From: **B Nichols (Gmail)**
Subject: 1862 State of Missouri vs. John (Paxton), a Slave "Enticing, Decoying or Persuading a Slave"
Date: October 20, 2024 at 11:07 AM
To:

Bcc:

NB

On the (nearly) 162 year anniversary of the event, here's a Platte County Circuit Court case for you. See if you can figure out what happened.

John, a slave owned by William Paxton, was accused of "enticing, decoying or persuading" slaves named Mary, Reuben, and Alfred into their freedom. The court file does not indicate the outcome or any punishments.

The witness examinations describe a conspiracy between slaves George Coots, West Barry, John Paxton, Lew Green, and Frank Green to help Mary, Reuben, and Alfred escape from their enslavers and into Kansas. It appears some of the co-conspirators were from Leavenworth, Kansas.

The witness accounts certainly describe a lot of free movement by the slaves. The witness accounts also indicate that John Paxton's wife and West Barry's wife lived apart from their husbands. The Leachman and Lipton properties appear to have been amenable to gatherings of slaves.

^^^

Be it remembered that on the 1st day of November 1861 John Paxton and William M. Paxton of Platte County Missouri personally came before me, James M. Mulkey, a Justice of the Peace within and for said county, and acknowledged themselves to owe to the State of Missouri; that is to say **John Paxton** the sum of $150 and the said William M Paxton the sum of $150 to be levied of their goods and chattel lands and covenants if the said John Paxton shall fail in the condition under written:

The condition of this recognizance is such that if the above named **John Paxton** shall personally appear at the Circuit Court on the first day of the next term thereof to be held in the county of Platte on the 24th day of November 1862 then and there to answer XXXXX to be performed to the Grand Jury against the said John Paxton for the offense of attempting to entice, decoy and persuade certain slaves to wit, Mary a slave the property of N.R. Green, Reuben the property of same and Alfred the property of Mr. Marshall to be carried away with intent to affect the freedom of such slaves and each of them, where are of his stands charged and shall not depart the same without the leave of said in court then this recognizance to be void otherwise and remain in full force.

Signed by John Paxton and William M. Paxton
Taken and certified the day and year aforesaid. James M. Mulkey, J.P.

Nov. 6, 1862: Bill of Costs filed, totals $7.00

Nov. 6, 1862: Examination of Witnesses

Examination of **Frank Green**, a Slave, produced sworn and examined on his oath says:

- I saw **John** at diverse times in Leavenworth city.
- I have been there xxxx monthly.
- **John** told me sometime last week that **Lew** told him to tell me to come over at any time ***and I could get my boy.***
- I told him to tell **Lew** I would be over on Saturday night. He said he would tell him.
- I had not said anything about sending word to **Lew** until then.
- I came over at the time I told **John** and saw **Lew**.
- I did not see **John** that night.
- The Negroes I was coming after was **Mary and Reuben**.
- **John** told me that **Lew** said to come on over that he would get **Mary** and **Reuben** out.
- I sent word by **John** that I would be over on Saturday night.
- I came over at the time mentioned by **John** and got **Lew**.
- We went to **Mr. Green's** and then got **Mary, Alfred and Reuben.**
- I sent word that I would meet **Lew** at **Mr. Burkhartz' (Burckhartt)** bridge and I met him on the hill near **Mr. Morressey** between 11:00 and 12:00.
    - (**James R. Burckhartt** was a farmer that lived 3 miles west of Platte City. In 1867 he started a grocery in Platte City. He died in 1873. See Paxton's Annals)
- We got the Negroes xxxxx at **Mr. Crick Green's** out through the window.
- The white family were all asleep.
- I left some clothing for **John** to bring over. I learned after that he had brought them.
- When I came over I had a knife and two pistols - one a Colt and the other a single barrel. **Lew** had a corn knife.
- After we left **Mr. Green's** I loaned **Lew** one of my pistols.
- I posted(?) with him at the bend of the River above the mill.

- **Lew** took the pistol I lent him.
- **Alfred** also had a pistol.
- The pistols I brought over, I brought one from the shop(?) and the other from Hazel.

