

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Major William Brogden, once a soldier in the American Revolution, owned Roedown. Horse breeding, and farming of tobacco, wheat and grains were some of tasks of the land, and Brogden, like many large land holders of his time, used slave labor to attend to the duties of the plantation. At the time of his death in 1824, property inventories indicate Brogden owned upwards of eighty slaves. History has shown us that one of those slaves would go on to leave an imprint on the story of slavery in Maryland and the United States. The 1825 inventory lists this slave as one of the three children of Louisa but we have come to know his name as William Parker.

Born in 1822 on Roedown, William Parker was the original property of Major Brogden, but after Brogden's death, he became the property of Brogden's son, David (Mack) Brogden. Parker and his brother Charles fled from Roedown in 1839, running first to Baltimore City, then on to York, Columbia, and Christiana, Pennsylvania. Parker notes a number of reasons for running away in his autobiography, published in two parts of the Atlantic Monthly in 1866, but most prevalent among them, was the fear of being sold by "Master Mack."