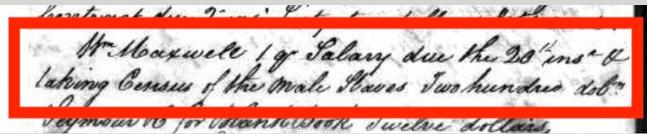


Phase III Overview

The City of Savannah participated in the use of enslaved labor throughout the nineteenth century to complete municipal projects.¹ Building upon Phase II, which identified the use of the "hiring-out" system to secure enslaved labor, Phase III of the Municipal Slavery Research Project began to identify specific City infrastructure projects completed by enslaved workers between 1810 and 1866.² Research identified 1,000 potential infrastructure projects completed during this time, including:

- Fortifications, 1814
- Opening Roads, 1818
- President's House, 1819
- Springfield Plantation Drainage, 1850
- Laurel Grove Cemetery, 1851-1853
- Culvert East of Canal, 1852
- Perry Street Sewer, 1859-1860



1810 Census of Enslaved People

On April 30, 1810, City Council resolved the City Marshal conduct a census of all enslaved men between the age of 16 and 45. *The Republican and Savannah Evening Ledger* announced Council's decision and published an ordinance requiring all enslaved men to work two days a year leveling the streets. Enslavers were required to provide their enslaved person with a hoe or spade to complete the work. On May 28, 1810, City Marshal Maxwell was paid \$200 for taking the census.

¹ Johnson, Whittington B., *Black Savannah 1788-1864* (Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 1966), 95.

² Access the full Municipal Slavery Research Project online at: www.savannahga.gov/Slavery.

Perry Street Sewer, 1859-1860

In 1859 and 1860, City records document the construction of the Perry Street Sewer from Whitaker Street to Lamar's canal. The City contracted with Wm. L. Vroom to construct a 4,843-foot-long sewer measuring four feet in diameter, with a descent of 7 ½ inches per 100 feet. Cesspools were to be two feet before the bottom of the sewer, placed on the intersections of Perry and Whitaker, Abercorn and Price, and two between Price and Thunderbolt Road. The total project was budgeted at \$17,600 and payments in 1860 to City Surveyor John B. Hogg included at least \$143.72 for time of hands on the sewer.

Select Primary Sources

City of Savannah Municipal Archives

- 5600CL-160, Clerk of Council – Book of Records, Volume 1, 1858-1911
- 5600CL-020.1, Clerk of Council – Accounts Passed in Council, Volume 1, 1847-1857, and Volume 2, 1857-1860
- 5600CL-140, Clerk of Council – Committee Reports Registers, Volume 1, 1849-1853, and Volume 2, 1859-1866

Georgia Historic Newspaper Database

- <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/>

Explore the Municipal Slavery Research Project:

www.savannahga.gov/slavery

Discover the Archives:

www.savannahga.gov/MunicipalArchives

Schedule a Research Appointment:

Email: Archives@savannahga.gov

Telephone: (912) 651-6412

SAVANNAH
savannahga.gov



Municipal
Archives

City of Savannah Municipal Slavery Research Project

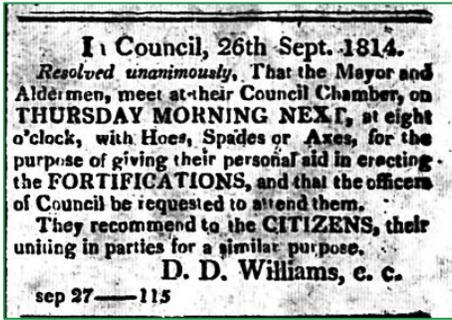
Phase III:

Connecting Enslaved Labor to City Infrastructure Projects

Prepared by Hannah Dinning
BFA Architectural History
Savannah College of Art & Design
Fall 2024

Fortifications

In 1814, amid fears of British attacks, coastal cities began to construct fortifications to protect their cities. On September 27, 1814, *The Republican and Savannah Evening Ledger* issued a call to local citizens for labor, provisions, and money to aid fortification work.



In October 1814, the Committee of Defense offered payment of \$0.25 per day for every enslaved man who could bring a spade or hatchet to help erect fortifications. In addition, laborers received rations of beef, pork, rice, and whiskey. On October 29, 1814, the State House of Representatives passed a bill appropriating \$45,000 for the construction of fortifications and block houses in Savannah. The Governor appropriated an unknown sum to hire laborers. In November, Mr. Williams, Jos. Savy, D.D. Williams, R. Habersham, and J.P. Oates were paid for hire. In December, the City began requiring all men (free and enslaved) in selected wards to meet at the courthouse to work on the fortifications.

