African-American Slavery and
Freedom on the Nathan Boone Farm

by Dakota Russell
Interpretive Resource Specialist II
Nathan Boone Homestead State Historic Site
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I. Nathan Boone as a Slaveholder

Nathan Boone was introduced to slavery at an early age. He was six years old in 1787, when his father, Daniel Boone, claimed seven slaves on his taxes. During this time, Daniel kept a tavern and warehouse in Limestone, Kentucky. Daniel’s adult slaves were mostly women, and probably worked at the tavern while Nathan Boone played with their children.¹ As he grew older, Boone would accept and absorb the notions of racial inequality that were entrenched in his family and culture, and would eventually become a slaveholder himself.

Slavery also had deep roots in Upper Louisiana, the land that would become Missouri. As early as the 1720s, French businessmen purchased African slaves to work in the territory’s rich lead mines.² The Boone family brought their own slaves when they arrived in Upper Louisiana in 1799. In fact, Daniel Morgan Boone, Nathan Boone’s older brother, brought three slaves to Missouri in 1798, leaving them to clear and settle his new farm while he returned to Kentucky to ready for the family’s migration.³

Nathan Boone purchased his first slave, a woman to assist his wife, Olive, in 1800. Boone noted that Olive and this woman “got all the wood, and fed the cattle” while Nathan and Daniel “were absent hunting.” During these long hunting trips, the two women also succeeded in laying a new floor in the Boone cabin and constructing a fireplace and chimney for the loomhouse.⁴

¹ Farragher, p. 236
² Foley, p. 17
³ Lyman Copeland Draper Collection, Series S, Vol. 6, p. 215
⁴ Lyman Copeland Draper Collection, Series S, Vol. 6, p. 243-244
Over the next few years, Nathan Boone concentrated most of his energies not on farming, but on the profitable businesses of market hunting\(^5\) and salt making.\(^6\) In 1812, Boone gave up both professions, and turned his attention to the war.\(^7\) From 1815 to 1817, Nathan still owned only one adult slave, probably Olive’s assistant.\(^8\)

Daniel Boone, in the meantime, had latched on to Derry, a young black man who belonged to Daniel Morgan Boone.\(^9\) Derry became a constant companion to Daniel, and even moved to Nathan Boone’s farm, where Daniel and his wife lived.\(^10\) Derry still labored on the farm, but was relieved of some of his duties so he could accompany the old man on his hunting trips and other adventures.\(^11\)

Either Nathan or Daniel Boone eventually purchased Derry from Daniel Morgan. Either just before or directly after Daniel’s death, Dr. John Jones purchased Derry and his wife Sophira. Jones’ sons could not agree as to whether Nathan or Daniel sold the couple to their father.\(^12\) Pleasant, Derry and Sophira’s only son at the time, stayed on the Boone farm and later went to Greene County with Nathan Boone.\(^13\)

\(^5\) Hammon, p. 120
\(^6\) Hammon, p. 126
\(^7\) Hammon, p. 129
\(^8\) Maxheimer
\(^9\) Hammon, p. 119
\(^10\) Lyman Copeland Draper Collection, Series C, Vol. 6, p. 64-65
\(^11\) Hammon, p. 119
\(^12\) Lyman Copeland Draper Collection, Series C, Vol. 21, doc. 1, p. 5 & doc. 16, p. 1
\(^13\) Lyman Copeland Draper Collection, Series C, Vol. 21, doc. 16, p. 1
In the late teens and early twenties, Nathan Boone increased his slaveholdings. He claimed three slaves in 1818, and twelve in 1823. By 1824, Boone had reduced this number to four. That same year, he used one of his slaves, Harry, as collateral on a loan of $372. Harry had lived on the farm since at least 1820, and shaved Daniel Boone on his deathbed that year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th># of Slaves</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1815</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>over 10 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1816</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1817</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1823</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>worth $2,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1824</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>worth $1,150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Slaves belonging to Nathan Boone, 1815-1823. Maxheimer.

In 1820, Nathan Boone became briefly involved in the politics of Missouri slavery. With statehood looming, the people of St. Charles County elected Boone to Missouri’s first constitutional convention. Boone and the forty-one other delegates framed a constitution that protected slavery in Missouri, without restriction. This draft also made efforts to prevent free African-Americans from ever settling in the state. The delegates narrowly voted down a provision to expel any slaves freed within the state. Boone, like most all of the delegates, had come to view slaveholding as his undeniable right, and used racism to justify his position.

Back on his farm, Boone’s slaveholdings were on the rise again. In 1830, he owned nine slaves: four children under 10, three young men, a young woman, and one woman over 55.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>under 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>under 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>under 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>under 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>10-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>55-100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Slaves belonging to Nathan Boone in 1830. 1830 U.S. Census.

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14 Maxheimer
15 Hurt, p. 112
16 Lyman Copeland Draper Collection, Series C, Vol. 6, p. 81
17 Hurt, 114
18 Foley, p. 296-297
19 1830 U.S. Census
Boone accepted a captain’s commission with the United States Dragoons in 1833.\textsuperscript{20} Initially stationed at Fort Gibson in the Arkansas Territory, Boone decided to move his home closer to work.\textsuperscript{21} He sent his three sons, James, Howard, and John, to the Ash Grove settlement in Greene County.\textsuperscript{22} Here, they would begin work on a new farm. The sons stayed at Ash Grove alone until 1837, when Boone and the rest of the family joined them.\textsuperscript{23}

In 1834, James claimed two slaves, with a value of $800.\textsuperscript{24} James may have purchased these slaves himself, or his father may have sent them with his sons, to begin work on the farm and assist in the construction of the family’s new house. James still owned two slaves in 1835, but their value had increased to $900.\textsuperscript{25}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>under 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>10-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>24-36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Slaves belonging to Nathan Boone in 1840. 1840 U.S. Census.

Nathan Boone first appeared in Greene County records in the 1840 census, where he claimed a reduced number of slaves: one boy under 10, a young man, a young woman, and a man between the ages of 24 and 36. His son Howard claimed one man.\textsuperscript{26} James, now living north of the family in Polk County, claimed two young men and a woman over 55 years old.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{20} Hurt, p. 147
\textsuperscript{21} Hurt, p. 185
\textsuperscript{22} Holcombe, p. 623
\textsuperscript{23} Cox
\textsuperscript{24} Greene County, Missouri Tax Assessor’s List 1833-1834-1835 & 1843, p. 32
\textsuperscript{25} Greene County, Missouri Tax Assessor’s List 1833-1834-1835 & 1843, p. 66
\textsuperscript{26} Greene County, Missouri First Federal Census 1840, p. 19
\textsuperscript{27}
On the 1843 Greene County tax list, Nathan Boone claimed 5 slaves, valued at $1800. Howard Boone again claimed 1 slave, worth only $100. Nathan’s son John also claimed 1 slave, worth $300.28

1850 brought the census again, this time with improved information on slaves. Census takers now recorded exact ages, as best they could. Many slaves did not know their exact age, nor did their owners. The census also reported on the “color” of each slave, black or mulatto. The term mulatto didn’t imply a white parent, just a lighter skin color.29 It did reveal, however, that America was not as racially separate as many wanted to believe. Both forced and consensual relationships between whites and blacks existed,30 as did relationships between black slaves and Native Americans.31 Thus, especially in the West, mulattos became more and more common.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Color</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Mulatto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Mulatto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mulatto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mulatto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Slaves belonging to Nathan Boone in 1850. 1850 U.S. Census, slave schedule.

