

December 2023

Morven & Slavery

Inclusive History Interpretive Plan



Prepared for Morven Museum & Garden by Sharece Blakney

This interpretive plan has been supported by the New Jersey Historical Commission through the Inclusive History Grant.

Acknowledgments

Morven Museum & Garden received an Inclusive History grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission, a division of the Department of State, to support the development of an interpretive plan for incorporating new research conducted on Morven and the Stockton family's ties to slavery into current public offerings.

The research conducted was funded in part by a grant from the William Short Fund for New Jersey of the National Trust for Historic Preservation; a grant from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities, a state partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities, along with additional funding provided by Yvette Lanneaux, Colleen Goggins, Lisa and Michael Ullmann, Liza Morehouse, and Jill M. Barry.

This interpretive plan and the research that forms its foundation are the product of many contributions and dedication to inclusive storytelling from the Morven team: Elizabeth Allan, Jesse Gordon Simons, Greer Luce, Kathy Greenwood, and Jill M. Barry.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
Project Background ↔ Mission, Goals, & Purpose	
Interpretive Content.....	8
Public Programs & Education (8) ↔ Website Expansion (13) ↔ Publication Opportunities (18) ↔ Gallery Spaces & Exhibits (22)	
Additional Recommendations.....	31
Appendix A.....	34
Research Reports: Morven & Slavery ↔ Morven & Slavery Continued	
Appendix B.....	35
Gallery MockUp Images ↔ Gallery Still Images	
Appendix C.....	40
Timelines ↔ Cost	

Introduction

The home of Richard Stockton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and former New Jersey Governor's Mansion, Morven Museum & Garden showcases the rich cultural heritage of the Garden State through regular exhibitions, educational programs, and special events. Built around 1757, the National Historic Landmark has played an essential role in the history of New Jersey and the nation for over 200 years. Like other signers, Richard Stockton held people in bondage while adding his name to a document that declared "that all men are created equal ..." As educated and trained lawyers, the first two generations of Stocktons at Morven enslaved people on site. At the expense of the enslaved, the Stocktons lived a comfortable lifestyle while amassing wealth and power. They also formed connections with other wealthy and powerful families with ties to slavery in New Jersey and the South.

The museum and visitor relationship is vital to any functioning museum. Museums can take many steps to improve a visitor's experience, from elaborate exhibits to accessible programs. The goal is to facilitate a meaningful experience for each visitor regardless of prior knowledge or interest. This interpretive plan is intended to help Morven improve the visitors' experience through more inclusive storytelling. With historical context in mind, these recommendations provide Morven with a resource to incorporate research findings on the enslaved people owned by the Stockton family (and their associates) into their current offerings. To that end, the interpretive approach for this plan examined Morven's current offerings and provided recommendations across four interpretive methods: public programming, exhibits and gallery spaces, publications, and website content. The recommendations in each section build on sharing the "Morven & Slavery" research.

As Morven has already undergone a renovation to its first-floor galleries, the recommendations in this plan are specific to adding African American history and the history of slavery into existing offerings.

Project Background

In 2017, Morven began a community engagement project that aimed to present the contributions and experiences of enslaved people as an essential part of Morven's and New Jersey's foundation. Morven gathered extensive community feedback, researched best practices, held several staff and board training days, and formed a Community Advisory Committee. Primary document research at the Historical Society of Princeton, the New Jersey State Archives, and the Princeton Theological Seminary helped uncover the names of the enslaved men and women who worked and lived at Morven.

In 2018, Morven reinterpreted and reinstalled its uniquely American story in the permanent galleries after creating a more robust and inclusive history of everyone who lived and labored at the historic site, including women and enslaved individuals. When Morven undertook the reinterpretation, it expanded the interpretive focus beyond the better-known patriarchs. Morven's current exhibition includes the names of all people known to have been enslaved by the Stocktons. In most cases, existing research had only uncovered first names. The exhibit features a panel on Marcus Marsh, nursed by Annis Boudinot Stockton and later freed to live in Philadelphia; birth and manumission records of a woman named Kate/Catharine; and a fugitive slave ad posted by Richard "the Duke" Stockton for a self-liberated man named Sampson.

In 2022, historian Sharece Blakney conducted archival research on the enslaved men, women, and children at Morven and other holdings owned by the Stockton family. She followed known leads and pursued new threads. For example, Blakney traced one branch of the family tree of Thomas Jewell, enslaved at Morven and emancipated in 1823, six generations to 2008, uncovering marriages, occupations, accomplishments, and struggles. With only the name "Hannibal" and an 1829 manumission date, she discovered information about Hannibal Simpson, enslaved at Morven, who later worked as a teamster; Blakney traced his children and other descendants multiple generations. She also found the names of the 108 enslaved people purchased by Robert Stockton in 1827 for his Georgia plantation; Morven knew of them but did not have their names. By uncovering shipping records, she found primary documents showing the interstate movement of enslaved people by Robert Stockton to and from Georgia, South Carolina, and New Jersey. After 900

hours of research, Blakney produced two detailed reports of her findings, attached in Appendix A.

During the plan's development, Blakney met with members of Morven's team monthly, visited other historic sites currently interpreting African American history and the history of enslaved people, and participated in listening sessions with community members. On June 26, 2023, Morven invited the local African American community to hear a presentation on the research and gain feedback vital to the interpretive plan. They held the session at the Princeton Public Library with a second virtual option held via Zoom on August 8, 2023. After engaging the local community, Morven had another virtual listening session for members of organizations that included other museums, archives, and historic sites. Each listening session allowed Blakney to share her research and assess which stories garnered the most interest and strongest reactions. On November 15, 2023, Morven held its final meeting (virtually), where Blakney presented a draft of the interpretive plan with invited attendees from all previous sessions.

Mission, Goals, and Purpose

Morven Museum & Garden's mission is to preserve and celebrate Morven's legacy by sharing its authentic stories. The recommendations in this interpretive plan aim to assist them in achieving their organizational goals outlined in the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan:

- Goal 1: Strengthen institutional stability
- Goal 2: Reinforce governance structure and develop future board leadership
- Goal 3: Promote greater awareness to reach broader audiences
- Goal 4: Develop technological infrastructure

This interpretive plan aims to transform a year's worth of research and discovery into accessible and engaging material to educate the public and enhance the visitor experience. The interpretive approach outlines the steps necessary to develop compelling exhibits and programs to attract new visitors and encourage returning visitors to forge richer and deeper connections with Morven. The topic of human beings being treated as property is difficult, and we aim to address it with the appropriate gravitas. By not shying away from connections to enslaved people, visitors better understand how our world evolved to where we are today and witness the lives, struggles, and accomplishments of enslaved

individuals and their descendants.

