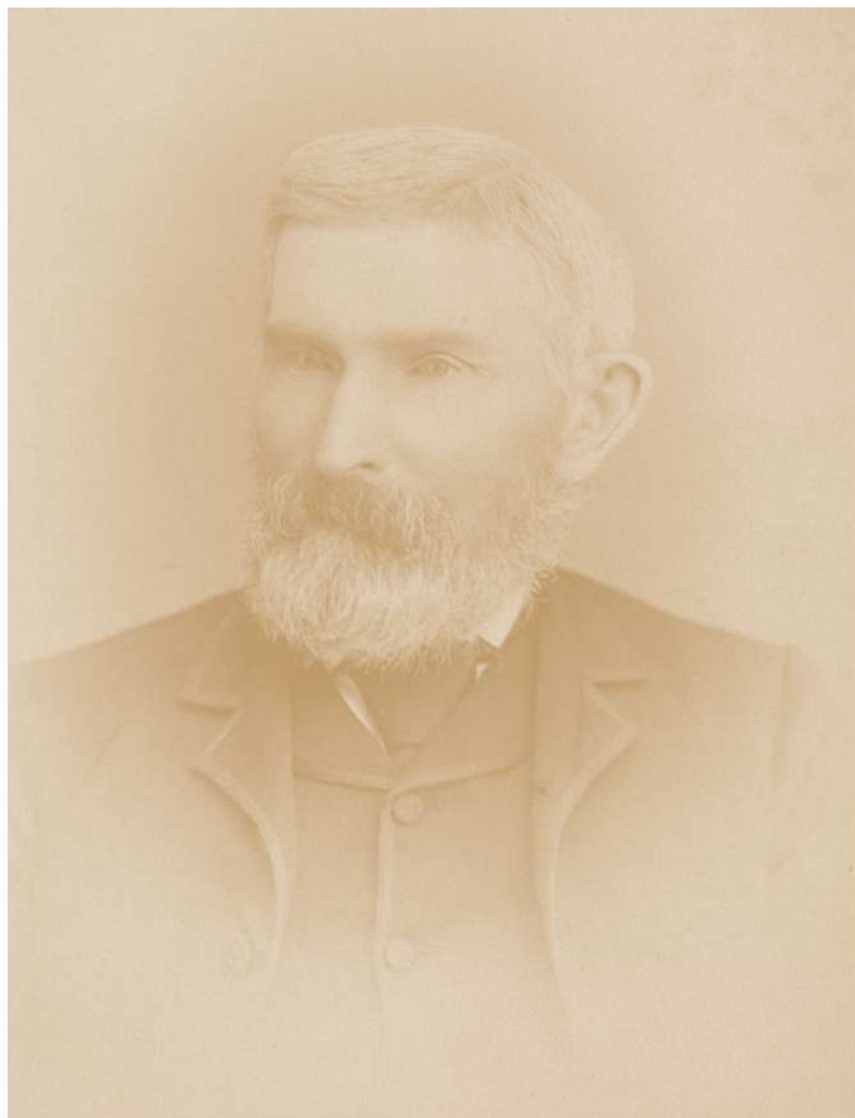


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FEATURE ARTICLES

- The Brambach, Mangold, and Beplat Saga:
Evidence Supports Sensationalist News Stories
Amy Larner Giroux, PhD, CG, CGL 165
- Parents for Mary Ann (Marriner) Graves
of New Jersey and Pennsylvania
Debbie Hadley 191

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

- Do Slave Schedules Accurately Report Owners?
Tony Burroughs 205

COMMUNICATIONS

162

EDITORS' CORNER

- Making the Most of What You Have 163

ADMINISTRATION

164

SIDELIGHTS

- Walls Family Bible 190
The Three Bears Revisited 204

REVIEWS

- Elder, Dyer, and Wirthlin. *Research Like a Pro with DNA:
A Genealogist's Guide to Finding and Confirming Ancestors*
By Ann Raymond, CG 217
- Yuill. *Preparing to Write and Publish Your Book: Tips and Tricks for the Writer.*
By Tracy Neely 219
- Henderson. *From Fens to Farms to Factories: Gedneys to America 1782–2018
with Entwined Families Eastwood, Flint, Lord, Thrall.*
By Darcie Hind Posz, CG 219

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Notes and Documents

Do Slave Schedules Accurately Report Owners?

