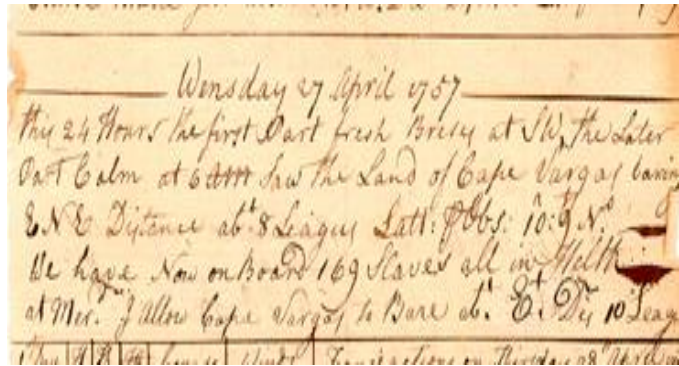


Research Guide to Materials Relating to Slavery in Connecticut at the Connecticut State Library

[Published Resources](#) | [Archival Resources](#) | [Manuscript Resources](#) | [Newspapers](#) | [Vertical Files](#)

Today, Connecticut is remembered as the state whose residents worked to help set the [Amistad](#) captives free, provided “stations” (safe havens) for fugitive slaves on the [Underground Railroad](#), and played key roles in the abolitionist movement. Its troops fought in the [Civil War](#) in what became a war of emancipation. What is less remembered is that slavery existed in Connecticut as in other Northern states; a few large Connecticut farms relied, in part, on slaves during the Colonial era; Connecticut’s textile mills relied on cotton grown by slaves in Southern states; and portions of Connecticut’s trade with the West Indies included cargoes of slaves.

The *Hartford Courant* devoted its entire Northeast section for April 3, 2005 to the feature “[Beyond Complicity](#)” featuring a 1757-1758 log book of slave traders between New London, Connecticut and Africa held in the State Archives. Beyond that significant manuscript, the State Library holds many other materials revealing the history of slavery in the state. Representative examples are given below.



Please note: Materials designated as “Archives,” “Manuscripts,” or “SpecColl” are subject to the [Rules and Procedures for Researchers Using Archival Records and Secured Collections Materials](#). These items may not be available on a same day basis. Please see the [Guidelines on the Use of Offsite and Secured Collections](#).

Published Materials

Andrews, Charles M. "Slavery in Connecticut." *Magazine of American History* 21 (May 1899) 5:422-423 [CSL call number E 171 .M18]. Includes examples of manumission certificates in Wethersfield records.

Barnes, Barbara A. *Venture Smith's Family*. Thesis (Certificate of Advanced Study), Wesleyan University, 1996 [CSL call number CS 71 .S643 1996].

Brown, Barbara W. and James M. Rose. *Black Roots in Southeastern Connecticut, 1650-1900*. Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1980 [CSL call number HistRef E 185.93 .C7 B76 1980].

Catterall, Helen T. *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery and the Negro*. Carnegie Institution of Washington, Publication No. 374. 5 vols. Washington: Carnegie Publications, 1926-37 [CSL call number E 441 .C35]. Lists and discusses fifty cases regarding slaves or slavery that were decided in the Connecticut Supreme Court of Errors, 1702-1873.

Cruson, Daniel. *Newtown's Slaves: A Case Study in Early Connecticut Rural Black History*. Newtown, CT: Newtown Historical Society, 1994 [CSL call number F 104 .N78 C78 1994].

Dwight, Theodore. *An Oration Spoken Before "The Connecticut Society for the Promotion of Freedom and the Relief of Persons Unlawfully Holden in Bondage."* Hartford: Hudson and Goodwin, 1794 [CSL call number SpecColl E 446 .D99].

Edwards, Jonathan. *The Injustice and Impolicy of the Slave Trade and of the Slavery of the Africans....* New Haven: T. and S. Green, 1791 [CSL call number SpecColl E 446 .E26].

Fowler, William Chauncey. *Local Law in Massachusetts and Connecticut, Historically Considered; and The Historical Status of the Negro in Connecticut....* New Haven: Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor, 1872-1875 [CSL call number KFC 3678 .F6].