The 1850 census recorded 15 slaves belonging to Nathan Boone. This increase probably included children born to his female slave, but also included at least one man, one woman, and one child recently purchased by Boone. The census has two

27 1840 U.S. Census, Polk County
28 Greene County, Missouri Tax Assessor’s List 1833-1834-1835 & 1843, p. 87
29 Grant
30 Blassingame, p. 154
separate entries for Howard Boone. The first lists him as owning one black man, age 34, and one black woman, age 20. The black female is probably Ellen, the wife of Nathan Boone’s slave Ruben. The second entry shows Howard Boone as the owner of one black female, age 10, and 1 black male, age 4. John C. Boone does not appear as a slaveholder in the 1850 census, having left for California.

In Polk County, James Boone claimed one 90 year-old black woman, probably the same female over 55 from the 1840 census. James also owned one 30 year-old black woman, and two black boys, ages 6 and 2, likely her sons.

On the 1851 tax list for Greene County, Nathan claimed 13 slaves, with a total value of $2,800. Howard Boone claimed 4 slaves, with a valuation of $625.

In 1853, Boone’s son-in-law, Winfield Wright, left Greene County to settle in California. Rather than selling his slaves before moving to a free state, Wright left them with Nathan Boone. Wright’s slaves included Mary, a 30 year-old woman, and her children: Thomas, Alfred, Sarah, and Adelaid.
The next available tax list, recorded in 1856, puts Nathan Boone’s slaveholdings back at 11 slaves, with a total valuation of $6,500.\textsuperscript{39} Boone was also acting as the agent for son-in-law Wright. Boone claimed six slaves, worth $1,900, on Wright’s behalf.\textsuperscript{40} Howard Boone claimed three slaves worth $1,300 on this tax list. John C. Boone, now returned from California, had no slaves.\textsuperscript{41}

The birth of children among Nathan Boone’s slaves accounts for some of the fluctuations between 1851 and 1856. However, using the 1856 estate sale record as a guide, it becomes clear that at least one adult woman and one teenage girl left the farm during this time. Boone may have sold them, or they may have died.

Nathan Boone died in October of 1856.\textsuperscript{42} He left all his lands and property to his wife, Olive. Olive, in turn, renounced the will. She sold all of Boone’s property at auction, used the proceeds to pay the estate’s bills, and then split the remainder between Boone’s heirs. Boone’s property, of course, included his slaves.\textsuperscript{43}

Rather than selling Nathan Boone’s 11 slaves with the farm equipment and household goods, Boone’s executors chose to hire them out to local farmers for four months, generating money for the estate.\textsuperscript{44} Jemima Zumwalt, Boone’s daughter, made each of the slaves a new set of clothes.

\textsuperscript{39} Greene County, Missouri Tax Assessor’s List, 1851 & 1856, p. 146
\textsuperscript{40} Greene County, Missouri Tax Assessor’s List, 1851 & 1856, p. 241
\textsuperscript{41} Greene County, Missouri Tax Assessor’s List, 1851 & 1856, p. 146
\textsuperscript{42} Hurt, p. 215
\textsuperscript{43} Hurt, p. 220
\textsuperscript{44} Yelton & Bray, p. 151-153
before their hiring. In March of 1857, the executors hired Boone’s slaves out again. On July 18, all 11 were sold at an auction held on the farm.

Nathan Boone’s slaveholdings by year, including number of slaves, average value per slave, and total valuation when available.

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45 Black Families, p. 162
46 Yelton & Bray, p. 151-153
II. **Slaves Belonging to Nathan Boone**

In 1856, after the death of Nathan Boone, his eleven slaves were first hired out to local farms and later auctioned off. Below is the known history of each slave sold.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>1856 Hire</th>
<th>1856 Cost</th>
<th>1857 Hire</th>
<th>1857 Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>I.J. Edmonson</td>
<td>$30.50</td>
<td>Allen Edmonson</td>
<td>$67.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruben</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>N/a</td>
<td>Olive Boone</td>
<td>$70.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>Henry McKinley</td>
<td>$22.50</td>
<td>G.W. Hancock</td>
<td>$64.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>James Boone</td>
<td>$22.50</td>
<td>James Boone</td>
<td>$50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>A.S. Clinton</td>
<td>$10.00</td>
<td>A.S. Clinton</td>
<td>$20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann</td>
<td>Alfred Hosman</td>
<td>$1.50</td>
<td>Jemima Zumwalt</td>
<td>N/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keziah</td>
<td>Alfred Hosman</td>
<td>N/a</td>
<td>Jemima Zumwalt</td>
<td>N/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derry</td>
<td>Alfred Hosman</td>
<td>N/a</td>
<td>Jemima Zumwalt</td>
<td>N/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson</td>
<td>B.H. Boone</td>
<td>$14.50</td>
<td>B.H. Boone</td>
<td>$30.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raullin</td>
<td>J.E.B. Justice</td>
<td>N/a</td>
<td>F.T. Frazier</td>
<td>$301.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>Franklin Frazier</td>
<td>N/a</td>
<td>F.T. Frazier</td>
<td>N/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Henry**—Henry was first hired out to I.J. Edmonson, in the fall of 1856. Allen Edmonson, probably a relative of I.J., hired out Henry the following spring\(^1\) and also purchased him in the July 1857 auction.\(^2\) Edmonson only claimed one slave on the 1860 census, a 29 year-old black male, presumably Henry. This would have made Henry about 25 years old at the time of Boone’s death.\(^3\) Dr. Jeffrey K. Yelton, however, speculates that Henry may have been much older. Yelton noted, reading through Boone’s probate, that while other adult slaves were sometimes identified as “negro boy” or “negro girl”, Henry was the only slave consistently

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\(^1\) Black Families, p. 148  
\(^2\) Black Families, p. 57  
\(^3\) 1860 U.S. Census, slave schedule
referred to as a “negro man”. Yelton believed this pointed to Henry as the oldest of the group, which would have put him at least in his mid-forties when Nathan Boone died.  

**Ruben Boone** – According to neighbor J.E.B. Justice, Ruben was “near fifty years of age” at the time of Nathan Boone’s death. 

His actual age was probably about 42. 

During the inventory of Nathan Boone’s estate, Howard Boone claimed his father had given Ruben to him before he died. 

Howard owned Ruben’s wife, Ellen. Ruben was not hired that fall, and apparently stayed at Howard’s.

By December, Howard wrote Lyman Draper that two of his brother-in-laws were “very much displeased” with how Boone’s property was divided. 

Court battles over Boone’s land began, and the issue of Ruben’s ownership also came up. Olive Boone, who had moved to Howard’s after her husband’s death, may have tried to smooth things over by paying for Ruben’s hire in the spring. She finally bought Ruben at the July auction. Olive died the next year, but Ruben continued to stay at Howard’s.

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4 Yelton & Bray, p.151  
5 Testimony of J.E.B. Justice  
6 1870 U.S. Census. Missouri, St. Louis County.  
7 Black Families, p. 58  
8 Testimony of J.E.B. Justice  
9 Lyman Copeland Draper Collection, Series C, Vol. 23, p. 61  
10 Testimony of Mrs. F.T. Frazier  
11 Black Families, p. 148  
12 Black Families, p. 58  
13 Spraker, p. 127  
14 Testimony of Mrs. F.T. Frazier
Howard Boone’s slaveholdings in 1860. A notation in the margin left of the 102 year-old woman reads “Rachael”.  1860 U.S. Census, Slave Schedule.