By Tony Burroughs

Census slave schedules are limited tools for identifying an enslaved African American's owner. They often do not distinguish between owners and those who employed enslaved individuals. Other genealogical records more accurately identify an owner.

Before the Civil War the majority of African Americans in the United States were enslaved—the property of their enslavers.¹ When tracing an enslaved ancestor it is essential to identify the former owner. Many researchers use a surname taken from an 1850 or 1860 federal census slave schedule to help identify their African American ancestor of the same surname.² However, slave schedules may not correctly distinguish owners from employers. Other genealogical records better identify the owner of an enslaved African American ancestor.

THE ORIGIN OF SLAVE SCHEDULES

When the Constitutional Convention met in 1787, the southern states had fewer free Whites than northern states. Southern states had less political power in the House of Representatives because elected members were based on population. Outvoted

© Tony Burroughs; P.O. Box 53091; Chicago, IL 60615; tony@tonyburroughs.com. Mr. Burroughs is the CEO of the Center for Black Genealogy and is the author of *Black Roots: A Beginner's Guide to Tracing the African American Family Tree*. Referenced websites were accessed on 26 July 2022.

1. *Population of the United States in 1860, Compiled from the Original Returns . . .* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1864) "Introduction," i, ix; PDF file, *United States Census Bureau* (<https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1860/population/1860a-02.pdf>). The 1860 U.S. census recorded 3,953,760 enslaved people and 487,970 free persons of color.

2. In 1850 and 1860 the U.S. census bureau counted enslaved persons on a separate Schedule 2, known as a slave schedule. United States Census Bureau, *Measuring America: The Decennial Censuses from 1790 to 2000* (n.p.: U.S. Department of Commerce, 2002), 11–13, PDF file, *United States Census Bureau* (https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/2002/dec/pol_02-ma.pdf). For research strategy, Emily Anne Croom and Franklin Carter Smith, *A Genealogist's Guide to Discovering Your African American Ancestors: How to Find and Record Your Unique Heritage* (Cincinnati, Ohio: Betterway Publications, 2002), 113–15. Also, Henry Louis Gates, *Finding Oprah's Roots: Finding Your Own* (New York, N.Y.: Crown Publishers, 2007), 111. Mary L. Jackson Fears, *Slave Ancestral Research: It's Something Else* (Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, 1995), 18. J. Mark Lowe, "Slave Schedules Require a Strategy," *Archives*, 26 February 2013 (<http://www.archives.com/experts/lowe-j-mark/slave-schedules-require-a-strategy.html>).

southern slave holders sought to include their enslaved population to equalize the balance of power. In 1783 the Continental Congress debated what ratio of enslaved persons to free people to use in counting the population. Northerners favored a ratio of four free persons to three enslaved; southerners favored two to one, or four to one. James Madison's proposed "Three-Fifths Compromise" suggested a ratio of five to three.³ When the compromise was adopted, the enumeration of enslaved people began.⁴

Every federal census schedule from 1790 to 1860 counted enslaved African Americans. Schedules from 1790 to 1810 counted enslaved people with their owners. The 1820 to 1840 U.S. censuses counted and grouped Blacks by age and by categories of free colored persons and slaves.⁵ The 1830 and 1840 censuses name a few. For example, "Frank a Slave" of Jefferson County, Tennessee, was named in 1830.⁶ The 1840 census names forty-eight enslaved people in four states:

- Alabama—Mobile County and Mobile City⁷
- North Carolina—Wake and Pasquotank counties⁸

3. "The Three-Fifth Compromise," *Digital History* (https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/dispatch_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=163). Also, Steven Mintz, "Historical Context: The Constitution and Slavery," *Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History* (<https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-resources/teaching-resource/historical-context-constitution-and-slavery>).

4. Three-fifths of enslaved people were added to the numbers of free persons to determine states' representation in the House of Representatives. United States Constitution, article 1, section 2, clause 3, apportionment of representatives and taxes—"Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons." See "The Constitution of the United States: A Transcription," *National Archives* (<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution-transcript>).

5. United States Census Bureau, *Measuring America: The Decennial Censuses from 1790 to 2000*, 6–8.

6. 1830 U.S. census, Jefferson Co., Tenn., page 287, line 249, Frank; microfilm publication M19, roll 180, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Washington, D.C.