	22	do	do	Hulls & Achord for refreshment furnished the city guard	176 00
	23	do	do	F M Stone for opening Thunderbolt road	26 87 1/2
June	17	do	do	H H Guyler for making minutes from July to October last	25 00
	19	do	do	Expense on Mayor's note	433 56
	23	do	do	F M Stone for laborers to open the White Bluff road	20 00
	25	do	do	A Wintchen for a man for laborers of engine at fire	2 50

Opening Roads

On May 23, 1818, the City Treasurer recorded a payment of \$96.87 to F. Stone for opening Thunderbolt Road. Additionally, Stone was paid \$20.00 in June 1818 for laborers to open White Bluff road.

President's House, 1819

On March 12, 1819, the *Savannah Daily Republican* announced William Scarbrough offered his new residence (now Ships of the Sea Museum) for use as the Savannah residence of President James Monroe during his upcoming visit. Scarbrough's home was not yet completed, and it is likely the City hired enslaved workers to ensure the home ready for the President. City cash books document payments to D. Sutherland for superintending labor and repairs to the house in the amount of \$372, and the City issued payments to Jos. Garnett for enslaved labor at the house.

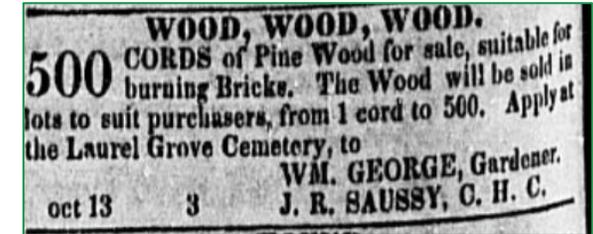


Springfield Plantation Drainage, 1850

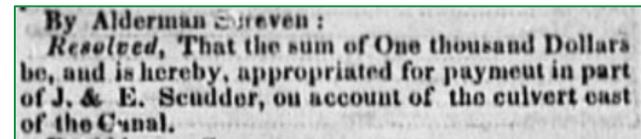
On May 10, 1850, the City paid the City Scavenger \$12.00 for labor in surveying Springfield Plantation. After the survey, Robert D. Papot submitted a proposal to the Dry Culture Committee to work on the Springfield Plantation canal. By June 1850, Papot had been paid \$140 for work on the canal. On June 29, 1850, the local newspaper *A Friend of the Family* reported the lowlands west of the Ogeechee Canal and south of Augusta Road had been drained and a bank fortification built. This work was accounted for in three payments on July 19th to Wm. Hughes for \$10, R.D. Papot for \$16, and the City Marshal for \$28. In September, the Savannah and Ogeechee Canal Company obstructed drainage of the same lowlands, and then built a culvert in thirty days to resolve this. In October, a survey of the work was completed by W. Remshart using enslaved labor. Shortly after, D.H. Stervent and C.M. (likely City Marshal Maxwell) were paid \$114.75 for labor related to drainage.

Laurel Grove Cemetery, 1851

In connection with the work on Springfield Plantation, the City offered a \$100 premium in February 1851 for the best plan for a new cemetery. In May, the City paid the Springfield Committee \$39.75 for labor in the cemetery. On October 14, 1851, W. M. George, the gardener of Laurel Grove, announced 500 cords of pine wood were for sale. During the month, the City paid \$206 for wood cutters working in the cemetery.



On February 10, 1853, the City made the first payment to A. F. Torlay, Keeper of Laurel Grove, for \$72.13. Throughout 1853, the City paid for labor related to the improvement of the cemetery, including \$140 paid to the City Marshal for labor to clean the cemetery set aside for people of color. In October 1853, the City issued a call for builders to construct a public vault 15 feet long, by 11 feet wide, by 7 feet high. John Mallery oversaw these plans and it is likely that some of the payments made in late October, November, and December were for the construction of this vault.



Culvert East of Canal, 1852

On June 19, 1852, three payments, totally \$212.56, were made for labor on the culvert east of the canal from funds appropriated for the Dry Culture Committee to drain the lands near the canal. Additionally, at the same time, \$1,000 was appropriated to pay J. & E. Scudder for their work on the culvert.