

**Nathaniel Calloway**  
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November 17, 2021

Stephen D Crump  
District Attorney General  
Tenth Judicial District  
3855 N. Ocoee St., 3rd Floor  
P.O. Box 1351  
Cleveland, TN 37364-1351

Mr. Crump,

I am writing this letter in the hopes that you will overturn a decision court decision and correct a great injustice that was perpetrated towards my great great great grandfather and namesake, Nathaniel Grant.

Nathaniel was born a slave in Cleveland, TN in 1812 and was owned by Captain William Grant. I'm not here to lecture on the evils of slavery for I think we can both agree that it was a barbaric economic system that wreaked havoc on America and the rippling effects still reverberate today. Nathaniel should have never been born into slavery to begin with.

Nathaniel negotiated to buy his freedom for \$155 to which Captain Grant agreed and in 1853 Nathaniel was granted his freedom after four decades as a slave.

He was a free man, living his life and most likely working towards buying the freedom of his wife and eight children when on June 21, 1856 --almost three years after Nathaniel had been granted his freedom-- Justice of the Peace, William I. Campbell petitioned the county court to serve Nathaniel with papers under the Act of the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, passed February 24th 1854, to regulate manumission of slaves. The law stated that emancipated slaves had to be sent to Africa and it was designed to

regulate the number of free people of color in Tennessee. Please see an excerpt from the petition below. I have also enclosed copies of the original court documents as well as a transcribed copy.

State of Tennessee:

To the Sheriff of Bradley County

Whereas at the May Term of the circuit court of said county, 1856, William I. Campbell, a justice of the peace for the county and State aforesaid, filed his petition in said court against Nathan, a slave mentioned therein, under the Act of the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, passed February 24th 1854, to regulate the emancipation of slaves. And being ordered by said court to issue copies of said petition to be served on said slave Nathan. Now therefore, you are hereby commanded to serve said slave Nathan with one copy and William Grant, the former master, with one copy, both of which accompany this order. And see that you have the same done, so that you can return this order and your proceedings thereon to a circuit court to be held for Bradley County, at the courthouse in Cleveland on the first Monday of September next. Witness, John H. Payne, clerk of our said court, at office, in Cleveland the first Monday of May 1856.

(Issued June 21, 1856)

John H. Payne, clerk

Nathaniel was emancipated before the law was passed and should have remained a free man. According to court documents he was also informed that there was nothing further he needed to pursue with the courts in order to finalize his status as a free person. Please see below.

...This defendant was advised it was necessary that he take some steps in the county court of Bradley County, Tennessee in order to a complete compliance with the law and he accordingly presented his case to said county court to comply with any requirements made by them being anxious as he was to comply with the law but was informed by said court that nothing more was necessary and so matters have gone on until the filing of the petition in this case...

Nathaniel and Captain Grant fought the suit in court but ultimately the court decided against him and his fate was sealed.

I don't know what the motivation was of the justice of the peace William I. Campbell but I can assure you there was mal intent. Nathaniel was placed back into bondage under the "possession" of the county clerk.

...Petitioner prays that copies of this petition be served upon said slave and that said slave be brought into court and placed into the possession of the clerk of the court and that said clerk be directed by your Honor to hire him out until a fund shall be raised sufficient to transport him to the western coasts of Africa...

After the decision, Nathaniel remained in Cleveland just long enough to be loaned out for work so the court could raise enough funds for his passage to Liberia. Once he earned enough money for his passage, Nathaniel boarded the Liberia Packet Ship and never returned to his home in Cleveland. He died seven months after arriving in Monrovia from tsetse fever. He left behind 8 children and a wife.

The court documents refer to Nathaniel as "Boy" repeatedly but in fact he was very much a man. A man with hopes and dreams like any other man. He was a man with eight children and a wife whom he loved very much. He was a Methodist minister, a skilled carpenter and a leader in his community.

As a result of his absence and the passage of the Act of the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, his wife and kids remained in bondage until emancipation.