7. 1840 U.S. census, Mobile Co., Ala., folio 83r (stamped), line 14, Eleazer; NARA microfilm M704, roll 9. 1840 U.S. census, Mobile Co., Ala., Mobile City, fol. 95r, line 12, Aaron; fol. 106r, line 10, Peter and line 24, Sally; fol. 112r, line 16, Betsy; fol. 113r, line 21, Eliza; fol. 116r, line 2, Patsey; fol. 121r, line 20, July, line 24, Nathan, and line 25, William; fol. 122r, line 1, Adaline, line 2, Patsey, line 25, Charlott, and line 26, Desilva; fol. 124r, line 11, Tishy, line 12, Hanah, and line 13, Milton; fol. 129r, line 8, Catherine, line 9, Becky, and line 25, Sally; fol. 130r, line 7, Nancy, and line 8, John; fol. 131r, line 30, Betsey; fol. 134r, line 7, Mariah, line 8, Charles, line 9, Mary, and line 29, Robert; fol. 135r, line 4, Viney, line 21, Patsey, and line 30, Charles; fol. 136r, line 10, Daniel, line 11, Emily, line 15, May, line 16, May, line 17, Louisia, line 22, Mariah, and line 25, Milly; fol. 137r, line 3, Gilbert; fol. 138r, line 20, Jenny; fol. 139r, line 4, Majo, line 8, May, and line 29, Clay; fol. 142r, line 27, Lary; NARA microfilm M704, roll 10.

8. 1840 U.S. census, Wake Co., N.C., fol. 154v, line 8, Franky; NARA microfilm M704, roll 374. 1840 U.S. census, Pasquotank Co., N.C., fol. 328r, line 5, Daniel Cross; NARA microfilm M704, roll 368.

- Tennessee—Knox County⁹
- Virginia—Loudoun County¹⁰

In 1850 and 1860 the census bureau produced two population schedules—one for free inhabitants and one for enslaved people.¹¹ The census bureau wanted to record names and other information for everyone in the household on both schedules. The Senate debated whether to record enslaved people's names. Senator John Davis of Massachusetts insisted that recording their names was important for an accurate count and for identifying owners. Senator Arthur P. Butler of South Carolina and others argued against recording names on slave schedules, stating that ages and gender sufficed. Recording names would add humanity to enslaved individuals, which would weaken the owners' argument that they were property, not human beings. In 1850 the Senate agreed to replace enslaved peoples' names with numbers.¹²

The 1850 and 1860 slave schedules list the owner's name and the number of people owned. Age, sex, and color (black or mulatto) are listed for each of the enslaved.¹³ In rare instances in 1850, marshals went beyond their responsibilities and included their names. Three counties recorded names for 1,702 enslaved African Americans out of a population of 3,204,313:¹⁴

- Scott County, Tennessee—37¹⁵
- Bowie County, Texas—1,641¹⁶
- Utah County, Utah—24¹⁷

9. 1840 U.S. census, Knox Co., Tenn., fol. 50v, line 28, Jane; NARA microfilm M704, roll 527. *Ibid.*, fol. 74v, line 24, Delilia.

10. 1840 U.S. census, Loudoun Co., Va., fol. 227r, line 22, Shedrick; NARA microfilm M704, roll 564.

11. United States Census Bureau, *Measuring America: The Decennial Censuses from 1790 to 2000*, 11–13.

12. David E. Paterson, "The 1850 and 1860 Census, Schedule 2, Slave Inhabitants," *Afrigenas* (https://www.afrigenas.com/library/slave_schedule2.html), citing Congressional Globe Debates and Proceedings, 1833–1873, 31st Congress, 1st session.

13. United States Census Bureau, *Measuring America: The Decennial Censuses from 1790 to 2000*, 11–13.

14. *Population of the United States in 1860, Compiled from the Original Returns*, ix. The table for "Census of slaves and free colored" compares the 1850 slave population with the 1860 and other census enumerations.

15. 1850 U.S. census, Scott Co., Tenn., slave schedule, district 18, p. 563 (penned); NARA microfilm M432, roll 906.

16. 1850 U.S. census, Bowie Co., Tex., slave schedule, dist. 8, pp. 1–23 (penned); NARA microfilm M432, roll 917.

17. 1850 U.S. census, Utah Co., Utah, slave schedule, p. 147 (stamped); NARA microfilm M432, roll 919.

