WESTCOTT CEMETERY ASSOCIATION ARCHIVAL RECORD

Doc No. 62846

Historical Context & Overview • Harris County Archives Discovery

Note on Slavery

While Richard Wescott belonged to a prominent Southern family with deep ties to the institution of slavery, his personal records in Texas did not previously indicate that he was a slaveholder himself. However, Westcott Cemetery Association (WCA) board member **Lloyd Prince** discovered this affidavit in the Harris County Archives by Joseph R. Sharman, showing Richard Wescott was indeed a slave owner, having traded 354 acres of land for an enslaved Negro boy and a mare.

Summary of the Affidavit

On February 26, 1910, **Joseph R. Sharman** (age 52) executed a formal sworn affidavit in Harris County, Texas, to clarify land titles and chain of ownership for property sold to **Stephen T. Sikes**. The affidavit establishes:

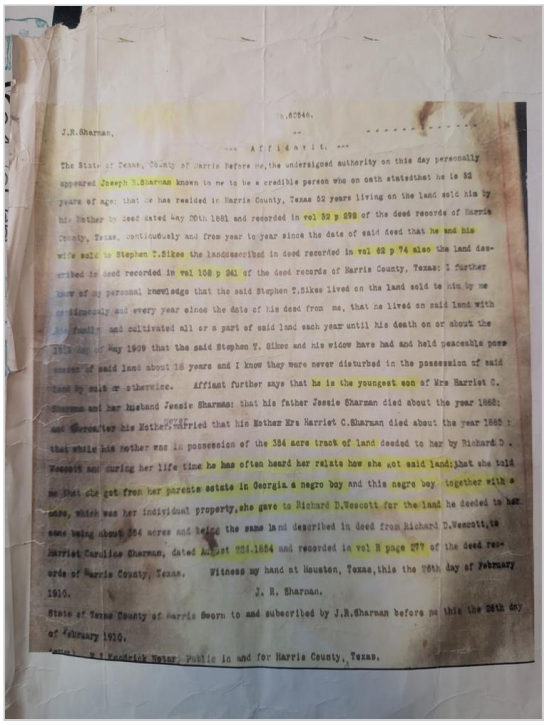
- **Land Occupancy & Sale:** Sharman resided in Harris County for 52 years on land deeded to him by his mother in 1881. He and his wife later sold portions of this property to Stephen T. Sikes, who lived on and farmed the land until his death on May 19, 1909.
- **Family Lineage:** Sharman specifies that he is the youngest son of Jessie Sharman (who died around 1868) and Harriet C. Sharman (who died around 1885 and *never* remarried after her husband's death).
- **Land Acquisition via Enslaved Trade:** Sharman recounts how his mother acquired the 354-acre tract from Richard D. Wescott on August 22, 1854. Harriet Sharman inherited an enslaved young male ("a negro boy") from her parents' estate in Georgia, which she traded along with a mare (her individual property) to Richard D. Wescott in exchange for the 354-acre tract.

Document Structure Notice: Included on Page 2 of this PDF is a side-by-side presentation of the original affidavit image from the Harris County Archives alongside its full verbatim transcript.

ORIGINAL AFFIDAVIT & VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT

Doc No. 62846

Record Details: Deed Records of Harris County, Texas • **Affiant:** J. R. Sharman • **Recorded:** Feb 26, 1910



--- AFFIDAVIT ---

The State of Texas, County of Harris — Before me, the undersigned authority on this day personally appeared **Joseph R. Sharman** known to me to be a credible person who on oath stated that he is 52 years of age; that he has resided in Harris County, Texas 52 years living on the land sold him by his Mother by deed dated May 20th 1881 and recorded in **vol 32 p 292** of the deed records of Harris County, Texas, continuously and from year to year since the date of said deed that **he and his wife sold to Stephen T. Sikes** the land described in deed recorded in **vol 62 p 74** also the land described in deed recorded in **vol 108 p 241** of the deed records of Harris County, Texas; I further know of my personal knowledge that the said Stephen T. Sikes lived on the land sold to him by me continuously and every year since the date of his deed from me, that he lived on said land with his family and cultivated all or a part of said land each year until his death on or about the 19th day of May 1909: that the said Stephen T. Sikes and his widow have had and held peaceable possession of said land about 18 years and I know they were never disturbed in the possession of said land by suit or otherwise.

Affiant further says that **he is the youngest son of Mrs Harriet C. Sharman** and her husband Jessie Sharman; that his father Jessie Sharman died about the year 1868; and thereafter his Mother **never** married that his Mother Mrs Harriet C. Sharman died about the year 1885 : that while his mother was in possession of the **354 acre tract of land** deeded to her by Richard D. Wescott and during her life time **he has often heard her relate how she got said land;** that she told me **that she got from her parents estate in Georgia a negro boy and this negro boy together with a mare, which was her individual property, she gave to Richard D. Wescott for the land he deeded to her**, same being about 354 acres and being the same land described in deed from Richard D. Wescott, to Harriet Caroline Sharman, dated **August 22d 1854** and recorded in **vol R page 277** of the deed records of Harris County, Texas.

Witness my hand at Houston, Texas, this the 26th day of February 1910.

J. R. Sharman

State of Texas, County of Harris — Sworn to and subscribed by J.R. Sharman before me this the 26th day of February 1910.

R. L. Fandrick
Notary Public in and for Harris County, Texas.