Nathaniel's wife and children are all buried in Fort Hill Cemetery right next to Captain Grant and his family. This is where he should have been buried.

I know having this decision overturned won't change the outcome but it will go a long way towards righting a wrong and maybe, just maybe heal an open wound that has an effect on all of us.

Sincerely,

Nathaniel Calloway

Cc:

Honorable Kevin Brooks

Professor Bryan Reed

Ricky Young, Times Free Press

Phyllis Callaway, Cleveland Historic Preservation

The answer of Nathan a free man  
of color to the Petition filed against  
him in this Honorable Court by William  
A Campbell an acting Justice of the  
Peace in the County of Bradley and  
State of Tennessee

This Defendant admits  
as charged in the Petition that he  
was formerly the slave of William Grant  
of Cleveland Tennessee and that he has  
by Contract or agreement been set free  
by his Master and is acting for him-  
self in the County of Bradley, but Defend-  
ant denies that the Contract or agreement  
under which he became or has been  
set free was made since the passage of  
the Act of the General Assembly of  
the State of Tennessee February 24<sup>th</sup> 1861.  
But Defendant here begs leave of the  
Honorable Court to state the date and  
terms of the Contract under which  
he acquired his freedom, for many  
years he had belonged to and was the  
slave of said William Grant and as  
such had endeavored to serve him hon-  
estly and faithfully and about six  
years ago his said Master in considera-  
tion of his former services and on account  
of the kind feelings he entertained to-  
wards this Defendant proposed to him  
that he would after a further service of  
five years in the same faithful manner  
in which he, this Defendant had been  
laboring for him, liberate and discharge

N. H.

State of Tennessee, this <sup>2nd</sup> first day of  
Bradley County, 7 September 1856 personally appeared before me  
John Mc Payne Circuit Court Clerk of,  
and for the County of Bradley and  
State of Tennessee Nathaniel a free man  
of color and the <sup>sons</sup> carried on the fore-  
going answer and after being by me  
duly sworn says, the facts in said answer  
stated in his own knowledge are true  
and those stated in the information  
of others, he believes to be true  
Sworn to and subscribed Nathaniel  
before me the date above written  
John St. Payne Clerk.

Answer of Nathaniel  
to answer of the  
State

Testimony of

W. D. Campbell

Given Sept one 1857.

J. St. Payne clerk

him from bondage and so far as  
he could would confer on him the  
right to freedom and of course this  
defendant was glad to accede to a proposition  
not once so kind in his master and as  
he then supposed likely to be such a loss  
to himself. This defendant then paid me  
of his own money over did the <sup>order is in my name</sup> ~~order~~ then again  
stated then requiring their freedom to  
be transported to the western coast of  
Africa. Defendant will further state that  
before the full lapse of the said five  
years during which he was to continue  
in the service of his master he succeeded  
at in raising the sum of one hundred &  
fifty five dollars which he paid to his  
Master William Grant for a release-  
ment and full discharge from bondage  
one year before the time at which he  
was to be discharged under the original  
contract, and at the time of the pay-  
ment of the above sum he was on the  
30th day of June 1855 his said Master  
executed to him in pursuance of their  
original contract a discharge and full  
allow from his service, which has been  
fully acknowledged recorded and reg-  
istered in Bradley County Tennessee  
which said release is here to the land  
shown. This Defendant was advised it  
was necessary that he take some steps  
in the County Court of Bradley County  
Tennessee in order to a complete com-  
pliance with the law and he accord-

