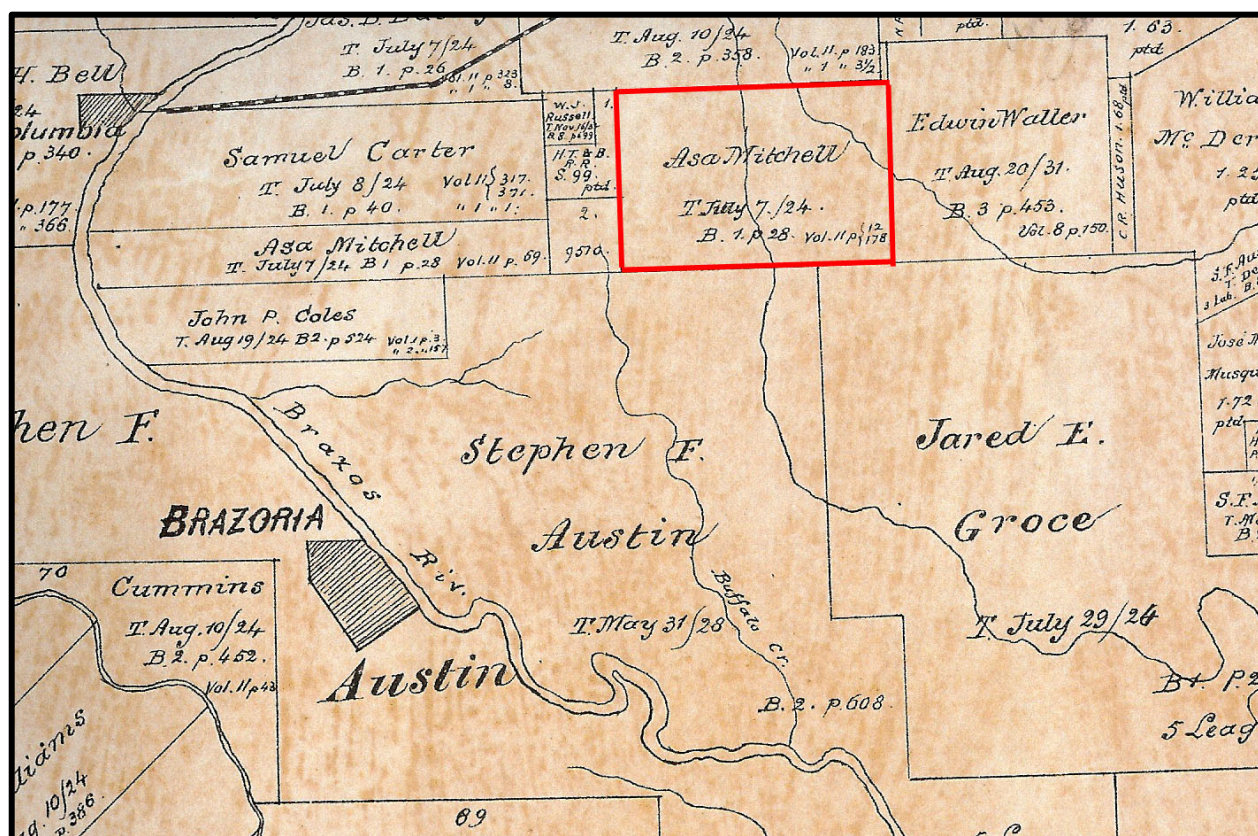


Richmond Champion Plantation  
Brazosport Archaeological Society



Asa Mitchell League Map 1879 The General Land Office of the State of Texas

Preferring to settle at the mouth of the Brazos River after Asa Mitchell had received his league of land May 7, 1824 he sold it to his brother Eli Mitchell. Eli Mitchell sold the  $\frac{1}{4}$  league which was in the lower part of the upper half of the league to Edwin Waller in 1836.<sup>1</sup> Edwin Waller would make this his homestead.

