

Margaret Finch's probate case file folder of June 1860 (shown below) includes the names of the slaves that she and her sister Nancy (through her husband William Danforth) petitioned the court to order to be sold so that their value could be equitably divided among the several heirs of Hugh Finch (known to be her siblings or their descendants). These heirs included Margaret's nephew William H. Timmons as one of the defendants against the petition. (Apparently, William and the others did not want to sell the slaves in question, possibly out of regard for their faithful service or from fears of seeing them purchased by less caring owners. Still, one wonders why none of the "defendants" against Margaret's petition offered to buy the slaves outright, paying the balance of their value to the other co-owners.)

Notwithstanding the disagreement over the slave question, Margaret lived in William's household in 1860 and would continue to live there until her death in 1899. Even so, she still had William summoned by the sheriff to testify in court regarding her petition to sell the slave Silva and Silva's children in order that their value could be equitably distributed among the owners in common and their descendants. The court ruled in Margaret's favor, so the slaves were sold, but the records of that sale have not yet been separated from within the very large pile of papers in the estate's probate files.