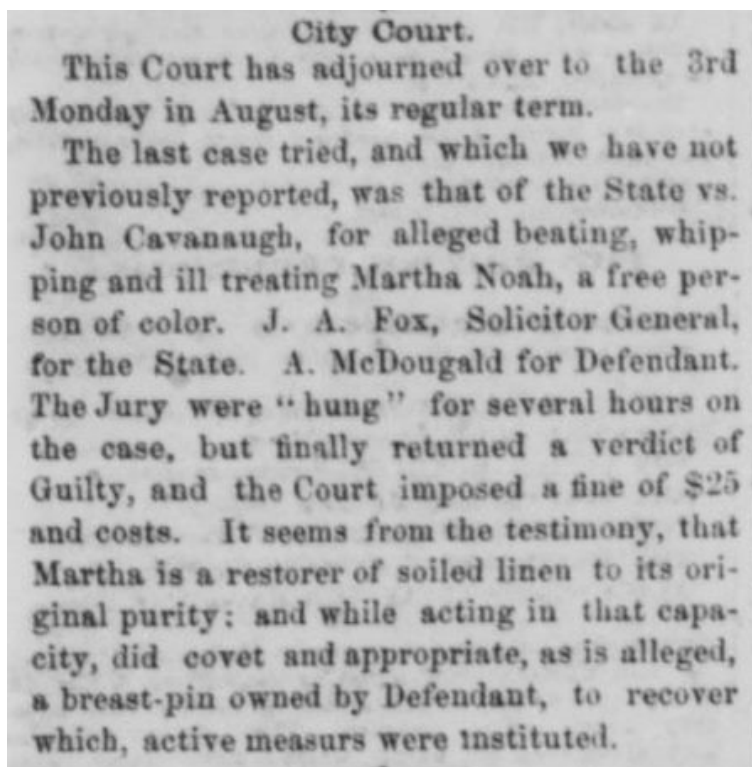


Today in Columbus History: On Saturday, May 24, 1856, the Columbus *Daily Sun* reported on a case that had been decided in City Court. John Cavanaugh was charged with "beating, whipping and ill treating" a free woman of color named Martha Noah. Cavanaugh alleged that Martha stole a piece of jewelry that was attached to some clothing he had taken to her for washing. The jury found him guilty and fined him \$25. Martha was not a slave; she had somehow gained her freedom – either through manumission by her owner (sometimes this was at the death of the owner – in his will) or purchasing her own freedom. In Martha's case, it was probably the former; as a washerwoman, her financial status would have been iffy. Note that by 1860, there were about 85 free persons of color living in Columbus (for names, see John W. Mallory's article in *Muscogiana* (Vol. 1 #4, 1990, p.229+ ; available at <https://csuepress.columbusstate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi...>).

Compiled by Callie McGinnis, Muscogee Genealogical Society

Our snippets of Columbus history are usually based on a few days-worth of searching through the most popular sources for Muscogee County history. Meant to inspire readers to explore more about Columbus history, they are not exhaustive dissertations on the topic and may contain mistakes. If you have corrections or additional information, feel free to share them with the group.

Clipping from Georgia Historic Newspapers (GALILEO).
<https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu>



City Court.
This Court has adjourned over to the 3rd Monday in August, its regular term.
The last case tried, and which we have not previously reported, was that of the State vs. John Cavanaugh, for alleged beating, whipping and ill treating Martha Noah, a free person of color. J. A. Fox, Solicitor General, for the State. A. McDougald for Defendant. The Jury were "hung" for several hours on the case, but finally returned a verdict of Guilty, and the Court imposed a fine of \$25 and costs. It seems from the testimony, that Martha is a restorer of soiled linen to its original purity: and while acting in that capacity, did covet and appropriate, as is alleged, a breast-pin owned by Defendant, to recover which, active measures were instituted.