



# Archival Sources for the “Peculiar Institution”

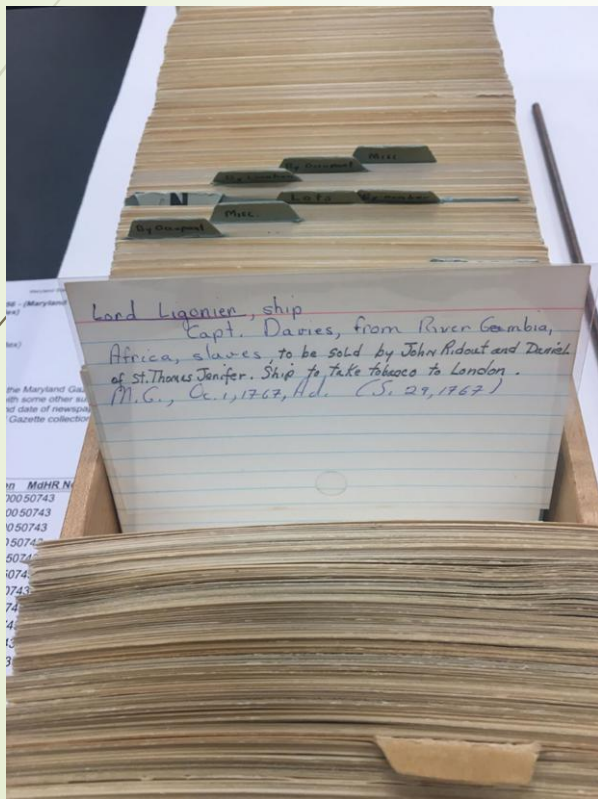
Education Writers Association National Seminar

June 5, 2026

Hilton Baltimore Inner Harbor



# 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Publication of Roots. August 17, 1976



Annapolis, Sept. 29, 1767.

JUST IMPORTED,  
In the Ship LORD LIGONIER, Capt. DAVIES,  
from the River GAMBIA, in AFRICA, and to  
be sold by the Subscribers, in ANNAPOLIS, for  
Cash, or good Bills of Exchange, on Wednesday the  
7th of October next,


A CARGO of CHOICE HEALTHY SLAVES.  
The said Ship will take TOBACCO to  
LONDON, on Liberty, at 6l. Sterling per Ton.

JOHN RIDOUT,  
DANIEL OF ST. THO<sup>s</sup>. JENIFER.

N. B. Any Person that will contract for a  
Quantity of Lumber, may meet with Encouragement,  
by applying to D. T. JENIFER.



# Runaway Ads




**TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS REWARD.**  
—Left home on Saturday last my SERVANT  
**BOY OSCAR**, sometimes called Bill's. He  
has been living in Annapolis for the last three  
years, and may try to return there, but more probably  
has been enticed away. He is 13 years old, likely,  
copper-color, speaks quick and loud; has on a grey  
cloth jacket, blue pants, slouch hat and coarse shoes.  
I will give the above reward if he is brought home,  
or secured so that I get him again.

**JAMES HIGGINS,**  
No. 88 St. Paul street. 1

1t\*

1850



**ONE DOLLAR REWARD.**—Ran away, on  
the 19th ult., a **COLORED BOY**, named **BILL**,  
10 years old. Had on when he left home a black  
jacket, pants and tow apron, and is marked with  
the small pox. All persons are warned not to  
harbor or employ said boy at the peril of the law.  
Any information respecting said boy would be gladly  
received and the above reward be given, at No. 225  
**WEST SARATOGA ST.**, near Pearl street. 1t\*

## RUNAWAYS.

**W**AS committed to the jail of his county  
on the 7th inst. as a runaway, Negro  
**CHARLES MILLINGS**, who says he is a free  
man, and was born in the state of Vermont.  
Charles is 21 or 22 years of age, 5 feet 5 in. ch-  
es high and dark complexioned; his clothing  
when committed, was a yellow striped cotton  
coat, a blue nankeen vest, two pair yellow  
striped cotton pantaloons, a black silk hand-  
kerchief, a fine hat half worn, and a pair of fine  
shoes.

