

## Enslaved Men of the City of Savannah

Through an examination of records preserved in the City's Municipal Archives, eleven men were identified as enslaved by the City of Savannah through purchases between 1830 and 1864.

**Chance**, Scavengers Department, purchased May 1830

**Monday**, Scavengers Department, purchased July 1830

**Bob**, Scavengers Department, purchased July 1830

**Ben**, Scavengers Department, purchased April 1831

**Unknown Man One**, Scavengers Department, purchased February 1832

**Unknown Man Two**, Scavengers Department, purchased February 1832

\***Joe**, Scavengers Department, purchased June 1842

\***London**, Scavengers Department, purchased July 1842, sold November 1842

**Unknown Man Five**, Water Works Department, purchased May 1861

**Unknown Man Six**, Water Works Department, purchased May 1861

**Ellick**, department unknown, purchased July 1864

*\*Previously identified as Unknown Man Three and Four.*

## Enslaved Laborers secured by City through Hiring-out System\*

*Enslaved laborer (hired from), City department, year*

**Damon** (Mary E. Long), Driver City Wagon, 1826-28

**Nero** (Elias Reed), Streets, Docks, & Trees, 1830-31

**Tom** (Hatcher), Streets, Docks & Trees, 1830

**Tony** (L.S. D'Lyon), Streets, Docks & Trees, 1830-31

**Adam** (City Marshals F.M. Stone, A. Harmon), Scavengers, 1835-37

**Damon** (City Marshal), Scavengers, 1835

**Daniel** (City Marshal A. Harmon), Streets & Lanes, 1837

**Ephram** (J.J. Maxwell), Scavengers, 1839

**Monday** (Thomas B. Baker), Scavengers, 1839

**Will** (C.G. Cramer), Scavengers, 1839

**Cassino** (Sarah Adams), Scavengers, 1842-45

**Jack** (F.M. Stone), Scavengers, 1842, 1844

**John** (Sarah Adams), Scavengers, 1842, 1844-45

**Sam/Samuel** (F.M. Stone), Scavengers, 1842, 1844

**Anthony** (John Hover), Scavengers, 1844-45

**Bob** (John Hover), Scavengers, 1844-45

**Cato** (F.A. Demerie), Scavengers, 1844

**Charles** (James T. Webb), Scavengers, 1844

**Dennis** (John Hover), Scavengers, 1844-45

**Jack** (John Hover), Scavengers, 1844-45

**Jacob** (R.J. Brantley), Scavengers, 1844

**Jim** (Emanuel Sheftall), Scavengers, 1844-46

**Joe** (James T. Webb), Scavengers, 1844

**Joe** (John Hover), Scavengers, 1844-45

**John** (James T. Webb), Scavengers, 1844

**July** (Mrs. Pettigrew), Scavengers, 1844

**Anthony** (William B. Fleming), Scavengers, 1852-53

**Jim/James** (Olsen O'Rourke), Scavengers/Streets & Lanes, 1852-54, 1857-60

**John** (P.K. Shiels), Scavengers/Laurel Grove Cemetery/Pumps, 1852-53

**Paul** (Mrs. Eliza Huguenin), Streets & Lanes/Scavengers, 1852-53

**Jane** (Mrs. Eliza Huguenin), Scavengers, 1853

**Tom** (W. Russell), Market, 1856

**Jim** (James Brown), Streets & Lanes, 1857

**Charles** (James Brown), Streets & Lanes, 1858

*\*This list: includes enslaved individuals identified as "hired" in City records; may not include all individuals who worked for the City under the hiring-out system; is not inclusive of those who received wages directly.*

## Primary Sources for Researching Municipal Slavery

Record Series 5600CT-360, City Treasurer – **Account Ledgers-City Departments, 1837-1851, 1853-1857, 1859-1865**

Record Series 5600CT-400, City Treasurer – **Annual Settlements, 1819-1853**

Record Series 5600CT-410, City Treasurer – **Cash Books, 1806-1864\***

Record Series 5600CT-540, City Treasurer – **Cash Books, 1806-1809, 1824-1831**

Record Series 5600CL-005.1-A, Clerk of Council – **City Council Minutes (Official Proceedings of City Council), 1791-1865\***