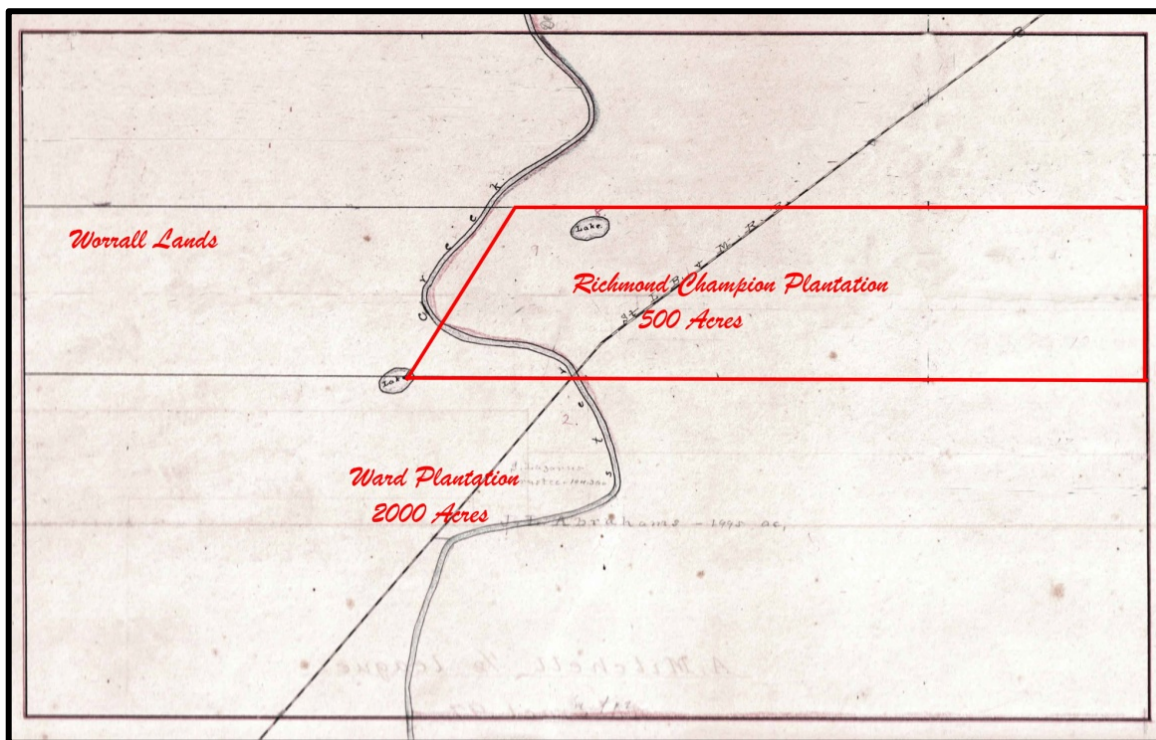
Edwin Waller sold out his plantation, 12 slaves, farm equipment, and his growing crops to Mosely Hooker May 21, 1840.<sup>2</sup> The price of \$30,000 must have had Edwin Waller grinning from ear to ear. However, Mosely Hooker died while living at Velasco August 19, 1840 and was buried at the Eagle Island plantation. The sudden wealth was now gone and several notes were now due by Waller. He had to foreclose on Hooker at this point and the plantation was sold at auction for \$3000 to Samuel Harris in 1844.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Brazoria County Deed Record: A 17/18

<sup>2</sup> BCDR: A 265/67

<sup>3</sup> BCDR: D 235/37

In 1853 Samuel Harris sold his 1000 acres for \$6000 to John Worrall and Richmond Champion.<sup>4</sup> Worrall took the eastern 500 acres while Champion settled on the western 500 acres which probably contained most of Edwin Waller's improvements. Worrall already owned part of the acreage in that area.



Asa Mitchell League with Current Railroad

In 1850 Richmond Champion working as an overseer and his family were listed in the 1850 Federal Census:

Richard Champion	Overseer	30M	Georgia
Isabel Champion		25F	Georgia
Margaret E. Champion		4F	Texas
Joseph B. Champion		2M	Texas
A. C. Scott	Engineer	42M	Kentucky
Jeremiah Snooks		30M	Unknown

Richmond Champion was born December 20, 1820 to Abner and Frances Pounds Champion in Georgia. Exactly when he came to Texas is unknown but he was part of Captain Gill's Company during the Vasquez Campaign in the spring of 1842. He would receive two 160 acre certificates for his service. Richmond Champion returned to Georgia and wed Isabella Kirk

<sup>4</sup> BCDR: F 485/87

September 5, 1844 in Henry County, Georgia. Returning to Texas they would have their first child Margaret Elizabeth in 1846. On his return to Texas he often spelled his last named “Champin”.