Note:

The interpretive content presented in the following sections are recommendations. The interpretive content should not replace Morven's current offerings but could serve as valuable additions to assist the organization in telling more inclusive stories. By incorporating portions of the "Morven & Slavery" research into Morven's current offerings, Blakney does not recommend altering their interpretive methodology. Expanding their public offerings can and should take time.

See Appendix C for a multi-year recommended timeline.

Also, in various parts of the plan, there will be references to different men in the Stockton family with the same name. To differentiate between them, I will refer to them by titles consistent with their appearance in *Morven: Memory, Myth & Reality*:

- Richard, the Settler - purchased Morven land from William Penn, grandfather of the Signer
- Richard, the Signer - signer of the Declaration of Independence
- Richard, the Duke - son of the Signer
- Robert, the Commodore - grandson of the Signer

Public Programs & Education

On-site

Virtual Options as Needed
Program Suggestions With Descriptions

Programming as Interpretation & Morven's Current Offerings

Engaging and informative public programs are a vital aspect of successful interpretive plans. Museums and historic sites provide public programming in numerous formats, from interactive workshops to lectures and presentations. Programming options also vary when considering the age ranges of audience members, time of year, and relevant themes.

Morven's best-selling programs are the Grand Homes and Gardens series and Holiday Wreath Workshops. Their typical program attendees are white, 55+, and local to Princeton or Mercer County. None of the proposed programs are intended to replace current program offerings, but instead, they are meant to provide an array of options when creating programming schedules. These recommendations will also allow Morven to develop a more diverse audience, connect with their local African American community while providing valuable services and information, and collaborate with other organizations/institutions that interpret slavery at their sites or would like to engage in similar work.

History-based programs exploring underrepresented topics in visitors' education or daily lives have performed positively. Morven has also seen an uptick in diverse audience attendance for interactive, hybrid (or virtual non-ticketed), and low-cost or free programs.

Morven Programming Recommendations

The following is a list of interpretive programs developed with Morven's current Curator of Education & Public Programs, Greer Luce. Each proposed program includes a description and recommendations on partners and collaborators (other institutions, historic sites, and

scholars) or panels/series options. While each program is meant to be offered by Morven, programs that are not exclusively virtual may not necessarily be held on-site. Some of the partners mentioned can also act as hosts for specific programs and might be a more appropriate location, which can be determined during scheduling.

Lastly, this is a partial list of programs, and there are opportunities to build more programs and educational offerings based on the research. However, these programs are meant to use historical research to address concerns and interest in topics shared during listening sessions with local community members. The suggested programs should be successful if they are well-attended, bring new visitors to Morven, and receive positive feedback from attendees. Morven would need to continue sending follow-up surveys after programs.

African American Genealogy

- Covers the process of conducting archival research, digital and analog.
- Tips for starting points and collecting essential information to begin a family tree
- Breaking through the 1870 “Brick Wall”
- Resources for collecting records (accessible sources and paid subscriptions)
 - Opportunities for partnerships with public libraries (Princeton Public Library and other libraries in Mercer County)
 - It can be offered as a stand-alone program or series. For example, researching family histories through themes: Women’s history, immigration, military history
 - There is excellent potential to provide genealogical assistance in person. Programs held at public libraries can take place in media rooms or computer rooms for hands-on learning. Using a local public library as a meeting space increases the program's accessibility, lending to Morven's desire to strengthen community engagement efforts.

Black Stocktons & Princeton

- Present biographical sketches of Black Princetonians with the surname Stockton
- Black residents with notable surnames: Scudder, Voorhees, Van Dyke, Simpson, etc.

- Opportunities for partnership with Princeton Historical Society, Witherspoon-Jackson Cultural and Historical Society, and Princeton Theological Seminary
- A panel discussion with members of the above organizations can follow the presentation

Morven & Slavery

- An overview of the history of slavery in New Jersey
- Discuss the daily lives of enslaved people in historic homes like Morven
- Information gathered on the people enslaved at Morven
 - The program should make distinctions between the following experiences:
 - the regional lives of enslaved people
 - enslaved people in rural and urban settings
 - Various legal statuses (i.e., enslavement vs. indentured servitude)

Pursuit of Freedom: The Thomas Sims Trial

- The story of Thomas Sims's escape from James Potter, brother-in-law of Commodore Robert F. Stockton
- Sims's journey from Savannah, Georgia, via a ship bound for Boston, Massachusetts, and the documents and records used to uncover the story
- Public reaction to the trial and subsequent arguments for and against the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850; present examples of the trial's regional impact on print culture
- The verdict and the fate of Sims's family still enslaved by James Potter
 - Optional: invite scholars like legal historians and other experts for a panel discussion on the historical significance of the trial and the legislation at the center of the case, the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850

Coastwise Routes: Ship Manifests and Interstate Movement of Enslaved

- Examine the collection of manifests, the information provided, and what regions kept this type of record
- What this interstate movement means for the way we understand and discuss Northern and Southern slavery

- What we learned from the interstate movement of people enslaved by the Stocktons and Potters
 - This program should use one or two people as examples of how this type of record allows researchers to tell a human story. For example, an enslaved girl named Georgiana grows up before our eyes when viewing slave ship manifests that show her numerous trips between Savannah, Georgia, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The Economics of Slavery

- Use Wills and Estate Inventories from the research to examine how enslavers built generational wealth.
- The pattern of educated men building fortunes with enslaved labor (i.e., Thomas Fuller Potter, a trained physician, left no historical evidence that he practiced medicine. However, he amassed a fortune using enslaved labor and left many records detailing his business)
- Share ways the Potters (family of Commodore Robert F. Stockton's wife Harriet) used profits from slaveholding to improve or increase the built environment of Princeton and New Jersey.
 - Morven can partner with other scholars with relevant expertise—particularly economic historians and historians of slavery or professors from local universities and colleges. There may be an opportunity to partner with groups whose interpretation includes similar historical figures.

Princeton Cartography

- A look at historic maps of Princeton
- The maps will note the area's critical social institutions, the proximity of the local African-American community members and Morven, and their proximity to white residents with matching surnames.
 - Opportunities to partner with local repositories with sufficient map collections.