Negro **RICHARD BARRET** was committed  
to the jail of this county, on the 6th of August  
last, and broke jail on the 15th of the same  
month, and was again taken up by Mr. Samuel  
McCalley on the 11th inst. and recommitted.  
Richard is a stout, well made fellow, 28 or 30  
years of age, and dark complexion; his clothing  
is an old tow shirt, cloth pantaloons, wool ha-  
and coarse shoes. Richard says he was set  
free by Mr. Thomas Johnston, of Louisa coun-  
ty, Virginia. The owners of the above descri-  
bed runaways, are desired to release them, oth-  
erwise they will be sold for their jail fees, &c.  
as the law directs.

**DANIEL SCHNEBLY, Sheriff**  
Washington county, Md.

Oct. 21—w3w



The Maryland State Archives Presents:

# LEGACY OF SLAVERY IN MARYLAND

An Archives of Maryland Electronic Publication



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## SEARCH COLLECTIONS

The Beneath the Underground database features entries of over 400,000 individuals including, white and black, slave owners, enslaved and free individuals from primarily the years of 1830 through 1880 to review. Listed below are the record series currently searchable online. Click on the record series name to view the titles available in that record series. Click on the record title for more detailed information on the record series or the individual titles. To search title names and title level description fields, enter your search term(s) in the text box below.

Please note, for the Advanced search leaving the gender box blank may result in additional returns. Female or Male was not always indicated on the document or entered into the database, and limiting a search by gender may block entries where no gender was given. Click Clear to start a new search.

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### Certificates Of Freedom

#### Record Type: Total Results

- Census 1870 1880: 1
- Certificates Of Freedom: 5071
- Chattels: 1
- Colonization Society: 513

Filter By:



Showing only:

Baltimore City

Results 151 to 200 of 5,070

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Age	Alias	Complexion	County	Date	Document	Entry	Folder	Freed First Name	Freed Last Name	Height	Item	Notes	Owner First Name	Owner Last Name	Page	Prior Status	Scars	Series
9.00		dark	BA	1840-04-23		9		Richard	Henry	3'8"	3	Raised in Baltimore County. Thos Kell, clerk			177	Born Free		c290
9.00		light yellow	BA	1840-04-08		5		Josephine	martin	4'1"	3	Raised in Baltimore City. Thos Kell, clerk. Witness resides at Saml. Ellicott's in Sharp St			167	Born Free		c290

Certificate of Freedom for 3 children.  
Who is the mother?

William Jackson  
Chambers.  
John Henry Chambers  
Eloza Jane Chambers  
raised in Balto.

on this 29 day of June 1840 before me Clerk of  
Baltimore County Court. personally appears  
Jonathan T. Eastman of makes oath in due  
form of Law that Negro William Jackson  
Chambers aged about 6 years of light complexion  
& feet four inches high. has no marks or scars  
John Henry Chambers aged about 4 years light  
Complexion & feet 3 inches high has no  
notable marks or scars.  
Eloza Jane Chambers an infant in its mother  
arms aged about 18 months has no notable  
marks or scars. were born free in Maryland  
houses in Balto City. J. H. Keese

John B.

John Stephen Sellman  
 1864 Slave Statistics 41 people  
 Wallace Family of 11

John Stephen Sellman	Benjamin Wallace	1	77	"	"
	Smith Wallace	1	62	"	"
	John Wallace	1	42	"	"
	Amy Wallace	1	40	"	"
	Wm. Wallace	1	38	"	"
	Walter Wallace	1	36	"	"
	Rebecca Wallace	1	34	"	"
	Emily Wallace	1	32	"	"
	Mary Wallace	1	30	"	"
	Joshua Wallace	1	28	"	"
	Peter Wallace	1	25	"	"
	Lloyd Beard	1	3	"	"
	Nicholas Brown	1	20	"	"
	Sarah Tordle	1	16	"	"
	Clara Tordle	1	13	"	"