Howard Boone’s slaveholdings in 1860. A notation in the margin left of the 102 year-old woman reads “Rachael”.  1860 U.S. Census, Slave Schedule.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Appraisal</th>
<th>Sale Price</th>
<th>Purchaser</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>$600.00</td>
<td>$829.00</td>
<td>Allen Edmonson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruben</td>
<td>$700.00</td>
<td>$865.00</td>
<td>Olive Boone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>$900.00</td>
<td>$1,251.25</td>
<td>A.C. White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>$800.00</td>
<td>$1,202.00</td>
<td>Alfred Hosman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>$550.00</td>
<td>$1,001.00</td>
<td>A.S. Clinton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann</td>
<td>$500.00</td>
<td>$340.00</td>
<td>Henry McKinley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keziah</td>
<td>$300.00</td>
<td>$507.00</td>
<td>Jemima Zumwalt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derry</td>
<td>$200.00</td>
<td>$300.00</td>
<td>Henry McKinley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson</td>
<td>$600.00</td>
<td>$1,153.25</td>
<td>A.C. White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raullin</td>
<td>$500.00</td>
<td>$965.00</td>
<td>John McMirty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>$500.00</td>
<td>$726.50</td>
<td>Franklin T. Frazier</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In the 1860 census, Howard Boone claimed eight slaves, including a 47 year-old man, likely Ruben.15 A few years later, in 1863, Howard’s family left Ash Grove for St. Louis,16 leaving Ruben, wife Ellen, and possibly other slaves, behind on the farm.17

Missouri’s slaves were freed in January 1865,18 before Howard Boone’s family returned.19 In May, Alsey Woodward helped Ruben to file an application that declared Boone’s farm abandoned. The Union Army provost permitted Ruben to occupy the farm and work the land for one year, with one-third of his harvest going to the troops. The provost also noted that Ruben

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15 1860 U.S. Census, slave schedule  
16 Holcombe, p. 627  
17 Testimony of J.E.B. Justice  
18 Greene, Kremer, & Holland, p. 88  
19 Holcombe, p. 627
was “worthy of protection” and that some of his white neighbors were trying to drive him off.\(^{20}\)

On Christmas Day, 1865, Ruben and Ellen were legally married. Like many of the other slaves, they had both taken the Boone surname. The couple claimed no children from their marriage.\(^{21}\)

In 1865, Ruben appeared on the Greene County tax list as the owner of three horses and four cattle.\(^{22}\) In 1885, J.E.B. Justice reported that, shortly afterward, Ruben “went North and died.”\(^{23}\)

Ruben did, in fact, leave Greene County some time in the 1860s, but never went further “North” than St. Louis. According to the 1870 census, he was living in that city with Ellen (age 48), Johnson (age 36), and Caroline (age 19) Boone. Also in his household were a family named Lightfoot and a man named Welford Shelton.\(^{24}\)

Ruben died before 1880, as Ellen Boone appears in that year’s census as a widow. Ellen (age 52) is still living in St. Louis, with niece Lillie Lightfoot, Welford Shelton, and three other unrelated men. A duplicate entry for that year lists Ellen, Lillie, and Welford Shelton as Ellen’s brother.\(^{25}\)

By 1900, Ellen had moved to Mission Creek, Wabaunsee County, Kansas. Here she lived in the household of her nephew, Franklin Glass.\(^{26}\) Glass first appeared in the Boone Township, Greene

\(^{20}\) Missouri’s Union Provost Marshall Papers: 1861-1866  
\(^{21}\) Greene County, Missouri Marriages: Book B, 1854-1866, p. 88  
\(^{22}\) Black Families, p. 181  
\(^{23}\) Testimony of J.E.B. Justice  
\(^{24}\) 1870 U.S. Census. Missouri, St. Louis County.  
\(^{25}\) 1880 U.S. Census. Missouri, St. Louis County.  
\(^{26}\) 1900 U.S. Census. Kansas, Wabaunsee County.
County, Missouri census of 1860, as the only free Black living in the township.\textsuperscript{27} By 1910, Ellen, now age 81, had returned to St. Louis, and was living with nephew Franklin Shelton. She presumably died before 1920.\textsuperscript{28}

**Preston Boone** – Preston is buried in the site’s African-American cemetery under the name “Preston Boon”.\textsuperscript{29} The presence of a last name, not common during slavery, suggests Preston may have lived to see freedom, though nothing is known about his life after slavery.\textsuperscript{30} Preston was probably in his twenties in 1856.\textsuperscript{31} That fall, he was hired to Henry McKinley. In the spring, he was hired to George W. Hancock.\textsuperscript{32} In the auction, he was sold to A.C. White.\textsuperscript{33} There is no mention of Preston past 1857.

**Cork** – Cork would have been about 14 years old in 1856.\textsuperscript{34} He was hired out to James Boone in the fall of 1856 and spring of 1857,\textsuperscript{35} before being sold to Alfred Hosman, Boone’s son-in-law, in July.\textsuperscript{36} The 1860 census shows Cork as one of Hosman’s slaves, an 18-year old black man.\textsuperscript{37} When Civil War broke out, Hosman first moved to Howard County, Missouri, and then on to Illinois.\textsuperscript{38} It is doubtful that Hosman took Cork into a free state, but he may have taken him as far as Howard County.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{27} 1860 U.S. Census. Missouri, Greene County.
\item \textsuperscript{28} 1910 U.S. Census. Missouri, St. Louis.
\item \textsuperscript{29} Graves of Former Boone Slaves
\item \textsuperscript{30} Yetman, p. 59, 88
\item \textsuperscript{31} Estimated from inventory classification, sale price, comparison to 1850 census record.
\item \textsuperscript{32} Black Families, p. 149
\item \textsuperscript{33} Black Families, p. 57
\item \textsuperscript{34} Estimated from inventory classification, sale price, and comparison to 1850 census record
\item \textsuperscript{35} Black Families, p. 149
\item \textsuperscript{36} Black Families, p. 58
\item \textsuperscript{37} 1860 U.S. Census, slave schedule
\item \textsuperscript{38} Holcombe, p. 632
\end{itemize}
William – Per the 1860 census, William was about 12 years old when Nathan Boone died.\(^{39}\) He was hired twice to Dr. Aaron S. Clinton, Nathan Boone’s physician\(^{40}\) and Howard Boone’s brother-in-law.\(^{41}\) Clinton later bought William at the sale in July 1857.\(^{42}\)

Ann Boone, Keziah Zumwalt, and Derry – Ann was probably in her thirties when she was first hired out in 1856.\(^{43}\) She was very ill and had two young children, Keziah (about 5) and Derry (about 3), that accompanied her.\(^{44}\) Alfred Hosman hired her in the fall of 1856, but only paid $1.50.\(^{45}\) Later, Jemima Zumwalt, Boone’s daughter, charged the estate $36 for attending to Ann, still sick, and her children.\(^{46}\) Dr. A.S. Clinton billed the estate for medicine and visits to Ann in 1856 and 1857.\(^{47}\) Howard may also have kept the children at his farm for a time.\(^{48}\)

By July 1857, Ann must have recovered somewhat. She and Derry were sold to Henry McKinley.\(^{49}\) McKinley was reputed to be one of the cruelest slaveholders in Boone Township, and was murdered by one of his slaves in 1862.\(^{50}\) Ann appears on McKinley’s estate sale bill as “Ann Boon”. Derry does not appear in this sale, although there is a “David” about his age.\(^{51}\) Derry may also be the “D Boone” killed in 1869. Ann was a witness in this murder case (detailed under Peter Boone’s biography).\(^{52}\)

