

Slavery at Rose Hill Manor, Frederick, Maryland: A Preliminary Report¹

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From the building of Rose Hill Manor in about 1790, until emancipation in 1864, the majority of the people living and working on the site were enslaved African Americans.² With more than twenty enslaved people at times, this farm can be classified as a plantation and is a large slave site for this geographical area. The slaves held by the Grahame family numbered eleven in 1790, nineteen in 1800, twenty-nine in 1810, twenty-one in 1820, and twenty-four in 1830.³ Men, women, and children were enslaved on the property. They labored in the fields as farmhands, cared for animals, drove vehicles, and worked in the manor house as cooks, maids, waiters, and valets. Like all slaves, they were held here against their will and by the threat of violence, working without pay, living without legal rights, and fearing sale and family separation. Unfortunately we know relatively little about this particular enslaved community, compared with some other plantation sites. Nevertheless, information exists about how African Americans at Rose Hill worked, supported each other, created individual identities, and strove for freedom. This report will detail what is currently known about the people enslaved at Rose Hill and will briefly set that information in the context of slavery in western Maryland, especially

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² Before this period, when the Hoffman family lived on the site (c. 1748-c. 1778), there is no evidence of slavery.

³ U.S. Census 1790; U.S. Census 1800; U.S. Census 1810; U.S. Census 1820; U.S. Census 1830. All census references are to Frederick County, MD, population schedules unless otherwise noted and are to online images at Ancestry.com.

Frederick County. This information is especially important because the mission of Rose Hill Manor Park and Museums is, in part, “to preserve and present the living heritage of the property known as Rose Hill from 1746-1950 ... [and] present the daily life of Thomas Johnson, Maryland’s first Governor, *and the individuals who lived on the property* as well as the history of agriculture ... in Frederick County” (emphasis added).⁴ Faithfulness to this mission requires knowing about the people enslaved at Rose Hill and telling their story.

Governor Thomas Johnson (1732-1819), who gave Rose Hill to his daughter Ann and son-in-law John Grahame, was a practitioner and proponent of slave labor. During the construction of the Potomac Canal, Johnson urged George Washington to use slave and indentured labor in the building project, writing in 1785 that “Negro” and unfree labor would be “more valuable than that of common white hirelings.”⁵ Johnson could base his opinion on his personal experience as one of the larger slaveholders in Frederick County. He held 38 people in slavery in 1790, and 50 people in 1800.⁶ A few years later an African-American man named Charles escaped from slavery under Johnson but was captured in Calvert County.⁷ Others may have escaped too.⁸

When Rose Hill Manor was built as a home for the newly married Grahames, it became part of an established tradition of slavery in Maryland and in Frederick County.⁹ Already in 1790, when Rose Hill was very new or perhaps still under construction, John Graham was listed in the federal census as owning eleven slaves in Frederick County. These enslaved individuals

⁴ Frederick County Parks & Recreation, Rose Hill Manor Park and Museums, <https://recreater.com/404/Rose-Hill-Manor-Park-Museums> (accessed 14 Sept. 2018).

⁵ Letter of Thomas Johnson, printed in Corra Bacon-Foster, “Early Chapters in the Development of the Potomac Route to the West,” *Records of the Columbia Historical Society* 15 (1912): 161.

⁶ U.S. Census 1790; U.S. Census 1800.

⁷ *Maryland Gazette*, 26 Sept. 1793.

⁸ *Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser*, 30 July 1784; but it is not clear whether the “Thomas Johnson” named in this runaway ad was Governor Johnson. In addition, not all runaways were advertised.

⁹ Maryland State Archives, *A Guide to the History of Slavery in Maryland*, https://msa.maryland.gov/msa/intromsa/pdf/slavery_pamphlet.pdf.

probably formed the original core of Rose Hill's agricultural and domestic workforce. It is quite possible that slave labor was used to build the manor house and farm buildings. In addition, because of the Johnson family's ownership of Catoctin Furnace, Aetna Glass Works, and other industrial sites, and the importance of slave labor in the iron industry,¹⁰ some enslaved people may have been moved between Rose Hill and the Catoctin Furnace site. Some may have formed a workforce that was shared between Rose Hill and John Grahame's other farm property, lying near Rose Hill.¹¹ There were almost certainly kinship and other social connections among the people enslaved on these various sites. One piece of evidence suggesting kinship comes from the surname "Chase," the only slave surname we have from Rose Hill before the 1860s. It can also be found (a generation later) in the free black community at Catoctin.¹²