single presented his case to said  
County Court to comply with any requi-  
sitions made by them being anxious as  
he was to comply with the law but  
was informed by said Court that nothing  
more was necessary and so matters  
stood gone on until the filing of the  
Petition in this case. This defendant  
will here state that ~~from~~ <sup>from</sup> the time  
of his contract for freedom, up to the time  
of the execution of his free papers as  
above stated he was more industrious and  
faithful to his Master if possible than  
he had before been, desiring to make some  
adequate returns for his Master's kindness  
and meet the full requirements on his  
part of the contract between them.  
This defendant admits he has no fund  
with which, or sufficient to transport  
him to the Western Coast of Africa nor  
does he deem it best for the present, to  
be so removed, he has a wife and several  
children to whom he is fondly attached  
and they are all slaves and final separa-  
tion most of necessity ensue if the re-  
moval of this defendant takes place. This  
defendant humbly <sup>trusts</sup> in the benefit of  
his original contract and prays that  
the petition filed against him and  
his former Master, <sup>be dismissed</sup> and that they be  
service discharged to

Rowland Hoyle  
Attorney for Deft

Northam



The Separate answer of William Grant to the Petition filed in this Court by William I Campbell an acting Justice of the Peace in and for Bradley County Tennessee against Nathan a freeman of Color and copy of which said Petition has also been served on this defendant.

This defendant has read the answer of said Nathan filed in this Court and believes the same to be correct and truly copies the same as his own answer. Defendant states that Nathan had been a faithful steward and good servant, and on this account and for the other considerations stated in Nathan's answer he did contract and agree to set him free and has done so as stated in said Nathan's answer. Defendant here begs leave to state that after this contract with Nathan entered into in the manner and at the time stated by him, he if possible would have more faithfully than ever before, and lived up to his contract in ever particular and on this account was as stated by him fully liberated from his service. Defendant was not aware that the law Nathan would be required to leave his family and go to Africa and yet desires that he might remain here, but his right to do so is a question of law submitted to the Honorable Court and now having fully answered defendant

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State of Tennessee:

To the Sheriff of Bradley County

Whereas at the May Term of the circuit court of said county, 1856, William I. Campbell, a justice of the peace for the county and State aforesaid, filed his petition in said court against Nathan, a slave mentioned therein, under the Act of the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, passed February 24th 1854, to regulate the emancipation of slaves. And being ordered by said court to issue copies of said petition to be served on said slave Nathan. Now therefore, you are hereby commanded to serve said slave Nathan with one copy and William Grant, the former master, with one copy, both of which accompany this order. And see that you have the same done, so that you can return this order and your proceedings thereon to a circuit court to be held for Bradley County, at the courthouse in Cleveland on the first Monday of September next. Witness, John H. Payne, clerk of our said court, at office, in Cleveland the first Monday of May 1856.

(Issued June 21, 1856)

John H. Payne, clerk

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(Order/Decree)

Be it remembered that at the January term of the Circuit Court for Bradley County, Tennessee held at the courthouse in the town of Cleveland in the county and state aforesaid this cause was continued by consent of parties and thereupon his honor, the Honorable John C. Gaut, presiding and holding said court, from sufficient cause appearing to the satisfaction of the court, from an inspection of the petition and answers in this cause, is pleased to order and adjudge and does order any adjudge and decree, that the boy Nathan named in the pleadings be kind out by the Clerk of this Court until the next term of the court to the highest bidder, herein giving bonds and security, and that the Clerk report his action in the premises to the next term of this court.

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To the Honorable John C. Gaut, Judge of the Third Judicial Circuit, holding the Circuit Court for Bradley County, Tennessee at Cleveland.

Your petitioner William I. Campbell an acting Justice of the Peace-in and for said county of Bradley would respectfully represent to your Honor that a Boy named Nathan formerly the slave of William Grant of Cleveland, Tennessee has by agreement been set free by his said master within the last two years, since the passage of the Act of the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, February 24th, 1854 "to regulate the emancipation of slaves." Your petitioner states that he is informed and believes the facts to be so that said slave has been set free by a

agreement or contract by the said master and that he is living and acting for himself in the county of Bradley-That said slave has no fund sufficient to transport him to the western coasts of Africa as contemplated by Act of Assembly--The -----considered Petitioner prays that copies of this petition be served upon said slave and that said slave be brought into court and placed into the possession of the clerk of the court and that said clerk be directed by your Honor to hire him out until a fund shall be raised sufficient to transport him to the western coasts of Africa and that the clerk report his action in the premises at each term of this court. And in duty bound will ever pray.

