

# MEBA Archival Collection

## Finding Aid - James N. Eaton, Sr. Collection (AR\_0012)

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Language of description: English

MEBA Archival Collection

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<http://meba.famuedu/index.php/james-n-eaton-sr-collection>

# James N. Eaton, Sr. Collection

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## Summary information

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<b>Repository:</b>	MEBA Archival Collection
<b>Title:</b>	James N. Eaton, Sr. Collection
<b>Reference code:</b>	AR_0012
<b>Date:</b>	1800-2004 (creation)
<b>Physical description:</b>	50 linear feet
<b>Language:</b>	English

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## Scope and content

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In 1975, James N. Eaton spearheaded the effort that ultimately gave rise to the creation of FAMU's Black Archives. By 1976, the 'Black Archives Research Center and Museum' came into existence, and Eaton was recognized and appointed as its inaugural archivist, curator, and director.

For the next three decades, he helped amass a collection of memorabilia and printed records that now comprise one of the region's most extensive collections of first-source material relating to the history, culture and contributions of people of African descent living in the United States.

James Eaton constructed in 1976 the first exhibits, using historical memorabilia from his own family. Afterward, he petitioned the university and community members to contribute historical material to the repository. His call was answered by the first Black Archives donors and volunteers, who included: Donald Hill, Frank Pinder, John F. Matheus, and a host of other individuals and groups. Thus, the Research Center was chartered in 1976 and was officially opened in 1977.

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## Notes

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### Other notes

- **Publication status:** Published
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## Access points

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- 19th Century African American History (subject)
- United States (place)

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## Series descriptions

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### Series AR\_0012-\_03: Artifacts

Publication status:

Published

### Series AR\_0012-\_04: Textiles

Publication status:

Published

### Series AR\_0012-100\_Slavery Documents: Slavery Documents

Creator: James N. Eaton

Date: 1832-1948 (creation)

Scope and content: This collection provides an overview of the significance and potential of rare slave estate documents in illuminating the hidden history of slavery. These documents, often overlooked and scattered, hold a treasure trove of information about the lives of enslaved individuals, the economic systems that sustained slavery, and the broader social context of their time. It explores the various types of rare slave estate documents, their historical importance, and the ways in which they contribute to a deeper understanding of the institution of slavery.

Rare slave estate documents encompass a wide range of materials, including wills, inventories, bills of sale, plantation ledgers, and personal correspondence. These documents offer unique insights into the lived experiences of enslaved people, detailing their names, family relationships, work assignments, and the hardships they endured. They also shed light on the economic aspects of slavery, revealing the financial transactions, property valuations, and the labor force that supported the slaveholding class. The historical significance of these documents cannot be overstated. They challenge conventional narratives and stereotypes about slavery by presenting a more nuanced and humanizing perspective. Rare slave estate documents are invaluable for scholars, researchers, and educators seeking to reconstruct the stories of enslaved individuals and their communities, as well as the complex social dynamics that shaped the institution of slavery.

Physical description: 8 linear feet

Physical storage: AC.8.B.1.2.3 – Shelf: Active Collection Room 321

Language of the material:

- English

Note [General]: The James N. Eaton Rare Slavery Document Collection is a curated assemblage of original slavery papers and artifacts that offer a profound insight into one of the darkest chapters in human history. This meticulously assembled collection presents a comprehensive and historically significant documentation of the institution of slavery, its multifaceted impact, and the resilient spirit of those who endured it.

Spanning centuries and geographical regions, the James N. Eaton Rare Slavery Documents Collection comprises many primary source materials, including letters, estate files, legal documents, plantation records, publications, and personal artifacts.

The Eaton Slavery Documents is an unprocessed collection of rare, printed records that were collected and purchased by Dr. James N. Eaton during his travels throughout the Southeastern United States. The records were acquired during his tenure as the founder and first director of The Black Archives (1976-2003). He obtained the different documents from antique shops, antique book dealers, and auction houses such as Affiliated Auctions, and Live Auctioneers.

**Arrangement:** Following a preliminary survey, our recommended approach involves meticulously cataloging the collection in a chronological sequence. Wherever feasible, we will employ discernible names to enhance the organization of the materials. As part of our preservation efforts, we intend to transfer the documents into flat archival boxes to safeguard their structural integrity.

To ensure the long-term preservation of these historical materials, acid-free file folders will be utilized as dividers between documents. Additionally, we will employ sheet protectors with a balanced pH level to isolate any decorative elements. This comprehensive approach aims to enhance the collection's accessibility and orderliness and protect these valuable documents for future generations.