Richmond Champion started to buy a few slaves and built a small cotton plantation. According to the 1860 Federal Agricultural Census he had 140 improved acres and \$2000 worth of farm equipment on the property. There were 15 horses, 5 mules, 50 milch cows, 5 oxen, 100 head of cattle, and 12 hogs on the plantation. The plantation produced 1200 bushels of corn and 105 bales of cotton in 1859. There were 19 slaves living in six dwellings on the property. The R. Champin family in the 1860 Federal Census:

R. Champin	Planter	39M	Georgia
Isabell Champin		34F	Georgia
Maggie Champin		13F	Texas
Joseph B. Champin		12M	Texas
Wiley J. Bridges	Farmer	18M	Georgia
Harriet E. Kirk		6F	Texas [Niece] <sup>5</sup>
Samuel B. Kirk		4M	Texas [Nephew]
William B. Maxey	Clerk	24M	Texas

Two of the children of Isabel’s brother Benjamin D. Kirk were living with the family. Benjamin with his wife Mary O. Kirk and their youngest daughter Isbella were living in Gonzales, Texas. Mary Kirk would die before the end of 1860.

At the beginning of the Civil War Richmond Champion joined Company B of Terry’s Texas Rangers as a private. After the Battle of Shiloh April 8, 1862 he was killed in action:

Camp, Near Corinth April 11, 1862

...Being joined by him [Captain Isaac Harrison] I returned to my position near the hospital, where I found Colonel Forrest commanding in person the company of his cavalry above named. On consultation with him it was determined to charge the enemy then formed for battle to our front. The charge was immediately executed. The front line of the enemy’s infantry and his cavalry in its rear was put to flight; a portion of the latter only after a hand-to-hand engagement with the Rangers had attested their superior skill in the use and management of pistol and horse. My command not having sabers and our shots being exhausted I ordered a retreat on the appearance of a strong line of infantry still to our front, which was well executed by the Rangers. I rallied and reformed them on the ground where the charge was begun, but the enemy did not advance. Shortly afterward I was ordered by General Breckinridge to the rear of his infantry and artillery.

I suppose 40 or 50 of the enemy were killed on the ground and doubtless many more were wounded. We captured 43 prisoners. My loss was 2 killed (Champion and Earnest) and 7

---

<sup>5</sup> Father was Benjamin D. Kirk and Mary Olive Daniels had three children Harriett E. b. March 3, 1854 d. January 16, 1921, Samuel Benjamin b. April 10, 1856 d. January 6, 1896, and Mary E. L. b. May 2, 1858 d. October 22, 1898 in Seguin, Texas. Mary Olive Kirk died in 1860 and Benjamin F. Kirk died in 1862 both in Brazoria County.



wounded, among them Captain [G.] Cook, Lieutenants [H.E.] Storey and Gordon; none mortally. Private Ash is missing...

The Rangers acted throughout the affair with admirable coolness and courage. I cannot say more than that they fully sustained the ancient fame of the name they bear; they could not do more. I cannot discriminate between them, because each one displayed a heroism worthy of the cause we are engaged for.

Very respectfully,

Thos. Harrison

Major, Commanding Texas Rangers<sup>6</sup>

Shortly thereafter his brother-in-law Benjamin Kirk also died in Brazoria County. Isabel Champion applied for guardianship of his three children June 30, 1862.<sup>7</sup>

March 9, 1860 Richmond Champion had written his last will and testament:

...As all the property of every kind and description of which my wife Isabela Champion and myself are possessed, is the proceeds of our joint labours care and management, and is consequently community property it is my intention and meaning in case of my death before my said wife, hereby to give & bequeath , and I do hereby Will that my two children Margaret Elizabeth Champion and Joseph B. Champion shall have my entire interest in all the property of every kind nature or description which I own & have either in my individual right or as community with my said wife Isabela and that all of my said property shall be equally divided between my said two children share & share alike in the manner at the time hereinafter specified.

