

Where did they go?

Changes in African American population patterns: Antebellum Boone County through the Civil War, and the Three Creeks Community

Changes in Rural African American Population

- In 1860, 5 years prior to Missouri Emancipation
 - About 5,000 African Americans in Boone County,
 - Nearly all enslaved
 - Mostly on farms
 - “Owned” by the 885 slaveholding families in the county.
- By 1870, 5 years after emancipation
 - about 4,000 African Americans in the county
 - 20% decline
- Today the number of rural African Americans in our county is vanishingly small.
- In 2017, according to USDA statistics, the number of African Americans who are farming landowners was exactly ZERO.
- What happened?

UUCC Racial Justice Team: “Whitewashed” History subgroup

Our origin story

UUCC Racial Justice Team: “Whitewashed” History subgroup

- Fall 2019: Rev Housh-Gordon assembles a Working Group:
 - How can we contribute towards repair to the damages caused by the systemic impact of slavery on African American residents of Columbia/Boone County?
- Subgroups: Our “Whitewashed History” group was charged with “Engaging/collecting race-related history of Columbia & Boone County”
- “Overcome By Events”, i.e., a pandemic!
- Our subgroup continues, but not without sorrow and loss:
 - Andrew Twaddle

This Morning's Agenda

- “Tiki-Toki” timeline
 - Chuck Swaney
- Antebellum History
 - Fred Young
- Three Creeks Community
 - Dave Gibbons

Boone County “Founding Fathers”

- Primarily from Kentucky.
- Arrived here with their slaves; or as Crighton puts it:
 - “ordinarily rode on horseback to Missouri, accompanied by a *trusted black servant* to make camp and prepare meals.”
 - (italics added)

Slavery in 19th century Boone County

- Individual farms were generally small:
 - Few enslaved persons on each farm (e.g., less than 10, most less than 5).
- Landowners often worked alongside the enslaved.
- Labor of enslaved persons:
 - Integral part of a profitable agricultural business model.
 - No comparisons readily available to “free labor” farms. Not sure there were any....
- “Abroad” marriages were the norm.
 - Typical family of enslaved persons:
 - Mother and her children
 - Husband and father who lived on another farm.
- “Hiring out” of enslaved persons was common:
 - Allowed owners to retain their slave property/capital investment
 - Generated income
 - Reduced operating expenses
- Plenty of foot traffic on rural Boone County roads.
 - Married men visiting their families.
 - Enslaved persons hired to other farms.

Population Trends in Boone County, 1830-1860

Year	White People	Enslaved People	Free Black People	Total Persons	% People Enslaved
1830	6,935	1,923	1	8,859	21.7%
1840	10,529	3,008	24	13,561	22.2%
1850	11,300	3,666	13	14,979	24.4%
1860	14,399	5,034	53	19,486	25.8%

Slaveholders in Boone County:
776 in 1850 885 in 1860

Some of the Slaveowners in Boone County

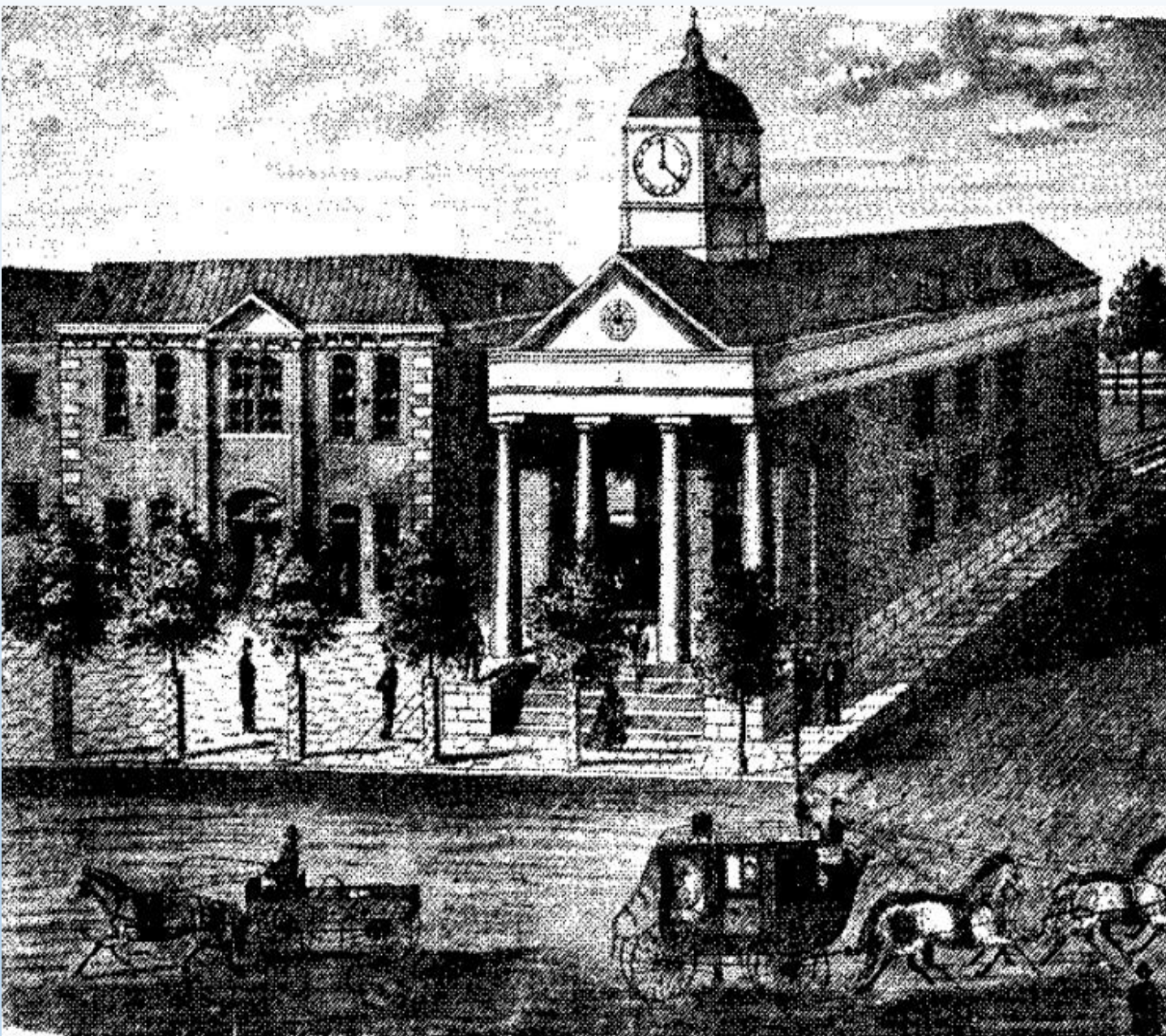
- Eli E. Bass
- Peter Bass
- Thomas Beasley
- Austin Bradford
- John Ellis
- Peter Ellis
- Michael Fisher
- James Harris
- Overton Harris
- George Hayden