Unlike plantations of the deep south or even southern and eastern Maryland, the farms of western Maryland grew mainly grain and other crops that were not as labor-intensive as cotton or tobacco. Therefore wealthy whites enslaved relatively fewer people per farm, and the slave population was spread out more thinly across farms. It was the norm for African-American husbands and wives to live on different farms or in different households, because a single slaveholding was rarely large enough for people to find a spouse within it. Men who lived apart from their families in slavery normally got to visit their wives and children only on weekends, as distance and masters permitted. Children born into slavery belonged legally to their mother's enslaver, and often they were sold or given away at a relatively young age. They might remain in the neighborhood, or they might be sold to a southern trader and never see their family again.

¹⁰ Elizabeth Yourtee Anderson, *Catoctin Furnace: Portrait of an Iron-Making Village*, ed. Elizabeth Anderson Comer (Charleston: The History Press, 2013), 18-20, 63-4; *Frederick Town Herald*, 7 Feb. 1807.

¹¹ *Frederick Town Herald*, 8 Jan. 1825.

¹² *Frederick Town Herald*, 7 July 1827; U.S. Census 1850, where a free black family of six, surnamed Chase, is listed as living at Catoctin.

Enslaved Work at Rose Hill

The labor assigned to enslaved workers was quite varied in northern and western Maryland. In this region, it was common for enslaved men to be trained in crafts (such as masonry, carpentry, and blacksmithing) and to be hired out for months or years at a time. Enslaved women were frequently hired out too, usually as domestic workers.¹³ On the farm, both men and women commonly had a variety of jobs.

We have glimpses of the specific work that enslaved people did within the Johnson and Grahame households. In 1805 John Grahame advertised two (unnamed) enslaved women for hire, stating that they could “work either at plantation work or in the house, and one of them is a pretty good cook.”¹⁴ There must have been another, more skilled, enslaved woman available to cook for the Grahame family, since Grahame was willing to hire out a woman who was “pretty good” at cooking. This ad also reminds us that enslaved women worked in the fields at Rose Hill. On a later occasion (in 1825) Grahame wanted to hire out or sell enslaved women whom he described as “good house maids, cooks and seamstresses.”¹⁵ These were skills the women had probably demonstrated at Rose Hill. In a large household like the Grahames’, individual servants could be specialists to some extent, but they also had multiple capabilities. In 1803, Governor Thomas Johnson’s son, Thomas J. Johnson, offered for sale an enslaved woman who “understands housework of every kind.”¹⁶ The younger Johnson’s household also included an enslaved man described as “an excellent waiter”—that is, a servant who among other duties

¹³ Max Grivno, *Gleanings of Freedom: Free and Slave Labor along the Mason-Dixon Line, 1790-1860* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2011), 39, 43; Pennington, 4-5.

¹⁴ *Frederick Town Herald*, 5 Jan. 1805.

¹⁵ *Frederick Town Herald*, 8 Jan. 1825.

¹⁶ *Frederick Town Herald*, 16 April 1803.

served food at meals, like a butler or footman.¹⁷ A young enslaved man named Daniel served as a waiter for the Grahames at Rose Hill, but was also able to “perform any work on a farm,” according to John Grahame.¹⁸ Another specialized job was driving. A young man named Leonard, whom John Grahame sold to his neighbor William Schley, “occasionally acted as coachman, but generally as a house servant,” according to Schley.¹⁹

Beyond these glimpses, we can speculate that most of the men enslaved at Rose Hill spent the majority of their time in field work and other outdoor chores. Typical farm work for enslaved men—and sometimes women—in western Maryland, on a plantation like Rose Hill, included such diverse tasks as hauling manure, feeding and caring for animals, taking horses to the smith, butchering, smoking meat, cutting and hauling wood, hauling grain to the mill, cutting and hauling ice, repairing fences, fixing equipment, cleaning barns, clearing fields, burning brush, planting and weeding gardens, seeding and cutting various crops, threshing and processing those crops, and planting trees. This is by no means an exhaustive list.²⁰ The slaves engaged in such work at Rose Hill in the 1820s included young men named John, Charles, and Edward. In 1825, when John Grahame was trying to sell off 800 acres of land near Rose Hill, he also put up for sale “the Negroes on this farm” (i.e., not at Rose Hill but nearby). He claimed that the male slaves were “excellent farming hands, and understand the cultivation of tobacco”—even though it is highly unlikely that they had grown tobacco on Grahame’s land.²¹ This may have been an exaggerated claim by Grahame, or it may have been true, if he had purchased workers

¹⁷ *Frederick Town Herald*, 7 Feb. 1807. For “waiter” as a description for enslaved men who worked as house servants in Maryland, see, e.g., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews, and Autobiographies*, ed. John W. Blassingame (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 405.

