From: **B Nichols (Gmail)**
Subject: 1858 State of Missouri vs. John Vaughn
Date: November 6, 2024 at 1:38 PM
To:

NB

An 1858 criminal lawsuit again ferryman John Vaughn for ferrying an unnamed slave owned by John W. Brightwell into Kansas.

John Brightwell died after the indictment was issued and before the Sheriff later certified he couldn't find Vaughn in Platte County.

John did not report any slaves on the 1850 Slave Schedule but his father, Waller, reported 4 slaves: two Black males ages 35 and 18 and two Black females ages 28 and 14.

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Platte County Circuit Court, February Term 1858

State of Missouri vs. John Vaughn
"Ferrying Slaves"
"-Accused of taking a slave (name unknown) belonging to John W. Brightwell across the river to Kansas"

February 25, 1858: True Bill of Indictment, filed by W.C. Remington, Clerk

State of Missouri, County of Platte

In the Platte Circuit Court at the February Term thereof A.D. 1858

The Grand Jurors for the State of Missouri for the body of the County of Platte aforesaid being duly sworn upon their oath present that John Vaughn late of said county on the 1st day of December A.D. 1857 at the County of Platte aforesaid was then and there a ferryman and as such ferryman was in command of a certain boat crossing and re-crossing the Missouri River from the County of Platte into the Territory of Kansas;

And as such ferryman he, the said John Vaughn, did then and there feloniously cross and suffer and permit to be crossed on said boat and escaping so crossing said river as aforesaid, a certain slave belonging to John W. Brightwell but whose name is the name of which slave is to the jurors unknown, said slave being then and there taken on said boat across said river and carried into the Territory of Kansas by the said ferryman aforesaid, whereby said slave was carried out of this State, all of which act aforesaid were then and there done by the said John Vaughn as aforesaid without the written consent of the master or owner of said slave, the said John W. Brightwell then and there being the master and owner of said slave, contrary to the form of Statute in such case made and provided and against the peace and dignity of the State.

Signed J. M. Basset, Circuit Attorney

Witnesses:
G.J. Oliver
John W. Brightwell
W.P. (William Ptolemy) Brightwell
John Miller

March 11, 1858: Writ issued

March 11, 1858: Writ issued

Writ issued to Sheriff to "take John Vaughn (into custody) and him safely keep" so that he can appear before the Judge of the Platte County Circuit Court on Monday, August 30th, to answer to the State of Missouri for "ferrying slave, of which he stands indicted by the Grand Jury of Platte County aforesaid."

Issued by W.C. Remington, Clerk, by James D.(?) Marsh.

August 30, 1858, Sheriff's Return of Service:

I, W.R. Bryant, Sheriff of Platte County, Missouri, do certify that I have made xxxx xxxx and used due diligence and the within named Defendant not found in Platte County, Missouri, this 30th August 1858.

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From Paxton's Annals:

John W. Brightwell was the son of Waller L. Brightwell (died July 7, 1868, 4 miles southeast of Platte City). "Mr. (Waller) Brightwell volunteered in Col. Coons' regiment, and served throughout the War of 1812. In 1816 he came to Kentucky, and thence to Missouri arriving in Platte Nov. 10, 1842." John died on June 6, 1858.

Best,