**Mayor's/Municipal Annual Reports for the City of Savannah, Georgia, 1855-1858, 1860-1863\***

**Savannah City Codes, 1854, 1858, 1871\***

*\*Digitized or partially digitized and available online through [www.savannahga.gov/DigitalCollections](http://www.savannahga.gov/DigitalCollections)*

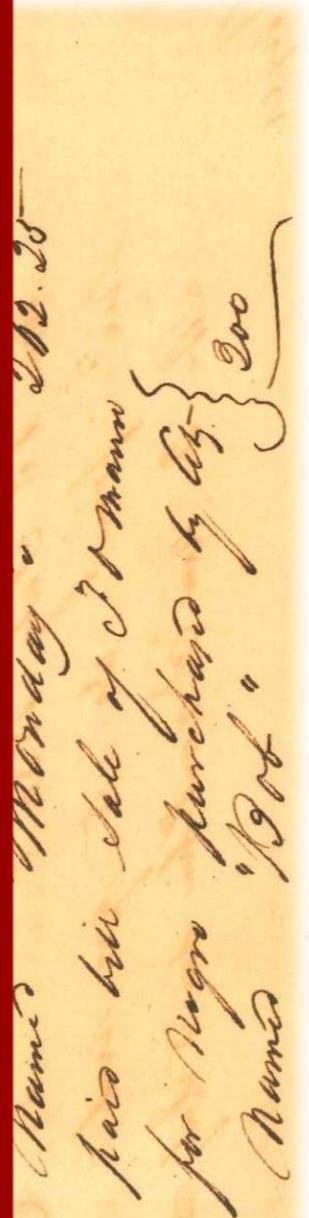
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**SAVANNAH**   
Municipal Archives

October 2023

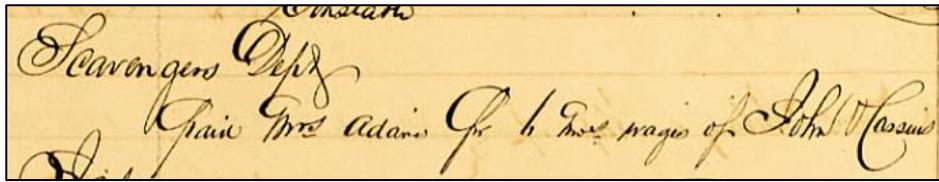
# Municipal Slavery

in Savannah, Georgia



# Municipal Slavery in Savannah, Georgia

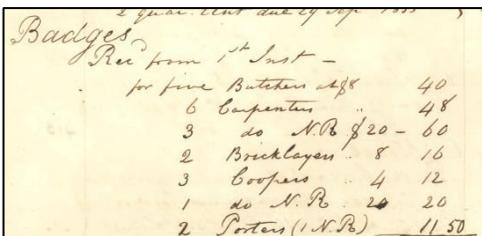
Learn more at [www.savannahga.gov/slavery](http://www.savannahga.gov/slavery)



Cash book showing City paid Mrs. Adams \$100.00 for six month wages for John and Cassino for the Scavengers Department. Record Series 5600CT-410, City Treasurer – Cash Books, Vol. 8, Aug. 1844

During the nineteenth century, the City of Savannah participated in the use of enslaved labor through the hiring-out system and by owning enslaved individuals for work on municipal projects. Many enslaved laborers were rented or “hired-out” to others who paid the owner for their services. Some enslaved people were able to hire themselves out and keep the wages.<sup>i</sup>

Between 1826-1828, the City of Savannah paid Mary E. Long multiple times for the services of an enslaved man named Damon to drive the City Wagon. Throughout the 1830s-1850s, the City paid for the labor of numerous enslaved men to work in the Scavengers Department, including Will, Cassino, Cato, Jim, and Anthony, among others. Some workers were used for an assortment of tasks, like John (hired-out from P. K. Shiels) who worked in Laurel Grove Cemetery and, with the City’s pumps, as well as with the Scavengers Department.<sup>ii</sup> The City used enslaved labor to: build and repair roads; clear roads of weeds, trash, or dead animals; fight fires; develop public property like Laurel Grove Cemetery and Forsyth Park; and work on local fortification projects.