\(^{39}\) 1860 U.S. Census, slave schedule  
\(^{40}\) Black Families, p. 149  
\(^{41}\) Bryan, p. 186  
\(^{42}\) Black Families, p. 57  
\(^{43}\) Estimated from inventory classification, sale price, Henry McKinley probate record, and 1850 and 1870 census  
\(^{44}\) Yelton & Bray, p. 151  
\(^{45}\) Black Families, p. 149  
\(^{46}\) Black Families, p. 159  
\(^{47}\) Yelton & Bray, p. 151  
\(^{48}\) Black Families, p. 162  
\(^{49}\) Black Families, p. 57  
\(^{50}\) Farmer, p. 101  
\(^{51}\) Black Families, p. 5  
\(^{52}\) State of Missouri vs. Peter Boone
6 year-old Keziah was purchased by Jemima Zumwalt, and separated from her mother and brother.\textsuperscript{53} In the 1860s, the Zumwalts moved to Grayson County, Texas, taking Keziah with them.\textsuperscript{54} In 1870, “Kizzie” Zumwalt, now a 20 year-old black laundress, born in Missouri, was living in Jack County, Texas. Living with her there was a 1 year-old mulatto boy, James W. Maxwell.\textsuperscript{55} By 1880, Kizzie had moved to Mobeetie, Texas, where she continued working as a laundress. She lived with her two mulatto sons, Willie Zumwalt (age 15) and James Zumwalt (age 9).\textsuperscript{56}

Ann had at least one other child, Julia, while she belonged to McKinley.\textsuperscript{57} Where Ann spent the last years of slavery in Missouri is unknown. In 1869, Ann Boone was living in Boone Township. Ann (age 50) appeared again in Boone Township in the 1880 census, living with her son, Peter (age 29), and daughter, Julia (age 18).\textsuperscript{58}

**Johnson Boone** – Johnson was about 12 years old at the time of Boone’s death.\textsuperscript{59} He worked for Howard Boone in 1856 and the spring of 1857,\textsuperscript{60} until he was sold to A.C. White in July.\textsuperscript{61} Johnson’s next appearance is in the 1865 Greene County tax list, where he claimed two horses.\textsuperscript{62} Johnson moved to St. Louis with Ruben and Ellen Boone, and was living with them in 1870. In 1879, Johnson was still in that city, farming a “patch of ground… on the Columbia Bottom

\textsuperscript{53} Black Families, p. 57  
\textsuperscript{54} 1870 U.S. Census. Texas, Grayson County.  
\textsuperscript{55} 1870 U.S. Census. Texas, Jack County.  
\textsuperscript{56} 1880 U.S. Census  
\textsuperscript{57} Black Families, p. 6  
\textsuperscript{58} Greene County, Missouri 1880 Federal Census, p. 12  
\textsuperscript{59} 1870 U.S. Census. Missouri, St. Louis County.  
\textsuperscript{60} Black Families, p. 149  
\textsuperscript{61} Black Families, p. 57
Road, near the seven-mile house”. He rented the land from a William Hickman. In November of that year, Johnson appeared at the house of neighbor Dabney Murray, coughing up “slimy watter”. His feet had swollen to an abnormal size. Johnson asked Murray if he could stay with him until he either recovered from his sickness or died. Seven weeks later, on January 11, Johnson passed away. The city coroner ruled it to be “phthisis pulmonalis”—tuberculosis. Murray reported to the coroner that Johnson had no family in the city, save for his stepmother.\textsuperscript{63} This could only have been Ellen Boone,\textsuperscript{64} which suggests that Johnson was Ruben Boone’s son from a previous marriage.

**Raullin** – Raullin may have been less than twelve when he was hired to J.E.B. Justice in 1856. Justice was not charged for the hire, suggesting Raullin may not have been expected to do much work. In the spring of 1857, “Rall” was hired by F.T. Frazier, who was charged.\textsuperscript{65} John McMirty purchased Raullin at the July auction.\textsuperscript{66}

**Peter Boone** – Like Raullin, Peter was still a boy when F.T. Frazier, Boone’s son-in-law, hired him in 1856. Frazier was not charged, although he did pay for Peter’s hire the next year.\textsuperscript{67} He also bought Peter at the auction.\textsuperscript{68} During the Civil War, the Frazier family moved to Texas.\textsuperscript{69} Peter may have gone with them, or he may have been left in Greene County.

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\textsuperscript{62} Black Families, p. 181
\textsuperscript{63} Coroner’s Inquest of Johnson Boone
\textsuperscript{64} 1880 U.S. Census, Missouri, St. Louis County.
\textsuperscript{65} Black Families, p. 149
\textsuperscript{66} Black Families, p. 57
\textsuperscript{67} Black Families, p. 149
\textsuperscript{68} Black Families, p. 57
\textsuperscript{69} Danforth, Nelson
He was living as Peter Boone in Boone Township in 1869 with his mother, Ann, and half brother, “D”. On September 26th, while Ann was sick in the house, Peter and “D” began arguing over a chicken. Peter shot D in the head. He claimed it was an accident, but a jury brought to the scene convicted him of murder. The next year, Peter was sentenced to 20 years in the state penitentiary in Jefferson City. He is listed among the inmates in the penitentiary on the 1870 census, an 18 year-old mulatto and farmer by trade. By 1880, Peter had returned to Greene County, and was listed as living there with Ann and Julia Boone in 1880 census.

Peter is unusual in that he is mentioned frequently in Ash Grove Commonwealth newspaper, which otherwise routinely ignored the town’s African-American population. In 1893, the newspaper reported:

Peter Boone, an old colored man, was almost suffocated by coal gas last Saturday. He was building a fire and inhaled the gas, which produced a spasmodic action of the heart and lungs. The old man tumbled over and begged most pitiously for help. Dr. Doolin applied the necessary restoratives and brought him through.

In 1900, Peter was living with a family named Rector, one household away from Frank M. Jacobs, who may have been living in the Boone home. Five years later, Peter’s marriage was announced in the Commonwealth:

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70 State of Missouri vs. Peter Boone
71 Rising, Southwest Missouri Newspapers, p. 110
72 1870 U.S. Census, Missouri, Cole County
73 Greene County, Missouri 1880 Federal Census, p. 12
74 Ash Grove Commonwealth, 30 Nov., 1893, vol. 11, #26
Peter Boon of this place and Mrs. Caroline Hogan of Neosho, Mo., (colored) were married at the colored Baptist Church on Thursday evening of last week. Rev. Robert Gale of Kansas officiating. A large crowd of friends was present, and after the ceremony ice cream, cake and other refreshments were served, and a pleasant evening was enjoyed by all. Mr. Boone has lived here all his life--57 years--and is one of our most honored and respected colored citizens, and we join his many friends in wishing him and his bride happiness and prosperity in their wedded life.\textsuperscript{76}

Another newspaper item, from 1907, further illustrates Peter’s unique status in the Ash Grove community:

A rather disagreeable joke was played on Peter Boone (colored) last Monday afternoon. The old gentleman was fishing on the river, when a boy came along by his home and told his wife that Peter had fallen into the river and drowned. An alarm was at once raised and a crowd started out to find the body, but met [Peter] on the way, totally ignorant of the mission of the crowd. Such jokers should be visited by a spanking bee for the benefit of would be perpetrators.\textsuperscript{77}

