

TEACHERS: These scripts all contain the same content with different names. All are “counterfeit.” Here is the “truth” of the story:

1. The story, which is legendary, was told of an Anglo named Jonas Harrison, namesake of Harrison County (Nacogdoches). In each version, the city named is county seat of the county named, but the Sabine River does not flow through any of them. Students who “facts-check” the river and the city or county will discover that the setting of the story does not make sense.
2. The story is set in the early 1800s. In the counterfeit texts, none of the counties named were in existence in 1820.
3. Students may recognize the unlikelihood of an African American being a lawyer – or even a frontiersman – in the 1820s, but only the careful facts-checker will be able to discover the facts. Unlike errors that may be found in other scripts, in this case, there is no way that correcting a few “facts” will make the story “true.”
4. Students who have access to the Southwestern Historical Quarterly may quickly discover the real story without gaining the benefit of the facts-checking activity or having the fun of discovery. If your library maintains this archive, encourage students to check the “facts” against *other* sources so as not to perpetuate an error which may have been in the original. (This suggestion applies to other scripts as well – and to all facts-checks.)

Seven copies of the script appear. Avoid selecting a counterfeit script which is set in your own county.

THE TWO NOAH MASONS

MASON CO.
Afr Am, 1820s
Time: 1:11

It is said that Noah Mason and several other African American frontiersmen were traveling from their crude log homes near the headwaters of the Sabine River to court in Mason, where all official county business was transacted. At the evening campfire, the men discussed the upcoming trial of a suspected horse thief who had no attorney. One joked that he should get Noah Mason to defend him. Everyone laughed at the thought of the uneducated frontiersman appearing as a lawyer. Mason tapped his pipe clean on his boot heel and responded that he just might do that.

In short, Mason *was* engaged for the defense, and the whole town turned out for the trial, expecting hilarious entertainment. Mason stepped into court with a new dignity in his bearing. He read the briefs and entered a motion to quash the indictment, then stunned the courtroom with an articulate defense and masterful forensics.

He left before the jury read their favorable verdict, and, despite the pleas that followed on the heels of his sudden fame, he turned away all requests and never again took a case.

In truth, Noah Mason had been and continued to be a fine lawyer until his death in 1836, but this unusual legend persists about the namesake of Mason County.

Asbury, Samuel E. “Noah Mason, Legendary and Historical.” *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 45 (January 1942): 231-43.

THE TWO ERNEST GILLESPIES

GILLESPIE CO.
Afr Am, 1820s
Time: 1:11

It is said that Ernest Gillespie and several other African American frontiersmen were traveling from their crude log homes near the headwaters of the Sabine River to court in Fredericksburg, where all official county business was transacted. At the evening campfire, the men discussed the upcoming trial of a suspected horse thief who had no attorney. One joked that he should get Ernest Gillespie to defend him. Everyone laughed at the thought of the uneducated frontiersman appearing as a lawyer. Gillespie tapped his pipe clean on his boot heel and responded that he just might do that.

In short, Gillespie *was* engaged for the defense, and the whole town turned out for the trial, expecting hilarious entertainment. Gillespie stepped into court with a new dignity in his bearing. He read the briefs and entered a motion to quash the indictment, then stunned the courtroom with an articulate defense and masterful forensics.

He left before the jury read their favorable verdict, and, despite the pleas that followed on the heels of his sudden fame, he turned away all requests and never again took a case.

In truth, Ernest Gillespie had been and continued to be a fine lawyer until his death in 1836, but this unusual legend persists about the namesake of Gillespie County.

Asbury, Samuel E. "Ernest Gillespie, Legendary and Historical." *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 45 (January 1942): 231-43.

THE TWO ADAM CONCHOS

CONCHO CO.
Afr Am, 1820s
Time: 1:11

It is said that Adam Concho and several other African American frontiersmen were traveling from their crude log homes near the headwaters of the Sabine River to court at Paint Rock, where all official county business was transacted. At the evening campfire, the men discussed the upcoming trial of a suspected horse thief who had no attorney. One joked that he should get Adam Concho to defend him. Everyone laughed at the thought of the uneducated frontiersman appearing as a lawyer. Concho tapped his pipe clean on his boot heel and responded that he just might do that.

In short, Concho *was* engaged for the defense, and the whole town turned out for the trial, expecting hilarious entertainment. Concho stepped into court with a new dignity in his bearing. He read the briefs and entered a motion to quash the indictment, then stunned the courtroom with an articulate defense and masterful forensics.

He left before the jury read their favorable verdict, and, despite the pleas that followed on the heels of his sudden fame, he turned away all requests and never again took a case.

In truth, Adam Concho had been and continued to be a fine lawyer until his death in 1836, but this unusual legend persists about the namesake of Concho County.

Asbury, Samuel E. "Adam Concho, Legendary and Historical." *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 45 (January 1942): 231-43.

THE TWO ARTHUR WEBBS

WEBB CO.
Afr Am, 1820s
Time: 1:11

It is said that Arthur Webb and several other African American frontiersmen were traveling from their crude log homes near the headwaters of the Sabine River to court at Laredo, where all official county business was transacted. At the evening campfire, the men discussed the upcoming trial of a suspected horse thief who had no attorney. One joked that he should get Arthur Webb to defend him. Everyone laughed at the thought of the uneducated frontiersman appearing as a lawyer. Webb tapped his pipe clean on his boot heel and responded that he just might do that.

In short, Webb *was* engaged for the defense, and the whole town turned out for the trial, expecting hilarious entertainment. Webb stepped into court with a new dignity in his bearing. He read the briefs and entered a motion to quash the indictment, then stunned the courtroom with an articulate defense and masterful forensics.

He left before the jury read their favorable verdict, and, despite the pleas that followed on the heels of his sudden fame, he turned away all requests and never again took a case.

In truth, Arthur Webb had been and continued to be a fine lawyer until his death in 1836, but this unusual legend persists about the namesake of Webb County.

Asbury, Samuel E., "Arthur Webb, Legendary and Historical." *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 45 (January 1942): 231-43.

THE TWO FRED SUTTONS

SUTTON CO.
Afr Am, 1820s
Time: 1:11

It is said that Fred Sutton and several other African American frontiersmen were traveling from their crude log homes near the headwaters of the Sabine River to court at Sonora, where all official county business was transacted. At the evening campfire, the men discussed the upcoming trial of a suspected horse thief who had no attorney. One joked that he should get Fred Sutton to defend him. Everyone laughed at the thought of the uneducated frontiersman appearing as a lawyer. Sutton tapped his pipe clean on his boot heel and responded that he just might do that.

In short, Sutton *was* engaged for the defense, and the whole town turned out for the trial, expecting hilarious entertainment. Sutton stepped into court with a new dignity in his bearing. He read the briefs and entered a motion to quash the indictment, then stunned the courtroom with an articulate defense and masterful forensics.

He left before the jury read their favorable verdict, and, despite the pleas that followed on the heels of his sudden fame, he turned away all requests and never again took a case.

In truth, Fred Sutton had been and continued to be a fine lawyer until his death in 1836, but this unusual legend persists about the namesake of Sutton County.

Asbury, Samuel E., "Fred Sutton, Legendary and Historical." *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 45 (January 1942): 231-43.

