

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

***Unknown Man Three**, Scavengers Department, purchased June 1842

***Unknown Man Four**, Scavengers Department, purchased between 1841 and 1842

***London**, 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

**Unknown Man Three or Four could possibly be London.*

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*

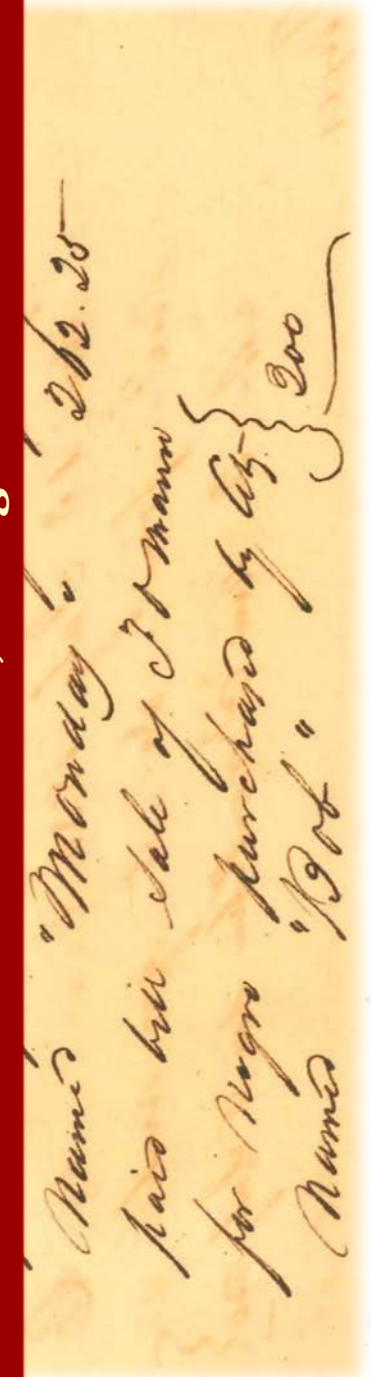
**digitized and available online through www.savannahga.gov/DigitalCollections*



City of Savannah, Georgia
Research Library & Municipal Archives
City Hall, Room 103, Bay Street at Bull Street
P. O. Box 1027, Savannah, Georgia 31402
(912) 651-6412
www.savannahga.gov/MunicipalArchives

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Municipal Slavery in Savannah, Georgia



Municipal Slavery in Savannah, Georgia

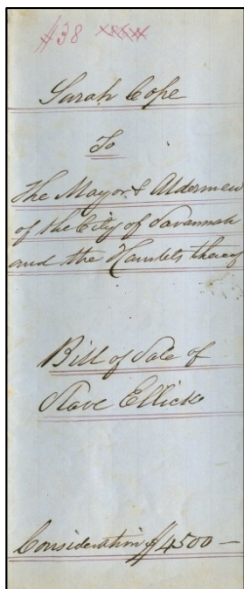
Learn more at www.savannahga.gov/slavery

Category	Quantity	Cost
for five Butcher wages		40
6 Carpenters		48
3 do N.B. \$20-		60
2 Bricklayers		16
3 Coopers		12
1 do N.B.		20
2 Porters (N.B.)		11 50

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

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

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



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

During the nineteenth century, the City of Savannah participated in the use of slave labor through the hiring-out system and by owning slaves for work on municipal projects. Many slaves 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.ⁱ In 1835, the City of Savannah paid Mary E. Long and the City Marshal multiple times for the services of an enslaved man named Adam.ⁱⁱ The City used slave labor to repair roads, clear roads of weeds, trash or dead animals, and at different times to work on local fortification projects.

To regulate the lives of enslaved people and free people of color, Savannah City Council passed local ordinances. 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.ⁱⁱⁱ

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 the men may have been housed at either the City Pound (on Perry Lane behind Colonial Park Cemetery in the 1840s) or the Scavengers Lot at West Boundary Street.^{iv}

In May 1861, the City purchased two men for the Water Works Department. The Mayor’s Annual Report lists the purchase as an “economical move.” 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) for the enslaved man Ellick.^v

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 buildings cannot be overemphasized.

Learn more about the City of Savannah’s use of slavery to support municipal work at www.savannahga.gov/slavery

ⁱ Whittington B. Johnson, *Black Savannah 1788-1864* (Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 1996), page 95.
ⁱⁱ “Scavengers Department,” July 1835, Record Series 5600CT-410, City Treasurer – Cash Book, Volume 7, 1835-1839, pages 20, 24.
ⁱⁱⁱ Charles S. Henry, compiled by, *A Digest of all the Ordinances of the City of Savannah, Which Where [sic] of Force on the 1st July 1854*, pages 339-340.
^{iv} 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.
^v Tim McMahon, “Confederate Inflation Rates: 1861-1865,” InflationData.com, April 3, 2013.