David M. Hickman
Durrett Hubbard
Walter R. Lenoir
James McConathy, Sr.
John Machir
Mason Moss
William C. Robnett
James S. Rollins
William Shields, Sr.
Edward Young, Sr.

Persons enslaved by David Hickman, 1851. I count 28.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Assignment/Purchaser</u>
John	26	900.00	C. A. Hickman
Willis	18	800.00	C. A. Hickman
George	34	500.00	C. A. Hickman
Henry	16	750.00	C. A. Hickman
George	12	450.00	C. A. Hickman
Susan	35	300.00	C. A. Hickman
Abbey	27	700.00	C. A. Hickman
Philis	14	500.00	C. A. Hickman
Randal	20	900.00	Wm. L. Hickman
Dinah	38	400.00	Wm. L. Hickman
Lizzie	18 mos.	150.00	Wm. L. Hickman
Daniel	24	900.00	David H. Hickman
Olivia	12	300.00	David H. Hickman
Milly	5	250.00	David H. Hickman
Charley	18	700.00	James L. Hickman
Bartlet	16	635.00	James L. Hickman
Harrison	7	400.00	Thomas B. Hickman
Wm.	23	900.00	Thomas B. Hickman
Warner	18	1000.00	Sarah A. Hickman
Easter	29	400.00	Sarah A. Hickman
Charles	39	575.00	John L. Hickman
Robert	22	900.00	John L. Hickman
Seipio	29	900.00	Thomas H. Hickman
Solomon	9	300.00	Thomas H. Hickman
Sara	4	200.00	Thomas H. Hickman
Miriam +	22	900.00	C. A. Hickman
Patsey	2		C. A. Hickman
Hester	6 mos.		C. A. Hickman

SOURCE: From the Probate Record #1028 of David M. Hickman. Boone County, Missouri. 1851.



Boone County courthouse Steps

- Slave auctions Jan. 1st and July 1st
 - Often to pay taxes and debts
- Annual “slave-hiring fair”
 - Often on Jan. 1st
 - Contracts typically for 1 year
- Columbia a large slave market
 - Up to four dealers
 - Up to 100 enslaved persons
 - Boys, girls, men, and women
- Last “Slave Auction”-Jan 1864

Very Little Interstate Slave Trading

- Of a sample of 1,078 slaves sold between 1820 and 1864, 98 percent were local.
- The overwhelming majority of slaves divided among the heirs of estates remained in the county.
- Slave traders experienced little success in Boone County during this period.

Slave Families Were Separated

- Marriages of those enslaved from 1830-1864:
 - 36 marriages between enslaved couples
 - Not all marriages were recorded (?)
 - Sales subsequently separated 27 of these couples
 - *Records from county newspapers and probate court
- Slave children in Boone County were frequently sold separately.
 - “A sample of 1,078 slaves sold in Boone County during the period reveals that 322 children (30 percent) under 15 years of age were sold alone, without an older slave.”