The Life of Commodore Robert F. Stockton

- Military experiences and California
- American Colonization Society and Liberia acquisition
- Glynn County, Georgia plantation and 108 enslaved people
- 20,000 acres of inherited land in Buncombe County, North Carolina, owned jointly with the General Assembly of Presbyterian Church
- Purchase and sale of goldmine in Fluvanna County, Virginia
- Delaware & Raritan Canal creation and how he acquired funds to complete the project
 - Opportunities for partnership with Princeton Historical Society, Princeton University, Princeton Theological Seminary, etc.
 - A panel discussion with members of the above organizations can follow the presentation.

American Colonization Society (ACS) & New Jersey

- Explain the purpose and creation of the organization
- Spotlight members relevant to New Jersey history and positions they held within the organization
- How does their participation link the ACS to other well-known organizations?
 - Potential for a series
 - Partners for this program could include Princeton University, the Presbyterian Church, and any organization connected with members from New Jersey that may still exist.
 - A discussion panel could include representatives from the above organizations.

Website Expansion: 'Morven & Slavery'

Digital

Website Content

Drawing on Morven's existing website, the following recommendation for a new website featuring content dedicated to the history of the Stockton and Potter families' connections to slavery, stories collected of people enslaved by the Stocktons and Potters, and genealogical research of their generations of descendants. Currently, Morven.org houses a digital exhibit titled "Slavery at Morven." The webpage provides site visitors information on Marcus Marsh, Sampson, Cate or Catherine (daughter of Nancy), Betsey Stockton, and Robert Field Stockton & the American Colonization Society (ACS).

I recommend adding a new website titled "Morven & Slavery" that will present research findings but should also include historical context to ensure the site is a valuable educational resource. Building on the digital exhibit, "Slavery at Morven," as a landing page, each page would contain block text, image inserts, one pull quote, and a photo gallery of relevant images. The pull quote should be enlarged and italicized. Image captions for the photo gallery should include descriptions and citation information.

Website Content

The following outlines recent research findings as content for the proposed website and relevant records that may be used as visual aids. The content's order does not indicate website structure or a recommendation for content structure.

- **Marcus Marsh** - A biographical sketch of Marsh's life
 - Born enslaved at Morven in 1765, manumitted or emancipated by Annis Stockton after Richard Stockton, the Signer's death.

- Marsh assisted Dr. Benjamin Rush during the Yellow Fever and worked in the Rush household when unable to work on ships.
- Marriage to Martha Wright
 - Philadelphia City Directory pages
 - Seamen's Certificate
 - Death record (note that record could pertain to the death of Martha or Marcus)
- **Thomas Jewell** - A page dedicated to biographical sketch of Jewell's life
 - Manumission by Richard Stockton, the Duke; 1823
 - Census appearances (Federal and State)
 - Jewell Descendants
 - Four generations beyond Thomas Jewell
- **Hannibal Simpson** - A page dedicated to biographical sketch of Simpson's life
 - Manumission by Robert Field Stockton, the Commodore; 1829
 - Census appearances (Federal and State)
 - Simpson Descendants
 - Newspaper clippings, vital records, military records, and census collections spanning four generations beyond Hannibal Simpson
- **Robert Field Stockton (the Commodore)** - A page dedicated to Stockton's connections to slavery and accumulation of wealth
 - He was given a sugar plantation in Brunswick (Glynn County, Georgia) on Turtle River after marrying Harriet Maria Potter.
 - Purchase of 108 enslaved men, women, and children
 - Sale of enslaved man, Anthony; 1827 (Anthony was one of the 108 people purchased by Stockton for his Glynn County, Georgia sugar plantation)
 - Transfer of ownership (plantation/labor/production to date) with retained rights or addition of trustees
 - Slave Ship Manifests
 - Interstate movement of enslaved people between Stockton's northern and southern properties

- 20k acres of goldmine land in Buncombe County, North Carolina
 - Original land grant inherited by Elias Boudinot and Richard “The Duke” Stockton, bequeathed to Presbyterian Church General Assembly and the Commodore
 - The Commodore and younger brother, William B. Stockton, sold acres of Buncombe County land for several years.
- Other connections to slavery
 - Anthony (born to Phyllis) was registered by Richard ‘the Duke’ Stockton in 1806. No record of Anthony’s manumission has been found despite the Gradual Abolition Act of 1804. Like Cate and Hannibal Simpson, he would have been emancipated by Robert Field Stockton.
- Purchase and sale of goldmine in Fluvanna County, Virginia
 - Stockton enslaved 17 people near Tellurium Mine. Previous publications either refute the use of slave labor or imply Stockton hired enslaved people.
- **The Potters** - A page dedicated to the in-laws of Robert F. Stockton, the Commodore
 - John Potter gifted Stockton a plantation and funds to purchase enslaved labor in Glynn County, Georgia. Both were part of a marriage settlement.
 - Slave ship manifest
 - Interstate movement of enslaved people between Potter’s northern and southern properties (owned by James Potter, John Potter, and Thomas Fuller Potter)
 - Division of plantation and enslaved labor
 - The deed outlined land and labor divisions between John Potter’s sons, James and Thomas.
 - Acquisition of plantations along the Savannah River
 - Colerain Plantation
 - Argyle Plantation
 - Onslow Island
 - Tweedside Plantation

- James Potter as Power of Attorney
 - The potential sale of Alonzo and his family, enslaved by Robert F. Stockton
 - The attempted acquisition of Cabbage Bluff plantation on behalf of Robert F. Stockton
- Mingo Lovett
 - Lovett was sold to James Potter by Cornelia W. Beckwith (acting as POA for her husband, E.G. Beckwith)
 - Lovett appears in estate inventory after the death of James Potter, then in the Freedman's Bureau as a settler on 20 acres of land that belonged to James Potter's estate.
 - Lovett appears with a family in two census records in 1870. Both show him living with a woman named Hester, who also appears in James Potter's estate inventory. Lovett also appears in a Georgia newspaper on a list of colored voters.
- Thomas Sims Trial
 - The escape and subsequent re-enslavement of Thomas Sims by James Potter
 - Public reaction to case by region and historical significance
 - Menda Campbell (Sims's mother) and the purchase of her family
- Potter's connections and imprint on New Jersey

Digital Exhibits

Below is a list of suggestions for digital exhibits that can be curated for "Morven & Slavery" from the above content. This list is not exhaustive, as the curated exhibits are rotating.

