

Enslaved People at Blandwood

Governor Morehead, like many Southern statesmen, held conflicting positions on slavery. As a politician he presented legislation on behalf of abolitionists, yet he remained a slaveholder for more than four decades.

After Morehead married Ann “Eliza” Lindsay in 1821, the couple moved to their new family home, where the household grew to include eight children. In the same years, those enslaved at Blandwood increased from twenty-two to thirty-seven.

Blandwood was a residence, not a working plantation, so why were so many people enslaved there? While census records are useful, they do not reveal this type of information or other details about an enslaved person’s experiences.

Enslaved women at Blandwood likely prepared, cooked, and served food, cared for the children, cleaned, and performed other domestic tasks. Enslaved men probably tended to the livestock and horses, as well as the grounds.

In 1866, Morehead died followed by Eliza’s death in 1868. Her will refers to two formerly enslaved people: Hannah Jones and Tinnan Morehead. Of significance, they are the only people she mentioned other than her children and their families. Her bequest provides a rare opportunity to see Hannah and Tinnan as individuals, not statistics or property.



Ann Eliza and John Motley Morehead,
taken in the 1850s.

From the Blandwood Collection

I give and bequeath to my faithful servant Hannah formerly my slave, one walnut table and one bedstead a small one now in use in the family.

I also give and bequeath to my freedman Tinnan formerly a slave one bed and stead and furniture which bedstead is now used by him also one pair of Boots or Shoes as he may choose

“I give and bequeath to my faithful Servant Hannah formerly my Slave one walnut table and one bedstead, a small one now in use in the family.

I also give and bequeath to my freedman Tinnan formerly a Slave one bed and stead and furniture which bedstead is more used by him also one pair of Boots or Shoes as he may choose.”

- Transcription of Ann Eliza Morehead’s 1868 will