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Descriptive Summary

Identifier  ICU.SPCL.INDPERS

Title  Indentured Persons Collection

Date  1766-1785

Size  2.25 linear feet (2 boxes)

Repository  Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center
University of Chicago Library
1100 East 57th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

Abstract  Contains several documents pertaining to indentured servants (1766-1785), primarily rosters or lists of people immigrating to the United States as "redemptioners" in 1785. The collection also includes a 1766 indenture of apprenticeship for a nine year old boy.

Information on Use

Access

The collection is open for research.

Digital Images

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The University of Chicago Library appreciates hearing from anyone who may have information about any of the images in this collection.
Historical Note

After the Treaty of Paris ended the American Revolutionary War in September 1783, business owners and merchant traders in the newly established United States looked for ways to start or re-start their businesses and livelihoods after eight years of war. Some merchants engaged in the transport of people as voluntary or semi-voluntary immigrants.

Indentured servitude had been a practice in the American colonies from the time of their earliest settlement by colonists in Jamestown in 1607. In the older form of contracts of indenture, an individual would be committed to work for a specific sponsor for a set period of time in exchange for the passage to the colonies, room, board, clothing, and potentially even training that he or she received. The terms of the indenture and the person(s) holding the indenture were determined before the servants set sail, often with the people holding their indentures. Indentures could be traded, sold, or bought out before their terms were completed.

In the redemptioner system, however, individuals or families who wanted to immigrate to the colonies would commit themselves to a merchant or middleman who would take them over to the colonies on one of their ships, often on the return from a trade voyage. Once they arrived at the destination, the obligation was typically settled in one of three ways: 1) the redemptioners could "cash out" or pay off the expenses of their voyage with cash on hand and could then make their own way free of obligation, 2) their indentures (often simply the expenses accrued during their voyages) could be redeemed by a relative, a correspondent, or an acquaintance upon arrival at their destination, or 3) their indentures could be sold, or even auctioned off, by the shipping merchant or another business contracted to handle the sales or transfers of indentures.

Both systems suffered from abuse. Both the kidnapping of unwilling individuals for indentures and the use of indentured servitude in the colonies as a means of serving penal sentences are documented. The misrepresentation of contracts for redemptioners has also been documented as well as the frequent occurrence of robbery as merchants and their crews sifted through the personal possessions of the passengers. In 1717 the English parliament enacted legislation including a clause requiring an indenture involving a minor to be officiated by a single magistrate in London or two magistrates in any other location. This was intended to protect children from being kidnapped to sell for indentures and also to protect merchants who were transporting legally indentured children from charges of abduction.

An indenture of apprenticeship, otherwise known as an "apprenticeship indenture" was the practice of committing and training children, usually boys around the age of twelve, to a trade
in which they could earn a living in their adult lives. The practice was widespread in Great Britain until the Eighteenth-Century when it started to decline, but it was also carried over to the colonies in North America.

Pauper apprenticeships are a specific type of apprenticeship indenture in which a poor or orphaned child is placed with a trade professional by a charity or parish. Pauper apprenticeships continued in Great Britain and the United States after other forms of apprenticeship began to decline.

**Scope Note**

The documents in this collection cover the period 1766 to 1785. Although acquired by the University Library from diverse sources they have been gathered together as a collection as a matter of convenience.

The collection contains documents for various types of indentured servitude dating from 1766-1785. These include an indenture for apprenticeship for a nine year old boy and several documents for the ship, Favorite, which sailed for Stewart, Nesbitt, & Co out of Philadelphia. In 1785, the date of most of the documents, the Favorite, under Captain Nicholas Vallance, was periodically transporting redemptioners from mainland Europe to America. Also included in this collection is a 1785 list of indentured servants on board the ship, Vigor. The roster for the Vigor is extensive and in some cases includes the vocation or skillset of the individual listed as well as some of the additional fees the individuals accrued in transit. The documents are handwritten in English with the exception of the roster for the Vigor which has a few notations and drafts for messages written in French.

These materials were part of a previous collection “Slavery and Indentured Servitude.”

**Related Resources**

Slavery in North America Collection

Mariners’ Museum (Newport News, Virginia):


**Subject Headings**

- Indentured servants-United States-History
- Redemptioners
- Apprentices--United States

**INVENTORY**
Box 1
Folder 1
Letter from C. Bishop to Captain Nicholas Valance [Vallance] on board the ship Favorite [also called the Favourite], concerning the passage of the redemptioners on the Favorite, Corck [Cork], October 10, 1783, autograph letter, signed, 1 page

Box 1
Folder 2
Sales of redemptioners of the Ship Favorite from Amsterdam, September-November, 1785, document, 9 pages.