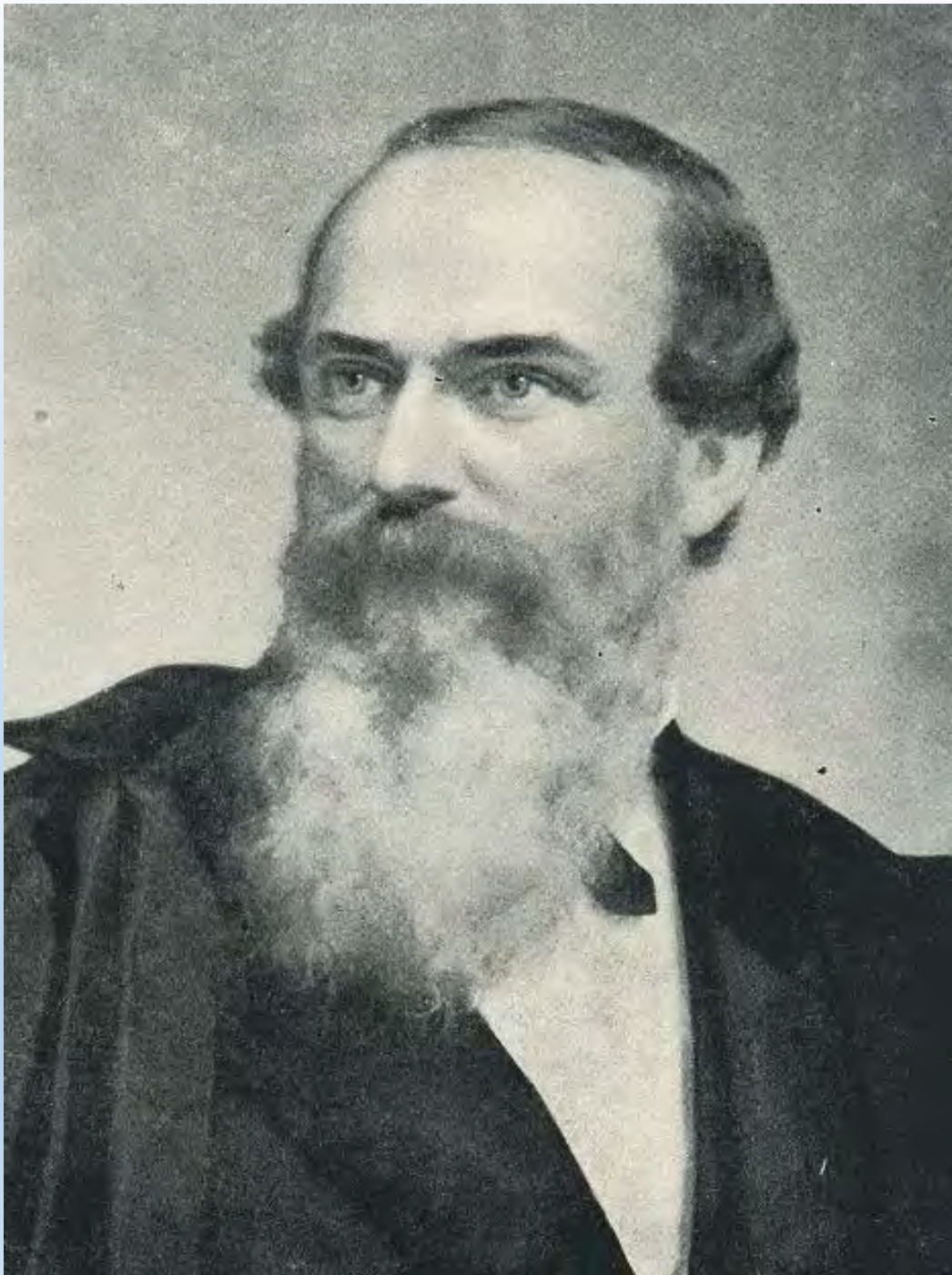
Slaves were chattel:

property to be bought, sold, and distributed by probate courts

- Many wills called for equal distribution of slaves among the heirs.
 - When the county probate court ordered the slaves of an estate distributed, the executor was required by law to have the slaves appraised and then equally divided among the heirs.
- “Slaves of Thomas Stone's estate, a woman and her two small boys, were offered for sale (Columbia Dollar Missouri Journal, July 5, 1855). The executor informed the public that, ‘They will be sold separately.’
 - In August, the mother and her two-year-old son were purchased together, but someone else bought the four-year-old son.”
- “In accordance with his will, when Samuel Marrs died in 1850 his ten slaves were sold.
 - Four of the children ranging in age from three to ten were separated by the sale from the rest of the family.”
- Sam Copeland of Boone County liberated his slaves in his will, but his daughter disputed it...
- Conclusion: the majority of Boone County slaveowners had little concern for the breakup of slave families. Economic and legal forces usually prevailed over any humanitarian forces.

University of Missouri in the Antebellum Years

- Established in Columbia in 1839
 - The State Legislature awarded the authority to establish UM based on competitive bidding between Boone, Howard and Callaway counties.
 - “Boone’s bid was reported as \$82,300 in cash and \$36,000 in land...”
 - The donors were primarily wealthy, slave-holding landowners; one may assume that much of their wealth was due in part to slave labor.
 - Fred’s conclusion: UM owes its existence in part to wealth derived from slavery.
- John Hiram Lathrop, first university president
 - A Northerner; lost the confidence and support of some proslavery Board members.
 - Resigned in 1849.
- James Shannon, Lathrop’s replacement.
 - An outspoken apologist for slavery.
- The University of Missouri employed a number of enslaved persons:
 - women and girls as domestics
 - men and boys for odd jobs, e.g., cutting wood and janitorial work.



James S. Rollins

- “Father of the Univ. of Missouri”
- In Boone County History & Culture Center Hall of Fame
- Clay Mering, Rollins’ great-great-grandson, seeks to atone for the enslavement of 34 people forced into labor on Rollins' farm in Columbia.
- In 2008, Mering created the [James S. Rollins Slavery Atonement Endowment](#) to fund research in MU's Black Studies Department.