¹⁸ *Frederick Town Herald*, 7 July 1827.

¹⁹ *Frederick Town Herald*, 7 July 1827.

²⁰ These were all tasks performed by enslaved workers at Ferry Hill in early 1838; John Blackford, *Ferry Hill Plantation Journal: Life on the Potomac River and Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, 4 January 1838 – 15 January 1839*, ed. Fletcher M. Green et al. (Sheperdstown, WV, 1975), 3-43 *passim*.

²¹ *Frederick Town Herald*, 8 Jan. 1825.

from the tobacco-growing regions of Maryland. It is possible that Grahame had purchased men with tobacco-growing expertise specifically because he hoped to grow tobacco. The skills of enslaved workers were critical to white economic success.

The Enslaved Community at Rose Hill

Although work was the reason for the presence of African Americans at Rose Hill, enslaved individuals also strove to create a community. This centered on the “quarter,” where all or most of them lived. The Rose Hill quarter was described in the early 1830s as a single house, “a two story log building” located near the spring.²² This was similar to slave quarters later described by a former slave as typical of Frederick County: “dingy little hovels, which were constructed in cabin fashion and of stone and logs with their typical windows and rooms of one room up and one down with a window in each, the fireplaces built to heat and cook for occupants.”²³ When a fire destroyed some barns and grain at Rose Hill in April 1831, the chimney of the slave quarter was one of the suspected sources.²⁴

It seems likely that in the early decades of the nineteenth century, when the Grahames held at one point 29 or more people in slavery, those people lived in more than one building. Some enslaved domestic servants may have lived in the manor house. In western Maryland it was also common for slave quarters to be dual-purpose buildings; for example, a spring house or smithy might also serve as a slave dwelling.²⁵ The Grahames probably used some flexibility in housing the Rose Hill slaves.

²² *Frederick Town Herald*, 20 April 1833; the quarter is also referred to a few years earlier, *Frederick Town Herald*, 16 April 1831.

²³ WPA interviews, Maryland, George Jones, 1937.

²⁴ *Frederick Town Herald*, 16 April 1831.

²⁵ Edie Wallace, “Reclaiming the Forgotten History and Cultural Landscapes of African-Americans in Rural Washington County, Maryland,” *Material Culture* 39 (2007): 13.

Communal and family life in the slave quarters involved everyone from children to elders. Story-telling was one of the ways that enslaved people formed and preserved social bonds. Since Rose Hill was built before the African slave trade ended, it is possible that people born in Africa lived on this plantation. African-born individuals certainly lived in the community at Catoctin Furnace, which was owned until 1811 by various combinations of the Johnson brothers. Forensic research at the Furnace cemetery has identified Africans buried there.²⁶ Historical evidence also attests to the presence of a strong African heritage throughout the region. We know from people who lived on other local farms that stories about Africa were handed down from one generation to the next. Eliza Thomas, who was born on a farm in southern Frederick County, often heard her grandmother talk of having been kidnapped in Africa, snatched away from a husband and children, and brought across the Atlantic to Virginia.²⁷ Lewis Charlton, born in 1814 near Buckeystown, recalled the stories his grandfather told of his boyhood in Africa.²⁸ James Pennington wrote of the native Africans who were enslaved with him in Washington County, south of Hagerstown, and wrote of his own “Mandingo” heritage.²⁹ Enslaved people in western Maryland had a clear sense of their African roots.

Enslaved Children at Rose Hill

The slave community at Rose Hill included children at most times. The first specific information about enslaved children here comes from 1820, when three of the Grahames’ 21

²⁶ Etta Place, “The Purity and Power of Enslaved Iron Workers at Catoctin Furnace,” *The History Bandits*, 2015, <https://thehistorybandits.com/2015/12/05/the-purity-and-power-of-enslaved-iron-workers-at-catoctin-furnace/> (accessed Sept. 15, 2018).

