

# Guide to the Cuban Slavery Collection

MS 2116



compiled by Jana Krentz

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Yale University Library  
P.O. Box 208240  
New Haven, CT 06520-8240  
(203) 432-1735  
(203) 432-7441

[beinecke.library@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.library@yale.edu)

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Manuscripts and Archives  
Yale University Library  
P.O. Box 208240  
New Haven, CT 06520-8240  
(203) 432-1735  
(203) 432-7441  
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<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

**CALL NUMBER:** MS 2116

**TITLE:** Cuban slavery collection

**DATES:** 1848-1889

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** .42 linear feet (1 box)

**LANGUAGE:** The materials are in Spanish.

**SUMMARY:** Official documents pertaining to slavery in Cuba, mostly from Matanzas, Cuba. Documents include death certificates for enslaved people, petitions for freedom from slavery, documentation of disputes, prisoner correspondence, and arrest warrants. Some death certificates specify the cause of death, the plantation or enslaver, and the enslaved person's origin in Africa.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.2116>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.2116>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to [http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr\\_copy\\_order.html](http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html). The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box  
f. folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Transferred from the Latin American Collection Curator, 2020. Purchased from Kevin Jackson, 2019.

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## Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research.

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## Conditions Governing Use

Copyright status for collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

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## Preferred Citation

Cuban Slavery Collection (MS 2116). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

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## Processing Information

Folder titles were supplied by Yale University Library processing staff based on document contents. Processing staff included names of people in the folder descriptions when they were identified in the materials.

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## Biographical / Historical

Slavery was legal in Cuba from the 16th century until it was abolished on October 7, 1886. Enslaved people of African origin were the primary source of labor in the Cuban sugar industry controlled by Spanish plantation owners.

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## Scope and Contents

Official documents pertaining to slavery in Cuba, mostly from Matanzas, Cuba. Documents include death certificates for enslaved people, petitions for freedom from slavery, documentation of disputes, prisoner correspondence, and arrest warrants. Some death certificates specify the cause of death, the plantation or enslaver, and the enslaved person's origin in Africa.

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## Arrangement

Some materials are arranged into groupings and are arranged chronologically within those groupings. Other materials are arranged in no particular order or in the order in which they were originally bound together.

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## Collection Contents

	Death certificates Spanish; Castilian	1860–1864
	<p>Forty-one death certificates for enslaved African people in Cuba. Each death certificate describes the origin of the enslaved person (i.e., whether they were African or criollo), and usually includes information on the name of their enslaver and where the enslaver lived. Information on the cause of death is sometimes included. The death certificates were issued when the enslaved person died so that they could be buried.</p> <p>Scope and contents notes for the death certificates were created by Yale University Library processing staff and consist of partial translated transcriptions of the first lines of the certificates.</p>	
b. 1, f. 1	<p>Faustino Spanish; Castilian</p> <p>1860...the black man Faustino, 40, Lucimi (Africa), died in this house of health according to the adjoined certification, he was the slave of Colonel Juan Portillo, who lived at #21 Teniente Rey Street, this which I share with you hoping this will serve so that he may be buried....</p>	1860
b. 1, f. 2	<p>Ines Spanish; Castilian</p> <p>1860...the black woman Ines, 25, Congo (Africa), single, died in this house of health, according to the adjoined certificate, she was a slave of Jose de Cuartas, who lived at #156 Campos Street, this which I share with you hoping this will serve so the she may be buried.</p>	1860
b. 1, f. 3	<p>Francisca Spanish; Castilian</p> <p>1860...the black woman Francisca, 30, native, single, died in this house of health, according to the adjoined certificate, she was the slave of Manuel Diaz Rulin who lives at Calle de Cuba # 36 1/2, this which I share with you hoping this will serve so that she may be buried...</p>	1860
b. 1, f. 4	<p>Leonardo Spanish; Castilian</p> <p>1860...the black Leonardo, 28, from the Congo, single, died in this house of health, according to the adjoined certificate, he was the slave of Antonio Hobion, who lives at San Miguel Street #73, this which I share with you hoping this will serve so that he may be buried...</p>	1860
b. 1, f. 5	<p>Gregorio</p> <p>1860...the black man Gregorio, 46, Lucimi, African, single, died in this house of health, according to the adjoined certificate, he was the slave of Luis Rebolledo who lives at Polvara y Monerrat Street #20, this which I share with you hoping this will serve so that he may be buried...</p>	1860
b. 1, f. 6	<p>Jose Spanish; Castilian</p> <p>1860, Last night as a result of dysentery according to the adjoined facultative certification, the black Mandinga [African] man Jose, 70, died, he was the property of Pedro Perez, which I share with you hoping that this will serve to give to the Chaplain of the Cemetery so that he may be buried...</p>	1860