The 1860 instructions directed marshals to name those aged one hundred years and older in slave schedules.¹⁸ Some marshals, however, went beyond their responsibilities and included names for enslaved persons younger than one hundred. Six counties recorded names for 4,092 enslaved people of all ages out of 3,953,760:¹⁹

- Hampshire County, Virginia—1,213²⁰
- Boyd County, Kentucky—113²¹
- St. Louis Independent City, St. Louis County, Missouri—18²²
- Twiggs County, Georgia—4²³
- Washington County, Tennessee—617²⁴
- Camden County, North Carolina—2,127²⁵

18. *Eighth Census, United States 1860, Act of Congress of Twenty-Third May, 1850, Instructions to U.S. Marshals, Instructions to Assistants* (Washington, D.C.: Geo. W. Bowman, 1860), 18.

19. For 1860 total enslaved persons, *Population of the United States in 1860, Compiled from the Original Returns*, ix.

20. 1860 U.S. census, Hampshire Co., Va., slave schedule, Eastern District, fols. 393r–395r; Romney Court House, fols. 395v–396r; Western District, fols. 396v–402v; NARA microfilm M653, roll 1391.

21. 1860 U.S. census, Boyd Co., Ky., slave schedule, fols. 145r–146v; NARA microfilm M653, roll 401.

22. 1860 U.S. census, St. Louis Independent City, Mo., slave schedule, St. Louis, ward 2, fol. 337r; NARA microfilm M653, roll 664.

23. 1860 U.S. census, Twiggs Co., Ga., slave schedule, Georgia Militia District 376, pp. 65–66, 68; NARA microfilm M653, roll 152.

24. 1860 U.S. census, Washington Co., Tenn., pop. sch., Boones Creek dist. (11th), fols. 31r–41v; Brush Creek dist. (9th), fols. 42r–52r; Buffalo Ridge dist. (12th), fols. 53r–63v; Campbell's dist. (17th), fols. 64r–75r, 119v; Hoggard's dist. (13th), fols. 63v, 76r–86v; Jonesboro dist. (15th), fols. 87r–105r; Knob Creek dist. (10th), fols. 52v, 106r–113r; Leesburg dist. (16th), fols. 105v, 114r–119r; and Swinney's dist. (14th), fols. 120r–130v; NARA microfilm M568, roll 1277. Suzanne Murray, "In Praise of William H. Couch: The Enumeration of Slaves in the 1860 Census of Washington County, Tennessee," *National Genealogical Society Quarterly* 93 (March 2005): 52–64. Murray extracted 617 enslaved people's names enumerated in the Washington County population schedule.

25. "N.C. archivists uncover rare listing of slaves," *The Free Press* (Kinston, N.C.), 24 April 2004, p. 14, cols. 3–6, William L. Holmes, The Associated Press. "A renegade census taker charged with recording the population of a tiny northeastern North Carolina county in 1860 left behind a record of slave names that is the only such known document in the state—and perhaps in the nation." "The 1860 Census lists the population of Camden, which borders Virginia, as 5,343, including 2,127 slaves." The newspaper article refers to a state copy of the population schedule, not the population schedule sent to Washington and now available from NARA.

HIRING OUT ENSLAVED PEOPLE

Owners sometimes hired out their enslaved workers. Many were hired out to work for an employer who did not own them.²⁶ The practice was well established in the colonies before the Revolutionary War.²⁷ As early as the fourth and fifth centuries B.C. in Athens, Greece, owners rented enslaved people.²⁸

During the Revolutionary War and Civil War, the threat of emancipation loomed over the United States. Owners feared losing their investment in enslaved workers. Renting them was less risky than owning them.²⁹

“The jobs that rented slaves performed were the same as those of other slaves. One could rent field hands, domestic servants, miners, or construction workers for railroads, canals, highways, and roads. Most public works were done by slaves hired out to the county or municipal government.” Enslaved African Americans served as sailors, crewmen, stewards, and cooks. Nurses for children or the elderly were often teens hired out to work on someone else’s farm.³⁰ Some owners punished the unruly by hiring them out, separating them from their families.³¹

Many small farmers could not afford enslaved workers, so they rented them, as needed. That likely occurred during planting or harvest season, although many were hired annually for fifty-one weeks, “with a stipulated return for Christmas vacation.”³²

Other small owners gradually accumulated enslaved people until they had enough land, capital, and supplies to profitably operate their farms. They hired out their workers until they could use them profitably.³³ Some wealthy individuals commonly hired more-expensive enslaved skilled artisans for particular jobs.³⁴

Owners hired out enslaved people to earn income to pay off their debts. In Union County, Kentucky, Richard Hord’s executor hired out eight of Hord’s African Americans to pay debts. The hired-out individuals included John, Thornton, Harry, Stephen, Jim, Kate, Mary, and Nancy (see figure 1).³⁵

26. Douglas Sanford, “Hiring Out of the Enslaved,” *Encyclopedia Virginia* (<https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/hiring-out-of-the-enslaved/>).