- Digital Exhibits
 - American Colonization Society
 - Discusses the New Jersey chapter of the American Colonization Society
 - Princeton's Build Environment
 - A virtual walking tour of locations in Princeton that were built by enslaved labor or the proceeds of slave ownership

- Black Princeton - The Origin of Names
 - Use state and federal census records as visuals. This exhibit would show the proximity of formerly enslaved people and the white families with whom they share a surname.
- Estate Inventories, Wills, and Slavery
 - Use wills and estate inventory records from the research as an example. This digital exhibit looks at how historical records created after the death of enslavers help us find enslaved people in the present. This digital exhibit is an opportunity to curate an exhibition on African American genealogy pre-1870.
- Northern Families with Southern Ties
 - The exhibit should discuss marriages similar to Robert F. Stockton and Harriet Maria Potter and the impact of slavery on the connections made between Northern and Southern families.
- Black Stocktons & New Jersey, Black residents of Princeton and neighboring West Windsor
- George Stockton and seven generations of descendants
 - Connection to Thomas Jewell and Cate Stockton (similar to Thomas Jewell and Hannibal Simpson, Cate was manumitted by the Stockton family)

Publication Opportunities

Digital

Print Recommendations Included

Data Sharing and Publication Recommendations

The publication of various aspects of “Morven & Slavery,” lends to Morven’s goal of sharing or disseminating the history of African Americans enslaved by members of the Stockton family and their associates. However, assessing the landscape of historical scholarship reveals opportunities for Morven to also share primary source material. By publishing works and sharing data compiled during the research process, Morven creates educational tools while aiding others in furthering their research projects.

Below are recommendations for sharing compiled data and submitting scholarly journal articles. However, Morven should also consider writing a book as they have sufficient material for a compelling proposal for a major publisher. Books in the history field tend to present research, offer historical analysis of a known figure or event using an alternative methodology, or provide new primary sources to contradict previous scholarship. Morven’s recent research findings position them as an authority on several historically relevant topics. As such, they have enough material to create many works currently absent from the historical literature field. Previously published biographies on Commodore Robert Field Stockton misinterpreted his slave ownership, mainly his ties to slavery outside of New Jersey. Published works on African American genealogy are relatively common. However, Morven can provide genealogical findings for African American residents who share surnames with prominent white members of the Princeton community. The research covers many historical themes and spans generations. Lastly, no publisher has offered a book on the forced interstate movement of enslaved people. Morven has valuable research material relevant to publishing historical non-fiction.

Enslaved.org - [Data Sets & Journal Articles](#)

Data Sets Submission

Enslaved: Peoples of the Historic Slave Trade or *Enslaved.org* is a digital repository that provides researchers (historians, students, genealogists, and more) with datasets, linked data, and data visualizations of enslaved people with original sources. Researchers share compiled data with Enslaved.org, which is then available to the public. Morven has collected sufficient sources to share datasets for the following topics:

- **Enslaved on Plantations Owned by Stockton and Potter**
 - The data provides insight into various demographics, allowing research into plantation life in the South, gender dynamics, familial ties among the enslaved, and plantation management using data collected on plantations owned by Robert Field Stockton and James Potter. Data sets were compiled on the following plantations:
 - Tweedside - Thomas Fuller Potter
 - Argyle - James Potter
 - Turtle Creek - Commodore Robert F. Stockton
 - Colerain - John Potter (divided between James and Thomas Fuller Potter before his death)
 - Onslow - James Potter
- **Interstate Movement of Enslaved People**
 - A data set using United States Coastwise collections compiling information submitted on slave ship manifests. In some cases, Coastwise records were created when enslavers shipped enslaved people newly purchased between the North and South. However, in the case of Robert F. Stockton and the Potters, enslaved people were sent from one plantation or property to another.
- **Enslaved Labor & Estate Inventories**
 - The data gives insight into the wealth built and inherited by generations of enslavers. Estate inventories also provide data on the monetized nature of human property and the economics of the institution.

Journal Article Submissions -

Enslaved.org partners with the *Journal of Slavery and Data Preservation*, a digital peer-reviewed academic journal, to publish scholarly research articles. The journal publishes scholarly articles using the datasets contributed to Enslaved.org. While researchers can submit datasets to the repository without submitting journal articles, data from submitted articles will be shared with the repository for increased discoverability. Morven has collected sufficient sources to share datasets and submit scholarly journal articles on the following topics:

- Origins of enslaved people traced through data compiled from bills of sale
- Family structures and communities established by the enslaved on plantations along the Savannah River
- Gender and labor on Argyle Plantation (supported by secondary sources providing additional data on other plantations owned by James and Thomas Fuller Potter)
- Interstate movement of enslaved people

Morven & Slavery

- An overview of the history of slavery in New Jersey
- Discuss the daily lives of enslaved people in historic homes like Morven
- Information gathered on the people enslaved at Morven
 - The article should make distinctions between the following experiences:
 - the regional lives of enslaved people
 - enslaved people in rural and urban settings
 - Various legal statuses (i.e., enslavement vs. indentured servitude)

The Economics of Slavery

- Share ways the Potters used profits from slaveholding to improve or increase the built environment of Princeton and New Jersey.
 - It is possible to partner with other scholars with relevant expertise—particularly economic historians and historians of slavery or professors from local colleges and universities.

Princeton & Slavery - [Journal Articles](#)

The Princeton & Slavery Project shares articles investigating Princeton University's ties to slavery. In addition to informative articles on prominent members of the University's community, the site also shares stories of enslaved people connected to the University, African American residents in the surrounding neighborhoods, and the relevance of antebellum southerners as part of their student body. Topics for submission need to be assessed based on the publication's needs. However, Morven has enough research to submit articles on prominent members of Princeton's community (many with connections to the University) or supplement existing articles with previously unknown information.

Gallery Spaces & Exhibits

On-site

Virtual Exhibits on Website

Recommendations on Altering Exhibit and Gallery Spaces

In many museums, exhibits are a commonly used form of interpretive methodology. Curated displays allow museums to present interpretive narratives with visual accompaniments or material culture. Morven's permanent exhibits on the first floor follow the Stockton family and other estate inhabitants through multiple generations and historical periods. Like other sites of its age, Morven has had to wrestle with the topic of slavery. In Gallery 1, visitors see a historic record revealing the Stocktons as enslavers. Each exhibit in the remaining galleries shares information about the enslaved men, women, and children who lived at Morven or were owned by a member of the Stockton family. In Gallery 2, there are references to a baby girl named Cate (her birth record and manumission), Betsey Stockton, and Marcus Marsh. In Gallery 3, visitors learn of America's expansion and the Stockton family's expanded slave holdings through Commodore Stockton's Georgia sugar plantation. In the Garden Room, an exhibit displays the names of enslaved people who lived and labored at Morven.

