From: **B Nichols (Gmail)**
Subject: 1860 Morrison vs. Pitt, C64668, Box 54, Folder 17
Date: August 8, 2024 at 12:15 PM
To:

NB

Hi All:

Rebecca recently received the three Bully Pitt-related court files that she had requested from the Missouri State Archives. **Thanks again, Rebecca, for getting the court file.** Below is the summary of the 1860 Morrison vs. Pitt and Frost case and I'll send the other summaries later.

But first, a couple of observations:

* Slave George was originally owned by **James H. Johnston** and his wife **Martha** was the executor of James H.'s estate.

Paxton says James H. was the postmaster and a merchant in Martinsville (later Platte City). He was also the County Clerk. In Feb. 1840 he built the first brick house in Platte City (Lot 9, Block 25).

In 1840 James H. married **Martha,** the younger sister of **George P. Dorriss'** (😈😈'😈'😈) wife. As of Oct. 7, 1850, James H. owned 8 slaves (3 female, 5 male - all younger than 10 years old).

James H. died on May 23, 1854. Paxton said *"Mr. J.H. Johnston and I were intimate friends…"* and even wrote a poem about James H.

As of July 6, 1860, Martha owned 13 slaves (5 female, 8 male). On Sept. 17, 1860, Martha married A.W. Johnston "State treasurer." As of Aug. 21, 1850, A.W. Johnson owned 10 slaves (1 female, 9 male).

* I've now seen a few of these lawsuits against Pitt pertaining to slave hiring. It seems to have been a standard condition, that in addition to the hiring fee and 10% interest:

- the slave would be provided with summer clothing (usually 2 suits) and winter clothing (usually 1 suit);
- a blanket;
- that the person hiring the slave had to pay for doctors fees and the taxes;
- that the person hiring the slave had to pay the **taxes;**
    - **Who was collecting the "tax" and where are those records? Those records would be a gold mine of information.**
- the money was typically due at the end of the hiring term, which was usually one year.

The George promissory note is the first I've seen dictating that George could not be taken out of the State of Missouri.]

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Platte County Circuit Court November Term 1860

Alfred W. & Martha C. Morrison vs. John E. Pitt & James E. Frost

Promissory Note: “$175.00 for hire of a male slave named George”

Nov. 3, 1860 - Morrison Petition:

> Pitt and Frost executed a promissory note on April 12, 1859, promising to pay Martha C. Morrison, nee’ Johnston, $175.00 twelve months after April 12, 1859, for the “services and labor of a certain slave named George at that time in the possession of Plaintiff Martha C. Morrison.”
>
> After the 1859 promissory note was executed, Martha C. Johnston married Alfred W. Morrison.
>
> Defendants are indebted to Plaintiffs in the sum of $175.00 with 10% interest, which has not been paid (no mention of clothing not being provided, doctor’s fees, or non-payment of taxes).

The April 12, 1859 Promissory Note (filed with Court November 3, 1860)

> "Twelve months after date we or either of us promise to pay Martha C. Johnston the guardian of the (xxx) **heirs of James H. Johnston** $125, it being for one year of hire of a negro man named George and we further agree to furnish said negro one winter suit and two summer suits of clothing and one blanket, **pay the tax** on said negro, doctors bills if any (xxx) time if sick and not to take the said negro out of the State of Missouri and to pay 10% interest after due until paid.” Signed John E. Pitt and James E. Frost

November 3, 1860 - Summons issued to John E. Pitt and James E. Frost to appear on November 26, 1860, to answer the Morrison’s petition. Served by Sheriff on November 5, 1860.

No further information in the court file about the outcome of the lawsuit.

Best,
Bill Nichols