

Inventory No. 1/21

**Inventory of the Archives of the Registrar and
Guardian of Slaves,
1717 - 1848**

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This inventory is written in English.

C O N T E N T S

FONDS SPECIFICATIONS	5
Context	7
Biographical History	7
Lodge.	7
Registrar: Protector.	7
 DESCRIPTION OF THE SUBORDINATE COMPONENTS	 11
1 Letters received.	12
2 Letters, drafts, indexes, memorials.	13
3 Reports.	14
4 Books of Complaints and Inquiry.	15
5 Day Book.	16
6 Register of Slaves.	17
7 Returns.	18
8 Casualties, Deaths and Memory Books.	19
9 Mortgages	20
10 Sale, Transfer and Return of Slaves	21
11 Book of Conditions	22
12 Manumissions	23
13 Day Book	24
14 Account Books	25
15 Resolutions, Extracts and Certificates	26
16 Permissions, Agreements, Contracts, Statements	27
17 Placcards etc.	28
18 Miscellaneous Slave Papers	29
19 Unidentified Indices	30
20 Slave Compensation Office	31

FONDS SPECIFICATIONS**Title:**

Archives of the Registrar and Guardian of Slaves

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1717 - 1848

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Abstract:

By a proclamation dated 26 April 1816 the registration of slaves was made compulsory. A head office for the registration of slaves in the colony managed by an inspector and an assistant inspector was established in Cape Town. Slave registry offices were established in the country districts where the duties were performed by district officials under inspection of the landdrost and under control of the head office in Cape Town. Slave owners were obliged to report births, deaths, etc. of their slaves; sales and exchanges of slaves were to be registered and a register kept of proprietors and the name of their slaves. Slavery was abolished in the Colony in 1834.

CONTEXT

BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY

LODGE.

The slaves belonging to the Government were housed in the Slave Lodge, which was under the management of a Director. The medical care of the slaves was entrusted to a surgeon to the lodge. The organisation of this institution is reflected in the Instructions for the Director dated 17 March 1820: - "It is his particular duty to watch over the conduct of every individual committed to his charge" - both slaves and apprentices. He had to see to their food and habitation, and keep a general supervision. Although the hospital was not actually under his charge, he had to inspect it daily.

He had as assistant three white overseers, a Porter and a Schoolmaster.

The Director's "most particular duty" was to see that children of competent age attended school regularly. He had to watch the education and morals of the slaves. The schoolmaster had to see to the general as well as religious instructions of the inmates (Inst. 17.3.1820).

In 1826 Major Bourke submitted the following plan to the Secretary of State in connection with the Lodge: - "I submit to your Lordship the propriety of giving freedom to all those who are able to earn their own bread and of confirming the use of the Lodge as a hospital of Charity to those sickly and worn out individuals who are not capable of labour".

This plan was realised in 1828, when "the Hospital for Infirm Government Slaves and Government Apprentices" came into existence.

REGISTRAR: PROTECTOR.

By a proclamation dated the 26th of April 1816 the registration of Slaves was made compulsory. Such a measure was necessitated by "the numerous manumissions which take place, and the large class of Negro Apprentices, (which has of late years been, by decisions of the Court of Vice Admiralty, greatly increased)", and the expediency "that the most minute precautions should be taken to prevent the possibility of such free persons, or their offspring, merging into a state of Slavery, or being confounded with the domestic or other Slaves, the property of individuals in this Settlement."

An office was established in Cape Town "for the purpose of keeping exact Registers of all Slaves within the Colony." It was managed by an Inspector and an Assistant Inspector. Similar offices were established in each of the country districts "under the immediate inspection of the Landdrost, and in correspondence with, and under the control of, the principal office in Cape Town." These offices were placed under District Clerks. As there was no District Clerk at Stellenbosch the duties in question were to be carried out by the Secretary for the Drostdy.