²⁷ Caroline Healey Dall, “A Breeze from Lake Ontario,” in *The Liberty Bell* (Boston: National Anti-Slavery Society, 1853), 30-1.

²⁸ Lewis Charlton, *The Life of Lewis Charlton: A Poor Old Slave, Who, for Twenty-Eight Years, Suffered in American Bondage* (Fredericton, New Brunswick: Pitts & Crocket, n.d.), 5.

²⁹ Pennington, 82; *Frederick Douglass’ Paper*, 6 April 1855.

slaves were under age fourteen. In 1830, there were eleven children under age ten enslaved at Rose Hill.³⁰ Three years later, an 1833 estate inventory listed no children at all; it is possible that all or most of the children counted in 1830 had been sold away.³¹ In 1837, an inventory included seven-year-old George and five-year-old Matilda.³² Enslaved children like these did not have safe or happy lives in western Maryland. Their mothers were hard at work all day, and their fathers were hard at work or absent. The whole family was at risk of violence and separation. Traveling slave traders were eager to buy younger slaves for the southern market, including mothers with young children and children on their own.³³ Local masters were sometimes appallingly cruel, even to children. Lewis Charlton, who was enslaved as a child by several abusive men in and around Frederick city, described one who “would call me to him, strip me and beat me with a cowhide whip till the blood ran in streams from my back. So often did he do this that for months and months I was unable to sleep on my back. The wretched brute seemed to take great satisfaction in flogging me, a poor crippled child.”³⁴ James Pennington, a well-known abolitionist who had grown up in slavery south of Hagerstown, wrote of overseers who “seem to take pleasure in torturing the children of slaves, long before they are large enough to be put at the hoe, and consequently under the whip.”³⁵ Pennington also wrote of “the tyranny of the master’s children.”³⁶ Sometimes enslaved children played with neighboring white children, but both black and white were conscious of the divide between them.³⁷ And on farms where slaves were

³⁰ U.S. Census 1830.

³¹ Maryland State Archives, Frederick County Courthouse Records, Inventories, Liber 6, p. 623.

³² Maryland State Archives, Frederick County Courthouse Records, Inventories, Liber 9, p. 166.

³³ Michael Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves: Masters, Traders, and Slaves in the Old South*, rev. edn. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 112, 125; Pennington, 9.

³⁴ Charlton, 7.

³⁵ Pennington, 3.

³⁶ Pennington, 2-3.

³⁷ Charles Wilson Bingham, *A Little Boy in Maryland during the Civil War* (Cedar Rapids, IA: privately published, 1994), 36-7.

whipped and beaten—which was all too many of them—children witnessed their parents subjected to violence.³⁸

At Rose Hill under the Grahames, it seems likely that the greatest risk faced by enslaved children was sale. Agents for southern and Baltimore traders operated actively in Frederick County.³⁹ Children were regularly among those sold to southern dealers in western Maryland, as local writers of the nineteenth century amply testified.⁴⁰ We have no direct evidence of children being sold away from Rose Hill. But the Grahames held eleven small children (under age ten) in slavery in 1830, and none of those children were recorded in the estate inventory three years later.

The Threat of Sale

Every enslaved person lived under the very real danger of sale—to another local slaveholder, either known or unknown; to a more distant location in Maryland or Virginia, where they might be able to remain in touch with loved ones, or not; or, worst of all, to the deep south. Slave traders were most interested in buying young men who could work and young women who could work and bear children. Young mothers were frequently purchased with or without a child.⁴¹ Many sales went unrecorded. For this reason there is little direct evidence of sales away from Rose Hill. But there are enough traces to indicate that John Grahame engaged in the normal buying and selling practiced by someone who held slaves on the scale that he did. For example, Grahame sold Leonard, a young man with skills as a coachman and waiter, to his neighbor

³⁸ Pennington, 7, 10.

³⁹ Frederic Bancroft, *Slave Trading in the Old South* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1931 and 1996), 64-5.

⁴⁰ Charlton, 14; Pennington, 9; Grivno, 131; *Slave Testimony*, ed. Blassingame, 405.

⁴¹ Tadman, 142-4.

William Schley in the 1820s.⁴² Grahame advertised an unspecified but apparently large number of male and female slaves for sale in 1825, when he was selling off his farmland adjacent to Rose Hill. A sale that was recorded, unusually, at the courthouse occurred in January 1831, when Grahame sold a man named Benjamin to a John McCandless from Virginia. Benjamin was about 34 years old, somewhat older than typical for a prime field hand. He was “of sound foot and mind” and was sold for \$325, in the normal price range for a worker sold privately in the upper south in the 1830s.⁴³ We can speculate endlessly about why Benjamin was sold and about what his new circumstances meant for him, but overall the sale probably changed his life for the worse.