Slave Patrols: Boone County and Columbia

- In 1825 the Missouri General Assembly enacted a statute to establish slave patrols
- Boone County slave patrols established by county court: May 20, 1823
 - To guard against law violations by African Americans, and to search for runaway slaves,
 - Appointed five men to constitute a company of patrollers within Columbia Township for a period of one year.
 - Required to be on duty at least twenty hours a month in their assigned territory.
 - Similar patrols established in other townships.
- Supplementing state legislation on the subject, Columbia enacted its own slave code (1853?)
 - “To aid in the enforcement of these and other ordinances, the trustees on August 1, 1854, had established a town patrol, commanded by the marshal, with special orders to search for stolen articles and fugitive slaves.”

Slave Patrols: Missouri in general

(from Mutti-Burke, 2010)

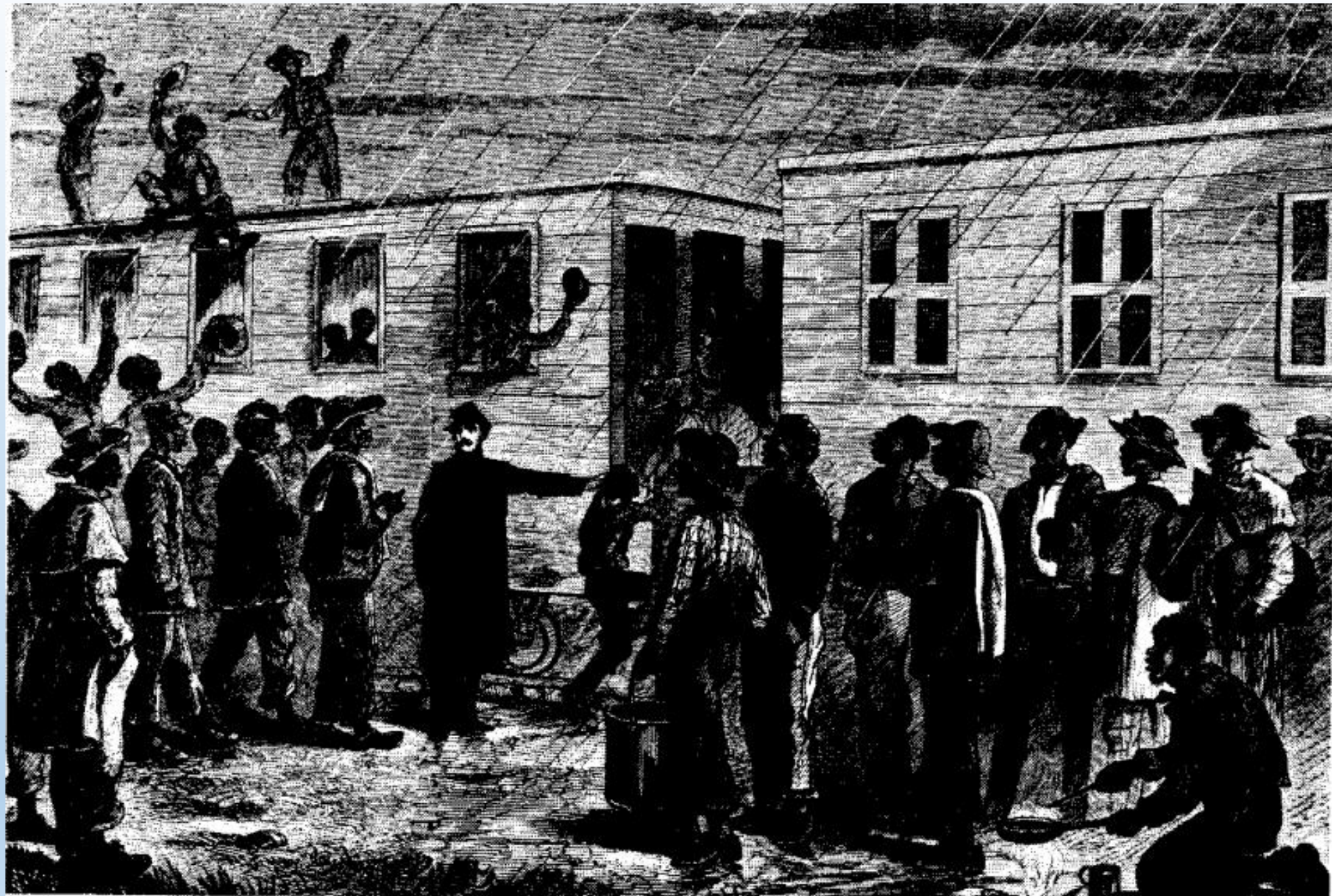
- Marilda Perthy described the brutality of these local police forces: “De patrollers used blacksnake whips. Dey was a lot of de neighbors dat were patrollers. When dey would meet de colored men out at night, dey would ask dem if dey had a pass. If dey didn’t, de patrollers would get off de horses and whip dem.”
- The patrols were often made up of “poor whites, who took great pride in the whipping of a slave.”
- Some slaves tried to deceive illiterate patrollers by giving them “a portion of a letter picked up, and palmed off on the patrollers as a pass.”
 - Literate slaves erased the dates in passes in order to recycle them, while others asked slaveholding children to write them passes.
 - Missouri slaves found it particularly gratifying to trick these poor white men, whom they held in such contempt.

