all the Negro Indian or Mulato Slaves within the Bowry Division of the Out ward of the City of New York Male and female from fourteen to fifty Years of Age together with the name and names of the Owners or Possessors thereof Pursuant to An Act of General Assembly of this Colony made in the eighth year of his present Majesty's Reign Entitled an Act to lay a duty on the goods and a Tax on the slaves therein mentioned during the time and for the life therein mentioned made this thirteenth day of February 1737 by us Phillip Milthorne and John Millthorne Afsefsors of the said ward.

Total # of slaves: should be 43

Bowry Division

City of New York }

By Paul Richard Esq Mayor of the City of New York and by the Alderman of the said City to Harman Van Dewater -- Collector of the Bowry Division of the Out Ward of the said City who is also hereby nominated and appointed Collector for the County of New York [illegible] By virtue of an Act of General Assembly of this Colony made in the Eighth year of his present Majesty's Reign Intitled an Act to lay a Duty on the goods and a Tax on the slaves therein mentioned, during the time and for the aforementioned in the same year are hereby in his Majesty's name Ordered and Commanded to gather collect and receive in your said Ward and District of and from the Owners or possessors of all the slaves mentioned in the list of slaves here unto announced the sum of **one** shilling a head so that you duly pay all the money to arise by the said Collection (which you are hereby required to do) unto Abraham De Peyster Esq. Treasurer of this Colony or to the treasurer of this Colony for the time being on or before the first Day of the Month of May next on [illegible] the Date hereof. Retaining out of the same nine pence on every pound you shall so Collect and pay for your Trouble therein And in case any such owner or possessor of any slaves or slaves mentioned in the list hereunto Announced shall deny neglect or refuse to pay the said on Demand, then you are hereby Authorized and required (pursuant to the Directions of the said Act to [illegible] him her or them by his her or their goods and Chattells so denying neglecting or refusing to pay and the Distr-- [page is creased] the charge of the owner for the space of four Days if not Redeemed in that time to make sale thereof at public vendue to the highest bidder, and out of the produce thereof to Deduct the said Tax and Charges and Return the Overplus (if any be) immediately to the Owner and hereof fail not at your perile given under

our hands and seals in New York the Twenty first day of February --- in the Seventh year of his Majesty's Reign Annos Domini 1737.

Paul Richard
 John Moore
 Peter Van Ranst
 Chris Bancker
 William Roome

Adriaen Hogeland's Last Will and Testament

In the name of God amen this Twenty six Day of February Anno Domini one thousand seven hundred and seventy one, I Adriaen Hogeland of the outward of the City of New York yeoman being aged but of perfect mind and sound memory thanks be to God therefore but calling to mind the Mortality of my Body, and that it is appointed unto Man once to die therefore I do make this my last Will and Testament in the following Manner and Form that is to say, Principally, I give and bequeath my Soul into the Hands of Almighty God that gave it, My Body I recommend to the Earth to be Buried in a decent Christian Manner at the Discretion of my Executors hereafter to be named, and touching such Wordly Estate wherewith God has blest me in this Life I give devise and dispose of the same in the following manner. [Illegible] my Will is that all my just Debts and Funeral Expenses be well and truly paid and discharged by my Executors hereafter named. Item I give and bequeath unto my son Benjamin Hogeland for his Birth Right the sum of ten Pounds currant lawful money of the Colony of New York. Item I give and bequeath unto my son William Hogeland all my Carpenters and weel right tools and utensils. Item I give and bequeath unto my Daughter Antje the sum of sixty Pound money as above said, and a Bedstead with Bed and Furniture thereunto belonging. Item my Will is that my Daughter Jane shall likewise have the sum of sixty Pound as above said and a Bedstead with Bed and Furniture thereunto belonging. Item I give and bequeath unto my Grand Daughter Engeltje Ooutrander the sum of sixty Pound lawful Money of the Colony of New York for her full Portion no more. Item my Will is that after my Decease all my Lands, Swamps, Meadows, Buildings and Improvements to be sold by my Executors and that all my Estate yet remaining after the abovesaid Legacies are paid shall be equally divided among my Children whose names are as follows Neeltje Covenhoven, Engeltje Lent, Jean Hogeland, Maragret Flechter, Benjamin Hogeland, William Hogeland, Antje Hogeland, and Adreana Day Share and Share alike all said real and personall Estate thus Divided Share and Share alike among my Children as abovesaid to be and remain unto each of them and then [illegible] and Assign forever x And I do by these Presents nominate constitute, ordain and appoint my son in Law Richard Flechter, and my son Benjamin Hogeland, William Hogeland Executors of this my last Will and Testament and do by these presents revoke make void and disannul all other and former Will or Wills, Request or

Bequeets Executor or Executors by me made willed or ordained, holding this and no other to be my last Will and Testament.

Adriaen Hogeland (L.S)'

Appendix B: Manuscript Sources

Harman Vandewater Collection NYHS 1737-1738

Head or Title of the Tax Roll

City of New York } True Exact and Compleat List of all the
 Negro Indian or Mulato Slaves within the Bowery -
 Division of the Out Ward of the City of New York
 Males and female from fourteen to fifty years
 of Age together with the Name and Names
 the Owners or Possessors thereof Pursuant to
 An Act of General Assembly of this Colony made
 in the eight Year of his present Majesties
 Reign Entituled An Act to lay a Duty on
 the Goods and a Tax on the Slaves therein
 Mentioned During the time and for the life
 therein mentioned Made this thirteenth day of
 February 1737 by us Phillip Mithorne
 and John Mithorne Assessors of the said Ward