The recommendations for changes to the permanent exhibit are intended to strengthen Morven's storytelling. The narrative in the museum galleries reflects a complicated history of freedom and slavery. The additions will not only broaden the discussion of slavery and present a more inclusive narrative but will introduce previously unknown names of enslaved people, incorporate a regional understanding of slavery, and examine the national connection between northern wealth and southern slavery. With minimal changes to the wall exhibits, Morven is uniquely positioned to tell the story of Northern slavery in ways few historic sites can.

Recommended Gallery Edits for Galleries 1-3 and Garden Room

Below are interpretation recommendations for updating the permanent exhibit areas in the museum identified as spaces relevant to the Morven & Slavery research findings. Each entry begins with the section's title and the gallery location on the first floor. Next, I recommend additions, edits, or changes to wall text, followed by suggestions for image removals or replacements. Images not removed or replaced with another should be updated. Many of the images of archival records need to be enlarged for visitors to read. Well-written and detailed text panels aid them. However, the panels must include so much information to accommodate the size of the images that they are text-heavy. The text panels should be updated to reflect any image changes. Recommendations are included to address new information in text panels as necessary.

Additionally, all image numbers on the wall used as identifiers should be updated to reflect removing any images to mirror the text panel. Adding a URL linking to the landing page on Morven's website with additional information and sources allows for limited changes to the first-floor galleries, boosts traffic to the website, and saves on expenses associated with altering images and text as additional research is conducted. The current exhibit is self-guided; however, Morven offers docent-led tours on a schedule that varies based on the museum's needs and time of year.

"The Stories of ENSLAVED PEOPLE WHO LIVED HERE" - Gallery 1

- Add a URL below the text panel linking to the Morven & Slavery website.

"Men, Women & Children ENSLAVED AT MORVEN" - Gallery 2

- Add a reference to Marcus Marsh's birth in the text's third paragraph.
 - The wall text references three generations of Stocktons as slaveholders. Visitors learn about Dinah, her six children, and three women enslaved by Richard "the Duke" Stockton: Fan, Batty, and Susan. Replace Betsey Stockton's photo with a page from the Settler's will that bequeathed Dinah and her children to his family or an excerpt from one of the letters showing Fan, Batty or Susan's names.
 - Remove Sampson's runaway ad.

- Relocate the ad to “Debates & Dissent ON PERSONAL LIBERTY.” *See Appendix B, Figure 1 for designer file mock-up suggestions.*
- Replace Marcus Marsh’s Seaman Certificate with Anthony’s birth record. Anthony’s birth was registered by Richard “The Duke” Stockton, who owned his mother, Phyllis.
 - Relocate the certificate to the hanging glass panel in the center room. *See Appendix B, Figure 2 for reference.*
 - The text panel should reflect that no manumission record has been found despite Anthony being born after New Jersey’s Gradual Abolition Act of 1804.

“Debates & Dissent ON PERSONAL LIBERTY” - Gallery 2

- Update text (second paragraph) to include how Richard “The Duke” Stockton’s views on personal rights are reflected in his role as an enslaver and head of the Princeton Vigilante Society.
 - Replace images of the letter from “The Duke to General J. Dayton” and the “Congressional Pugilist” cartoon with an image of Sampson’s runaway slave ad and an image of an enlarged excerpt from Thomas Jewell’s manumission record.
 - The text panel should note how long the Duke ran the ad to recover Sampson.
 - Replace the image of the newspaper article on the Princeton Vigilante Society with an enlarged version cropped to isolate the article. *See Appendix B, Figure 3 for example.*
 - If it is impossible to highlight the names of the Society members listed in the article, edit the text panel to include their names.

“Construction of the Ice House and THE FIRE OF 1821” - Gallery 2

- Based on recommendations for the hanging glass panel, this space could be an option for relocating some of the image and text inserts displayed. Specifically, the “Muse of Morven” text insert. The text should also be closer to the wall’s center for visibility.

- Replace the “Detail of the Stockton Mansion” sketch with the Provost Jail or Debtor’s Prison image from the hanging panel (Side 1).
- Replace the Drawing of Thomson Hall with the quote from the Signer to Abraham Clark (1776) about the needs of New Jersey troops. The quote is displayed as an insert in the hanging panel (Side 2).
- Replace the 1821 house fire notice with the image of “Washington’s Reception by the Ladies on the Bridge” and accompanying text from the hanging panel (Side 2).

Hanging Glass Panes, Side 1 - Gallery 2

- The hanging display comprises five double-sided glass panes containing a paper insert with an image (painting or drawing). Some inserts have images paired with block text, while others only have captions with citation details. There is no central text for the hanging glass panes. However, below are recommendations for replacement inserts to create a mini display that centers on enslaved people at Morven: Thomas Jewell, Marcus Marsh, and Hannibal Simpson.
 - *Top Row, Center* - Edit insert to add information about Marcus Marsh’s marriage to Martha Wright.
 - *Top Row, Right* - Replace Benjamin Rush insert with an image of Marcus Marsh’s Seaman Certificate.
 - Keep the current insert format, which displays an image with a caption of citation details. The certificate image should be large enough to be read by visitors. Morven uses this image on its website in the digital exhibit “Slavery at Morven.”
 - *Top Row, Left* - Replace the debtor’s prison sketch with an insert showing a map of Philadelphia marking the distance between Marcus Marsh and Benjamin Rush’s homes.
 - Keep the current insert format, which displays an image with block text. The text could discuss Marcus’s appearances in the Philadelphia City Directory. Morven uses this image on its website in the digital exhibit “Slavery at Morven.”