Slave Patrols: 1850's through the Civil War

- The number of slave patrols increased in the decade preceding the Civil War.
- Willard Mendenhall wrote in late 1862: “The Patrole in the country are arresting negros every night. It will put a stop to thare running about at night.”
- William Black remembered the brutality of wartime patrollers: “Durin de war we could not leave de master’s house to go to de neighbors without a pass. If we didn’t have a pass de paddyrollers would get us and kill us or take us away.”
- Many Civil War-era “patrollers” were secessionist guerrillas, who were encouraged by pro-southern slaveholders to preserve the slavery regime through a campaign of intimidation, violence, and murder.

Civil War in Boone County: Slavery system starts to collapse

- July 1, 1863: Missouri State Convention: ordinance providing for gradual emancipation.
 - Eli Bass and Warren Woodson, Boone county's delegates, voted in favor.
- Nov 14, 1863: Missouri General Order #135, authorized Union army enrollment of Negroes, both slave and free.
 - "Loyal" owners compensated.
 - \$300/enslaved person
 - \$100 bounty/enlisted person
- This was attractive to Boone County slaveholders
 - \$400 was above the going rate for slaves (prices were collapsing).
 - Enlisted slaves reduced the draft quota for the county.
 - Conjecture: slaveowners could "see the writing on the wall".
- As local authority collapsed, many enslaved people simply walked away
 - May 1863, "stampede" of Negroes from the Providence area, to Jefferson City.
- Jan 11, 1865: Emancipation in Missouri



“Negro Recruits Boarding Train”; published May 7, 1864

Slavery at the end

- “Slavery died hard in Missouri, and the slave code mentality lived on for many years....Conservative counties, like the Kingdom of Callaway...hated emancipation.”
- “The last year of the war in Missouri saw a sharp increase in guerilla activity, a violent response to the frustration that southern sympathizers felt. Often the guerillas vented their wrath upon innocent freedmen who had become a symbol of all that the bushwhackers detested. One of the most infamous of the lawless bandits was Jim Jackson.”
- General Clinton B. Fisk, March, 1865:, referencing specifically Boone, Howard, Randolph and Callaway counties: *“I have no doubt but that the monster, Jim Jackson, is instigated by the late slave owners to hang or shoot every negro he can find absent from the old plantations....the poor blacks are rapidly concentrating in the towns....”*
 - from *Missouri’s Black Heritage* Chapter 6: Forty Acres and a Mule; Reconstruction in Missouri, 1865-1877

“Murder by Bushwhackers – A Negro Hung”

From *Columbia Statesman*, Feb 24, 1865

“Last Monday night about 10 o’clock four or five bushwhackers went to the residence of Dr. John W Jacobs, living a few miles east of this place. Two of the gang, Jim Jackson and Abe Rummons, dismounted and went into the house, where they remained a considerable time, the others remaining outside.

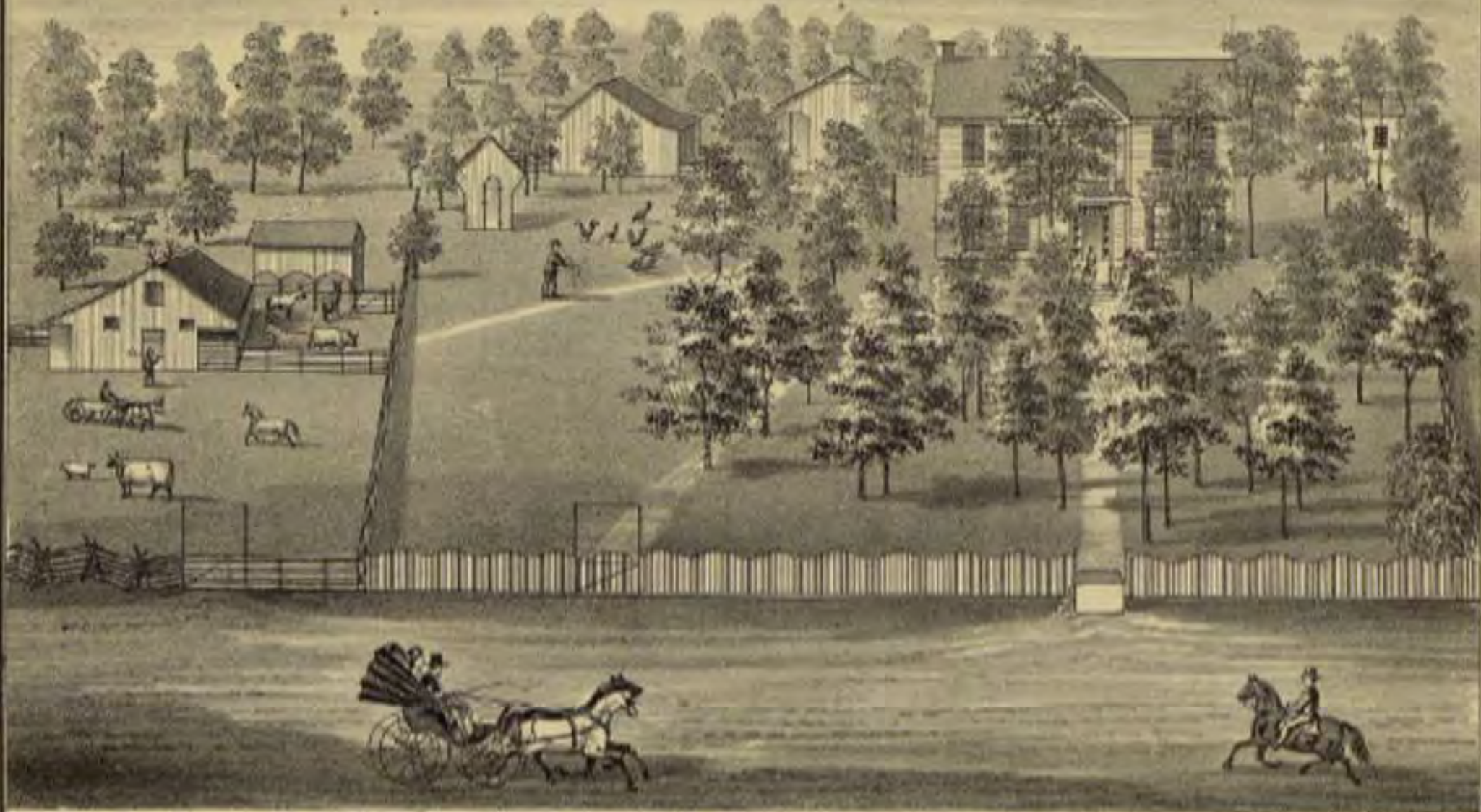
Jackson called for a sheet of paper, which was furnished. He wrote a note and putting it in his pocket departed. Next morning one of Dr. Jacobs’ former slaves, named Lewis, was discovered dead, hanging by the neck to a beam which extended from one gate post to another, near the yard, having been hung by murderers who remained outside the house. The outrage was conducted in such a manner that no one knew that any violence had been done until morning. Pinned to the negro’s coat was a note on which was written these words:

