



Brief Summary/ Abstract

The aim of this research is to shed light on the Keyser-Wyman opinion of slavery and role in the Civil War: Ned Blake, the enslaved coachman of Samuel Keyser, was considered to “benefit from slavery” according to historic Johns Hopkins University benefactor, William Keyser. As the financial elite, the Keyser-Wyman family interacted with key slaveholding figures part of the Confederate army to retain their wealth and networks: ultimately, despite shifting opinions, William Keyser’s and his legacy later engaged in segregation of Eutaw Place. I call for Ned Blake’s name to be memorialized on campus.

Goal/ Objective

- Discover the relationship between the Keyser-Wyman families and slavery: Were they complicit? Did the families own slaves?
- We need to rethink the legacies of the Keyser-Wyman families on Hopkins, and bring to light their involvement in the institution and profit from slavery. How can this research be reimagined & integrated into institutional memory? Should monuments to Keyser’s memory and involvement in the University remain? My targets are integrating history markers and institutional knowledge within tours.

Research Methods

- Analyzed the [memoirs & correspondence](#) of William Keyser: Who did he contact, what was the family’s involvement in the Civil War? What did his network look like and which organizations did he lead?
- Checked *Baltimore Sun* and *Baltimore Afro-American* news articles for reference to the families: In *The AFRO*, how did the local Black community think of William Keyser and his descendants? A philanthropist, or another wealthy white businessman?
- Searched through [records](#) of Ned Blake: was unable to find further outside of 1850 census records, job was labeled as “Farmer/Planter.”

Additional Questions?

Twitter: @Marv_Guti

Email: mgutie16@jhu.edu

Here is the QR code for the Hard Histories site.



SCAN ME



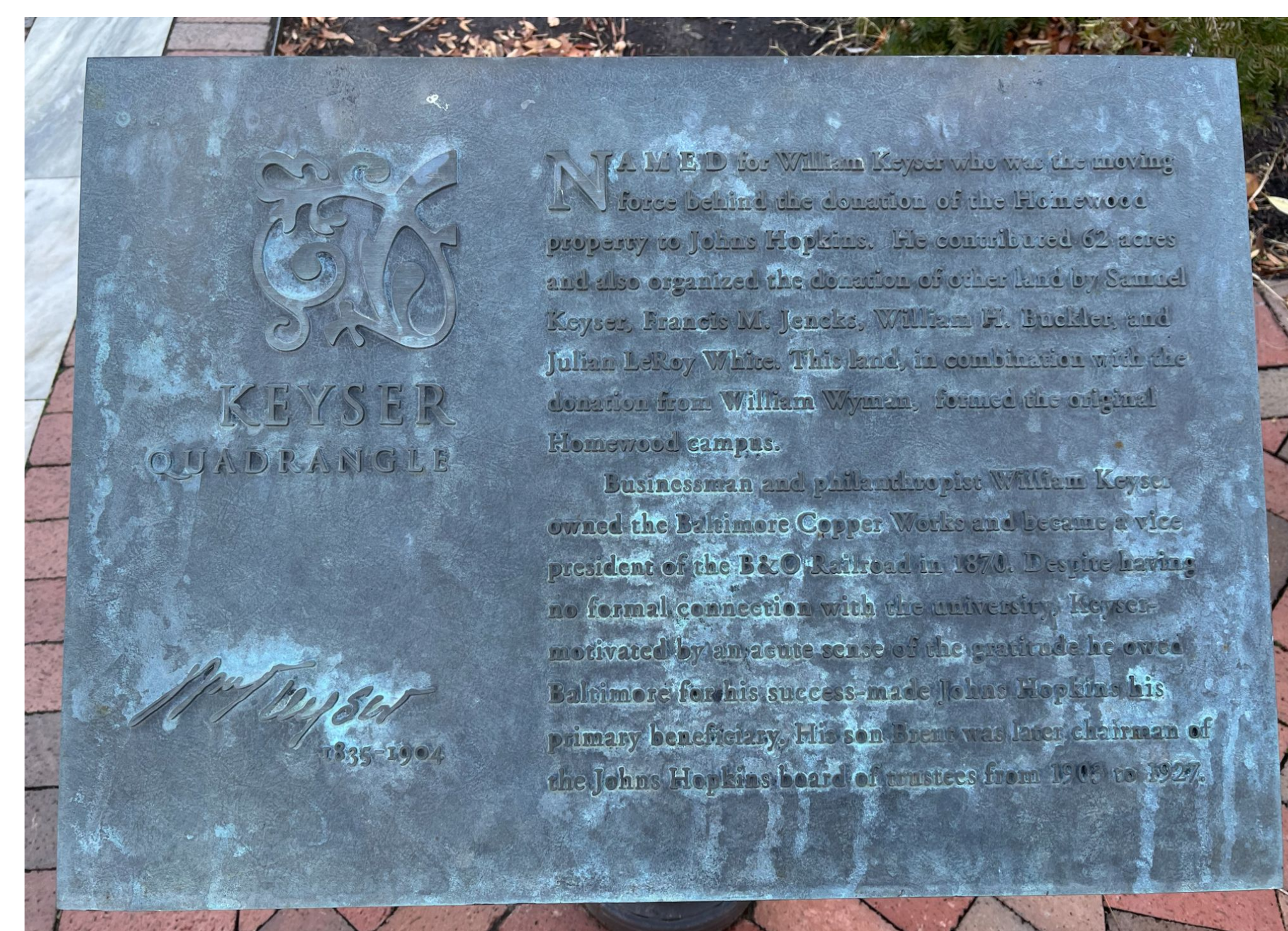
HOMEWOOD IN 1900-1901.
The notes on this map were made in 1901 by R. Brent Keyser when helping his father, William Keyser, in the purchase of the site.