Cross Examination of **Frank Green**, a Slave

- I had previously sent word by **West Barry** for **Lew** to meet me at **Burkhartz' (Burckhartt)** bridge.
- I was at **Howard Murra**y in Leavenworth City when this conversation took place.
- When I met **Lew**, **George Coots** was with him.
- I told **George Coots** my business, where I was going and all about my business.
- I went to **John** where he was at Leavenworth to inquire what word **Lew** had sent me.
- I had the information before from **West Barry** the Negroes in Leavenworth call **John** a kidnapper and say he is Southern. The free Negroes say the same.
- **John** told me on yesterday that **my wife** had him arrested in Leavenworth for kidnapping.
    - Signed with his mark.

Examination of **Frank Green**, a Slave

- That **Paxton's John** told me that he had forgotten to deliver the message I had sent by him to **Lew**.
- I told him it made no difference as it had been done by **Barry's West.**

Examination of William Green:
(Son of Elisha Green, born 1835, died 1881. Lived in Platte City)

- **John** told me he was about **Timothy Bookings'**(?) place about sundown on Saturday evening and that he was in company with **Lew, a Black man belonging to the Coots.**
    - (There were severals Coots in Platte County. Patrick S. Coots bought 160 acres north of Platte City but lost it to pay debts he'd endorsed for friends. He then bought 80 acres northeast of Platte City. Died Jan. 7, 1892. See Paxton's Annals)
- He said that **Lew, the Coots' boy**, and himself went out as far as **Burkhartz' (Burckhartt)** bridge to meet **Frank**.
- That **Frank** was not there and they returned towards home.
- That he **(John)** came back to where his road went to **his wife's house** and there left them.
- That **Lew and Coots' boy** came on toward town.
- He also told me that **Frank** had sent word by him to **Lew** that he would be here on Saturday night.
- He told me that **Lew** gave him a five shooting Colts revolver.
- He gave **Frank** the revolver either that night before or the morning he went to Leavenworth City.
- As he was going over, he met **Frank** *coming back a prisoner* and that he took the pistol over and gave it to **Howard Murray.**

Cross Examination of **William Green**

- He **(John)** told me all the above conversation voluntarily.
- I told him to tell the truth, that he might get off better by so doing.
- I may have told **John** that both before and after what I said to him was in relation

- I may have told **John** that both before and after what I said to him was in relation to his testifying as a witness.
- I was guarding him at that time as a prisoner.
    - Signed W. Green

Examination of **H.B. Callahan**

(H.B. Callahan came to Platte City in 1843. Was a physician in Platte City and in partnership with Paxton and Almond in a mercantile house and water mill. In 1857 Callahan moved the mercantile business to Leavenworth "but his Southern blood would not permit him to remain there…" Then moved to Cincinnati but then came back to Platte City and then to Leavenworth. Died 1896. See Paxton's Annals.)

- I had a conversation with **John** yesterday evening.
- **John** said he wanted to talk to me.
- I told him it was all right.
- He said he was going to tell the truth.
- I told him it was the better place.
- He then told me that he had gone down with **Lew Green and George Coots** as far as Burkhart's (Burckhartt) Bridge on Saturday evening last to meet **Frank**.
- That they did not meet with **Frank** then and that when he came to the road going to **John Brown's, where his wife lived,** he turned off and went there.
- He seemed to excuse himself by saying that he was heading to Leavenworth and wished to conduct himself in a way that he would not be troubled(?) there.
- And that he also had to manage to keep a friendly feeling with the Negroes on this side.
- And also that there had been a message sent by him from **Lew to Frank or Frank to Lew,** I can't say which, but that he had failed to convey the message for fear that he might get into trouble over it.
- And that **West Barry** had testified(?) the same.
- This declaration as to his testimony served to cover the entire case as well a witness as a party.