\textsuperscript{75} Greene County, Missouri 1900 Federal Census, p. 30
\textsuperscript{76} Ash Grove Commonwealth, 26 Oct., 1905, vol. 25, #23
\textsuperscript{77} Ash Grove Commonwealth, 23 May, 1907, vol. 27, #1
Peter (age 61) and “Corra” (age 45) Boone appeared in the federal census of 1910, living in Ash Grove. The couple had no children. Peter worked as a laborer at odd jobs. He could read and write, but Corra could not.78 Peter died near Ash Grove on November 25, 1913, and was buried in Berry Cemetery.79 The Commonwealth dutifully reported his death:

Peter Boone (colored) aged about 65 years, died at his home in this city shortly afternoon Tuesday, Nov. 25, of general debility due to old age. Rev. Bond conducted the funeral Wednesday afternoon and the body was interred in the colored cemetery. Uncle Peter was an honest, upright, man and had the good will of everybody. He was a faithful member of the Baptist church and just before he died he proudly remarked that he was an “old servant of God.”80

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78 1910 U.S. Census
79 Death Certificate, Peter Boone
80 Ash Grove Commonwealth, 27 Nov., 1913, vol. 33, #29
III. Other African-Americans with Ties to the Nathan Boone Farm:

Moses Boone – In 1865, Moses Boone appeared on the Greene County tax list, the owner of two horses and three cattle. On February 2nd of 1868, Moses married Catherine Goodall. Moses did not appear in the 1870 U.S. census, but resurfaces in the 1876 County Census, in Boone Township. He appears again in the 1880 census, giving his age as 60 years old. He was living with his wife Catherine (50), granddaughter Ella Cooper (12), and two unrelated men, William Greenway (23) and Lewis Wilson (16). Moses lived only one household away from Ann, Peter, and Julia Boone. He lived only five households away from the family of Joseph D. Boone, Nathan Boone’s grandson and probable occupant of the Boone home. Moses is buried in the African-American cemetery at NBHSHS. There is no record of Moses’ life as a slave, though clearly he is somehow tied to the farm.

Maria Boone & Caroline (Boone) Berry – Father Moses Berry, curator of the Ozarks Afro-American Heritage Museum in Ash Grove, traces his lineage back to Maria Boone. Maria was born in Kentucky on August 5, 1819. According to the Berry family’s oral history, Maria later became a slave on the Nathan Boone farm, where Boone fathered her daughter Caroline, born August 25, 1850. Caroline is not the only mulatto child attributed to Nathan Boone. A 1927 newspaper noted that famed Missouri ragtime composer and performer “Blind” Boone traced his

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81 Black Families, p. 181
82 Greene County, Missouri Marriages, Book C, p. 28
83 1876 Greene County Census
84 Greene County, Missouri 1880 Federal Census, p. 12
85 Graves of Former Boone Slaves
86 Emrie
descent from Daniel Boone “through his great grandmother, daughter and slave of Nathan Boone.”

Caroline Boone first appears in the historical record in 1870, living in St. Louis with Ruben and Ellen Boone. By November of 1872, though, she had returned to southwest Missouri, and was living in Cedar County. In that month, at the town of Stockton, Caroline married William H. Berry of Greene County. Caroline moved to Berry’s home in Boone Township afterward, as did her mother, Maria Boone. In 1880, all three were living on Berry’s farm west of Ash Grove. Maria died on December 19, 1893 and Caroline on September 8, 1914. They are both buried in the Berry Cemetery, adjacent to William H. Berry’s farm.

Rather than being slaves of Nathan Boone, Maria and Caroline may have belonged to Boone’s son James. One of Caroline’s sons later stated that his mother was born in Polk County, Missouri. In 1850, James was the only slaveholder in Polk County with the surname Boone, and he did own a black woman aged 30 years, roughly consistent with Maria Boone’s age in that year. After Nathan Boone’s death, James appears to have moved back to his father’s farm in Greene County, and stayed there for the remainder of the decade. In 1860, he migrated to Carroll County, Arkansas, where the 1860 slave census lists him as owning one 39 year-old black female and seven children, ranging in age from 3 to 15. Included in these children is a young mulatto girl, age 10, roughly consistent with Caroline’s age in 1850. James returned to

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87 Pittsburgh Courier, 18 Jun, 1927, p. A2
88 1870 U.S. Census
89 Emrie
90 Death Certificate, Della May Berry
91 1850 U.S. Census, slave schedule
92 Abstract of Circuit Court Record Books, February 1857-June 1860, p. 6, 8, 39; Rising, Genealogical Gleanings
93 1860 U.S. Census, slave schedule
Greene County before 1867. Presuming Caroline came along with James, she could have encountered Ruben and Ellen Boone in Greene County, which offers some explanation of how Caroline came to be in their household in the 1870 census.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1850 – Polk Co. Mo.</th>
<th>1860 – Carroll Co. Ar.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female, 90, black</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female, 30, black</td>
<td>Female, 39, Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male, 6, black</td>
<td>Male, 15, Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male, 2, black</td>
<td>Male, 12, Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male, 10, Mulatto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female, 10, Mulatto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male, 8, Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male, 6, Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male, 3, Black</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparison of James Boone’s slaveholdings in 1850 and 1860. The italics indicate possible records of Maria & Caroline Boone. 1850 & 1860 U.S. Census.

**Pleasant** – During their first years in Missouri, Daniel Boone befriended a slave named Derry, who became his regular hunting companion. Derry and his wife, Sophira, lived at Nathan Boone’s farm. It is unclear which of the Boones actually owned the couple. Derry and Sophira had a son, Pleasant, likely born sometime around 1820. According to Samuel H. Jones, Daniel gave Pleasant to Nathan Boone shortly before his death. Pleasant died in Greene County, after being brought to southwest Missouri by Nathan Boone.95

**Katie Phelps Boone and Henry Cooper** – On December 9, 1931, an 80 year-old man named Henry Cooper appeared at the Jasper County Poor House and Farm. He declared that he was homeless, a widower and farmer, and that he had been picking cotton in Oklahoma that fall. His father, he said, was Owen Cooper of Tennessee, and his mother was Katie Phelps Boone of

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94 Nattie L. Boone to Lyman Copeland Draper, September 19, 1867
95 Lyman Copeland Draper Collection, Series C, Vol. 21, doc. 16, p. 1
Kentucky. He explained his mother’s name by saying that “Col. Phelps [presumably Col. John S. Phelps of Springfield] had sold her to Boone.” Cooper stayed for about a week in Jasper County, then left for Springfield to find his brother’s son, James Hines.96

James Hines was the son of Manda Hines, who lived in Ash Grove in 1870 and 1880. She had three sons: James (born about 1868), Levi (born about 1870), and John (born about 1873). Manda was not living with a husband in the 1870 census, and declared she was a widow in the 1880 census.97 John Hines died in 1920, and his brother James provided the information for his death certificate. He stated that John’s father was Henry Cooper.98

Henry Cooper does not appear in the U.S. Censuses for Greene County in 1870 or 1880. However, in the 1876 County Census, his name is directly below Moses Boone’s. Moses Boone, in the 1880 census, had a twelve year-old granddaughter, Ella Cooper, living with him.

The evidence connecting Henry Cooper and his mother to the Nathan Boone farm is still circumstantial at this point, but seems to suggest that Katie Phelps Boone was, at one time, either owned by Nathan Boone or one of his sons.

96 Black Families, p. 237
97 Greene County, Missouri 1870 Federal Census, p. 5; Greene County, Missouri 1880 Federal Census, p. 9
98 Death Certificate, John Hines
IV. Slavery and Economy in Greene County

From an agricultural standpoint, early Greene County had several things working against it. The Ozarks’ rocky glades made for poor cropland and the good soil in the prairies took significant effort to break. What’s more, Greene County had no major navigable rivers. Farmers were forced to move the goods they produced by road. This took longer and cost more. But despite these challenges, Greene County cut out its own economic niche.