SCAN ME

Document Hub

Scan this code to access all of the documents I consulted for this project. Transcripts included.



William Keyser plaque at Keyser Quad.

Results

My research adds four facets to the story of the Keyser-Wyman families as the university currently tells them: of Ned Blake, of the family’s involvement in the war, of William Keyser’s opinion on slavery and of the segregation of Eutaw Place.

[Ned Blake](#) was an enslaved coachman bought by Samuel Keyser (father) that was later [freed](#). William Keyser thought the slave benefited from the “relationship,” and was “good for nothing.” Additionally, the Keyser-Wyman families were the wealthy elite, financially benefiting from slavery and the war with increased land and business contracts, especially from the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad – where William Keyser was an executive. William Keyser’s [network](#) includes influential figures from both the Confederates and the Union. Keyser also referred to an “Uncle Sam” who fought and died for the Confederate Army. His sister married a Union soldier.

Throughout the Civil War, William Keyser shifted his opinion on slavery, considering slaves to be “[fortunate](#) in having those to care for him who were more intelligent and better fitted, even if at the cost of his liberty” to the abolition of the slavery as the “[greatest of blessings](#) to America.” Finally, in my search through *The AFRO* articles, I found the story of Brent Keyser - as an extension of Johns Hopkins University Board of Trustees - signing off to segregate [Eutaw Place](#).

Conclusions

With the setting of Baltimore in a border state, the Keyser-Wyman families capitalized from the Civil War through their indifference on the institution of slavery & involvement with slave-holding members of the financial elite - in order to gain the wealth used to buy Homewood campus. His memoirs tell a tale of shifting opinions to the institution of slavery, but that still does not justify his negative opinions of Ned Blake and of slaves prior to the war. Even after the Civil War and emancipation, his family members engaged in segregation.

We can re-envision the legacy of the Keyser-Wyman family two-fold: through the Keyser Quad, and the plaques. Ned Blake must be memorialized, whether it be through a bench and monuments, or another plaque in addition to the plaque dedicated to William Keyser in Keyser Quad.