The registration is explained by the following clause: - "Every Proprietor of a Slave shall be bound to enter at the office of the District, in which he resides, by name and sex, all his or her Slaves, stating their respective ages country, and occupations, and also to report and receive a Certificate of all manumissions, transfers, inheritances, births, deaths, or changes of property, as the case may be".

An alphabetical register of proprietors within Cape Town, the Cape District and Simonstown, giving the names and all particulars of the slaves of each person, and what happened to them, was to be kept in the office of the Inspector of the Enregistration. Similar registers were kept in the country districts and copies there - of transmitted monthly to the Chief Office in Cape Town. The first to occupy the post of Inspector was Major George Rogers.

A Commission from the Court of Justice had to inspect the Inspector's Office in Cape Town. In the country districts this function was performed by by the Commission of Circuit.

An important change was effected by Ordinance No. 19 of the 19th June 1826. By this law the Inspector of the Registry was appointed "Registrar and Guardian of Slaves".

The increased scope of the new office can be gathered from the preamble in wich it is stated that the "propagation of Christianity, and the general diffusion of religious instruction amongst Slaves, will tend, beyond any other measure to propmote Morality amongst them, and that the Ordinance was passed for the attainment of these objects. It made lavish provision for the amelioration of the condition of the Slaves.

The Registrars in the various Districts were now styled "Assistant Registrars and Guardians of Slaves".

In the year 1828 the Colony was, on the recommendation of the Commision of Inquiry, divided into two provinces. The districts of the Cape, Stellenbosch, Swellendam and Worcester and Clanwilliam formed the Western Province, whereas the Eastern Province comprised those of Graaff - Reinet, Beaufort, Somerset, Albany, Uitenhage and George. In accordance with this arrangement a Guarian of Slaves, Eastern Division, with headquarters at Grahamstown, was appointed on the 1 st January 1828. The first incumbent was George Pigot. He was succeeded on the 21st June, 1830, by Donald Moodie. On the same date the Western Division was placed under a man by the name of Henry Murphy. A further important change was brought about by the separation of the Offices of Registrar and Guardian. Major Rogers, who now also occupied the post of Registrar of Deeds, was appointed Registrar of Slaves for the whole Colony. The Clerks of the Peace of the several districts acted as Assistant Registrar or Guardians. The officers now kept the registers, and returns were made by them to the Registrar in Cape Town.

The next important Slave enactment was the Order in Council dated the 2nd of February, 1830. It made provision for the appointment of a Protector and Assistant Protectors of Slaves in each of the British Colonies. This order became law in the Cape on the 26th of August, 1830. As there was to be only one Protector, the designation of Officer in Charge of the Eastern Division was changed to that of Principal Assistant Protector of Slaves.

Another Order in Council was issued on the 2nd of November of the following year. By this measure provision was made again for the appointment of two independent Protectors, one for the Eastern and one for the Western Division. Under these officers there were to be Assistant Protectors of Slaves. In the year 1832 the Protector for the Eastern Division was directed to reside at Graaff - Reinet.

Fresh measures were adopted for the protection of Slaves, who were given the right to lodge complaints with the Protectors or their Assistants. These officers could hear witnesses in respect of everything "relating to their office" ; but could not act as magistrates.

Every Manager of Slaves had to keep a Punishment Record Book to be submitted by him half

- yearly to the Protector of his district.

Furthermore new judicial bodies known as "Courts of Requests for Slaves" were created. Each of these was to be presided over by a Commissioner. These Courts were "to take cognizance in a summary way of all questions, claims, and demands affecting the property of any slave or slaves, and not exceeding in any one case the amount a value of ten pounds." Such courts were established under the Resident Magistrates of Cape Town, Simonstown, Stellenbosch, Worcester, Clanwilliam, Swellendam, George, Uitenhage, Grahams Town, Somerset, Graaff - Reinet and Beaufort.