**“Killed for knot going into the federal areas
by order of
Jim Jackson”**

Murder of Lewis, continued

Several weeks ago Jackson and his gang rode through the eastern part of the county putting up written notices notifying the negroes that they must leave the county by the 15th of February or they would all be killed; and notifying farmers that in case they hired negroes they too would be killed. But little attention was given to the threats of these infernal scoundrels; and no one supposed that they would attempt to carry out such hellish menaces toward the innocent and unfortunate negroes. We hope that justice will soon relieve the world of these atrocious murderers.”

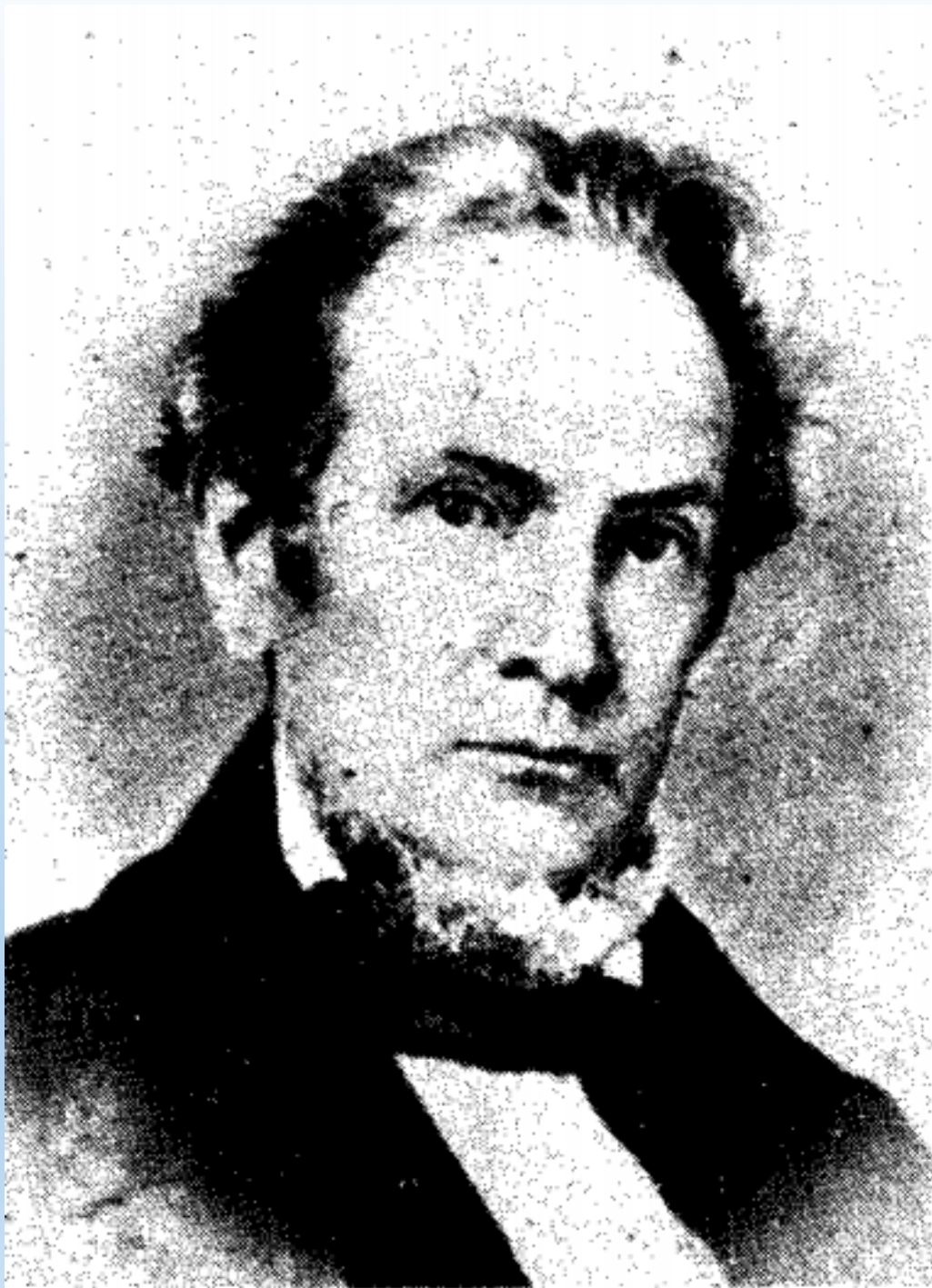
W.M. Jacobs Farm: site of Lewis' murder?