It is my desire and I will that my wife Isabela Champion(in the event that I die before she does) shall have the entire management & control of my two children, Margaret Elizabeth Champion and Joseph B. Champion, both of their person and Estate that she exercise her own judgment as to the manner & \_\_\_\_ of educating them and that she retain in her hands and \_\_\_\_ her management & control all of their property, managing & controlling the same as she shall manage & control her own property; and as long as my said wife shall remain single & unmarried I desire & will that no other action than the \_\_\_\_ & probating this my last Will...

I desire & Will that my said wife shall keep and manage all of the property of my two children until my said son Joseph B. Champion shall have arrived at the age of twenty one years, at which time I desire & Will that she shall deliver to him all of the property of my Estate to which he may be entitled...I also desire & do Will that at the marriage or majority of my said daughter Margaret Elizabeth Champion my said wife shall deliver to my said daughter all of the property to which she may be entitled by virtue of the will...<sup>8</sup>

Richmond Champion had an estate valued at \$27,810 which included the 500 acre plantation, 320 acres in Bexar County, 12 head of horses, 150 head of cattle, and 22 slaves.

Isabel Champion was raising five children during the Civil War until her death October 11, 1864. Shortly thereafter her son Joseph B. Champion died. Her will dated the same day:

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<sup>6</sup> Letter Major Thomas Harrison to Colonel John A. Wharton *OR Armies* Vol X pp. 923-924. *The Weekly Telegraph*, April 30, 1862, Houston, Texas

<sup>7</sup> Probate Case 786,787, 788 Kirk Minors Brazoria County Clerk's Office, Angleton, Texas

<sup>8</sup> Record of Wills: C 503/04

I hereby declare this writing to be my last Will & Testament. It is my Will and Desire that my nieces Harriet E. Kirk and Mary J. S. Kirk be educated and supported out of my individual property until married or arrive at the age of eighteen years.

And further Will that my nephew Samuel B. Kirk be educated and supported until he is fifteen years of age. It is my wish that the amt. of debts owed to the Estate of W. Y. Weems be paid out of cotton now on hand as soon as sold---<sup>9</sup>

Possibly Isabel Champion felt that her husband's estate would take care of their children. Margaret Champion married Joseph L. Priestly November 7, 1865.

October 31, 1866 Margaret Priestly died at the residence of Henry Hanson at the town of Columbia. Being informed of the near approach of her death she gave a nuncupative will in the presence of four witnesses. All her possessions she willed to her husband Joseph L. Priestly. November 10, 1866 Priestly became the administrator of Margaret Priestly and Isabel Champion's estates. Priestly held that all property associated with the plantation as well as other small tracts of land which were in Richmond Champion's name had been the property of Isabel Champion.

With no lawyer representing the Kirk children it does not appear they received any funds. Joseph L. Priestly remained in Brazoria County to liquidate the estate. Now the land was only valued at \$3.00 per acre. Two hundred head of cattle on the property were sold to A. G. Champion, brother of Richmond Champion, for \$1000 in 1868. For the year 1870 Priestly rented the plantation for \$80 to E. R. Cox. He was ordered by the probate court to auction the plantation. March 12, 1870 M. W. Garrett and E. H. Cox bought the 500 acre plantation for \$3000 and additionally purchased some of the livestock and all the farm equipment on the property.<sup>10</sup> Joseph L. Priestly was now living in Washington County, Texas.

Over the next couple year J. L. Abrahams, who was in control of the Ward plantation just to the south of the Champion plantation, acquired the Champion property.<sup>11</sup> January 1, 1872 Abrahams sold the plantation to Dena Busch Vollbaum for \$3500.<sup>12</sup> Dena and Wilhelm Vollbaum had come to Brazoria County in the 1850's. By 1860 they had two children William age 6 and Gustave age 4 while Wilhelm was a carpenter. During the 1860's they lived in Brazoria where Wilhelm was appointed Postmaster February 13, 1866. In the 1870 Federal Census the William Vollbaum family was listed:

William Vollbaum	Farmer	48 M	Prussia (May have died same year)
Dina Vollbaum		41F	Prussia
William Vollbaum		16M	Texas
Gustave Vollbaum		14M	Texas
Charles Vollbaum		9M	Texas
Dina Vollbaum		4F	Texas

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<sup>9</sup> Record of Wills: D 216

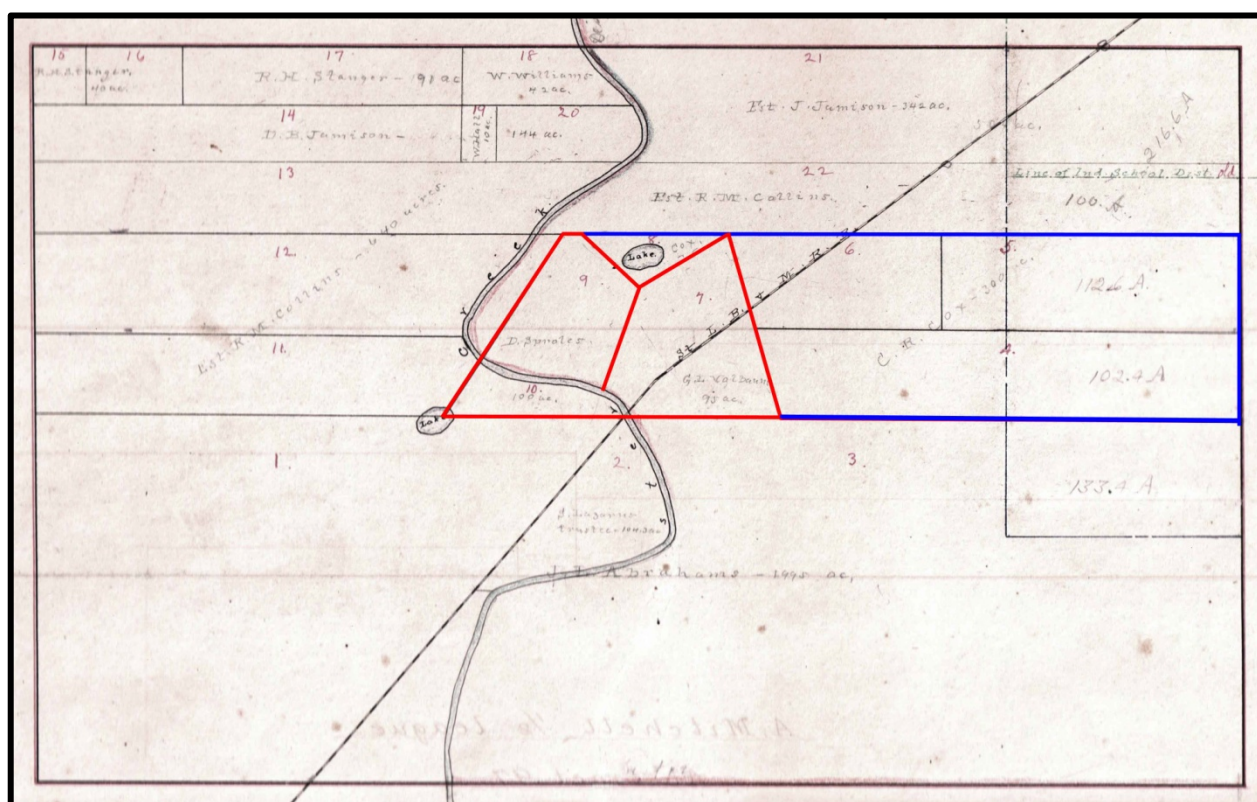
<sup>10</sup> BCDR: M 73/76

<sup>11</sup> BCDR: M 220/21, M 331/32 & M 664/68

<sup>12</sup> BCDR: M 693/94

Wilhelm Vollbaum died ~1870. Dena Vollbaum lost the plantation to creditors and Abner S. Lathrop bought the property. Lathrop sold it back to William H. Vollbaum for \$1100 in October 1875.<sup>13</sup> William H. Vollbaum used his half interest in the property to secure a \$300 note in 1875.<sup>14</sup>