**Publication status:**

Published

**File / item list**

Reference code	Title	Dates	Physical description
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-01	<b>Box - Slavery Papers</b>  <i>Creator:</i> James N. Eaton <i>Physical storage:</i> AC.8.B.1.2.3 – Shelf: Active Collection Room 321 <i>Physical storage:</i> AC.8.B.1.2.3 – Shelf: Active Collection Room 321	1936-1949	4.8 Linear Feet
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-01- Folder 01	<b>File - Court Proceedings</b>	1836-1849	Folder
	<b>Item - image 02</b>		
	<b>Item - image 02</b>		
	<b>Item - image 03</b>		
	<b>Item - image 04</b>		
	<b>Item - image 05</b>		
	<b>Item - image 06</b>		
	<b>Item - image 07</b>		
	<b>Item - image 08</b>		
	<b>Item - image 09</b>		

	<b>Item - image 10</b>	
	<b>Item - image 11</b>	
	<b>Item - image 12</b>	
	<b>Item - image 13</b>	
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-01- Folder 03	<b>File - Estate Papers_Ballard, Nancy</b>	1842
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-01- Folder 03-1	<b>Item - Deed of Gift</b>	April 29, 1842
	<b>Item - image 01</b>	
	<b>Item - image 02</b>	
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-01- Folder 04	<b>File - Estate Papers_Baitey, Williams</b>	1837
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-01- Folder 04-1	<b>Item - Territorial Documents</b>	1837
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-01- Folder 05	<b>File - Estate Papers_Bellame, John</b>	1846-1849
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-01- Folder 05-1	<b>Item - Inventory &amp; Appraisement</b>	October 15, 1849
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-01- Folder 05-2	<b>Item - List of Notes "B"</b>	October 15, 1849
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-01- Folder 05-3	<b>Item - List of Appraisement</b>	September 9, 1846
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-01- Folder 06	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1849
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-01- Folder 07	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1849-1850
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-01- Folder 08	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1843
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-01- Folder 09	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1860-1861
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-01- Folder 10	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1832

AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-01-Folder 02	<b>File - Estate Papers_Archer, James</b>	1860
	<b>Item - image 01</b>	
	<b>Item - image 02</b>	
	<b>Item - image 03</b>	
	<b>Item - image 04</b>	
	<b>Item - image 05</b>	
	<b>Item - image 06</b>	
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-02	<b>Box - Slavery Papers</b>  <i>Creator:</i> James N. Eaton	
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-02-FF1	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1863
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-02-FF2	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1838-1839
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-02-FF3	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1838
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-02-FF4	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1845-1860
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-02-FF5	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1840
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-02-FF6	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1852
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-02-FF7	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1840
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-02-FF8	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1938
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-02-FF9	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	No Date
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-02-FF10	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1833

AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-02- FF11	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1853
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-02- FF12	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1859
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-02- FF13	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1853
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-02- FF14	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1851
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-02- FF15	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1838
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-02- FF16	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1858
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-02- FF17	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1858-1857
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-02- FF18	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1850
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-02- FF19	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1840
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-02- FF20	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1855
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-03	<b>Box - Slavery Papers</b>  <i>Creator:</i> James N. Eaton	
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-03- FF1	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1841-1860
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-03- FF2	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1863-1871
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-03- FF3	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1837-1843
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-03- FF4	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1859-1860



AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-03- FF5	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1839-1863
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-03- FF6	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1841-1865
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-03- FF7	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1925
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-03- FF8	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1840
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-03- FF9	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1847-1858
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-03- FF10	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1837
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-03- FF11	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1848-1860
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-03- FF12	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1842
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-03- FF13	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1833
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-03- FF14	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1838
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-03- FF15	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1861-1863
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-03- FF16	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1863
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-03- FF17	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1835
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-03- FF18	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1838-1860
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-03- FF19	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1854
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-03- FF20	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1835

AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-03-FF21	<b>File - Estate Papers</b>	1837
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-04	<b>Box - Slavery Papers</b>  <i>Creator:</i> James N. Eaton	
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-04-FF1	<b>File - Artifacts</b>	1948
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-04-FF2	<b>File - Artifacts</b>	1861-1913
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-04-FF3	<b>File - Correspondences</b>	1844
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-04-FF4	<b>File - Legal Receipts</b>	1834-1857
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-04-FF5	<b>File - Publications</b>	1869
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-04-FF6	<b>File - Publications</b>	1837
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-04-FF7	<b>File - Publications</b>	1861
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-04-FF8	<b>File - Publications</b>	No Date
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-04-FF9	<b>File - Publications</b>	No Date
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-04-FF10	<b>File - Publications</b>	1862
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-04-FF11	<b>File - Publications</b>	1868
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-04-FF12	<b>File - Publications</b>	1833
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-04-FF13	<b>File - Publications</b>	1917

AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-04- FF14	<b>File - Publications</b>	1863
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-04- FF15	<b>File - Publications</b>	1904
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-04- FF16	<b>File - Unknown Documents</b>	No Date
AR_0012-100_Slavery Documents-04- FF17	<b>File - Unknown Documents</b>	1865