- Michael Shubart was employed as a linguist, P.J. Schlosser is listed as a recipient of some clothing, and F. Scheinhaultz is listed as a passenger who ran away. Indentured persons listed in the document include: Nichals Beyer, Barbara Baustin, Anna M. Bernhardin, John Muller, Hendrick Muller, John Voglerin, John Hendrick Offenstein, Catharine Weberin, George Kurst, Margaret Hupperin, Maria Eliza. Arnold, Herman Wind, Thomas Kraft, Jacob Volmer, Margaret Volmer, Nicholas Volmer, Christian Guttel, Dorothy Wirtz, John Dittman, Christopher Dittman, John Fuller, Anna M. Dittman, Martin Ruiter, John Bartholomer Ruiter, Godfrey Ruiter, Barbara Gulchin, Matthias Holzel, Jacob Mercker, Catharine Hollebachin, John Faussser, George Graul, Rosina Graul, Christina Graul, Jacob Eller, John Brede, Engeltina Brede, Conrad Naas, Eva Maria Naas, Anna Maria Naas, Anthony Moll, Cristopher Arboth, Magdalena Benzin, Nicholas Dielh & family, George Hornung & family, Christopher Fensche, David Weber, George Saal, George Wirtz, Henry Muller, George Mark, Hendrick Guttle, Johannes A. Reis, Michael Schott & Wife, family of George Wirtz, John Beyer & family, Nicholas Baus & Wife, John Muller family, Charles Gunther family, John P. Mark family, Valentine Flegler & family, Andreas Bott & family, Johan Adam Snellbacker family, Nicholas Hertle family, Conrad Dittman family, Frederick Moll family, Joseph Vinger family, George Kock family, Johannes Baus family, Nicholas Schreider family, Nicholas Dunckel family, Simon Steinmetz family, Martin Goetz family, Godfrey Conrad family, Andreas Schenger family, Conrad Propheter & Wife, Catharine Wirtz, Matthias Wirtz, Anna Barbara Beyer, Wilhelm Beyer. Redemptioners who were “cashed out” include: John Beyer, Frederick Buller, Killian Scherger, Aga Ruckertin, Dona Bayerin, Regina Kaufmanin, John M. Erhard, Anna M. Ruttigen, Barbara Catharine Lechin/Techin, Eva Maria Merckin, Maria C. Kissenelter, Eva Catharine Yunkin, Anna Bayerin, Michael Eckhard, Volmar, Anna M. Mullerin, Filipina Gottel, Anna Ruiter, Charlotta Gottel, Frederick Arnold, Christopher Romich, Elizabeth Gunther, Mary Yung, Barbara Jeckelin, Mary Bott, Barbara Bott, Casper Bott, Anna Catharine Bott, John Beyer, John Snellbacher, Nicholas Hertle, Michael Hertle, Barabara Schenger, Catharine Fersche, Margaret Saal, Michael Naas, Catharine Naas, Anna Dorothy Schott, Magdalene Dielh, Frederica Gottel, Nicholas Weber, Paul Ruckert, Dorothy Timmermanin, Conrad Schott, Ferd. Charles Dunckel, Anna Gebhard, Nicholas Wilhelm, Maria C. Krammers, John George Gebhard, Charles Gunther, John P. Korn, Ino. George Eckle, Anna B. Snellbacher, Hendrick Hauffman, John M. Schuman, George Mark, Jacob Kraushaar, John Roos, John Dielh, Christopher Gaat, John Adam Schumaker, John Schmutz, John Weigel, Margaret Weigel, Frederick Gram, George Adam Muller, Juliana Matthessin, John Miller,

Box 1
Folder 3

List of Indentured Servants on board the Vigor, January 30, 1785, document, 32 pages.


View digitized documents. http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/indenture-0001-003

Box 1
Folder 4
Indenture of apprenticeship for Lewis Hewitt to James Averill, Preston, Conn., January 6, 1766, document, signed, 1 page:
• Roger Sterry, John Tylor, Jonathon Brewster, Ezra Kinne, Aaron Gnary? were the aldermen approving the transaction, Samuel Morgan was the official for the document, and Samuel Tylor/Tyler was the witness


Box 2
Folder 1
Messrs. Vaughan Hamilton & Co. in Account with The Owners of Ship Favorite, [1785] document, 3 pages:
• An account of the expenses of a voyage of the Favorite which includes expenses from Captain Vallance, a debt of Gibs. Rosses, and expenses related to Mr. Bishop of Cork

View digitized documents. http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/indenture-0002-001

Box 2
Folder 2
Ship Favorite to Messrs. Vaughan Hamilton & Co. [1785], document, 2 pages:
• Includes pay expenses for Captain Vallance and monies paid to Luke Mayne(s) to provide clothing to the servants/passengers


Box 2
Folder 3
Account of Germans delivered from the Ship Favorite, August- September 1785, document, 4 pages.
• Indentured person listed in the document include: John Ditman, Anna Rutter, John Muller, Anna M Barnhardin, Christopher Rimrick/Rimrock, Al. Ruterkin, Martin Earhart, Agat Ruckerten, Eva Catharine Younkin, Volmar, Phildrina Gottel, Dona Bayeren, Charlotta Golel, Mary Bott, Barbara Bott, Casper Bott, Anna Catharine Bott, Dorothy Wisby, Christ Guttel, Regina Kaufman, Elizabeth Gunther, Mary Gunther, Maria Clisscwitter, Michael Hrtle, Eva Maria Marken, Margaret Young, Jn. Snelbaker, Nicholas Bayer, Barbera Baustin, John Gunther, Margaret Zall, John Bayer, Michael Herbit/Hertit, Ziggyn, Henry Offenstein, Catharine Weaver, Michael Naas,

View digitized documents. http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/indenture-0002-003