27. Sarah S. Hughes, “Slaves for Hire: The Allocation of Black Labor in Elizabeth City County, Virginia, 1782 to 1810,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 35 (April 1978): 262–63.

28. Randall M. Miller and John D. Smith, eds., *Dictionary of Afro-American Slavery* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger Publishers, 1997), 322.

29. *Ibid.*, 323.

30. *Ibid.*, 322.

31. *Ibid.*, 323. Also, Sanford, “Hiring Out of the Enslaved,” *Encyclopedia Virginia*, see “Hiring Out and Virginia’s White Society.”

32. Sanford, “Hiring Out of the Enslaved,” *Encyclopedia Virginia*, see “Summary.” Also, Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll Jordan Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York, N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1976), 391.

33. Genovese, *Roll Jordan Roll*, 391.

34. Hughes, “Slaves for Hire,” 268, 275.

35. *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/film/004819864>), digital film 004819864, image 277, Union Co., Ky., Wills, 1811–1941, will book, 1853–1861, vol. E:215, Richard F. Hord, executor settlement, 5 October 1857.

Figure 1

**Estate Settlement of Richard F. Hord
of Union County, Kentucky, 1857**

Do amt due on former settlement	\$ 285.33
" Int 1 year & 7 months	27.09
" Rent of farm (1855) Jan 1 st /56	700.00
" Hire of negroman John 1855	150.00
" " " " Thornton "	150.00
" " " " Harry "	150.00
" " " " Stephens "	150.00
" " " " Jim "	130.00
" " " " Girl Kate "	25.00
" " " " Mary "	20.00
" " " " Nancy "	20.00
" Cash recd of 9/2 acres land (1854) May 10 th /56	28.00
" Cash borrowed of Colie Hord Guardn Oct 24 th /56	700.00
" Jan 20 - 1857 - Hire of man ^{Stephens} " 1856	175.00
" Hire of man Jim "	130.00
" " " " Harry "	175.00
" " " " Girl Kate "	25.00
" " " " Nancy "	20.00
" " " man Thornton "	1.75
" " " " John "	1.75
" " " Rent of farm "	696.00
	\$4106.42

Source: FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/film/004819864>), digital film 004819864, image 277, Union Co., Ky., Wills, 1811-1941, book 1853-1861, volume E:215, Richard F. Hord, executor settlement, 5 October 1857.

Profitability

Hiring out workers was a stable economic investment.³⁶ “Slaves who could be hired out were the most secure and profitable property a person could leave for the maintenance of dependent heirs at a time when land rent was low, stocks and bonds a speculation, and life insurance little used.”³⁷ Therefore, widows and orphans who inherited enslaved individuals often hired them out.³⁸

When hiring out, owners could expect a return of ten to twenty percent per year of the local value of the enslaved African Americans. Rates were higher in Maryland at twenty to twenty-five percent of their value. Skilled tradesmen like Dave [the] Potter of Edgefield District in South Carolina could earn for their owner up to one hundred percent of their value per year.³⁹

Frequency of the Practice

Five to ten percent of enslaved people were hired out in the late antebellum period.⁴⁰ The practice was exceptionally common in Virginia. Sometimes half of African Americans in Virginia tobacco factories were hired help. Half in Lynchburg, Virginia, were rented.⁴¹ “The largest slave owner in Virginia, Robert Carter, hired out over two-thirds of his 509 slaves in 1791.”⁴² Estimates for those hired in Richmond, Virginia, were as high as fifty percent.⁴³

Hiring out was also common in the middle south. Twenty-five percent of enslaved African Americans in Nashville, Tennessee, and sixteen percent in Louisville, Kentucky, were hired.⁴⁴ Evidence for owners and employers of hired-out enslaved workers is found in the 1850 and 1860 slave schedules.