By the 1840s, the U.S. Army had established several forts along the western frontier. White and Indian communities sprang up around them. Southwest Missouri became the supplier for both soldiers and civilians. Greene County farmers of the 1840s and 1850s "were accustomed to send out from the country every year wagon loads of provisions— bacon, flour, potatoes, etc.,— to the trading posts in Indian Territory, to Ft. Gibson, Ft. Smith, Ft. Scott, and other points, where they found ready sale, at fair prices."\(^1\)

The farmers of Southwest Missouri also shipped goods east. Wheat was the main export in this direction, but farms also sent meal, pork, furs, leather, beeswax, fruit, and more.\(^2\) Wagonners took the produce to Boonville, where they sold it to wholesalers.\(^3\) From Boonville, the wholesalers shipped the goods by steamboat to St. Louis, the trading capitol of the West.\(^4\)

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1 Holcombe, p. 209
2 Hubble, p. 34
3 Holcombe, p. 727
4 Holcombe, p. 211
The plantation South, mainly Arkansas and Louisiana, provided a third market for Greene County farmers. Wholesalers purchased horses and mules in Springfield, then took them south for plantation work.\(^5\) Greene County food exports probably also helped feed slaves and animals on cash-crop farms to the south.\(^6\)

As the economy grew, Greene County's land and wealth became concentrated into the hands of just a few. Two distinct classes emerged. The upper class owned more land, produced more goods, and had diverse investments. The lower class owned small farms and produced goods for the most stable markets.\(^7\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No Slaves</th>
<th>Slaveholding</th>
<th>Nathan Boone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved Acreage</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unimproved Acreage</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of Farm</td>
<td>$428.27</td>
<td>$1,142.50</td>
<td>$2000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of Machinery</td>
<td>$69.42</td>
<td>$135.00</td>
<td>$250.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Horses</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Milch Cows</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Working Oxen</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td># of Other Cattle</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Sheep</td>
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<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Swine</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of Livestock</td>
<td>$326.64</td>
<td>$732.25</td>
<td>$1000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bushels of Wheat</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bushels of Indian Corn</td>
<td>547</td>
<td>1124</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bushels of Oats</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nathan Boone's agricultural standing in 1850, and averages for slaveholding and non-slave farms in Boone Township. 1850 U.S. Census, agricultural schedule.

Perhaps most importantly, almost all members of the upper class owned slaves. The lower class, the majority of the county's population, did not. In Boone Township, mainly a farming community, only 15% of the documented farms used slave labor. Only two farmers owned more

\(^5\) Hubble, p. 34
than ten slaves. But the community's slaveholders made a major impact on the economy. This 15% owned 36% of the township's land, accounted for 28% of the total livestock value, and produced 27% of the crops.⁸

Though some Boone Township farmers may have morally opposed slavery, most simply couldn’t afford to be a slaveholder. At Nathan Boone’s estate auction in 1856, an adult male slave brought more than $1,250.⁹ The most expensive horse at the same auction sold for only $172.¹⁰ The purchase price of slaves was not the only bar. Making slavery profitable also required land and resources for the slaves to work. In reality, slaveholding was not the path to wealth. But for the farmers who were already successful, it was a means to stay on top.

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⁶ Dunaway, Slavery in the American Mountain South, p. 2-3
⁷ 1850 U.S. Census, agricultural schedule
⁸ 1850 U.S. Census, agricultural schedule
⁹ Black Families, p. 57
¹⁰ Yelton & Bray, p. 178
V. African-American Life on the Boone Farm

Little is known about the work and lifestyle of black slaves on the Boone farm. We can gather some picture, though, by looking at the agricultural record of the farm and comparing it to other, similar farms with more documentation.

Work

Two things separate Nathan Boone’s farm from the farms of his neighbors. Boone’s wealth not only supported slaveholding, but also allowed him to diversify his production more than other farmers. Boone’s age and family situation also made him different. By 1850, both Boone and his wife, Olive, were almost 70.¹ Though some of their children remained in the neighborhood, there is no evidence that any of them took a major role in operations on Boone’s farm.

Boone’s slaves likely enjoyed more independence than slaves on other farms. Neither Boone nor his sons worked alongside them, constantly supervising their work. There is no record that Boone employed white laborers during this period either. Boone, like many aging slaveholders, would occasionally ride the farm and inspect work from horseback, but he was hardly a constant presence.²

In place of his direct supervision, Boone may have appointed a “driver” or “boss slave”.

Probably an older man, the driver served as foreman of the slave workforce, communicating

¹ Spraker, p. 127
² Lyman Copeland Draper Collection, Series C, Vol. 23, p. 54
directly with Boone and relaying orders to the other slaves. He would have also monitored the pace and quality of work done on the farm.³

With no labor-intensive cash crop to raise, Boone’s slaves probably did a lot of “task work”, work that changed with the season and the needs of the farm. Permanent assignments were rare on diversified farms. When it came time to harvest wheat, cooks and stock-tenders might be called to the field.⁴

Though they worked in many areas, some slaves may have specialized in certain tasks. Boone owned 24 horses when he died, far more than the farm needed.⁵ Clearly, he intended to sell some at the thriving Springfield horse market.⁶ Good horses sold for good money, and so they required more care than other animals. While other animals free-ranged, horses were generally kept in large corrals. In the winter, they were stabled. Some slaves had special skill in selecting, breeding, and caring for horses. Some also excelled at breaking horses for riding and plow work.⁷

Oxen also required special training.⁸ Boone owned at least 16 of these draft animals, an unusually large number considering that almost all the plows sold in his estate sale were horse-drawn.⁹ Boone may have been using his slaves to raise and train oxen teams that he would sell

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³ Dunaway, Slavery in the American Mountain South, p. 61
⁴ Dunaway, Slavery in the American Mountain South, p. 61
⁵ Yelton & Bray, p. 177-178
⁶ Hubble, p. 34
⁷ Dunaway, Slaves in Livestock Production
⁸ Dunaway, Slaves in Livestock Production
⁹ Yelton & Bray, p. 175-6
or rent later. Oxen could be used to break prairie soil, clear rocks and timber, and transport goods. Some slaveholders not only hired out oxen, but slave caretakers to drive them.\textsuperscript{10}

In the case of Nathan Boone’s slaves, there was another possible role outside the farm. As an officer with the U.S. Dragoons, Boone received an allowance every year to pay, feed, and clothe a personal servant while at his post or in the field. There’s no evidence that Boone ever employed a slave in this way, but apparently other dragoon officers did.\textsuperscript{11}

Despite these specialties, all slaves on the Boone farm would have participated in the seasonal task work. In the spring, these tasks included shearing sheep, repairing and maintaining buildings and fences, and preparing and planting oat and corn fields. In summer, Boone’s slaves harvested, processed, and stored the wheat crop. They also cut hay in preparation for winter. Fall brought the corn and oat harvest, the rounding up of hogs to be fattened and slaughtered, and the preservation of the farm’s fruits and vegetables.\textsuperscript{12} Butchering and curing took place around the time of the first frost.\textsuperscript{13} During the winter, the slaves watched the free-range animals more closely, feeding hay and grain to keep them nearby. In the worst weather, slaves did indoor work, such as repairing tools, harnesses, and farm implements.\textsuperscript{14}

slave children were generally expected to begin this kind of work between the ages of 10 and 12. Smaller children had some free time, but were also expected to shadow and assist adult laborers,