b. 1, f. 7	Hipolito Spanish; Castilian 1860...the "National" black man Hipolito died in this house of health, single, 20, and slave of Jose de Cuartas who lives on Campos Street #156...	1860
b. 1, f. 8	Justo Spanish; Castilian 1860, the "national" black man Justo, 30 of Havana, slave of Antonia Vellalla of Porto, died in this house of health, sccompanying this is the facultative certification which I share with you hoping ths will serve so that he may be buried	1860
b. 1, f. 9	Macario Spanish; Castilian 1860, this paperwork I share with you hoping this will serve so that he may be buried in the General cemetary the Emancipated man Macario, who died in the national house of health as a result of an intermitent fever...	1860
b. 1, f. 10	Fernandez Spanish; Castilian 1861, Last night as a result of viriola, and according to the adjoined facultative certficaton, the black Ganga [African] boy Fernandez, 10, died. He was the property of Manuel Calbo, which I share with you hoping this will serve to give to the Chaplain of the cemetaryt so that he may be buried	1861
b. 1, f. 11	Jacinto Spanish; Castilian 1861, Last night the single black man Jacinto, 60, of Havana died, son of an unknown father and Blasa, widow of Felipa Torres, who was a slave of Joaquin Santo Suarez, of O'Reilly Street #96 before the 13th of the month...	1861
b. 1, f. 12	Modesto Spanish; Castilian 1861, hoping this wil serve so that he may be buried, the black man, Modesto, from the Congo, single and slave of Francisco Marty y Torrero who died a natural death, according to the adjoined facultative certification...	1861
b. 1, f. 13	Francisco Spanish; Castilian 1861...this afternoon, according to the adjoined facultative certification, a black man, Francisco, of the Congo, 44, died of tuberculosis, he was the property of Rafael Forice, which I share with you hoping this will serve so that he may be buried...	1861
b. 1, f. 14	Federico Spanish; Castilian 1861, the black slave Federico, 60, Ganga (Africa), who came from the General factory, died in this house of health, he belonged to the District of Public Works and this paperwork I share with you hoping this will serve so that he may be buried in the General cemetary....	1861

b. 1, f. 15	<p>Camilo Spanish; Castilian</p> <p>1861...the black man Camilo, 18, from the Congo, died in this House of Health, he was the slave of Julian Alvarez in the neighborhood of St. Nicolas Street, this which I share with you hoping this will serve so that he may be buried...</p>	1861
b. 1, f. 16	<p>Desideria Spanish; Castilian</p> <p>1861, Last night, according to the adjoined facultative certification a black woman, Desideria, single, of the Congo, 25, died of a lung-related illness; she was the property of Francisca de la Cruz which I share withyou hopig this will serve so that she may be buried.</p>	1861
b. 1, f. 17	<p>Esteban Spanish; Castilian</p> <p>1861, last night according to the adjoined facultative certification, a black man Esteban, single, from the Congo, 50 years of age, died; he was the property of Francisco Navarro...</p>	1861
b. 1, f. 18	<p>Zacarias Carduna Spanish; Castilian</p> <p>1861, my slave Zacarias Carduna, native, about 46-48 years old, legitimate son of the black man Gayetano and of the black woman Maria del Rosario, died. He received the Holy Sacrament, and this paperwork I share with you hoping this will serve so that he may be buried in the cemetery....</p>	1861
b. 1, f. 19	<p>Jose O'Reilly Spanish; Castilian</p> <p>1861, Last night in the neighborhood of St. Lazaro..., the free [Black] man Jose O'Reilly, single, from this neighborhood, died and I hope this will serve so that he may be buried...</p>	1861
b. 1, f. 20	<p>Faustino Spanish; Castilian</p> <p>1862, the black man Faustino of the Lucimi nation, 40 years old, died; he was the slave of Manuel Portillo y Portillo...</p>	1862
b. 1, f. 21	<p>Juan Brigido Spanish; Castilian</p> <p>1862, this I share with you hoping this will serve so that the Chaplain of the Cemetary can bury the body of the Emancipated man Juan Brigido, 14, of Cayo Sol, who belonged to the District of Public Works...</p>	1862
b. 1, f. 22	<p>Alejandro Spanish; Castilian</p> <p>1862, the black man Alejandro, 15, Congo, died in this house of health, according to the adjoined certification, he was the slave of Miguel Subvia, who lived at #53 Obispo Street...</p>	1862
b. 1, f. 23	<p>Mercedes Spanish; Castilian</p> <p>1862, may this serve to expedite the paperwork to bury the body of the adult black woman, Mercedes, Ganga (African), 35, in the cemetary....</p>	1862