# More Families on Sellman Farm

8

Mr. Stephen Sellman (Continued)	Benjamin Fiddle	1	11	Male	Good	For life
	Adeline Larkins	1	9	Female	"	"
	Mice Larkins	1	5	"	"	"
	Bruna Larkins	1	3	"	"	"
	Geop Larkins	1	1	Male	"	"
	Nemiss Larkins	1	8	"	"	"
	Lidia Carrod	1	8	Female	"	"
	Rachel Carrod	1	3	"	"	"
	Louisa Carrod	1	1	"	"	"
	Samuel Chaso	1	25	Male	"	"
	Josann Chaso	1	57	Female	"	"
	Mannes Chaso	1	40	Male	"	"
	Thomas Young	1	24	"	"	"
	Matilda Green	1	15	Female	"	"
	Nancy Green	1	13	"	"	"
	Jean Green	1	10	"	"	"
	Anna Howard	1	50	"	"	"
	Henry Mitchel	1	28	Male	"	"
	Mrs. Howard	1	21	"	"	"
	Jam. Howard	1	19	"	"	"
	Thomas Howard	1	17	"	"	"
	Richard Howard	1	15	"	"	"
	Hanni E. Howard	1	13	Female	"	"
	Breton Howard	1	11	Male	"	"





After Maryland freedom on November 1864 where did the Wallace, Toodles, Stewards, Larkins, and other families go?

**Federal Census** 1870, 1880, 1890, 1900

**Land Records:** Anne Arundel, Prince George's, Calvert, Baltimore City

**Vital Records** (Birth, Death, Marriage) Did the freed families intermarry or build communities together?



Lot Bell  
1816

genealogical interest except the names of the prospective bride and groom. The Archives has copies of marriage records up through 2004; for certificates issued in 2005 and later, please contact the circuit court in the county in which the marriage took place.

#### CHURCH RECORDS

Church records are a good source to supplement government records when performing family history research. Few churches prior to 1864 had exclusively black congregations, although Sharpe Street and Bethel churches in Baltimore were exceptions. African Americans usually worshipped in the church of their owners, and, if records were kept of their baptisms, deaths, or marriages, they would be found among the records of these churches along with records of the white parishioners. Episcopal and Catholic parishes throughout Maryland, such as St. Paul's Baden in Prince George's, St. Peter's in Cambridge, and the early Catholic cathedral records in Baltimore, have many entries in their records for African American members. Methodist records also list black members of their congregations on class lists until the 1830s. Generally, information on African Americans in the records of predominantly white churches is scattered and incomplete, but still worth pursuing, particularly if government record sources have been exhausted. After the Civil War, the number of black churches in Maryland increased.

The records of some of these churches have been preserved on microfilm by the Archives and are maintained in Special Collections. Researchers should consult the Guide to Special Collections for the most up-to-date listing of donated church records at <http://speccolmsa.maryland.gov/pages/speccol/index.aspx>. Records of Sharpe Street United Methodist Church and Bethel A.M.E. Church, as well as those of St. Francis Xavier Roman Catholic Church, constitute the Archives' largest holdings of African American church records. Bethel records began about 1815, those for Sharpe Street about ten years later, and the records of St. Francis Xavier in 1871.



Runaway advertisement for Cinderella Brogdan, Anne Arundel County [*Baltimore Sun*, December 23, 1848].

#### NEWSPAPERS: RUNAWAY SLAVE ADS

Advertisements were routinely placed by owners and overseers in county and municipal newspapers which, among other facts, noted the escape date and location, enslaved individual's name and physical description, and reward amount for the runaway's capture and return. The advertisements also occasionally note familial connections by providing potential names and locations of kin with whom the runaway might seek shelter.

#### COMMITTAL NOTICES

Committal notices were placed in newspapers by local law enforcement officials. These advertisements typically listed individuals who had been picked up and were being held in the local jail until claimed. The assumption of these notices is that the individual might be a runaway and that an owner would come to retrieve their property upon reading the advertisement. Committal notices often list the name, physical description, and reported status of the individual (whether he/she claimed to be free or owned by someone).

#### DOMESTIC TRAFFIC/NOTICES OF SALE

Domestic traffic advertisements are notices of sale of slaves or, conversely, listings by those seeking to purchase slaves. These ads are typically more general, listing numbers of individuals for sale and attributes such as age, sex, and type of work recommended. To search over 12,000 examples of newspaper ads related to slavery from across the state of Maryland, please see the Legacy of Slavery in Maryland website.

[https://slavery.msa.maryland.gov/pdf/researching\\_african\\_american\\_families.pdf](https://slavery.msa.maryland.gov/pdf/researching_african_american_families.pdf)