36. Miller and Smith, *Dictionary of Afro-American Slavery*, 323.

37. Hughes, “Slaves for Hire,” 272.

38. *Ibid.*, 269–71.

39. Miller and Smith, *Dictionary of Afro-American Slavery*, 323.

40. *Ibid.*, 322.

41. Genovese, *Roll Jordan Roll*, 391.

42. Hughes, “Slaves for Hire,” 265.

43. Miller and Smith, *Dictionary of Afro-American Slavery*, 322.

44. Genovese, *Roll Jordan Roll*, 391.

1850 INSTRUCTIONS TO THE U.S. MARSHALS AND ASSISTANT MARSHALS

In 1850 the census bureau printed detailed, line-by-line guidelines. The guidelines show the bureau's main interest was counting the number of enslaved persons, and not who owned them. When researchers view the 1850 slave schedules, the enslavers' names on the schedules may not be owners, but instead employers who rented people. These instructions refer to the 1850 slave schedules:

- Where there are several owners of slaves, the name of one only need be entered, or when owned by a corporation or trustee estate, the name of the trustee or corporation.
- The person in whose family, or on whose plantation, the slave was found to be employed, is to be considered the owner—the principal object being to get the number of slaves, and not that of the masters or owners.⁴⁵

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE 1860 SLAVE SCHEDULES

Instructions changed for the 1860 slave schedules:

The slaves of each owner are to be numbered separately, beginning with the older at No. 1. The person in whose charge, or on whose plantation the slave is found to be employed may return all slaves in his charge, (although they may be owned by other persons,) provided they are not returned by their proper owner. The name of the *bona fide* owner should be returned as proprietor, and the name of the person having them in charge as employer.⁴⁶

By 1860 the census bureau wanted distinctions between owners and employers. However, the 1860 slave schedules may still show employers, not owners, of enslaved workers. Records that may link the enslavers to the enslaved lie with the owners, not with employers. An owner's plantation records, Bible records, indentures, mortgages, and court records containing probates and manumissions might provide information about an enslaved ancestor.

The 1860 slave schedules are divided into two identical sets of columns of forty lines each. The first column heading for each section reads, "Names of Slave Owners." Table 1 shows a partial transcription of page 22 from the 1860 slave schedule for division no. 1 in Henderson County, Kentucky. The assistant marshal recorded the names of sixteen owners and seven employers. Twenty-four percent of the twenty-nine people specifically named on page 22 were employers. The blank space in the number column to the right of the employers' names indicates the employer did not own the person.⁴⁷

45. Bureau of the Census, *Twenty Censuses: Population and Housing Questions, 1790–1980* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979), 15; PDF file, *United States Census Bureau* (<https://www.census.gov/history/pdf/20censuses.pdf>).

46. *Eighth Census, United States 1860, Act of Congress of Twenty-Third May, 1850*, 18.

47. 1860 U.S. census, Henderson Co., Ky., slave schedule, division 1, fol. 149v, p. 22; NARA microfilm M653, roll 403.

Table 1
 Page 22 of the 1860 Slave Schedule of Henderson County, Kentucky

LINE	NAMES OF SLAVE OWNERS	NO.	NAMES OF SLAVE OWNERS	NO.
1	D[itt]o	1	D[itt]o	1
2		1		1
3		1		1
4		1		1
5		{		1
6		Twins{		1
7				1
8	James E. Cheatham	1		1
9		{	James M. Powell	1
10	B. F. Martin	{		1
	[interlined]	{		1
11	B. F. Martin Guardian & Employer			1
12	For Minor Heirs	1	J. M. Powell Employer	
13		1	Elizabeth Green Owner	1
14		1		1
15		1		1
16		1	Hambleton's Est. of Union Co. Owner	1
17		1	Michael Higgins Employer	
18	B. R. Martin Employer		E. Ewell of Union Co. Owner	1
19	J. L. Hancock Owner	1	Alfred Oliver Employer	
20		1	H. Falkner Owner	1
21	John T. Branch Owner	1		1
22		1		1
23	Elizabeth T. Green	1		1
24		1	Milan Hancock Owner	1
25		1	C. Ritts of Ga. Owner	1
26		1	J. E. F. D. Cheatham Owner	1
27		1	Thomas Long	1
28		1		1
29		1		1
30		1		1
31	Albert G. Crutchfield	1	T. Long Employer	
32		1	E. James of Ga. Owner	1
33		1	E. Green Owner	1
34		1	M. Dury Owner	1
35		1	E. Morris Owner	1
36		1	F. B. Cheatham Owner	1
37		1	R. F. Powell Employer	
38		1	John Riker Owner	1
39		1	Sarah Clay Owner	1
40				