Examples of badges required for enslaved workers: butchers, carpenters, bricklayers, coopers, and porters. Record Series 5600CT-410, City Treasurer – Cash Books, Vol. 7, Sep. 1835

To regulate the lives of enslaved people and free people of color, Savannah City Council passed local ordinances or laws. One such ordinance regulated their ability to work in the city and required work badges for all enslaved people and free people of color. The badges, valid for one year, were priced according to categories and a fee was paid to the Clerk of Council.<sup>iii</sup>

WATER WORKS.	
The revenue from this source during the present year amounts to.....	\$16,123 74
The expenditures are as follows:	
Pay Roll, Coal, and sundry passed bills.....	\$9,648 19
Purchase of two negro men.....	1,610 00
	11,258 19
Amount received over disbursements.....	\$4,865 55

The purchase of these two negroes is an economical movement. The above expenses also embrace the cost of six months supply of coal now on hand, and a draining pump costing \$500.

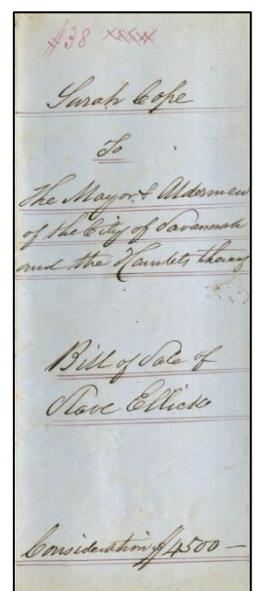
Report on the Water Works including the statement “the purchase of these two negroes is an economical movement.” Report of Charles C. Jones, Jr., Mayor of the City of Savannah, for the Year Ending September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1861, p16

In the 1830s and 1840s, City Council authorized purchases of enslaved men for the Scavengers Department, which was responsible for removing debris from the city. Research suggests that housing for the men was located at either the City Pound (on Perry Lane behind Colonial Park Cemetery in the 1840s) or the Scavengers Lot at West Boundary Street.<sup>iv</sup>

In May 1861, the City purchased two men to work for the Water Works Department. The Mayor’s Annual Report lists the purchase as an “economical movement.” Water Works Superintendent M. Desvergers was recorded in the City Treasurer’s Cash Book as the purchaser of the two men.

The City’s collection of property deeds provides documentation of what appears to be the last purchase of an enslaved person by the City. On July 21, 1864, the City paid Sarah Cope \$4,500.00 Confederate dollars (the equivalent of about \$225.00 US dollars at the time) for the enslaved man Ellick.<sup>v</sup>

Many of the City’s records lack the names of the enslaved people that the City owned or hired, making it difficult to fully document the history of these individuals. However, their contributions to the improvement of Savannah’s infrastructure, parks and squares, and public spaces cannot be overemphasized.



“Bill of Sale of Slave Ellick, Consideration \$4500.” Record Series 0115-001 (DDS) City Council Meeting Papers – Deeds, #38

Learn more about the City of Savannah’s use of slavery to support municipal work at [www.savannahga.gov/slavery](http://www.savannahga.gov/slavery)

<sup>i</sup> Whittington B. Johnson, *Black Savannah 1788-1864* (Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 1996), page 95.

<sup>ii</sup> “Municipal Slavery Project – Phase II, Transcription Spreadsheet,” compiled by Mark Clark O’Dell for the City of Savannah Municipal Archives, 2023 (available online at: <https://www.savannahga.gov/1452/Municipal-Slavery>, last accessed 29 September 2023).

<sup>iii</sup> Charles S. Henry, compiled by, *A Digest of all the Ordinances of the City of Savannah, Which Where [sic] of Force on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 1854*, pages 339-340.

<sup>iv</sup> Official Proceedings of City Council, 19 September 1844, page 18, City of Savannah, Clerk of Council’s Office; “Plan of City Pound Lot,” Record Series 3121-008, Engineering Department – East/West Maps, Map #EW/E-232; “Scavenger Lot,” Record Series 3121-008, Engineering Department – East/West Maps, Map #EW/W-233.

<sup>v</sup> \$225.00 US dollars in 1864 is equivalent to approximately \$4,400.00 in 2023; Tim McMahon, “Confederate Inflation Rates: 1861-1865,” InflationData.com, April 3, 2013.