- *Bottom Row, Left* - Replace the insert of Hannah Stockton Boudinot with an image of Princeton Theological Seminary's Presbyterian Church record of Thomas Jewell's baptism.
 - The image should highlight the entry with Thomas Jewell on the page. The image also shows that the Duke owned Jewell. The block text should include a brief biographical sketch of Jewell followed by text informing visitors that his family was traced. The text should also include language to inform visitors that more information can be found online at the Morven & Slavery website.
- *Bottom Row, Right* - Replace the portrait of Elias Boudinot with an insert of Hannibal Simpson's manumission record.
 - Keep the current insert format, which displays an image with block text. Alternatively, an image of Princeton Theological Seminary's Presbyterian Church record of Simpson's marriage can be used. The block text should include a brief biographical sketch of Simpson followed by text informing visitors that his family was traced. The text should also include language to inform visitors that more information can be found online at the Morven & Slavery website. *See Appendix B, Figure 4 for a photograph of the hanging panel.*

Hanging Glass Panes, Side 2 - Gallery 2

- Like Side 1, there is no main text for the hanging glass panes displayed on Side 2. However, below are recommendations for replacement inserts to create a mini display of the relationship between the Stockton family, Presbyterian Church, and other prominent Princeton families.
 - *Top Row, Left*- Option 1, replace insert of Julia Stockton Rush with an image of the Duke's will bequeathing 20,000 acres of land in Buncombe County, North Carolina (jointly owned with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church) to the Commodore. The Duke and Elias Boudinot inherited the land from Daniel Huger. Boudinot left his portion to the Presbyterian Church after his death. Option 2: use an image of the Presbyterian Church record of Mary

Field Stockton's application for communion. Option 3: use an image of the Stocktons on a list of congregants from Presbyterian Church records.

- A caption with citation details should accompany the image.
Regardless of the option chosen, the image should be large enough to be read by visitors.
- *Top Row, Center* - If the top row (left) pane is replaced with options 1 or 2, use an image of the deed that appointed Richard "the Duke" Stockton's Power of Attorney for land in Buncombe County, North Carolina. If option 3, use an image of a list of black congregants from Presbyterian Church records. Many of the people on the list have notable surnames, and some are mentioned as enslaved.
 - A caption with citation details should accompany the image.
- *Top Row, Right*- Replace with the relocated insert of Elias Boudinot from Side 1.
- *Bottom Row, Left* - Keep the current insert.
- *Bottom Row, Right* - Edit for content.
 - The current format is block text below a title, "*The Muse of MORVEN.*" Edit to discuss the connections between the Stockton family, the Presbyterian Church, and other prominent families in Princeton.

"FORMING *the* NEW NATION" - Gallery 3

- The text needs to be updated for accuracy. The Commodore's sugar plantation was located in Georgia, and the enslaved people on the plantation were purchased in the late 1820s. Morven should also reconsider the phrasing of the Commodore's land acquisition. The text states that Robert Field Stockton "purchased" land in Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, and California. However, his land was in North Carolina and was inherited from his father. Similarly, his Georgia plantation was given to him by his father-in-law, John Potter, as part of his marriage settlement.
 - Remove painting of the Commodore and his family on horseback. Use this space to relocate the quote from his American Colonization Society (ACS) speech. Currently, the quote is positioned above the doorway leading to

Gallery 4. The painting can go in storage but can also be used in an exhibit on the second floor (west wing).

- Relocate the photo of Harriet Maria Potter, the Commodore's wife, to a frame and place it on the mantel over the fireplace.
- Remove the photo of Robert Field Stockton, grandson of the Commodore.
 - Update the text panel to information for removed images.
 - Add citation information for the ACS quote. Block text can also discuss the roles of ACS members relevant to New Jersey history.

"COMMANDER *of the* PACIFIC FLEET" - Gallery 3

- I have no recommendations for updates to the wall text. The image relocation recommendations below will move them to a place in the gallery that may better fit the interpretive narrative.
 - Remove and relocate the image of Francis Johnson to a small frame and place it on the piano in the center of the room.
 - Remove the image of "The Princeton Gallopade." Laminate the sheet music and relocate it to the music stand on the piano.
 - Reposition the "Treaty of Cahuenga" photo to center it below the "Awful Explosion of the 'Peace-maker' on Board the U.S. Steam Frigate" image.
 - Update the text panel to reflect only the remaining images.

See Appendix B, Figure 5 for reference relocation of sheet music and Johnson's photo.

"THE COMMODORE *as a* SLAVE OWNER" - Gallery 3

- The text needs to be updated for accuracy. The Commodore's sugar plantation in Georgia was given to him by his father-in-law in 1827. Also, references to Stockton's purchase of the land and money invested in sugar crops should indicate the funding source. This adjustment will make the text more accurate and introduce Stockton's in-laws, the Potters.
- The text refers to a man named "Tony" sold for \$650. Records list his name as Anthony. Note: this is not Anthony referenced above in Gallery 2 recommendations.
- The servants' names who worked at Morven are spelled differently than they appear on the wall in the Garden Room and should be verified and replaced if necessary.

- Replace the previously referenced ACS quote with a list of 108 enslaved people purchased for the Commodore’s Georgia sugar plantation. Their names should be listed as block text and separated by commas, similar to the sale deeds. Names of enslaved people appearing in Coastwise slave ship manifests should be italicized. At the time of the present research, their names are John, Maria, Lucy, and James.
 - None of the images should be removed, relocated, or replaced for this section.
 - Update the text panel on the left side of the doorway to provide citation information for the deeds of sale that provide the list of names. The panel should also include citation information for the “Southeast Coastwise Inward and Outward Slave Manifest, 1790-1860” while mentioning that the names of italicized individuals were shuttled between locations by enslavers.
 - Update the text panel on the right side of the doorway to include citations for Frank Johnson’s photo and sheet music. This panel currently contains the information for the piano.
 - The text panel above the mantel should be updated to include a citation for the photo of Harriet Maria Potter.

Garden Room - Left Wall

- The following edits should be made to the left wall of the Garden Room.
 - Hannibal Simpson should be added to the text under Richard “the Duke” Stockton.
 - Check the spelling of E. Sherred under Robert Field Stockton. In Gallery 3, this name is listed as “E. Sherret.”
 - Check the spelling of Jane Dazell under Robert Field Stockton. In Gallery 3, this name is listed as “Jane Davis.”
 - Consider repurposing the existing italics. The italicized names indicate the next head of household. However, the following names should be italicized to show individuals with digital exhibits on the new “Morven & Slavery” website:

- Marcus Marsh, Thomas Jewell, Robert Field Stockton, and Hannibal Simpson

Second Floor - West Wing

The five galleries on the second floor contain space for additional exhibits. The Special Exhibits Galleries are used to highlight New Jersey arts and culture through special exhibitions, which have included one that examined the history of Roosevelt, New Jersey, from its early days as an antidote to the Great Depression to a 21st-century arts community, an exhibition on the work of New Jersey artist and ornithologist Gerard Rutgers Hardenbergh; and our current exhibit *Striking Beauty: New Jersey Tall Case Clocks, 1730-1830*, featuring over 50 tall case clocks and the experiences of the artisans and apprentices (free and enslaved) who made them. However, the west wing beyond the Special Exhibits Gallery is used less frequently.