Green, Lorenzo Johnston. *The Negro in Colonial New England, 1620-1776. Studies in History, Economics and Public Law no. 494.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1942 [CSL call number Offsite H 31 .C7 no. 492].

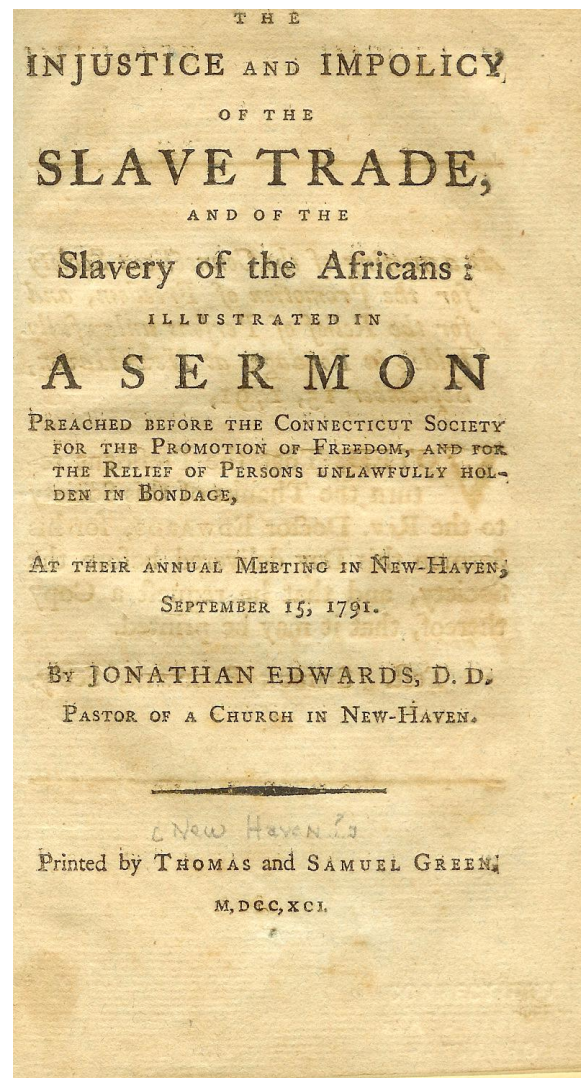
Mars, James. *Life of James Mars, a Slave, Born and Sold in Connecticut, Written by Himself.* Reprint. Miami, FL: Mnemosyne Publ. Co., 1969 [CSL call number Cage E 444 .M362 1969].

Mitchell, Mary Hewitt. "Slavery in Connecticut and Especially in New Haven." *Papers of the New Haven Colony Historical Society* 10 (1951): 286-312 [CSL call number F 98 .N49 vol. 10].

Pasay, Marcella Houle. *Full Circle: Directory of Native and African Americans in Windham County, CT, 1650-1900.* Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, 2002 [CSL call number R 185.93 .C7 P37 2002].

Ritter, Kathy A. *Apprentices of Connecticut, 1637-1900.* Salt Lake City, UT: Ancestry Pub., 1986 [CSL call number HistRef F 93 .R58 1986].

Stark, Bruce. "Slavery in Connecticut: A Re-examination." *Connecticut Review* 9 (November 1975):75-81 [CSL call number ConnDoc St22 core].



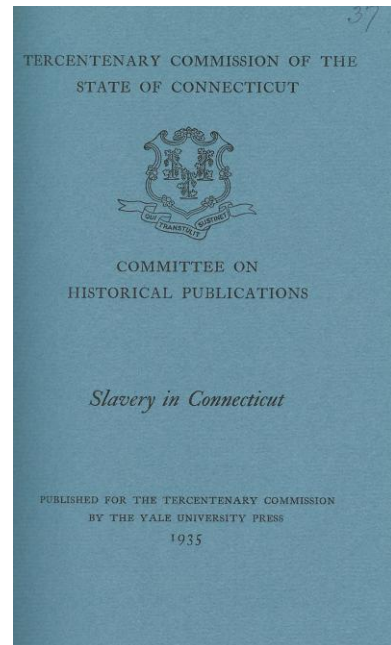
Steiner, Bernard C. *History of Slavery in Connecticut*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1893 [CSL call number SpecColl E 445 .C7 S8 1893; a second copy is in the stacks].