The land was once again foreclosed on and J. L. Abrahams once again purchased the plantation at auction in 1878 for only \$150.<sup>15</sup> In 1880 Abrahams sold the property to Eugene J. Wilson, who had been trustee of the land, for \$150.<sup>16</sup> All of these transactions were set aside by court decree in 1882 with Dinah [Dena]Vollbaum and her children receiving a 200 acre homestead on Oyster Creek. C. R. Cox received 300 acres mostly the eastern end of the 500 tract.<sup>17</sup> Dena Vollbaum divided the 200 acre homestead between her two children G. L. Vollbaum and Dena Vollbaum Sproles in 1903.<sup>18</sup>



Asa Mitchell League Abstract 96 Courtesy of Brazoria County Historical Museum  
1994.005c.0091

<sup>13</sup> BCDR: P 148/49

<sup>14</sup> BCDR: P 138/39

<sup>15</sup> BCDR: Q 555/56

<sup>16</sup> BCDR: S 599/600

<sup>17</sup> BCDR: 22 343/45

<sup>18</sup> BCDR: 64 549/50

It is not known the exact location of the improvements or home site. The 100 acre tract owned by Dena Sproles was kept in the family for many years. A one acre tract was deeded from G. L. Vollbaum to Dena Sproles when he sold the rest of his land in 1918.<sup>19</sup> This may have contained a family graveyard.

None of the site has been surveyed archeologically. Several members of the Champion and Kirk families could be buried on the property also.

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<sup>19</sup> BCDR: 146 197/98

## Appendix A

### Richmond Champion Family Genealogy

Richmond Champion b. December 20, 1820 Georgia (Abner Champion 1789-1836 & Frances Pounds (1792-1860) Georgia

d. April 8, 1862 KIA Rear guard action after the Battle of Shiloh

m. September 5, 1844 Henry County, Georgia

Isabella M. Kirk b. 1825 Georgia (Joseph Kirk 1778-1834 & Martha Davis 1792-1870)

d. October 11, 1864 Columbia, Texas

A. Margaret Elizabeth Champion b. ~1846 Texas

d. October 31, 1866

m. November 7, 1865 Brazoria County, Texas

Joseph L. Priestly b. April 1836 (1841) Tennessee?

B. Joseph B. Champion b. ~1848

d. 1864??

## Appendix B

### A. Wilhelm Vollbaum Family Genealogy

A. Wilhelm Vollbaum b. 1822 Hanover, Germany

d. ~1870 Brazoria County, Texas

m. 1850 Germany

Dena Busch b. April 1827 Germany

d. 1900 Brazoria County, Texas

A. William Henry Vollbaum b. November 1, 1853 Texas

d. July 9, 1931 Texas

m.

Liesette Marie Luedecke

a. Valley Ivy Vollbaum b. September 12, 1885 d. 1972

B. Gustave Louis Vollbaum b. January 1855

C. Clara Vollbaum died infant

D. Charles Vollbaum b. 1861

d. 1884

E. Dena Vollbaum b. May 22, 1866

d. 1956

m. November 19, 1900 Brazoria County, Texas

William Solomon Sproles b. 1856

d. 1936

a. Carrie Lee Sproles. February 4, 1907 d. 1986

m.