The West Wing (second floor) is an ideal location to share research that may not fit into a first-floor exhibit because of space limitations and may interrupt the interpretive narrative. Exhibits in this space can be dedicated to telling stories from the research reports that are thematically relevant and connect to African Americans' and New Jersey's history. For example, records on the in-laws of Commodore Robert Field Stockton present many historical themes that connect the Stockton family, Princeton, and New Jersey to the institution of slavery in the South. An exhibit on the Potters' use of money gained in the slave trade to expand the built environment in Princeton could educate visitors on northern and southern slavery, the wealth produced by slave labor, and the importance of nineteenth-century connections. Other exhibits can address the power connections of historic Princeton residents mentioned in Side 2 of the glass panel in Gallery 2 or an exhibit on military service highlighting the history of African Americans in New Jersey military history. The exhibit would use examples of people from the research.

See Appendix B, Figure 6 for a photo of second floor gallery space.

Exhibits in this space should rotate out every three years.

Additional Recommendations

Below are recommendations outside of the above interpretive approach. These recommendations may aid Morven Museum & Garden in sharing research findings, strengthening existing partnerships, or creating new opportunities for collaboration with similar organizations.

Share Genealogical Findings

- Create an Ancestry.com account with publicly accessible family trees. This will allow Morven Museum & Garden to share research findings but also enable the public to engage with the material at their will and decide whether to connect with Morven.¹
 - I do not recommend using FamilySearch.org despite the site's usefulness throughout the research process in 2022. The user-friendly search engine offers access to many collections not available on Ancestry. However, it provides very little public access to Morven-related genealogy, making it a poor choice for sharing research findings. Also, users can only create one main or attached family tree.

Stopping Stones

- [The Stopping Stones](#) program works with local partners to memorialize the names of enslaved people with markers at locations where they were held in bondage. In addition to assisting their partners in remembrance efforts, they support those needing help with accurate reporting and identification.
 - As the markers reference enslaved people held at a specific location, Morven Museum & Garden has supporting evidence to place markers for Marcus Marsh, Thomas Jewell, or Hannibal Simpson.

¹ Since the interpretive planning process began, Morven Museum & Garden has created an Ancestry.com account.

Updated Tour Scripts and Docent Materials

- In addition to editing the formal tour script, excerpts from the “Morven & Slavery” research reports can be used to create a pamphlet with talking points for docents. The materials can also offer information that may be useful in helping docents field questions from visitors related to the Stockton family and slavery during tours.

Conference Presentations and Paper Submissions

- Morven can seek opportunities to present findings at relevant conferences and submit papers on several slavery-related topics. Both will allow them to connect with similar institutions and organizations interpreting slavery.
- Options include the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) and the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH).
 - Both hold annual conferences throughout the country and offer options for publication. ASALH offers an academic journal for publishing historical research. AASLH encourages the submission of short articles on challenges public history organizations (and their staff) face.

Collaborations and Partnerships

- Morven Museum & Garden would make a great partner for many local organizations and historic sites throughout New Jersey. While many considered viable connections, new research allows them to revisit existing partnerships and create new opportunities. Partnerships with similar organizations allow Morven to save time and resources by sharing the responsibility of creating panels and programs.
 - For example, the historic site Trent House in Trenton, New Jersey, is actively trying to research and expand its historical interpretation related to slavery. Morven may be able to provide assistance or feedback. Trent House could also collaborate on a public program.
- In a previous section on **Programs & Education**, I recommended a series of program ideas with the possibility of panel discussions. Many scholars with relevant expertise invited to present or sit on panels can be professors at universities across the state.

- Establishing relationships with professors at local universities also offers another avenue for advertising, like university newspapers, department websites, and department social media.

Appendix A

Research Reports

Morven & Slavery: Slavery, Related Black History, and the Stockton Family (Phase 1, Report Jan-Jun 2022)
Morven & Slavery Continued: Slavery, Related Black History, and the Stockton Family (Phase 2, Report Jul-Dec 2022)

📄 Morven&Slavery.pdf

📄 Morven&Slavery_2.pdf

Appendix B

Gallery Images

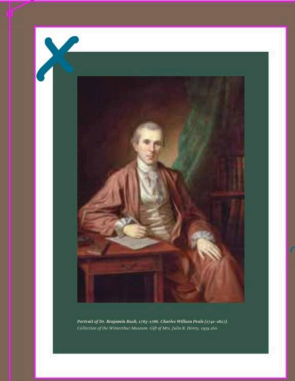
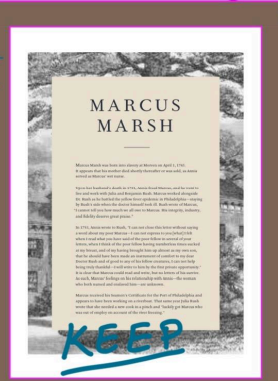
Designer File Mock-ups & Gallery Photos
 First Floor: Galleries 2, 3, and Garden Room
 Second Floor: West Wing

First Floor



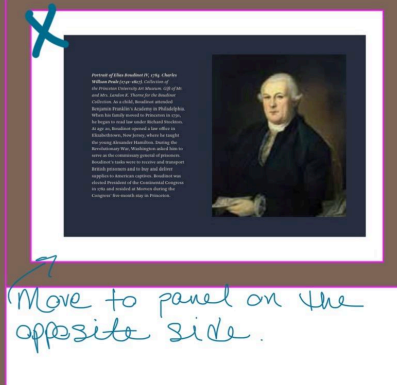
Figure 1. Gallery 1 - Designer file of "Enslaved at Morven" exhibit.

Replace img. of debtor's prison w/ img. of map showing distance btwn Marsh + Rush homes. Currently on Morven's website **X**
 Captain should mention Marsh in City Directory



Update the text in the remaining panel to mention his marriage to Martha
 Replace Ben Rush w/ img of Marcus Seaman Record/ Annis's letter

Replace img of Hannah w/ img of T. Jewell's baptism. Use the caption text for a brief bio. Learn more abt. Jewell at Morven + Slavery website **X**



Replace Elias w/ img. of Hannibal Simpson's manumission and use accompanying text for a brief bio on Simpson. Also, mention that visitors can learn more abt him on Morven + Slavery website.