Source: 1860 U.S. census, Henderson Co., Ky., slave schedule, division 1, folio 149v, page 22; microfilm publication M653, roll 403, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

How many assistant marshals followed the new instructions in 1860 is unclear. A random sample shows mixed results for the employers' names recorded on 1860 slave schedules. Louisville, Jefferson County, Kentucky, listed names of employers.⁴⁸ Union County, Kentucky, did not.⁴⁹ Nor were employers recorded in Spartanburg County, South Carolina.⁵⁰ In Baltimore, Maryland, nine wards identified employers, eleven did not.⁵¹ District 9 in Baltimore County, Maryland, did not show employers.⁵²

A study from Elizabeth City County, Virginia, indicates employing enslaved people was popular.⁵³ However, the 1860 slave schedules for Elizabeth City County reveal that none of three townships—Hampton, Back River, and Fox Hill—listed employers.⁵⁴ These small samples demonstrate the person who appears as an owner on a slave schedule may not actually be the owner.

AN EXAMPLE: SHARPTON FAMILY OF FLORIDA AND SOUTH CAROLINA

The Sharpton family illustrates the problem in using slave schedules to identify owners. African American Coleman Sharpton was enumerated in 1880 in Liberty County, Florida. Coleman was born about 1829 in South Carolina. He had a wife, Millie, and two sons, William and Laney, born in Florida before the Civil War ended.⁵⁵ Coleman, Millie, and their two sons were likely born enslaved. Coleman legally married Milly Cook after the war on 28 November 1868 in Liberty County.⁵⁶ However, they had probably married when enslaved.

48. 1860 U.S. census, Jefferson Co., Ky., slave schedule, Louisville, fols. 258r–290v; NARA microfilm M653, roll 403.

49. 1860 U.S. census, Union Co., Ky., slave schedules, Caseyville, Morganfield, Uniontown, and an unstated township; NARA microfilm M653, roll 406.

50. 1860 U.S. census, Spartanburg Co., S.C., slave schedules, Northern division, Southern division, and Spartanburg; NARA microfilm M653, roll 1237.

51. 1860 U.S. census, Baltimore Independent City, Md., slave schedule, Baltimore ward 1, fol. 57rv, no owners and employers (nil); ward 2, fol. 58rv, nil; ward 3, fol. 59v–60r, nil; ward 4, fol. 61r, nil; wards 5–6, fol. 62rv, employers; ward 7, fol. 63r, nil; ward 8, fol. 68rv, employers; ward 9, fol. 64rv, owners and employers; ward 10, fol. 65r, owners and employers; ward 11, fols. 66r–68r, nil; ward 12, fol. 69rv, nil; ward 13, fol. 70r, nil; ward 14, fol. 71r, employers; ward 15, fols. 72r–73r, owners and employers; ward 16, fol. 74r, nil; ward 17, fol. 75r, nil; ward 18, fols. 76r–77v, employers; ward 19, fol. 78rv, nil; ward 20, fol. 79r–80r, owners and employers; NARA microfilm M653, roll 484.

52. 1860 U.S. census, Baltimore Co., Md., slave schedule, district 9, fols. 95r–97v; NARA microfilm M653, roll 484.

53. Hughes, "Slaves for Hire," 260–86.

54. 1860 U.S. census, Elizabeth City Co., Va., slave schedule, Hampton Twp., fols. 474r–483r; NARA microfilm M653, roll 1389. *Ibid.*, Back River Twp., fols. 481v–486v. *Ibid.*, Fox Hill Twp., fols. 479r–489r.

55. 1880 U.S. census, Liberty Co. Fla., pop. sch., precinct 1, enumeration district 95, fol. 473v (stamped), p. 473D, dwell. 151, fam. 153, Coleman Sharpton household; NARA microfilm T9, roll 130. For more on the Sharpton family, see Austin Fenner, "Slavery Links Families," *Daily News* (New York, N.Y.), 25 February 2007, pp. 1, 4–6.