“Statement of Slaves in Connecticut, Abstract of Census.” United States House of Representatives Executive Document no. 90, 26th Congress, 2nd Session, 1841 [Serial Set 384, Vol. 3]

United States Census Bureau, Department of Commerce. *The Negro Population of the United States, 1790-1915* (1918) [C 3.2: N31].

Welch, Vicki S. “The Keys to the Shackles.” *Connecticut History* 40 (2001): 225-46 [CSL call number E 91 .C749].

Weld, Ralph Foster. *Slavery in Connecticut*. Tercentenary Pamphlet Series, No. 37. New Haven: Published for the Tercentenary Commission by the Yale University Press, (1935) [CSL call number HistRef ConnDoc T271h p].



Yang, Guocun. *From Slavery to Emancipation: The African Americans of Connecticut, 1650s – 1820s*. Thesis (Ph.D.), University of Connecticut, 1999. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Dissertation Services, 2001 [CSL call number E 445 .C7 Y36 1999b].

See also materials in the State Library's Law and Legislative Reference Unit, for example:

"An Act to Prevent Slavery." *The Public Statute Laws of the State of Connecticut, as Revised and Enacted by the General Assembly in May, 1821*. Hartford: S. G. Goodrich, 1821, p. 428 [CSL call number Ref KFC 3630 1821 .A24].

"Nancy Johnson Against Bulloch," in Day, Thomas. *Reports of Cases Argued and Determined in the Supreme Court of Errors of the State of Connecticut*, vol. 12, pp. 38-69. Hartford: Brown and Parsons, 1839 [CSL call number Ref KFC 3645 .A2 vol. 12]. Slave case with history of the law.

Archival Resources

Record Group 1, Early General Records

Check the General Indexes to the [Connecticut Archives](#), Series I and Series II under the headings “Slavery”, “Slavery – Laws, statutes &c.” and “Negroes”. Examples of the items to be found include:

Negroes. Pomp, Negro fugitive, Stonington, advertised in *Conn. Gazette*, Oct. 5, 1787. *Connecticut Archives: Insolvent Debtors*, Series II, vol. IX, document, 4g; vol. VIII, document 101.

Slavery. Jenny, Negro. Pet[ition] of Prosper Wetmore of Norwich with evidence

sh[owing] action brought by Jonathan Huntington vs. Wetmore for taking Negro girl of 6 yrs. called Jenny, the alleged property of Huntington, May 1750. *Connecticut Archives: Miscellaneous*, Series I, vol. II, documents 55-63.

Slavery. Letter from Board of Trade to Conn. on African slave trade. They ask for statistics before next parliament to show number of Negroes imported directly from Africa to Conn. between June 29, 1698 & Dec. 25, 1707.... *Connecticut Archives: Foreign Correspondence*, Series I, vol. I, document 121.

Slavery. Nan, Negro woman, action brought against her by John Cook of Windsor on charge of being a runaway slave. Appealed June 21, 1726. *Connecticut Archives: Miscellaneous*, Series I, vol. II, document 40.

[The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut](#)
[The Public Records of the State of Connecticut](#)

Check the index at the end of each published volume. Examples include:

Slaves, manumitted, when to be maintained by their Masters.
Records of the Colony of Connecticut v. 5 (1706-1716), p. 233

Slave of J. Leaming emancipated.
Records of the State of Connecticut, v. 2 (1776-1780), p. 427

Record Group 2, Records of the General Assembly.

See in particular materials listed in:

Finding Aid to African Americans and African Americans, 1808-1869 [CSL call number St292ara guro no. 2].

Record Group 3, [Records of the Judicial Department](#).

Cases involving African Americans are found throughout the records of the Judicial Department. Some court files so identified are listed in finding aids such as:

Finding Aid to Litchfield County Court Minorities Collection, 1753-1854. Includes cases of assault, theft, and breach of peace and lawsuits involving slaves as property.

Finding Aid to New London County African Americans Collection, 1701-1774. Includes cases of debt, theft, assault, as well as cases involving slaves as property (attachment, disputes over ownership of slaves, fraudulent sale, etc.).

