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News Article Reporting an Attempt to Smuggle an Unnamed Enslaved Person

John Lewis

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Recommended Citation

Lewis, John, "News Article Reporting an Attempt to Smuggle an Unnamed Enslaved Person" (1845). *Lantern Project*. 106.

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New Orleans Bee, June 16, 1845.

SOMETHING NEW IN THIEVING.

Under this head, the Memphis Enquirer narrates a singular incident— On Sunday morning the 8th. inst., a box marked "John Bennett, Louisville, Ky., was deposited on the wharf-boat of Messrs. A. B. Shaw & Co., to be shipped by the first boat. It was left by a free black who was very particular in directing it to be handled with care. An hour or two after, a gentleman happened to approach when a voice from the interior was heard to call out "open the door". Much consternation followed, and the spectators thought his Satanic Majesty had taken temporary lodgings in the inside of the box. After due deliberation, Mr. Shaw the owner of the boat, ripped off the top with a butcher's cleaver, when out jumped a strapping negro fellow nearly dead with suffocation and steaming like the escape pipe of a steamboat. He was greatly exhausted, but was revived by the fresh air and the application of stimulants, when he gave the following account of his singular incarceration:

"It appears that he belongs to Mr. John Lewis of Germantown, and has been hired here in town. He states that the scheme which had

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well nigh cost him his life, was concocted some months ago by John Bennett, a free black rascal, well known to many of our citizens.- The intention was to ship him, in the manner attempted, to Cincinnati, from whence he was to be conveyed by the Abolitionists to Canada. In the box was a quantity of moss, a number of plates, and a few dozen water crackers. Air holes were bored in the ends of the box. They forgot, however, to put in a supply of water. He states that he would inevitably have died in a very short while, if he had not been extricated, and his condition when taken out of the box confirms the opinion".

Bennett has since been arrested.