The 1860 Liberty County slave schedule lists Jefferson Sharpton in the owners column as owning sixteen people. No enslaved individual's names appears on the slave schedule.⁵⁷ It appears Jefferson may have been Coleman's owner. Coleman may have shared the surname of his enslaver.

Jefferson M. Sharpton died in debt without a will shortly after the 1860 slave schedule was created. His probable wife, Julia A. Sharpton, relinquished administration rights to Joseph B. Talley and A[lexander] Sharpton on 21 December 1860. On 24 December 1860 Joseph and Alexander, as administrators of the estate of Jefferson M. Sharpton, were bound unto the governor of Florida in the sum of \$40,000. They made an accounting of Jefferson's debts.⁵⁸

Jefferson's father, Alexander Sharpton Sr., lived in Edgefield District, South Carolina. Alexander entered into an indenture with Joseph B. Talley in early 1861. Alexander sent four of his enslaved African Americans, including Coleman, to Liberty County, Florida, to be hired out to help pay Jefferson's debts.

This indenture made and entered into this 31st day of Jany A.D. 1861 (eighteen hundred and sixty-one) Between Alexander Sharpton Sen^r of Edgefield District state of South Carolina of the first part and Joseph B. Talley of the second part of Liberty County . . . in consideration of the natural love and affection which he has and bears to his Grand Children Viz. Alexander Sharpton Jun^r, Preston Sharpton, Benjamin G. Sharpton and George S. Sharpton, minor heirs of Jefferson M Sharpton . . . [Alexander Sharpton Sr.] hath given and conveyed and by these presents do give grant and convey unto the said Joseph B. Talley the following described negroes To Wit, Coleman aged 25 years Bidley aged 22 years old Harrison aged about 4 years, and Bachus aged about 8 years together with the future increase of the said female slave [Bidley] To have and to hold the said negro slaves &c unto the said party of the second part . . . that the said Trustee is to receive all hires of the said slaves until the debts of the Estate of their father Jefferson M. Sharpton are paid and discharged.⁵⁹

56. *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/film/005253916>), digital film 005253916, image 237, Liberty Co., Fla., Record of marriages, 1857–1876, vol. A:415, Sharpton-Cook (1868).

57. 1860 U.S. census, Liberty Co., Fla., slave schedule, fol. 299v (stamped), p. 2, col. 1, lines 29–40 and col. 2, lines 1–4, Jefferson Sharpton; NARA microfilm M653, roll 110.

58. *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/film/005885708>), digital film 005885708, images 36–42, Liberty Co., Fla., Probate records, 1858–1945, Records of administrations, 1860–1886, vol. A:43–55, Jefferson M. Sharpton, bond and obligation, 24 December 1860, accounting made 31 December 1860.

59. *FamilySearch*, digital film 005253916, image 60, Liberty Co., Deed records, 1857–1885, Deed book A:78–79, Alexander Sharpton Sr. to Joseph B. Talley, indenture, 31 January 1861, recorded 19 February 186[1].

While Jefferson Sharpton shown on the 1860 Florida slave schedule appears to have been Coleman Sharpton's owner, he was not. Jefferson's father, Alexander Sharpton Sr. of South Carolina owned Coleman. Coleman may have been one of three twenty-five-year-old Black men owned by A[lexander] Sharpton Sr. in 1860 in Edgefield District, South Carolina.⁶⁰ Coleman had been hired out to Joseph Till[e]y to pay Jefferson Sharpton's debts.

CONCLUSION

Census slave schedules are limited tools for identifying slave owners. In the 1850 slave schedules assistant marshals did not distinguish between owners and employers. Some shown as owners are actually employers of enslaved workers. The accuracy of employers listed on 1860 slave schedules is questionable.

Researchers of enslaved African American ancestors might question why no owners sharing their ancestors' surname appear on the slave schedules where their ancestors lived. Perhaps the owner lived elsewhere. Perhaps the ancestor was hired out and lived where the employer, not the owner, lived. More accurate records that identify enslavers of enslaved people include slave narratives, military records, Freedmen's Bureau records, plantation records, bills of sale, mortgages, and court records such as probates, deeds of gift, manumissions, and others.

60. 1860 U.S. census, Edgefield District, S.C., slave schedule, Edgefield District, fol. 507rv, A[lexander] Sharpton Sr.; NARA microfilm M653, roll 1230.