



New York State Archives

**New York State Treasurer's Office Register of Payments to
Overseers of Abandoned Children of Slaves A3211**

New York State Archives
222 Madison Avenue
Albany, NY 12230
archref@nysed.gov
URL: <http://www.archives.nysed.gov/>

Table of Contents

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Overview of the Records | 3 |
| Arrangement | 3 |
| Administrative History | 3 |
| Scope and Contents | 4 |
| Other Finding Aids | 5 |
| Use of Records | 5 |
| Administrative Information | 6 |
| Access Terms | 6 |

Overview of the Records

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Repository: | New York State Archives |
| Summary: | The volume includes records of payments made by the state treasurer for the maintenance of the children of slaves, a partial index (by name of city, village, or town) to an unidentified set of records, and records apparently dealing with prison construction work. The abandonment accounts include date and place of abandonment as well as name of child and birthdate. The records suffered severe burn damage so writing is often obscured and pages are incomplete. |
| Creator: | New York (State). Treasurer's Office |
| Title: | Register of payments to overseers of abandoned children of slaves |
| Quantity: | 0.2 cubic feet |
| Inclusive Date: | 1797-1806 |
| Bulk Date: | (bulk 1801-1806) |
| Series: | A3211 |

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Arrangement

Roughly chronological.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative History

According to Chapter 188 of the Laws of 1801, any child born of a slave after July 4, 1799 was declared to be free but was to remain as a bound servant to the owner of the child's mother until the child was 28 years of age, if male, or 25 years of age, if female. However, the owner could elect to abandon his rights to the child during the first year after the child's birth. In this case, the child was still to be maintained by the owner until the child was one year of age and was then to be "considered as a pauper of such city or town and liable to be bound out by the overseers of the poor in the same manner as the children of paupers in other cases, and

such child, while such pauper, and until it shall be so bound out, shall be maintained by the overseers of the poor of such city or town, at the expence [sic] of this State..."

The state treasurer had custody of state funds and disbursed them upon warrant of the comptroller, who had the responsibility of collecting funds. The treasurer was required to keep records of payments so authorized by law. The 1801 law stated that in compliance with maintenance provisions "the comptroller is hereby required from time to time, to draw his warrant on the treasurer in favor of such overseers for the amount of such expence [sic], not exceeding the rate of three dollars per month...."

The law was amended on March 26, 1802 (Chapter 52) to decrease the rate of payment to two dollars per month. It also declared that no payment was to be made after the child had arrived at the age of four years "unless it shall be made to appear to the comptroller, that such pauper is either so decipid or infirm that it will be impracticable to bind out such pauper."

Chapter 40 of the Laws of 1804 repealed section 10 of the 1801 law (which allowed the person entitled to the service of the child to abandon that right). Owners were allowed to abandon the children of slaves at the ages of 21 for males and 18 for females if it could be certified by the overseers of the poor in the city or town of residence that the abandoned person was of sufficient ability to provide for himself or herself. Such certificates, signed by the overseers of the poor, were to be registered in the office of the city or town clerk.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Content Note

This series consists primarily of a record of payments made by the state treasurer for the maintenance of the children of slaves. A section at the beginning of the series also contains a partial index (for which the references are unclear) and unrelated records apparently dealing with prison construction work. The state treasurer had custody of state funds and disbursed them upon warrant of the comptroller. These records were created to document the fulfillment of the treasurer's requirement under Chapter 188 of the Laws of 1801 to make periodic payments to the overseers of the abandoned children.

The records suffered severe burn damage during the 1911 fire that burned the State Library. Writing is often obscured; pages are incomplete. Fragments measure approximately 8 x 10." Page numbers are completely missing. Entries are in manuscript on paper and were apparently originally part of a bound volume. The series is mentioned in the Annual Report of the American Historical Association for The Year 1900, Volume II (Report of the Public Service Commission, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1901). That abstract identifies the series as a register of children of slaves abandoned, and mentions internal notations that did not survive the fire. The information in the abstract suggests that the building construction accounts found at the beginning of the series relate to state prison construction in the late 18th century. It is likely that empty pages of the same journal were later used to list the registry.

Initial sheets of the series are a tab index, only part of which is extant. Entries in the index are alphabetical by name of city, village, or town, but it is not clear what is being indexed.

Pages following the index list payments made, apparently through the state comptroller on behalf of an unidentified commission, for services and materials relating to construction costs for unspecified prison-related building projects. The payments are signed by Samuel Jones, Comptroller, and are dated December 22, 1797.

After a series of blank pages, Chapter 52 of the Laws of 1802 is cited (with the date of its passage, March 26, 1802). Immediately following, Chapter 51 of the Laws of 1804 is cited (with its date of passage, March 31, 1804). The citations are only partly legible.

Directly following these citations appears a list of accounts in columnar form with headings for name of account, date and place of abandonment, date account rendered, amount due, and date of warrant (occasionally a warrant number). Arrangement is apparently chronological by year, and account names are apparently those of "overseers of the poor" for the town in which the abandoned child resided.

Following this list, and approximately half way through the series, begins a separate listing by child's given name which includes date of birth, a date "chargeable" or "Start Payment," another date (of unknown reference), and amount (sometimes with warrant number and date).

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Other Finding Aids

Available at Repository

There is a fragmentary index at the start of series, references of which are uncertain.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Use of Records

Access Restrictions

Access to original records is restricted due to severe burn damage. See reference to digitized copies.

Alternate Formats Available

Items Online

This series has been digitized in its entirety and available in State Archives Digital Collections.

[Register of Payments to Overseers of Abandoned Children of Slaves in Digital Collections](#)

Administrative Information

Custodial History

The series was originally accessioned as old New York State Library collection number 171, accession -146.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Access Terms

- Finance, Public--New York (State)
- African American families--New York (State)
- Slavery--United States
- Assisting children
- Slaveholders--New York (State)
- Slavery--New York (State)--History
- New York (State)
- Child welfare--New York (State)
- African American children--New York (State)
- Registers
- Documenting welfare services
- Lists (document genres)
- African Americans--History--To 1863--New York (State)
- Child labor--Law and legislation--New York (State)
- Slavery--New York (State)
- Slaves--Emancipation--New York (State)
- Indentured servants--New York (State)
- African American infants--New York (State)
- Disbursing welfare services
- Maintaining children