Francis Cowannover two Slaves	£	00		
Abraham Brabber one do		00		
The Widow Pomerindick one do		00	1	0
The Widow Cowannover one do		00	1	0
Mattise Stoppah two do		00	2	0
M. van Tarlin two do		00	2	0
M. De Lance three do		00	3	0
Marrines Dolffon one do		00	1	0
Windert van Eucera two do		00	2	0
Edoe Edeera two do		00	2	0
	£	00	17	00

Brought	£	00	17	0
Mangel Hall one L ^o		00	1	0
David Levor one L ^o		00	1	0
Sammual Rip three L ^o		00	3	0
Insurance Gardener three L ^o		00	3	0
Mr. Cerow two L ^o		00	2	0
Mr. Stuyvesant three L ^o		00	3	0
Mr. Bichte two L ^o		00	2	0
Mr. Crown one L ^o		00	1	0
Harremanus Rutger three L ^o		00	3	0
Mr. Bohannam two L ^o	X	00	2	0
Mr. Barpel two L ^o		00	2	0
Mr. Cepun one L ^o		00	1	0
John Cas one L ^o		00	1	0
		02	3	0

Phillip Minthorne
John Minthorne

Harman Vandewater Collection NYHS 1737-1738

Bowery Division

City of New York

By **Paul Richard** Esq^r Mayor of the City of New York
and by the Aldermen of the said City To Harman Van Dewater
Collector of the Bowery Division of the Out Ward of the said City who is also
hereby nominated and appointed Collector for the County of New York pursuant
By virtue of an Act of General Assembly of this Colony made in the eighth
Year of his present Majesty's reign Intituled An Act to lay a Duty
on the Goods and a Tax on the Slaves therein mentioned, during the
time and for the Uses mentioned in the said Act You are hereby (in his
Majesty's name) Ordered and Comanded to receive collect and receive
in your said Ward and District of and from the Owners or possessors of
all the Slaves mentioned in the List of Slaves herewith Annexed the
Sum of One Shilling a head so that you duly pay all the Money to
Arise by the said Collection (which you are hereby required to do)
unto Abraham De Vries Esq^r Treasurer of this Colony or to the
Treasurer of this Colony for the time being on or before the first Day
of the Month of May next ensuing the Date hereof. Retaining out
of the said Sum pence on every pound you shall so collect & pay for
your Trouble therein And in case any such Owner or Possessor of
any Slave or Slaves mentioned in the List herewith Annexed shall
deny neglect or refuse to pay the said Sum on Demand then you are
hereby Authorized and required pursuant to the Directions of the
said Act to Distrain him her or them by his her or their Goods &
 Chattells so denying neglecting or refusing to pay and the Dist
to be put in the Charge of the Owner for the Space of four Days
if not Redeemed in that time to make Sale thereof at public
Vendue to the highest bidder, and out of the produce thereof to
deduct the said Tax and Charges and Return the Overplus (if any
be) immediately to the Owner And hereof fail not at your perill
Given under our hands and seals in New York the twenty first
Day of February — in the Eleventh Year of his Majesty's
reign Anno; Domini 1737

Paul Richard Esq^r
John Moore
Pet. Van Rant
Chris. Baucher
Wm. Rouse

Adriaen Hogeland's Last Will and Testament

In the Name of God Amen this Twenty six Day of February Anno Domini one thousand seven hundred and seventy one, I Adriaen Hogeland of the outward of the City of New York yeoman being aged but of perfect Mind and sound Memory thanks be to God therefore but calling to Mind the Mostallity of my Body, and that it is appointed unto Man once to die therefore I do make this my last Will and Testament in the following Manner and Form, that is to say, Principally I give and bequeath my Soul into the Hands of Almighty God that gave it, My Body I recommend to the Earth to be Buried in a decent Christian Manner at the Discretions of my Executors hereafter to be named, and touching such Worldly Estate wherewith God has blest

me in this Life I give devise and dispose of the same in the following Manner. Inprimis my Will is that all my just Debts and Funeral Expences be well and truly paid and discharged by my Executors hereafter named. Item I give and bequeath unto my son Benjamin Hogeland for his Birth Right the sum of ten Pounds current lawfull Money of the Colony of New York. Item I give and bequeath unto my son William Hogeland all my Carpenters and well right Tools and utensils. Item I give and bequeath unto my Daughter Antje the sum of sixty Pound Money as abovesaid, and a Bedstead with Bed and Furniture thereunto belonging. Item my Will is that my Daughter Jane shall likewise have the sum of sixty Pound as abovesaid and a Bedstead with Bed and Furniture thereunto belonging. Item I give and bequeath unto my Grand Daughter Engeltje Oostrandes the sum of sixty Pound lawfull Money of the Colony of New York for her full Portion and no more. Item my Will is that after my Decease all my Lands, Swamps, Meadows, Buildings and Improvements to be sold by my Executors and that all my Estate yet remaining after the abovesaid Legacies are paid shall be equally divided among my Children whose Names are as follows Neeltje Croonhoven, Engeltje Lent, Jean Hogeland, Margaret Fletcher, Benjamin Hogeland, William Hogeland, Antje Hogeland and Adriaen Day Share and Share alike all said real and personall Estate thus divided Share and Share alike among my Children as abovesaid to be and remain unto each of them and their Heirs and Assigns forever. And I do by these Presents nominate, constitute, ordain and appoint my son in Law Richard Fletcher, and my Son Benjamin Hogeland, William Hogeland Executors of this my last Will and Testament, and do by these presents revoke make void and disannul all other and former Will or Wills, Request or Bequests, Executor or Executors by me made, willed or ordained, holding this and no other to be my last Will and Testament.

Adriaen ^{the} Hogeland (d. 5)

A Plan of Mr. Nicholas and James W. De Peyster's land at Bloomingdall, October 12, 1785. NYHS.