Figure 2. Gallery 2 - Hanging panel insert images.

Secretary of the Council.

ATTENTION.

A GREEABLY to an article of the Princeton Association, for the purpose of aiding the magistrates in the suppression of vice and the support of good order, a general meeting of the inhabitants was held this evening at the Academy, to choose a committee for the present year, Richard Stockton, Esq. Chairman, and John N. Simpson, Secretary.

The meeting proceeded to a choice, when Dr. Thomas Wiggins, Enos Kelsey, Daniel Agnew, sen. James Moore, John N. Simpson, John Hamilton, Noah Morford, James Hamilton, James Bunyan, John Gifford, John Thompson, William Hight, Isaac Anderson, Joseph Leigh, Robert Voorhees, John Jones, Nicholas C. Everett, William Napton, John Robeson, Charles Morford, Aaron Scott, and Christopher H. Stryker, were chosen.

It was then unanimously resolved, That the most beneficial consequences have resulted from this institution, and that the unremitting vigilance and activity of the late committee in detecting and bringing to merited punishment sundry offenders, and their constant solicitude for the preservation of good order, justly entitle them to the warmest approbation and hearty thanks of this meeting.

Resolved, That in the opinion of this meeting, the practice of selling liquor to apprentice boys and servants, or purchasing any articles of produce or merchandize from them, without a written permission from their masters or mistresses is productive of the greatest evils; that therefore the meeting do earnestly request the several store keepers in Princeton to prohibit the said practice in their respective stores.

Resolved, That the members of this meeting will not purchase from any negro, any articles of produce without such written permission as aforesaid, or some other sufficient evidence of the consent of their said masters or mistresses, to such sale.

Resolved, That the foregoing proceedings be published in the New-Jersey Federalist for three weeks.

By order of the meeting,
RD: STOCKTON, Chairman.

JOHN N. SIMPSON, Secretary.
Princeton, Jan. 14, 1801.

100-3W

Figure 3. Gallery 2 - Example of cropped Princeton Vigilance Society news clipping.



Figure 4. Gallery 2 - Photo of framed hanging panels, side 1.



Figure 5. Gallery 3 - Photo of gallery 3 quote, mantel, and piano.

Second Floor



Figure 6. Second Floor (West Wing) - Second floor gallery space for special exhibits with entrance to West Wing.

Appendix C

Cost Estimates & Timelines

Quotes for Gallery Exhibits
Multi-year Timeline for Interpretive Content Implementation

The interpretive content presented in this plan was structured to be flexible in presentation and implementation. Incorporating portions of the “Morven & Slavery” research findings into Morven’s current offerings can and should take time. The recommendations provided are not intended to replace Morven’s current offerings or alter their interpretive methodology but to add to their offerings and equip them with tools to tell inclusive and fuller stories. An intentional rollout of interpretive content allows Morven to establish and strengthen relationships with similar organizations and their local community and maximize staff time and resources while following best practices and meeting core standards.

Multi-year Timeline

The approach to interpretation outlined in this document is already presented in a rough timeline. The most straightforward (and immediate) impact Morven can make with its interpretive offerings is through updated programming followed by website updates and publishing research findings. The more involved and costly interpretive work is related to editing and correcting content currently found in the museum galleries. Rather than provide a timeline with short-term, mid-, and long-term implementation, I have arranged the recommendations by year. Full implementation should take a minimum of five years.

2024:

- Drawing on the list of recommended public programs, begin implementing inclusive programs and contacting potential partners.
 - In February (during Black History Month), hold a program on Morven & Slavery. The program can hint at the intentional additions of inclusive programs based on research shared during the 2023 listening sessions.
 - Discuss the possibility of hosting an African American Genealogy series with Princeton Public Library. The series should be held (or, depending on public interest, begin) during the week of Juneteenth.
- Website Expansion
 - Morven has secured a grant to write a new website for Blakney's research findings. Her writing will be completed by July 1, 2024, and evaluated by Dr. R. Isabela Morales by July 15, 2024. The grant period ends in August 2024.
- Discuss publishers to contact
 - Compile a document with submission guidelines per publisher and journal with a list of topics.

2025:

- Begin publishing research findings
 - Start with sharing articles on Princeton & Slavery and submitting data sets to Enslaved.org.
 - Create proposals for academic journal submissions.
 - Finalize publisher

2026:

- Begin edits to First-Floor gallery spaces
 - The process should begin in the Winter to avoid as many interruptions to museum operations as possible.
 - Assess which gallery updates are feasible before Summer and prioritize those.

2027 - 2031:

- Finalize portions of research that can be added to the 2031 American Colonization Society (ACS) exhibit for the Second Floor - Special Exhibit Gallery.
 - In this plan's 'Gallery Spaces & Exhibits' section, I recommend that the Second Floor, West Wing space be used for exhibits related to the 'Morven & Slavery' research, rotating every three years. However, to maximize resources and ensure a realistic and manageable workload for Morven's curatorial staff, I do not recommend planning or implementing these exhibits before 2031. The current exhibit schedule would allow them to incorporate portions of the research into the planned exhibits while leading up to the ACS exhibit scheduled for 2031.

Cost & Estimates

Below is a graphic depicting an estimate for graphic design fees, production, and installation costs for the first-floor alteration recommendations and revolving second-floor exhibit. [Olivia de Salve Villedieu](#), independent designer, provided a quote based on recommendations provided in the interpretive plan.

1ST FLOOR GALLERY REVISIONS GALLERY ESTIMATE

Graphic Design	\$3,000–\$8,000
Graphic Production & Installation	\$1,000–\$5,000
Total	\$4,000–\$12,000

ADDITIONAL 2ND FLOOR GALLERY ESTIMATE

Graphic Design	\$7,000–\$15,000
Graphic Production & Installation	\$3,000–\$10,000
Furniture Production & Installation	\$3,000–\$10,000
Total	\$13,000–\$35,000

De Salve Villedieu has worked with Morven since 2021. Previously, she was the designer on the "Ma Bell: Mother of Invention in New Jersey" exhibit. She also helped design the current exhibit, "Striking Beauty: New Jersey Tall Case Clocks, 1730-1830." Currently, De Salve Villedieu is collaborating with Morven on an upcoming exhibit, "Morven Revealed."