The officials of the Slave Department continued in office up to the beginning of the year 1835. The office of Registrar and Protector was retained until 1838 to wind up the affairs of the Department, under the title of "Late Protector of Slaves and Keeper of Late Slave Registers." This appears from a Despatch from the Governor dated 22 November 1837 in connection with discharge of Major Rogers, the Registrar and Protector: - "By a reference to Lord Stanley's Despatch announcing that intended arrangement it will be seen that it was conditional upon Colonel Rogers" having become independent of his present office, "of Keeper of late Slave Registry - which has not yet been the case - , as his continuance in it has been all along indispensable to the public since in adjusting the claims for compensation, nor will it cease to be so, as it appears to me, until the close of the next year 1838, when the apprenticeship of the Labourers, formerly slaves, will end".

DESCRIPTION OF THE SUBORDINATE COMPONENTS

1 LETTERS RECEIVED.
All records after 1806

2 LETTERS, DRAFTS, INDEXES, MEMORIALS.

All records after 1806

3 REPORTS.

Records after 1806 are not listed.

3/26

Court Cases.
1804 - 1834

4 BOOKS OF COMPLAINTS AND INQUIRY.

All records after 1806.

5 DAY BOOK.

All records after 1806

6 REGISTER OF SLAVES.

All records after 1806

7 RETURNS.

Records after 1806 are not listed

7/34

List of Government Slaves, Convicts and Invalids and their Stations
 Distribution List of Meat supplied to Slave Lodge Lists of Slaves employed on
 different works Alphabetical Return of Slaves belonging to Government
 Return of Government Slaves, Government Apprentices and Free Blacks
 residing in Government Slave Hospital Documents relative to Imported Negro
 Apprentices registered at Port Louis Certificates (in French) of Imported Slaves
 registered at Port Louis Return of the Proprietors of Slaves, Index to the Names
 of Slave Proprietors at the Cape List of Slave Owners in the District of George
 Return of Slaves of different ages List of persons who have neglected to appear
 before the Committee and who have Slaves in their possession either proved or
 suspected to have been smuggled; List of Mosambiek Slaves taken from
 captured enemy ships and declared to be free on condition that they be
 apprenticed Return of Slaves under the administration of the Orphan Chamber
 still to be manumitted, transferred or cancelled as having died Various Slave
 Returns

1789 and 1802; October 1803; 1762 - 1809;
 1823; 1831; 1828 July - August; 1828 - 1832; 31st
 December 1826; 1831; 1833; 1810; 1829; 1811 - 1835

8 CASUALTIES, DEATHS AND MEMORY BOOKS.
All records after 1806

9 MORTGAGES
All records after 1806

10 SALE, TRANSFER AND RETURN OF SLAVES

All records after 1806

11 BOOK OF CONDITIONS**11/1**Book of Conditions
undated

12 MANUMISSIONS

Records after 1806 are not listed.

12/3 - 12/110 Deeds of Manumissions

1768 - 1834

Records after 1806 are not listed.

12/10 1768 - 1834

13 DAY BOOK
All records after 1806

14 ACCOUNT BOOKS

All records after 1806

15 RESOLUTIONS, EXTRACTS AND CERTIFICATES

Records after 1806 are not listed.

- 15/1** Resolutions and Extract Resolutions by the Court of Justice and the Commission for the Administration of Justice for the Outlying Districts in Slave Matters.
1777 - 1834
Includes Letters Received by the Registrar of Slaves relative to the matters dealt with.
- 15/2** Extracts from various Documents.
1717 - 1834
- 15/3** Certificates and Extracts.
1790 - 1838

16 PERMISSIONS, AGREEMENTS, CONTRACTS, STATEMENTS

Records after 1806 are not listed

16/2 Agreements, Contracts, Statements, etc.
1764 - 1836

17 PLACCARDS ETC.**17/1**

Notes collected from the Colonial Placcards etc, since 1652, upon the subject of Slavery and Indian Statutes.
1652 - 1818

18 MISCELLANEOUS SLAVE PAPERS

18/1

Miscellaneous Slave Papers
1789 - 1848

19 UNIDENTIFIED INDICES

19/1

Unidentified Indices
undated

20 SLAVE COMPENSATION OFFICE
All records after 1806