Although we have no evidence of Rose Hill slaves going to auction, it is unlikely that they all avoided such a fate all their lives. The active slave trade in western Maryland, the high demand of the southern trade for Maryland slaves, along with the probable turnover of enslaved people at Rose Hill suggested by the existing records, all point to the likelihood that the Grahames sold slaves—especially children—either directly to slave traders or to nearby masters who would later sell them to traders.⁴⁴

Preacher Jim Chase and the 1827 Escape

At Rose Hill in the 1820s one enslaved man, Jim Chase, was a leader in the quarters and in the local black community. Chase was approaching 50 years of age in the mid-1820s and occupied the position of John Grahame’s “confidential servant.” In this role he probably served as Grahame’s valet and personal attendant. Grahame described Chase as “about 6 feet high, erect

⁴² *Frederick Town Herald*, 7 July 1827.

⁴³ Frederick County Land Records, MSA CE 108-103, Liber JS 35, p. 210.

⁴⁴ Tadman, 112, argues that an enslaved person in the upper south faced about a 1 in 4 chance of being sold away to the deep south during her or his lifetime.

and stately in his walk.” A religious man, Chase served “for some time” as a preacher at Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church in Frederick.⁴⁵ This congregation, founded in the late eighteenth century, was located on East Third Street in Frederick, about a mile south of Rose Hill, and no doubt drew its members from both the city and nearby farms.⁴⁶ Unusually for a slave, Jim Chase could read and perhaps write. When he was preaching—and any time that he wasn’t serving in the house—he wore a black suit to denote his religious calling. Grahame had no complaints about him, finding Chase “of irreproachable deportment.” From Grahame’s perspective, Chase was a privileged and trusted servant.

But Chase was far from satisfied with his life in slavery. Despite his status and his relatively advanced age, he began plotting with several younger men at Rose Hill—the waiter Daniel and the farmhands John, Charles, and Edward—and with Leonard, who been sold away to the Schley farm. Perhaps they spoke openly in the quarter, but more likely they met in secret elsewhere. By the early summer of 1827 their plans came together. The six men left on the night of Saturday, June 30. (Saturday night was a good time to leave, since enslaved people often had Sunday off and might not be missed by the master until Monday morning.) The five men from Rose Hill took two horses from the Grahame stables: a black gelding and a bay mare. Over at the Schley farm, Leonard, who “had access to every part of the house,” according to William Schley, “was seen on Saturday night with a large bundle.” It turned out that Leonard had gathered a “large supply of very excellent clothing,” most of it belonging to the Schleys, apparently to share among his fellow travelers, so that they could look less like typical runaways. Once they had

⁴⁵ *Frederick Town Herald*, 7 July 1827.

⁴⁶ The church still exists today, with the name Quinn Chapel A.M.E. Church. For some of its history see <https://www.quinnnamefrederick.org/history/> and Lisa Mroszczyk Murphy, “Preservation matters: Churches linked by architecture, and service to black community,” *Frederick News-Post*, 25 Feb. 2018, https://www.fredericknews.com/news/politics_and_government/preservation-matters-churches-linked-by-architecture-and-service-to-black-community/article_44dc6c11-f3da-54ac-afdd-e50e1439315e.html.

joined up, the six men headed north, for the Pennsylvania border. By July 7, they had reportedly been spotted near Gettysburg and Hanover. Schley believed they were heading northeast toward Columbia, across the Susquehanna on the way to Lancaster, whereas Grahame thought they were traveling due north toward Harrisburg, where “many of their acquaintances” lived.⁴⁷ Grahame and Schley advertised and offered rewards (\$350 total) for the capture and return of the six men, with physical descriptions and other information. The ads included some information about the escape, but our knowledge of other runaways can supply other possible details. For example, it is conceivable that Jim Chase and his companions used forged passes, it is likely that they packed food, and they may have armed themselves with clubs or other weapons. They may have been helped in Frederick County by free blacks, and in Pennsylvania they probably found assistance from both blacks and whites.⁴⁸

To attempt escape from slavery was to take an enormous risk. James Pennington, who ran away at about the same time as the men from Rose Hill, wrote that, as he planned his escape, he knew “that the consequences of a failure would be most serious”—including possible “flogging and selling to the far South.”⁴⁹ We do not know what calculations entered into the decision by Chase, John, Charles, Edward, Daniel, and Leonard to seek their freedom, but they must have had similar fears. Nor we do know whether they were ultimately successful. There is no record of either their capture or their life in freedom.