FARM RES. OF WM JACOBS . 9 MILES EAST OF COLUMBIA , BOONE CO. MO.

Three Creeks area: the Antebellum years

- Peter Ellis, Overton Harris, David M. Hickman, and Peter Bass were early settlers in the Three Creeks area.
- These men were also slaveholders and they would profit enough before 1830 to leave legacies enabling their children to become major slaveholders in Three Creeks during the latter part of the century.
- These men were the foundation of the gentry class in Three Creeks and they, and their descendants, set the standard of wealth, status, and education in the community for the next four decades.



Eli Bass

- In Boone County History & Culture Center Hall of Fame
- UM Board of Curators (1859)
- The county's largest slaveholder in 1850, enslaving 52 people.



Forest Hill (Bass) Plantation home: 36 rooms (undated; from Nancy Obermiller Kiser)



Ruins of Forest Hill (Bass) Plantation

- Near entrance to Charles W. Green Conservation Area
- On Minor Hill Rd; 3 miles N of Ashland
- Burned in 1917



Tom Bass

- Celebrated horse trainer.
- Born into slavery on the Hayden plantation, 1859.
- Son of Cornelia Grey, a young enslaved woman, and William Hayden Bass (Eli's son).
- Raised by his maternal grandparents, because his father demanded that Cornelia work on the plantation instead of caring for baby Tom.

The Bottom of Heaven

This phrase is from the novel “Sula” by Toni Morrison

- The bottom of Heaven: A social and cultural history of African-Americans in Three Creeks, Boone County, Missouri (PhD Dissertation)
 - Frances Maryanne Jones-Sneed, 1991
 - University of Missouri – Columbia
- Documents the historic rural community of formerly enslaved African Americans in the *Three Creeks* area.

Land ownership: a strong cultural value for “freedmen”

- “What's the use of being free, if you don't own land enough to be buried in? Might as well stay [a] slave all yo' days.”
 - Whitelaw Reid, *After the War: A Tour of the Southern States*, 1865-66.
 - As quoted by Jones-Sneed, 1991
- “With the acquisition of land, the ex-slave viewed himself entering the mainstream of American life, cultivating his own farm and raising the crops with which to sustain himself and his family. That was the way to respectability in an agricultural society, and the freedman insisted that a plot of land was all he required to lift himself up.”
 - Quoted in reference to Pennytown, a rural community of emancipated African Americans in Saline county.
 - Equally true of Three Creeks community?

Origins of Three Creeks community

- “According to local legend, ex-slaves in Three Creeks were granted the "bottom of heaven" by their grateful masters and the ex-slaves accepted it gladly”
 - Jones-Sneed, 1991
- Dr. Jones-Sneed found only two instances where former enslaved persons received land by bequest from former enslavers.
 - “George and Sallie Coleman inherited 20 acres from their employers, R.T. and Olivia Beazley in 1892.”
 - “James Robnett, the son of a former slave woman named Darcus, inherited almost 84 acres of land in 1888 from William C. Robnett, the second largest slaveholder in the community.”
 - William C. Robnett was allegedly the father of James Robnett

Increasing concentration of African American farmers in Three Creeks

African American farmers, in Boone County and in Three Creeks

Year	# in county	# in 3 Creeks	% of total in 3 Creeks
1870	22	6	27%
1880	67	22	33%
1900	94	66	70%

By 1930, there were almost 100 independent African American landowners in Three Creeks.



Three Creeks Parking

Three Creeks Tomlin Hill Access

X Log Providence Church

Three Creeks Conservation Area

Three Creeks S. Meyers Ln Access

Lakeside Ashland

63

US Hwy: 63

Cartw and Tech

Oakland Cemetery

Charles W. Green Conservation Area

X Forest Hill Plantation

Google

LOG
PROVIDENCE
MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

EST. 1866 REB. 1925-74

PASTOR: DAVID P. BALLENGER





Log Providence Church congregation, Circa 1900 – 1930
(Missouri Conservationist, Oct 1992)



Three Creeks, Circa 1900 – 1930 (Missouri Conservationist, Oct 1992)

So, What Happened To All The Black Farmers?

“Particularly significant among African American landowners in Three Creeks was the loss of land due to mortgage foreclosure”

“Several properties were lost because the owners died without leaving a will.”

“In one-fourth of the cases, African American landowners in Three Creeks sold their land voluntarily. Yet, circumstances of the sale usually prefaced overwhelming mortgage debts”

“In a few cases, the loss of land by African American landowners in Three Creeks was to due to delinquent taxes.”

“By 1930, there were fifty African American landowners left; by 1950 there were about twenty; ultimately by 1980 there were only twelve African American families who still owned land in the Three Creeks community.”