Manuscript Resources

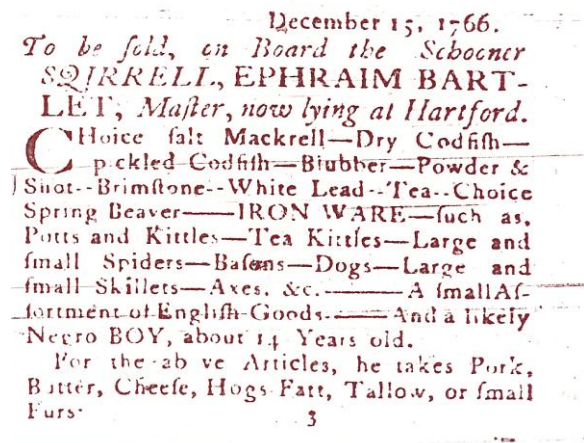
Check the card index to the classified manuscripts under the headings "Slave-Trade," "Slavery," and "Slavery in the U.S." Examples of items to be found include:

Elmendorph, Cornelius C. Bill-of-sale made by Cornelius C. Elmendorph of Nine Partners, Dutchess County, N.Y., to Moses Seymour of Litchfield County, Conn., for a Negro slave

named Jenney, Sept. 18, 1784 [CSL call number Main Vault 326 E13].

[Log book of slave traders between New London, Conn., & Africa](#). The *Africa*, John Easton, commander, Jan. 18-Apr. 10, 1757. The *Good Hope*, Alexander Urqhart, commander, Apr. 11-May 29, 1757. The *Fox*, William Tailor, commander, Mar. 28-Aug. 10, 1758. [CSL call number Main Vault 387 fL828. Access to the original is restricted due to its condition. A photocopy a microfilm copy [639.2 W553 no. 806 a-c mfilm] are available as use copies.

Phelps, Charles. Lease made by Charles Phelps of Stonington, Conn., to Ebenezer Stanton of Stonington, Conn., whereby he leases his Negro slave woman, Rose, age 32 years, to Stanton for 5 years and he sells her son, Jack, age 2 years, to Stanton [CSL call number Main Vault 326 P13].



December 15, 1766.
To be sold, on Board the Schooner
SQUIRELI, EPHRAIM BART-
LET, Master, now lying at Hartford.
Choice salt Mackrell—Dry Codfish—
Pickled Codfish—Butter—Powder &
Shot—Brimstone—White Lead—Tea—Choice
Spring Beaver—IRON WARE—such as,
Potts and Kittles—Tea Kittles—Large and
small Spiders—Basons—Dogs—Large and
small Skillets—Axes, &c.—A small As-
sortment of English Goods.—And a likely
Negro BOY, about 14 Years old.
For the above Articles, he takes Pork,
Butter, Cheese, Hogs Fatt, Tallow, or small
Furs.

Newspapers

Check our *Connecticut Courant* Index, 1764-1799 under the headings “Slave trade,” “Slavery,” “Slavery, in British colonies,” “Slaves,” “Slaves, adv. For,” “Slaves, for lease,” “Slaves, for sale,” “Negroes, runaway”.

The State Library has many other original and microfilmed early Connecticut [newspapers](#).

Vertical Files

See the folders “Connecticut – African Americans”, “Connecticut – Amistad”, and “Connecticut – Slavery” in the History and Genealogy Unit’s vertical files.

Picture Credits:

Log book of slave traders between New London, Conn., & Africa. The *Africa*, John Easton, commander, Jan. 18-Apr. 10, 1757. The *Good Hope*, Alexander Urqhart, commander, Apr. 11-May 29, 1757. The *Fox*, William Tailor, commander, Mar. 28-Aug. 10, 1758. [CSL call number Main Vault 387 fL828].

Edwards, Jonathan. *The Injustice and Impolicy of the Slave Trade and of the Slavery of the Africans...* New Haven: T. and S. Green, 1791 [CSL call number SpecColl E 446 .E26].
Connecticut Courant, December 15, 1766, p. 3

Prepared by the History and Genealogy Unit, Connecticut State Library, April 2005. © 2005