



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

## Legal Documents Concerning Slavery Collection

NMAH.AC.0786

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2015



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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
<b>Title:</b>	Legal Documents Concerning Slavery Collection
<b>Date:</b>	undated 1710-1865
<b>Identifier:</b>	NMAH.AC.0786
<b>Creator:</b>	Maynard, Thomas (Author)
<b>Source:</b>	Clark, Julie (Donor)
<b>Extent:</b>	1 Cubic foot (2 boxes)
<b>Language:</b>	Collection is in English. Some documents are in French.
<b>Summary:</b>	A collection of a variety of legal documents that relate to slavery and African-Americans.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Bill of Sale of "one Negro girl named Nancy, about three years old, from Thomas Maynard to John Stephen Hale, for the sum of 30 pounds, Frederick County, Maryland, June 13, 1796." 2002 acquisition: "Receipt for a slave named Wilson", January 19, 1863, and two carte-de-visite portraits: W.B. Mitchell, July 1880, and Pleasant A. Mitchell, undated. Gifts of Julie Clark, 2008 addendum.

### Provenance

This collection originally consisted of a single document, and was entitled, Maryland Slave Bill of Sale. In 2008, the Museum's Division of Music, Sports and Entertainment (now Division of Cultural and Community Life) transferred numerous documents, which were added to the single document entitled Maryland Slave Bill of Sale and re-named as Legal Documents Concerning Slavery, 1710-1865, undated (manumission documents, bills of sale, a deed of title, a deed of trust, estate documents, one document relating to the branding of captured runaway slaves, and other papers relating to slavery).

### Processing Information

Processed by Franklin A. Robinson, Jr., 2011; supervised by Vanessa Broussard-Simmons, archivist. Additional processing by Walter Hursey and Jakob Dopp, 2015, supervised by Vanessa Broussard-Simmons, archivist.

### Preferred Citation

Legal Documents Concerning Slavery Collection, 1710-1865, undated, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

### Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

## Conditions Governing Use

Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning copyright restrictions. Other intellectual property rights may apply. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.

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## Biographical / Historical

Up until the Emancipation Proclamation and the subsequent victory of the Union forces in the Civil War, slaves were considered chattel, property that could be bought and sold. Slaves were a commodity that could be attached for non-payment of debt, used as collateral, given as bequests in a will, and were considered assets of a deceased's estate. As such, they engendered legal battles and the need for a variety of legal documents asserting one's freedom or manumission.

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## Scope and Contents

This collection consists mainly of a wide variety of court and legal documents such as, bills of sale, warrants, a manumission document, a certificate of free birth, and documents concerning debt, property, and legal obligations. The documents originated in four states: Alabama, the Carolina colony, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Texas. They span the greatest portion of the era of slavery within what is now the United States. Most of the documents are from Lawrence County, Alabama and may have at one time been created or used as evidence in either an orphans court or civil court case. The documents are arranged in one series in chronological order.

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## Arrangement

The collection is divided into 1 series:

**Series 1: Legal Documents Concerning Slavery, 1710-1865, undated**

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## Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Branding (Punishment)
- Fugitive slaves
- Slave trade -- Maryland
- Slaveholders -- Maryland
- Slavery -- United States -- Maryland
- Slaves -- Emancipation

Types of Materials:

- Bills of sale
- Deeds
- Land titles
- Manumission, deeds of

Manuscripts -- 18th century  
Slave bills of sale

Names:

Clark, Julie

Places:

Maryland

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Legal Documents Concerning Slavery, 1710-1865, undated

Language: English.

Box 1, Folder 1	<a href="#">Suit for a runaway slave, Berkeley County, Carolina colony, 1710</a>
Box 1, Folder 2	<a href="#">Bill of sale, Frederick County, Maryland, 1768</a>
Box 2, Folder 1	<a href="#">Manumission document, Frederick County, Maryland, 1793</a>
Box 2, Folder 2	<a href="#">Bill of sale, Frederick County, 1796</a>
Box 1, Folder 3	<a href="#">Certificate, abolition society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1796</a>
Box 2, Folder 3	<a href="#">Freedom affidavit, New York, New York, 1811</a>
Box 2, Folder 4	<a href="#">Receipt, Jefferson County, Tennessee, 1813</a>
Box 2, Folder 5	<a href="#">Warrants and court documents, Lawrence County, Alabama, 1822</a>
Box 2, Folder 6	<a href="#">Warrant, Lawrence County, Alabama, 1824</a>
Box 2, Folder 7	<a href="#">Right of property, Lawrence County, Alabama, 1829</a>
Box 2, Folder 8	<a href="#">Debt document, Fayette County, Alabama, 1830</a>
Box 2, Folder 9	<a href="#">Bill of sale, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1833</a>
Box 2, Folder 10	<a href="#">Bill of sale, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1835</a>
Box 2, Folder 11	<a href="#">Testimony, 1840</a>
Box 2, Folder 12	<a href="#">Bill of Sale, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1840</a>
Box 2, Folder 13	<a href="#">Obligation, Franklin County, Alabama, 1841</a>
Box 2, Folder 14	<a href="#">Debt Document, Lawrence County, Alabama, 1841</a>
Box 2, Folder 15	<a href="#">Bill of Sale, Indiana, 1841</a>
Box 2, Folder 16	<a href="#">Court Document, Lawrence County, Alabama, 1842</a>
Box 2, Folder 17	<a href="#">Warrant, Lawrence County, Alabama, 1845</a>

Box 2, Folder 18	<a href="#">Certificate of free birth, Loudoun County, Virginia, 1846</a>
Box 2, Folder 19	<a href="#">Writ, 1849</a>
Box 2, Folder 20	<a href="#">Court documents, petition, Houston County, Texas, 1849</a>
Box 1, Folder 4	<a href="#">Assignment and declaration, Lawrence County, Alabama, 1851</a>
Box 1, Folder 5	<a href="#">Slave sale document, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1856</a> Language: French.
Box 2, Folder 21	<a href="#">Court Documents, Bexar County, Texas, 1856</a>
Box 2, Folder 22	<a href="#">Court documents, Smith County, Texas, 1856</a>
Box 2, Folder 23	<a href="#">Court documents, Fannin County, Texas, 1859</a>
Box 2, Folder 24	<a href="#">Warrant, Lawrence County, Alabama, 1859</a>
Box 2, Folder 25	<a href="#">Court order, 1860</a>
Box 2, Folder 26	<a href="#">Bill of sale, Chattanooga, Tennessee, carte de visite photographs of W.B. Mitchell and Pleasant A. Mitchell (father of W.B. Mitchell), 1863, undated</a>
Box 2, Folder 27	<a href="#">Warrant for the arrest of "Emmanuel Hooks (coloured)" for horse stealing, Lawrence County, Alabama, 1865</a>

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