The End of the Grahame Era

⁴⁷ *Frederick Town Herald*, 7 July 1827. There are three runaway ads in this issue of the paper, covering the six men altogether.

⁴⁸ *Frederick Town Herald*, 7 July 1827. For forged passes possibly used by other runaways: *Hagerstown Torch Light*, 19 April and 3 May 1825. For food: Pennington, 14. For clubs and other weapons: *Herald of Freedom*, 28 May 1845; *Herald of Freedom and Torch Light*, 28 May and 4 June 1856; William Still, *The Underground Rail Road: A Record...* (Philadelphia: Porter & Coates, 1872), 220-1. For assistance given to other runaways: *Hagerstown Torch Light & Public Advertiser*, 16 April 1829 and 14 April 1831; Still, 392, 519-20.

⁴⁹ Pennington, 13.

For the first time, in the 1830s, we have the names of women and children enslaved at Rose Hill, the ages of individual slaves are recorded, and we can glimpse some possible family relationships amongst those enslaved. (We also have appraised and sale values.) In the 1830s, near the end of the Grahame era at Rose Hill, there seem to have been fewer enslaved people on the plantation, though the records are difficult to interpret. Six slaves were listed by name in the estate inventory after John Grahame's death in 1833, and five different slaves were listed four years later after Ann Grahame's death. The two lists are:

	Name	Age	Appraised value
1833	Peter	65	\$ 40.
	Anne	65	\$ 30.
	Bill	45	\$100.
	Eliza	40	\$200.
	Polly	21	\$250.
	Charles	20	\$300. (sold for \$330) ⁵⁰
1837	Sarah Ann	28	\$300.
	Hester Ann	19	\$300.
	Susan	15	\$200.
	George	7	\$150.
	Matilda	5	\$ 50. ⁵¹

It is unlikely that there had been a complete turnover of the enslaved workforce in the four years after John Grahame's death. Instead, these records may be concealing a larger slave community in 1833. Perhaps the 1833 estate inventory showed only six slaves because they were the ones intended for sale. These six were all sold, in January 1834, to Ann Grahame's brother Joshua Johnson.⁵² This was a typical upheaval for slaves when a master died; sale and separation often followed a slaveholder's death. In this case, the six slaves who were sold may have been

⁵⁰ Source for the 1833 list: Maryland State Archives, Frederick County Courthouse Records, Inventories, Liber 6, p. 623; and Sales, Liber 8, p. 31.

⁵¹ Source for the 1837 list: Maryland State Archives, Frederick County Courthouse Records, Inventories, Liber 9, p. 166.

⁵² Maryland State Archives, Frederick County Courthouse Records, Sales, Liber 8, p. 31.

fortunate that they were sold together to a Grahame relative, thus avoiding the worse fate of the auction block or the slave trader.

Not long after this, Rose Hill itself was sold, to a nephew of the widowed Ann Grahame. This arrangement allowed Ann Grahame to live out her life at the Manor, but it provided no such security for the enslaved workers. When Ann Grahame died in 1837, the five enslaved women and children listed above were appraised as part of her assets. During the year it took to settle the estate, Sarah Ann was hired out by the estate administrator to a neighbor, Nelson Poe. Eventually Sarah Ann and her two children, young George and Matilda, passed with some other personal property to Ann Grahame's granddaughter, also named Ann Grahame. Hester Ann and Susan appear to have been sold (it is not yet known to whom).⁵³ The community of African Americans who had lived and worked together at Rose Hill in the Grahame era was scattered.

The Last Generation

Slavery did continue at Rose Hill under its next two owners, William Slater (who held four slaves in 1840) and John Wilson (possibly holding five slaves in 1850), though there is almost no information about the small enslaved community on the farm during those years.⁵⁴ But under David O. Thomas, in the 1850s and 1860s, the number of enslaved people rose again. In 1860, there were twelve people enslaved at Rose Hill, including three young men aged 17-24, one 30-year-old woman, and eight children, mostly girls, ages two to fifteen.⁵⁵ These were the people who were living and working at Rose Hill at the outbreak of the Civil War. At least two of the young men left during the war, which is not at all surprising. For African Americans, the Civil War was a time to seize freedom more assertively. All across the south, people of color

⁵³ Maryland State Archives, Frederick County Courthouse Records, Administration Accounts, Liber 13, pp. 293-5.

