

STORY OF RANSOM HUNTER

Teacher Background: The Work Ransom Hunter Did

Ransom Hunter held multiple working roles within the community of Freedom, reflecting the realities of life in a 19th-century self-sustaining settlement. In addition to farming his land, historical records indicate that he also worked as a carpenter, a blacksmith, and with horses through farrier and livery work. These were not secondary or symbolic roles. They were essential trades that allowed a rural community to function, grow, and remain economically independent.

As a farmer, Ransom Hunter grew food and raised animals to support his household and contribute to the broader community. As a carpenter, he helped build homes and other wooden structures needed for families to settle and establish permanent residence. As a blacksmith, he worked with metal tools and equipment required for farming, building, and transportation. Through his work with horses, including farrier services and the operation of livery stations, he supported travel, hauling, and agricultural labor at a time when horses were central to daily life.

Ransom Hunter owned and operated two livery stations. A livery station was a place where horses were housed, fed, cared for, and sometimes rented or exchanged for travel. These stations also served as important community hubs, supporting transportation, commerce, and communication. Operating a livery required a combination of skills, including animal care, stable management, and mechanical repair. Ransom Hunter's work as a blacksmith directly supported this operation, as he would have been responsible for shoeing horses, repairing metal equipment, and maintaining tools and wagons. His farrier and blacksmithing skills were therefore closely integrated with his livery business.

On Ransom Hunter's property, a large rock was used as a mounting stone, allowing people to stand higher in order to mount their horses more easily. This practical feature reflects how his land functioned as an active working site and gathering place. That same rock remains on the land today and is located on the site where the modern playground now stands, connecting present-day community life to the physical landscape of Ransom Hunter's era.

Together, these roles positioned Ransom Hunter as both a skilled laborer and a central community resource. His ability to perform and share practical trades helped other men earn a living, reduced reliance on outside services, and strengthened the economic stability of Freedom. His work was not only about individual survival. It was foundational to community building, mutual support, and long-term settlement.

Ransom Hunter was not only a worker within Freedom. He was its founder and leader. He established the community, identified and invited families to settle there, and helped organize the labor, land use, and shared responsibilities that allowed the settlement to grow. He gave land for a school, built two churches, and preached at one of them. These actions reflect both practical leadership and moral guidance, showing how faith, education, and work were woven together in the life of the community.

For classroom instruction, these roles provide a concrete way to help students understand how communities functioned in the past. They also demonstrate how one individual's skills, labor, leadership, and generosity could shape the development of an entire settlement.

Ransom Hunter's story offers educators a historically grounded example of entrepreneurship, community formation, and civic responsibility in early North Carolina.

Job Descriptions (Teacher Reference)

Farmer

Ransom Hunter grew food, raised animals, and worked his land to support his household and others in the community.

Carpenter

Ransom Hunter built homes and other wooden buildings for families living in Freedom.

Blacksmith

Ransom Hunter worked with metal tools and equipment needed for farming, building, and working with horses.

Horse Worker (Farrier / Livery)

Ransom Hunter worked with horses, cared for them, and helped manage their use for farm work and travel.

Optional Teacher Talking Points

- One person can do many kinds of work
- Work helped the whole community survive
- Skills were shared so others could earn a living
- Helping others was an important part of Ransom Hunter's life