(filed May 13, 1856)  
William I. Campbell

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The answer of Nathan a free man of color to the petition filed against him in this Honorable Court by William I. Campbell an acting Justice of the Peace in the County of Bradley and State of Tennessee

This defendant admits as charged in the petition that he was formerly the slave of William Grant of Cleveland Tennessee and that he has by contract or agreement been set free by his master and is acting for himself in the county of Bradley but defendant denies that the contract or agreement under which he became or has been set free was made since the passage of the Act of the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, February 24th, 1854. But defendant here begs leave of the Honorable Court to state that date and terms of the contract under he acquired his freedom. For many years he had belonged to and was the slave of said William Grant and as such had endeavored to serve him honestly and faithfully and about six years ago his said master in consideration of his former services and on account of the kind feelings he entertained towards this defendants ----- to him that he would after a further service of five years in the same faithful manner in which he, this defendant, had been laboring for him liberate and discharge

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him from bondage and so far as he could would confer on him the right to freedom and of course this defendant was glad to accede to a ----- at once so kind in his master and as he then supposed likely to be such a ----- to himself. This defendant then had no apprehensions no did the law then require slaves then acquiring their freedom to be transported to the western coasts of Africa. Defendant will further state that before the full lapse of the said five years during which he was to continue in the service of his master he succeeded in raising the sum of one hundred and fifty five dollars which he paid to his master William grant for a releasement and full discharge from bondage one year before the time at which he was to be discharged under the original contract, and at the time of the payment of the above sum to wit on the 30th day of June 1855 his said master executed to him in pursuance of their original contract a discharge and full release from his service, which has been duly acknowledged, received and

registered in Bradley County, Tennessee which said release is here to the court shown. This defendant was advised it was necessary that he take some steps in the county court of Bradley County, Tennessee in order to a complete compliance with the law and he accord

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ingly presented his case to said county court to comply with any requirements made by them being anxious as he was to comply with the law but was informed by said court that nothing more was necessary and so matters have gone on until the filing of the petition in this case. This defendant will here state that from the time of his contract for freedom, up to the time of the execution of his free papers as above stated, he was more industrious and faithful to his master if possible than he had before been, hoping to make some adequate returns for his master's kindness, and meet the full requirements on his part of the contract between them. This defendant admits he has no fund with which, or sufficient to transport him to the western coast or Africa nor does he desire at least for the present, to be so removed. He has a wife and several children to whom he is fondly attached and they are all slaves and final separation most of necessity ensue if the removal of this defendant takes place. This defendant humbly insists on the benefit of his original contract and prays that the petition filed against him and his former master be dis----- and that they be discharged.