\textsuperscript{10} Dunaway, Slavery in the American Mountain South, p. 98
\textsuperscript{11} Hurt, p. 147-148
\textsuperscript{12} Work based on farm inventories in the 1850 U.S. census, agricultural schedule and Yelton & Bray, p. 169-181
\textsuperscript{13} Dunaway, Slavery in the American Mountain South, p. 37
\textsuperscript{14} Dunaway, Slavery in the American Mountain South, p. 64-66
learning their future responsibilities. Slave children also handled odd jobs and chores, such as weeding, milking, and collecting eggs.\textsuperscript{15}

\textbf{Home}

There are few clues that shed light on the housing for Nathan Boone’s slaves. Opal Collins, who lived on the farm from 1925 to 1928, remembered a two-room log structure that sat about one quarter mile north of the house, near the African-American cemetery. The overall size was about 40 x 14 feet.\textsuperscript{16} Collins is likely describing a “saddlebag” style log house, where two log rooms share a central chimney.\textsuperscript{17} She was told that this was the slave house from the Nathan Boone farm.\textsuperscript{18} The 1876 Greene County atlas shows no house at this location,\textsuperscript{19} but the 1904 platbook of Greene County confirms a building in the area Collins describes, just west of the African-American cemetery.\textsuperscript{20}

Small as it was, a building of this size may have been expected to house all or most of Nathan Boone’s slaves,\textsuperscript{21} and possibly Howard Boone’s slaves as well. The house location described by Opal Collins sits on land that Nathan and Howard Boone owned jointly until Nathan Boone’s death.\textsuperscript{22} And although Howard owned his late father’s house and the land around it in 1860, he still stated that his farm had only one slave dwelling.\textsuperscript{23} Such crowded quarters were not uncommon. Whites did not enjoy a great deal of space or privacy in their homes, and black

\textsuperscript{15} Dunaway, Slavery in the American Mountain South, p. 57-60
\textsuperscript{16} Yelton & Bray, p. 17
\textsuperscript{17} Hutslar, p. 94
\textsuperscript{18} Yelton & Bray, p. 17
\textsuperscript{19} Illustrated Historical Atlas of Greene County, Missouri, p. 50
\textsuperscript{20} 1904 Platbook of Greene County, p. 3
\textsuperscript{21} Greene, Kremer, & Holland, p. 31
\textsuperscript{22} Yelton & Bray, p. 17; An Index to the Springfield Land Office Sales Book, p. 58; Greene County, Missouri Deed Book B, p. 275-276
slaves fared worse. Domestic laborers, or “house slaves”, may have slept closer to the Boone family, as a matter of convenience. Some slaveholders built nearby quarters for house slaves, or put them in part of another outbuilding, such as a summer kitchen. In some cases, slaves even lived in the main house.

Boone’s slaves may also have had their own gardens and animal pens in the same area. Several former slaves not only had them keep their own vegetable gardens, but also allowed them to raise produce and livestock to sell at market. There is certainly evidence that Boone’s slaves, at least, grew their own vegetables. In the agricultural census of 1850, Boone claims an annual production of 10 bushels of potatoes and 5 bushels of peas and beans. These amounts are about right to feed Nathan and Olive Boone, but not nearly enough to feed the farm’s fifteen slaves. It seems likely that they had their own gardens, which were not enumerated.

The home lives of blacks also extended beyond the farm. Traditionally, slaves were released from work early on Saturday evening and had a full day off on Sunday. During this time, they could travel to nearby farms to attend social gatherings or visit family. Before leaving, though, slaves had to obtain a written pass from their owners. Slave patrols, organized by the county, policed the roads for potential runaways.

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23 1860 U.S. Census, slave schedule
24 McWhiney, p. 229
25 Yetman, p. 60
26 Yetman, p. 307
27 Mark Discus Narrative
28 Covey, p. 73-76
29 150 U.S. Census, agricultural schedule
30 McWhiney, p. 86-88
31 Blassingame, p. 106
32 Dunaway, Slavery in the American Mountain South, p. 164
33 Holcombe, p. 162
Some slave families had only this free time to be together. The law didn’t recognize slave marriages, but this didn’t stop African-Americans from holding their own wedding ceremonies. Husbands and wives didn’t always belong to the same slaveholder. Some male slaves preferred that their wife live on another farm, as it saved them from being forced to see their wives degraded or beaten. This practice may have been the rule in some areas, but Greene County marriage records suggest that it wasn’t prevalent in Southwest Missouri. After freedom came, Missouri law required that former slaves who were living as man and wife be legally married. In Greene County, 55% of these couples had the same name, suggesting they had been slaves on the same farm. Of course some, like Ruben and Ellen Boone, belonged to different slaveholders within the same extended family. Some slaveholders controlled marriage and family among their slaves, like the Greene County farmer who bought a wife for his slave, as he “didn’t have no woman for him.” In general, slaveholders discouraged male slaves from having relationships off the farm, but were more lenient with women. After all, any children that resulted from a slave marriage belonged to the mother’s owner.

The universal constant in slave life was subjugation. Slaves on the Boone farm may have had more independence than slaves on large cash-crop plantations, but whites still took every opportunity to remind them of their inferiority. This psychological control played a major role in

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34 Greene, Kremer, & Holland, p. 35
35 Blassingame, p. 165-167
36 Blassingame, p. 164
37 Greene, Kremer, & Holland, p. 36
38 Greene County, Missouri Marriages: Book C, couples declaring children married by black ministers, 1865-1867
39 Testimony of J.E.B. Justice
40 Yetman, p. 157
41 Blassingame, p. 165
preserving slavery. Subjugation took more physical forms, too. Slaves who resisted the system were beaten or whipped on smaller farms as often as on large plantations, if not more often. Slaveholders threatened routinely defiant slaves with being “sold south” to the large cash crop plantations, the fate most feared by Midwestern slaves. Many slaveholders made good on this threat, enough to keep Springfield slave trader John S. Doak in business.

**Freedom**

In January of 1865, when Missouri freed its slaves, only Howard Boone’s slaves, Ruben and Ellen, remained on the farm. Howard Boone himself had left in 1863. He decided that Greene County was too dangerous in wartime, and took his family to St. Louis. In the years immediately following the Civil War, the Boone family had little presence in the neighborhood. Nathan Boone’s former slaves, however, appear to have returned, either to the Boone farm or to nearby farms.

Citizenship brought many changes for the freed African-Americans. They could now legally own property and get married. To do either of these, they had to identify themselves by both first and last names. Surnames had never been commonly used during slavery. Most former slaves took the last name of a slaveholder, but not necessarily the one that owned them when freedom came. Some even used the name of a slaveholder that hadn’t owned them, but had

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42 Greene, Kremer, & Holland, p. 28-29
43 Dunaway, Slavery in the American Mountain South, p. 163-166
44 Holcombe, p. 247
45 Greene, Kremer, & Holland, p. 88
46 Testimony of J.E.B. Justice
47 Holcombe, p. 627
48 Yetman, p. 59, 88
owned one of their parents.\textsuperscript{49} Though their individual reasons why are unknown, several of Nathan Boone’s slaves chose to take the Boone surname.

The newly formed black Boone family continued mostly with farming, the profession they were familiar with. In 1865, Ruben, Moses, and Johnson Boone already owned some horses and cattle of their own.\textsuperscript{50} Ann, Peter, and D. Boone owned at least a hog and some chickens in 1869.\textsuperscript{51} None of these African-Americans owned any land, however. They may have been renting or sharecropping from other farmers, or simply squatting on the Boone farm.