R. C. Rich



## Appendix C

### Champion Plantation Deed Records

GRANTORS	GRANTEES	Kind of Instrument	Book	Page	Month	Day	Year	Acres	Description
Mexican Government	Asa Mitchell	Deed	ST		July	7	1824	4428	
Asa Mitchell	Eli Mitchell	Deed							Sold to his brother
Eli Mitchell	Edwin Waller	Deed	A	17/18	Dec	17	1836	1000	\$1500 Lower part of upper half of league on both sides of Oyster Creek
James Croft Archie Hodge John Hodge	Edwin Waller	Deed			May	21	1840		
Edwin Waller	Mosely Hooker	Deed	A	265/67	May	21	1840	1000	\$30,000 1000 acres + 12 slaves + farm equipment & crops growing
E. M. Pease	Samuel Harris	Deed	D	235/37	Jan	17	1844	1000	Foreclosure on Hooker \$3000 at auction
Samuel Harris	John Worrall Richmond Champion	Deed	F	485/87	March	23	1853	1000	\$6000
Isabel Champion Estate	E. H. Cox M. W. Garrett	Deed	M	73/76	March	18	1870	500	\$3000
E. H. Cox	J. L. Abrahams	Deed	M	220/21	June	21	1870	500	\$1250 ½ interest
M. W. Garrett	J. L. Abrahams	Deed	M	331/32	Nov	30	1870	500	Assumes notes of Garrett & Cox
J. L. Priestly	J. L. Abrahams	Deed	M	664/68	March	1	1871	500	Land turned over to Abrahams for assuming \$1500 note
J. L. Abrahams	Dena Vollbaum	Deed	M	693/94	Jan	1	1872	500	\$3500 Champion place
Sheriff	Abner S. Lathrop	Deed							Auction suit against Dinah Vollbaum
Abner S. Lathrop	William Vollbaum	Deed	P	148/49	Oct	7	1875	500	\$1100 in cotton & corn
William Vollbaum	George Duff Eugene J. Wilson	Mortgage	p	138/39	Oct	12	1875	500	\$300 debt secured by land
Eugene J. Wilson	J. L. Abrahams	Deed	Q	555/56	Jan	25	1878	500	\$150 Foreclosure sale
J. L. Abrahams	Eugene J. Wilson	Deed	S	599/600	July	5	1880	500	\$150
	E. R. Cox	Decree						300	
E. R. Cox	Mary J. Cox	Deed	6	540/44	Jan	13	1891	300	One of several tracts given to his wife
Children	E. R. Cox	Deed	42	70/75	Aug	2	1897	300	½ interest in tracts back to father
Children	E. R. Cox	Deed	55	95/99	June	4	1901	300	½ interest of their mother's estate
	Wm. Vollbaum	Decree	22	343/45	Nov	18	1882	200	Homestead to Vollbaums- 300 acres to E. R. Cox
Dina Vollbaum	G. L. Vollbaum Dina Sproles	Deed	64	549/50	May	2	1903	200	100 acres each her two children
W. H. Vollbaum	G. L. Vollbaum Dina Sproles	Deed	81	60/61	Sept	7	1908	200	\$150 each for his rights to the 200 acre homestead
G. L. Vollbaum	Mrs. E. A. Weems	Deed	146	197/98	May	4	1918	90	\$4495 3 tracts his section
Dena Sproles	Carrie Lee Sproles Rich	Deed	474	154/57	March	17	1950	101	Gift to her daughter

Appendix D  
Slaves own by Richmond Champion at His Death 1862

Tarber aged	55 years	
Tom	22	
Perry	13	
Jerry	23	
Peter	25	
Sarah Jane	17	man & wife
Bill	20	
Dice	17	man & wife
Dave	25	
Ann	22	
Mary	3	
Laura	1	One family
Charles	28	
Terry	26	
Missouri	12	
Kitty	9	
Major	5	
Mag	4	
Sarah	1	One family
Agnes	50	
Abbey	12	One family
Elija	30	

Appendix E  
Isabel Champion Estate December 1866

500 Acres of Land	@\$3.00per acre
200 Head of Cattle	@\$4.00 per head
4 Head of Mules	@\$50.00 per head
3 Yoke Oxen	@ \$40.00 per yoke
300 Bushels Corn	@ \$1.00 per bushel
2 Cart Wheels	@ \$10.00 per
1 Waggon	@ \$50.00
1 Corn Sheller	@ \$5.00
House Hold Furniture	@\$50.00
4 plows & sweeps	@ \$24.50

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Federal Population Schedule, Seventh Census of the United States.

1850    The State of Texas, Brazoria County

“Schedule 2—Slave Inhabitants in the County of Brazoria, Texas”

Federal Population Schedule, Eighth Census of the United States.

1860    The State of Texas, Brazoria County

“Schedule 2—Slave Inhabitants in the County of Brazoria, Texas”

Federal Population Schedule, Ninth Census of the United States.

1870

Federal Population Schedule, Tenth Census of the United States.

1880

Federal Population Schedule, Twelfth Census of the United States.

1900

Federal Population Schedule, Thirteenth Census of the United States.

1910

Federal Population Schedule, Fourteenth Census of the United States.

1920



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