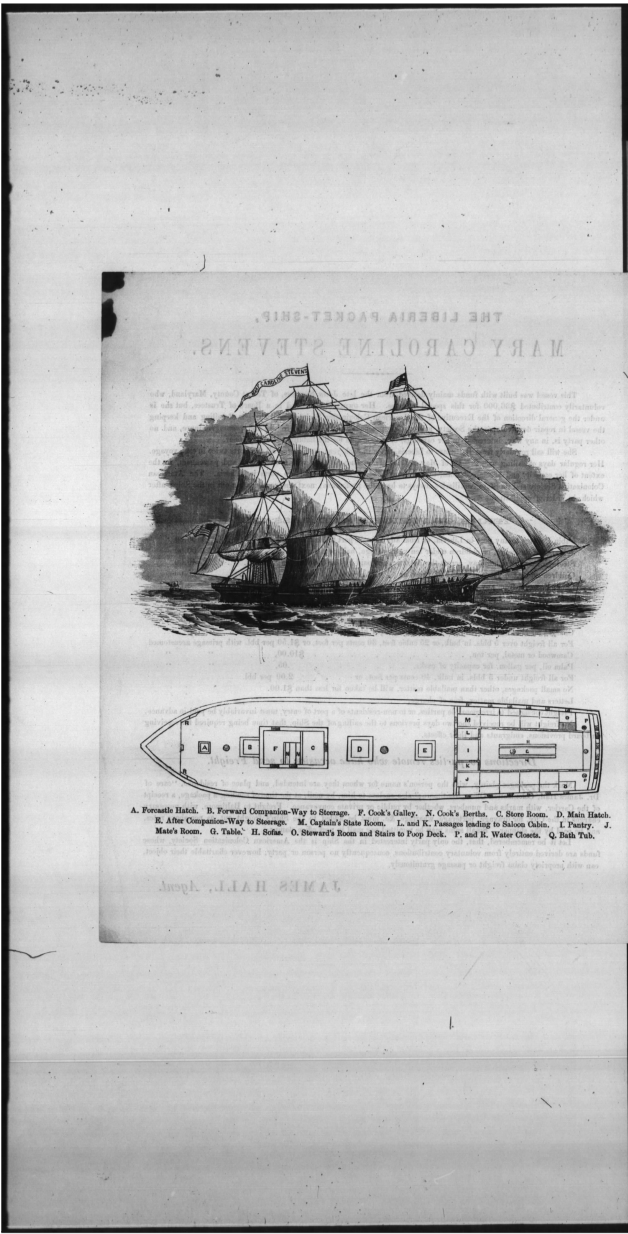
Nathan  
(filed September 2, 1856)

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The separate answer of William Grant to the petition filed in the court by William I. Campbell an acting Justice of the Peace in and for Bradley County, Tennessee against Nathan a freeman of color and a copy of which said petition has also been served on this defendant.

This defendant has read the answer of said Nathan filed in this court and believes the same to be correct and hereby adopts the same as his own answer. Defendant states that Nathan had been a faithful obedient and good servant and on this account and for the other considerations stated in Nathan's answer, he did contract and agree to set him free and has done so as stated in said Nathan's answer. Defendant here begs leave to state that after this contract with Nathan entered into in the manner and at the time stated by him, he of ----- served him more faithfully than ever before, and lived up to his contract in --- particular and in this account was a stated by him fully liberated from his service. Defendant was not aware that the boy Nathan would be required to leave his family and go to Africa and yet desires that he might remain here, but his right to do so is a question of law submitted to the Honorable Court. And now having fully answered defendant prays to be hence discharged.

William Grant  
(September 1, 1856)



Mrs. T.P. Gilmore



Description

Mrs. T.P. Gilmore was born into slavery under Captain Nathaniel Grant in the Bradley County area of Tennessee on March 29, 1856. Mrs. Tina (or Tena Gilmore began teaching in the African-American schools when black teachers began to replace white teachers in those schools. According to different local newspaper stories, Mrs. Gilmore was the youngest of seven or nine children born to Nathaniel and Caroline. She died on October 22, 1957 at the age of 101 years.

Result 1 of 1 in this book for "Nathan Grant" monrovia

161	William B. "....."	.10.....do.	
162	Mary E. Norman,.....	.2.....do.	
	WASH'N COLLEGE, TENN (For <i>Monrovia</i> .)		
163	Peter Jones,.....	.55.....Slave.	Purchased himself.
	CLEVELAND, TENN. (For <i>Monrovia</i> .)		
164	Nathan Grant,.....	.29.....Free.	<i>died Nov 15, 1857 at Clay Ashland</i>
	GAINESVILLE, ALA. (For <i>Monrovia</i> .)		
165	Henry Brackett,.....	.26.....Slave.	Em. by Mrs. A. Brackett.
	MERCER CO., KY. (For <i>Monrovia</i> .)		
166	Martin Clark,.....	.50.....do.	
167	Artemesia "....."	.41.....do.	
168	Battle "....."	.22.....do.	