The bottom of Heaven: A social and cultural history of African-Americans in Three Creeks, Boone County, Missouri (PhD Dissertation, pages 138, 141, 144, 155, 175)

The Origin of Three Creeks State Forest quotes from Dr. Jones-Sneed

“Three Creeks endures as a monument to African Americans, slave and free, who made the area a community and home over the decades for hundreds of others like themselves. The events that took place in the 1980s enabled a portion of the land to remain as a landmark and legacy to these remarkable and pioneering people.

On January 20, 1983, the Missouri Department of Conservation purchased almost 700 acres of land in the Three Creeks community as a state forest area. The purchase came after over a century of land ownership by African Americans in the Three Creeks community. The original African Americans who purchased the land were deceased and most of their descendants had emigrated. The Missouri Department of Conservation lauded these original African American settlers and their descendants for maintaining the land in an almost pristine state.”

The bottom of Heaven: A social and cultural history of African-Americans in Three Creeks, Boone County, Missouri (PhD Dissertation, pages 204,205)



Author **Dr. Francis Jones-Sneed**, with MDC forester Fred Crouse, examining an old cistern in Three Creeks

- Missouri Conservationist, Oct. 1992

TURKEY CREEK
NATURE TRAIL
← 3.0 MILE HIKE

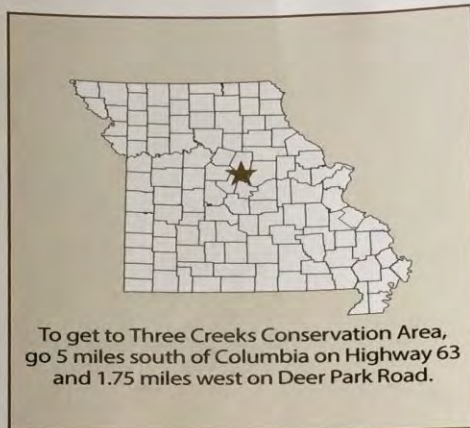






CONTINUED FROM OTHER SIDE

- G Note the **black oak** on the left, and the **red oak** and **white oak** on the right. The light gray bark of the white oak has shallow grooves and flat, loose plates. Notice how the bark becomes looser higher into the tree. Wood from white oaks is used for making furniture and barrels. Oaks are the only trees that produce **acorns**, which are an important high-energy food source in winter for animals such as deer, turkey and squirrels.
- H The large **boulder** to your right was, at one time, part of the bluff behind it. The bluff and boulder are **Burlington limestone**, formed during the Mississippian Period (about 345 million years ago). The boulder is covered with **lichens**; these green blotches are complex plants which help break down rocks. Perhaps in several thousand years this boulder will be gone.
- I The ground in front of you is a **sinkhole**, which formed when a small cave collapsed. The abundance of caves and sinkholes in Three Creeks is because of the limestone bedrock. Limestone is easily dissolved by acid, and caves are created when rainwater—which forms a weak acid when it absorbs carbon dioxide—seeps through the limestone bedrock.
- J Following the Civil War, former slaves were given land in and around this area. The freed men and women had to cultivate **small fields**, such as the one directly across the creek, to produce enough to survive. This old, abandoned field has since turned into the forest you see now.
- K **Black walnut trees**, such as the one to your right, thrive in moist soil along streams. The chocolate-brown color underneath the bark makes this tree easy to identify. The black walnut's dark wood is used to make fine furniture, while the walnuts themselves are harvested for human consumption. The nut is a rounded fruit with a thick outer husk. Close to the size of a baseball, the yellow-green walnut turns brown as it ripens.
- L This is a **limestone glade**—a dry, shallow-soiled area with unique vegetation. Uncommon animals and plants such as **scorpions**, **fence lizards** and **pale purple coneflower** thrive in this environment. Cedars are threatening the health of this glade by casting shade. Sunlight is important for the glade-loving plants and animals to thrive.
- M What you're looking at here is "**edge**"—the transition zone between the field and forest. The edge is important habitat for prey animals such as **quail** and **rabbits**. It should ideally be at least 30 feet wide and full of dense shrubs. Animals use edge as escape cover to hide from predators and as protection during cold, wet weather.



To get to Three Creeks Conservation Area, go 5 miles south of Columbia on Highway 63 and 1.75 miles west on Deer Park Road.



P. O. Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180
573-751-4115

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs of the Missouri Department of Conservation is available to all individuals without regard to their race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. Questions should be directed to the Department of Conservation, P.O. Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102, (573) 751-4115 (voice) or 800-735-2966 (TTY), or to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Federal Assistance, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Mail Stop: MBSP-4020, Arlington, VA 22203.

8/2020

www.mdc.mo.gov

TURKEY CREEK INTERPRETIVE TRAIL

THREE CREEKS
CONSERVATION
AREA



False Histories Still Exist

- Missouri Department of Conservation - Three Creeks Conservation Area
- Turkey Creek Interpretive Trail (3 mile loop)
- Description J stated “Following the Civil War, *former slaves were given land* in and around this area. The freed men and women had to cultivate small fields, such as the one directly across the creek, to produce enough to survive. This old, abandoned field has since turned into the forest you see now.”
 - (italics added)

Positive Response from MDC

- November 24, 2021 letter from Kevin Borisenko, Regional Administrator – Central Region
- “As I understand it, you would like us to change the wording in Description J of the brochure, that you claim to be inaccurate based on your research to something less misleading. While I cannot speak to the research that was done to develop the initial text, you do offer points that are well supported and have convinced us that edits to the trail brochure are necessary. Staff have already edited our digital brochure file so that all future brochures will reflect the changes that you have suggested.”