By the 1880s, a black community had begun to grow around Ash Grove. Caroline Boone married one its leaders, William H. Berry.\textsuperscript{52} The other African-American Boones seem to have remained at a distance, probably because of their age. Moses and Ann Boone appeared for the last time in the 1880 census.\textsuperscript{53} It’s very likely they died before 1900. As the 20\textsuperscript{th} century turned, only Peter Boone remained in Ash Grove,\textsuperscript{54} though other former slaves of Nathan Boone’s farm may have survived elsewhere.

\textsuperscript{49} Yetman, p. 116, 157
\textsuperscript{50} Black Families, p. 181
\textsuperscript{51} State of Missouri vs. Peter Boone
\textsuperscript{52} Emrie
\textsuperscript{53} Greene County, Missouri 1880 Federal Census, p. 12
\textsuperscript{54} Greene County Federal Census, 1900, p. 30
VI. The African-American Cemetery at Nathan Boone Homestead State Historic Site

The African-American cemetery is the best physical evidence of the 19th century black presence on the Boone farm. The cemetery lies about one-quarter mile north of the Boone home, only a short distance from the Boone family cemetery, and in the same vicinity where Opal Collins reported seeing a slave cabin in the 1920s.\textsuperscript{1} The African-American cemetery most likely began as a slave cemetery, but appears to have been used well past slavery, into at least the 1880s.

Today, the cemetery sits just inside a wooded area, but this is relatively recent growth. During its use, the area was likely open or only sparsely wooded.\textsuperscript{2} The trees and underbrush actually may have afforded some protection to the cemetery in the 20th century, when cattle grazed the area.\textsuperscript{3} Unlike the Boone family cemetery, most of the markers in the African-American cemetery seem to be largely intact.

The African-American cemetery contains at least eleven graves. Vertical limestone markers identify nine of these graves. Two markers are inscribed, reading “Moses Boone” and “Preston Boon”. A cairn, a pile of flat stones, marks one grave. All graves in the cemetery face east-west, and two orderly rows are clearly visible. These rows contain all but three of the graves.\textsuperscript{4}

The graves of both Moses and Preston feature the Boone surname. Last names weren’t commonly used by slaves, but became a necessity after freedom.\textsuperscript{5} The presence of the surname

\textsuperscript{1} Yelton & Bray, p. 17
\textsuperscript{2} Dougherty
\textsuperscript{3} Yelton & Bray, p. 17
\textsuperscript{4} Graves of Former Boone Slaves
\textsuperscript{5} Yetman, p. 59, 88
suggests that both Moses and Preston died as free men. Preston is listed as part of Nathan Boone’s estate, but there is no record of him past his sale to A.C. White in 1857. Moses Boone does not appear in Boone’s estate sale record. He is first listed in the tax list of 1865, and remains close to the Boone farm through the 1880 census.

The cemetery’s other notable feature, the stone cairn, may mark the burial of someone with important status, or may simply be a case of practicality. The cairn may represent a winter burial, when frozen ground presented a challenge to grave diggers. Sometimes, shallow graves were covered over with logs or rocks to protect the body from scavengers.

The nearby Boone family cemetery offers a good basis for comparing white and black burial practices on the Boone farm. The African-American cemetery sits on less desirable ground, which is common for slave cemeteries. In a reversal of the norm, though, the African-American cemetery appears to be better laid out, with clear rows and evenly spaced graves. The Boone family cemetery’s layout appears more random, though 20th century damage may contribute to this appearance.

Both blacks and whites on the Boone farm primarily used flat, uncut limestone markers to mark the head and foot of graves. None of the markers of this type in the Boone family cemetery has any kind of inscription. Ten burials in the Boone family cemetery are marked with more

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6 Black Families, p. 57
7 Black Families, p. 181
8 Greene County, Missouri 1880 Federal Census, p. 12
9 Yelton & Bray, p. 41
10 Brelowski, p. 32
11 Hammon, p. 41
12 Glossary of Cemetery Terms
elaborate stones, four of which are the later and apparently unrelated King children. Nathan and Olive Boone’s markers are modern replacements.\textsuperscript{14} The shared headstone of the Boones’ grandchildren, Minerva and Nathan Boone, is a 19\textsuperscript{th} century replacement (at least in Minerva’s case).\textsuperscript{15} Only Walter F. and H. Wardlaw Boone have cut and chiseled stones that appear original to their burial.

Overall, the African-American cemetery does not differ that much from its white counterpart. Both use primarily unmarked limestone slabs for markers, and both feature less-than-perfect layouts. This is typical of rural family cemeteries in the early 19\textsuperscript{th} century, and reflects contemporary perceptions of death and burial. Families did not linger long in mourning during this period,\textsuperscript{16} and cemeteries were viewed as places for the dead, not the living. By the 1840s, though, these attitudes were beginning to change. Churches and communities banded together to build larger, park-like cemeteries.\textsuperscript{17} Since these were now public places, gravestone inscriptions and appearances became more important. Families began purchasing professionally made stones, like the one shared by Nathan and Minerva Boone.\textsuperscript{18} Slavery and post-slavery racism prevented African-Americans from being able to fully embrace these new ideas, but even the rough inscriptions in the African-American cemetery indicate that they were following suit.

The social gap between blacks and white burials on the Boone farm is evident, and would be more evident if use of the Boone family cemetery had continued. Olive Boone, who died in

\textsuperscript{13} Grave Matters
\textsuperscript{14} Bills, p. 80 and Ash Grove Commonwealth, September 19, 1985, p. 5
\textsuperscript{15} There is a 4 year difference in death dates, as marked on the stone, between Minerva and Nathan Boone
\textsuperscript{16} Randolph, p. 320
\textsuperscript{17} Stansberry, p. 9
\textsuperscript{18} Harshbarger McVicker
1858, is the last known family member to be buried in the Boone family cemetery. Judging from Moses Boone’s lifespan, the African American Boones used their cemetery into at least the 1880s. Many public cemeteries had restrictions against non-white burials. Until William Berry (who married Caroline Boone) created a black community cemetery in Boone Township around 1880, African-Americans had little choice but to use the old slave cemeteries.

Former slaves also had an emotional attachment to the old cemeteries. As slaves, with no legal right to property, cemeteries were the closest thing they had to land of their own. The intensity of slave funeral practices also helped charge these places with emotion. Funerals were often held at night, when the slaves had free time and could obtain passes. Most every member of the black community attended, whether they were close to the deceased or not. The crowd would gather by torchlight to pay their respects with prayer and song. Sometimes the funeral would continue on until morning. The mood was not always solemn. For many Christian slaves, the Bible promised freedom in the next world, and death could be a reason to celebrate.

Though not always strictly organized or well kept, cemeteries were revered in African-American culture. This respect can be seen in the great number of slave spirituals that center around cemeteries, including the one former Greene County slave Fil Hancock named as his favorite song:

Ask my Lord for mercy,

Good Lord, gimme religion,

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19 Spraker, p. 126
20 Emerie
21 Grave Matters
Good Lord, gimme me a heart to b'lieve,

Dis is de buryin' goun'.

Amen, Hallelujah. Dis is de buryin' goun'.

Tell your mother,

Tell your father,

Dis is de buryin' goun',

Tell all your neighbors,

Tell all your neighbors chillun,

Dis is de buryin' goun'.

22 Greene, Kremer, & Holland. p. 52
23 Missouri Narratives, Volume 10, p. 160
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