

From Thomas Hart Benton to Unknown

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First:

I came to St. Louis to live in 1815, bringing with me slaves.

Built a house, & brought my mother in 1817, a sister, and three of my mother's grandchildren--lived in that house 20 years, when in St. Louis--until after 1837--when it was sold--and still have a [suit?] in St. Louis for part of it.

My mother died at St. L. also my sister.

My mother brought slaves.

Married in 1821--Removed my wife to St. Louis--two of our children born there--both sons--both died there & buried there.--

All my children went to school at St. Louis--some of the daughters as late as 1844--and back to 1829.

Randolph went to school in the county.

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Brought out slaves when I was married in 1821--*[text stricken through]* came with Mrs. Benton. Brought many more slaves in 1837--from Virginia on the death of my father in law. Hired in St. Louis.

Removed them to Kentucky in 1843, to a farm owned there--brought them back in 1849--some more in Missouri--some distributed to a daughter in cooper county.

Educated my mother's three grandchildren at St. Louis--two of them now there--Mrs[.] Brant & Mrs. Potts--the nephews removed to Texas.

They were the children of my brother, since dead, and educated & taken care as if they had been my own.

Came home from Congress nearly every long recess--and always kept house when the family was with me.

In 1844-5 kept house in 4th Street, South of the court House.

My books and papers were at Brant's--where I always had a room when I came without my family.

My slaves were hired out in St. Louis when I was absent or present.

They were never with me in Washington City, except two for house servants.

Engaged Mr. Smith to buy me a house, or ground to build on: if not to rent one for me.

Did rent one in 1851.

Now live in it.

Wrote to him *[text stricken through]* frequently about getting a house.

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Returned to St. Louis in the spring of 1849--Mrs. B., but not the family with me--made Brants our home until Mrs. B. left on account of the *[text stricken through]* cholera. I remained in the State until October & November, & was in St. Louis, at Brant's, in each of those months.

Never thought of quitting the State.

Sold all our property in Kentucky and Virginia to invest it Mri.

Sold to the amount of \$80.000, to be invested in Mri.

Sold part in Vir. in 1839--the rest in 1848.

Sold in Kentucky in '47 & '48--before the expiration of my senatorial term.

My post office in the recess of congress always at St. Louis. This proved by Cong. Directory.

Have a house now in Washington, which I will live in again if elected to Congress, as I will not be separated from my family, and always kept house there, when there, after my family became numerous, and purchased a house as being better than renting one. Saved the rent, & the property both. The rent of it would have been \$600 a year--have had it 12 years; which would have been a rent of \$7.200--It cost me \$6.250--and will now sell for more than that. This is the reason of my having a house in Washington.

I have no slaves there now--brought the last two to Mri. in 1850--summer--before I was [MS. illegible][.]

[written sideways in center of page]

I have been at home every year since 1826, inclusive of that year, except 1828, when [text stricken through] myself & Mrs. B. were in Ken[.] & Vir. to sell land.

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Points as to evidence in St. Louis on which questions can be framed to be put to John Smith, Milbourn, and Henry Brant.

These are the three best witnesses that could be asked for.

Smith has known me, and done business with me, 37 years, and was my agent in many matters--especially renting houses for me.

Henry Brant [text stricken through] is the son of Col. Brant, and a member of his father's family when I made his fathers house my home, which I always did when my family was not with me, and when they were I kept house.

Milbourn, has known me intimately above 30 years, was [N.?]T. Surveyor Genl. and afterwards Sheriff of the county, & in that capacity often had business with me, & came to Brants when I was not keeping house; and if [text stricken through] he had been Sheriff in 1849, and this summons had been sent to me, [wont?] have went to Brants, & returned it executed.

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Further circumstances to prove Col. Benton's residence in St. Louis, and at Brant's, as his home when his family was not with him.

after the adjournment of each session of congress my letters and paper came regularly to the St. Louis P.O.

They were put, by direction of Brant, into his letter box, and brought to his house with his letters and papers, and kept there for me until my arrival, or until I gave some order about them.

This was the regular [text stricken through] rule, and Henry Brant will know all about it, as he has often brought the letters himself--put them away in a drawer in his fathers office, & delivered them to me upon my arrival.

B.