Cross Examination of **H.B. Callahan**

- He told me that when he left Platte City my **Bill** was with him and after leaving he was in company with **Lew Green and George Coots.**
    - Signed H.B. Callahan

Examination of **George Coots**, a Slave

- I was in town Wednesday night.
- I was at **Mr. Leachman's and at Mr. Lipton.**
- I saw at Lipton's **Henry Lipton, Mildt Paxton, and other Negroes**. Paxton's **Jack Jordan Moore.**
- They were fiddling and dancing. I stayed there about an hour.
- I then went to **Mr. Leachman's.** I stayed there an hour and a half.
- **Lew Green** came up there after I came.
- **Remington's(?)** Negro woman was also there.
- **Lew** and I left together, went down in town, then I went home.
- I got home about 12:00. I met no person on the way.
- I was XXXX the plain XXXX.
- I was in town also Saturday night.
- I was at **Leachman's and Liptons.**
- I stayed at **Lipton's** all night with **Callahan's "Bill".**
- I got to **Liptons** at 8:00.
- **Lew** came to **Lipton's** after I came.

- **Lew** came to **Lipton's** after I came.
- I saw **John Paxton** this side of Liptons about the time I came in.
- **Lew Green said he intended to sit up with a sick child at Leachman's.**
    - **(Was Lew's child a slave at Leachman's?)**
- I did not stay long there at **Liptons**.
- I left with **Callahan's Bill**, went up to the church, put out some lights.
- Then went over to **Leachman's**, stayed there about one hour, then returned to **Lipton's** with **Bill**, where we stayed all night.
- **Lew** was at **Leachman's** when I got there and was there when I left.
- It was about 10:00.
- I got up the next morning about daylight.
- I left soon after to go up to **Raith's(?)** to by a coat.
- I then went back to **Lipton's**, then to **Leachman's**; then to **Cassel's**(?).
    - (Reuben Cassel? Was a member of Silas Gordon's Confederate company. See Paxton's Annals)
- It was about 12:00 then.
- **Lew Green** did not mention having any weapons.
- **Paxton's John** had with him when I saw him a small bundle, stated that he was going to **visit his wife.**
- **Lew Green** first told me that **Mary, Alfred and the boy *(Reuben)*** had left Sunday morning.
- Said **Crick Green** had told him.
- Told me in **Lipton's** yard.
- Did not see **Crick Green** coming into town, nor **Lew**.
- The sun was about an hour high when **Lew** told me that the Negroes had gone.
- I did not see **John Paxton** but once during the night.
- I did not know that they had been caught until **Alfred** came for whiskey to the distillery on Tuesday night.
- **Bill Callahan** and I slept to gether Saturday night.

Cross Examination of **George Coots**, a Slave

- I know **Frank Green** and his character for truth and veracity is ????.

Re-examination of **George Coots**, a Slave

- I went out to meet **Green's Frank** with **Paxton's John** and **Green's Lew.**
- I started with **John** and **Lew** to meet **Frank** about 10:00.
- I went on down the hill with **John** and we met **Lew** at the bridge (**Burckhartt's** branch bridge).
- **Lew** invited me to go with him to meet **Frank**.
- We first met **Frank** about 2 miles from town.
- **Lew** then told **Frank** that it was fixed with XXXX to get the **child**.
- **John** was not with us then.
- **Lew** told **Frank** that he had been down to look for him three nights.
- They said that **John** had brought word between them.
- **John** told **Lew** that **Frank** would be over that evening certain.
- **Lew** had a corn knife.
- **Lew** said that if he could not get the child by fair means he would by foul.
- I told **Lew** he was a fool to talk about that.
- I was afraid to tell the truth at first *because the Negroes over the River might harm me.*

Cross Examination of **George Coots**, a Slave

- Have had no conversation with anyone as to what I was to tell here.
- **John** stayed with **Lew** and me about 2 hours.
- He then left and took the direction of Weston.
- I have XXXXX **Lew** to wait, **John's** coming from Leavenworth, to hear from Negroes in that place.

Examination of **West Barry**, a Slave

- I have a **wife who lives at John McCown's.**
- I was at Leavenworth this day week.
- I went over on Thursday and came back Friday.
- **Frank** did not at any time send any word to **Lew** by me.
- Never brought any messages from any Negro from in Leavenworth to any Negro on this side of the River save one, which was from **Green's Luke** to tell **Spratt's Judith** "howdie".

John Paxton, Defendant, declines to make any statement.

Best,
Bill Nichols



1861 Missouri v
John A...22.pdf