⁵⁴ U.S. Census 1840; U.S. Census 1850, Slave Schedule.

⁵⁵ U.S. Census 1860, Slave Schedule.

actively contributed to the destruction of slavery, by running away, by assisting the Union army, and, when it eventually became possible (in 1863), by enlisting in the United States military.⁵⁶

The enslaved workers at Rose Hill would have been keenly aware of what was happening in the war, especially insofar as it affected matters of slavery and freedom. Those who stayed were waiting for emancipation.

The Emancipation Proclamation of January 1863 applied only to the states in rebellion, and thus it did not free anyone enslaved at Rose Hill or anywhere else in Maryland. But slavery's viability in Maryland had been crumbling as the war went on. Finally, in 1864, a new state constitution abolished slavery and freed all remaining slaves on November 1. According to a record made several years later, the people freed from slavery at Rose Hill in 1864 were (with their ages at the time and their birth years):

<u>Name</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Born</u>
Miranda	36 years	c. 1828
Marian	14 years	c. 1850
Maria	6 years 6 months	1858
Ellie	18 years 7 months	1846
Elijah	16 years 6 months	1848
Annie	11 years 2 months	1853
Harriet	9 years	c. 1855
Billy	23 years	c. 1841
Mary Nichols	29 years 6 months	1835
Lucy Nichols	12 years 4 months	1852
George Nichols	5 years 6 months	1859
Nannie Nichols	7 months	1864 ⁵⁷

⁵⁶ I have found no evidence that any men enslaved by David O. Thomas enlisted in the U.S. Colored Troops.

⁵⁷ Frederick County Commissioner of Slave Statistics (1868), MSA CE14-1, p. 31; *Commissioner of Slave Statistics Record, Frederick County, Maryland, 1864*, transcr. and comp. Richard H. Smith, Jr. (Woodsboro, MD: Frederick Roots, 2012), 45-6. The exactness with which Thomas was able to give, in 1868, the 1864 ages for enslaved people who no longer lived at Rose Hill suggests that he had birth records for many of them (for example, a family Bible or a farm journal).

The Nichols family is known by surname because they alone remained at Rose Hill until the census of 1870, when Mary Nichols was still living there as a “domestic servant,” along with her two younger children. It is possible that some of the older enslaved children present in 1864 were also part of the Nichols family. By 1880, Mary Nichols and her children were living in Baltimore with her married daughter Lucy Nichols Holmis, who had been enslaved as a child at Rose Hill.⁵⁸ Other African Americans with the Nichols surname lived in the neighborhood of Rose Hill, including a man who served in the United States Colored Troops during the Civil War and who was eventually buried in the Laboring Sons Cemetery in Frederick.⁵⁹

Another enslaved family at Rose Hill in the early 1860s probably belonged to the woman named Miranda. This family’s surname may have been Robinson, based on the following family entry in the 1870 census for Frederick:

William Robinson	41	Male	Black	Farmhand
Miranda Robinson	38	Female	Black	Keeping house
Mary Robinson	20	Female	Black	Domestic
Maria Robinson	11	Female	Black	[attended school] ⁶⁰

Miranda Robinson was the right general age to be the Miranda enslaved and freed at Rose Hill in 1864, and more importantly her two daughters “Mary” and “Maria” had the right names and exactly the right ages to be the “Marian” and “Maria” who were enslaved and freed at Rose Hill in 1864. Other children and teens at Rose Hill in 1864 may also have been Miranda’s or Mary Nichols’ children.

⁵⁸ U.S. Census 1870; U.S. Census 1880.

⁵⁹ USCT compensation claim for Nicholas Nichols, MSA SC-4678; NARA, Civil War pension record file card for Nicholas Nichols, Co. B, 19th Regt. USC Infantry, filed 16 July 1890; *The [frederick] Daily News*, 15 July 1895 (obituary); and for additional information about Nicholas Nichols and his burial at Laboring Sons, see <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/Frederick/FHD-1301.pdf> and <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/20186193/nickolas-nichols>.

⁶⁰ U.S. Census 1870.