b. 1, f. 24	Fernando 1862, today in the early morning, according to the adjoined facultative certification the black man Fernando, Carabali (African), died he was the slave of Juan Pico, which I share with you hoping that this will serve you to give orders to the Chaplain, so that he may be buried.	1862
b. 1, f. 25	Francisco Spanish; Castilian 1862, This afternoon, Francisco, of the Congo, 81, free, died, which I share with you hoping this will serve so he may be buried...	1982
b. 1, f. 26	Santiago 1862, in the neighborhood of St. Lazaro, the black man Santiago, 18, from the Congo, died in this House of Health, he was the slave of Joaquin Lahuerta, this which I share with you hoping this will serve so that he may be buried....	1862
b. 1, f. 27	Juana Spanish; Castilian 1862...the black woman Juana, 46, Carabali (African), single, died in this House of Health according to the adjoined certification, and she was the slave of Tomas Pruneda, from the Calzada del Monte #46 on the corner of Los Angeles, this which I share with you hoping this will serve so that she may be buried...	1862
b. 1, f. 28	Pablo Spanish; Castilian 1862, the black slave Pablo, 18, of the Congo (Africa), died according to the adjoined certification, he belonged to Prudencio Fernandez, who came from Bagatillo, in the vicinity of O'Reilly Street...	1982
b. 1, f. 29	Pablo Spanish; Castilian 1862, In the night, according to the adjoined facultative certification, a black man, Pablo, gange (Africa), 58, died of an ulcerous diarrhea; he was the propoerty Guineasion do Balbas, which I share with you...	1862
b. 1, f. 30	Leonica Benitez Spanish; Castilian 1864, at 11 o'clock tody at the house on Escovar Street, died the female, adult, native, black woman, Leonicia Benitez, slave of the person writing; she was administered the Holy Sacrament by the priet of this church, this which I share with you...	1864
b. 1, f. 31	Dorerde Spanish; Castilian 1864, my slave Dorerde, 70 has died, I don't know if she had any record (criminal or legal), which I share with you hoping this will serve...	1864
b. 1, f. 32	Chatino Spanish; Castilian 1864, I direct the current [information] to you, so this will serve so that the native man "achinado" [someone who looks Asian, literally "Chinaman"] this Chatino, slave of Esteba Hernandez, may be buried, he died in the afternoon as the result of an injury he received...hoping this will serve...	1864

b. 1, f. 33	<p>Jose Maria Spanish; Castilian</p> <p>1864, Last night the young black moreno, Jose Maria, from the Congo died; he was slave of Jose de Gosner y Perez...</p>	1864
b. 1, f. 34	<p>Juan Spanish; Castilian</p> <p>1864, the black man, Juan, 50, Ganga (Africa), slave of Manuel Rodriguez, of this neighborhood Rayo Street #74, died in this House of Health according to the adjoined facultative certification...</p>	1864
b. 1, f. 35	<p>Pablo Mora Spanish; Castilian</p> <p>1864, Yesterday afternoon, the black single man, Pablo Mora, native of Cardenas, 17, died; he was slave of Jose Maria Mora, and came from the Royal Jail on May 30th, which I share with you for your knowledge...</p>	1864
b. 1, f. 36	<p>Encarnacion Spanish; Castilian</p> <p>1864, Hoping this will serve so that the body of the single, native, adult, black woman, a cook, Encarnacion, 40, may be buried; she was the slave of Dona Josefa Alvarez of Prado Street #79, the name of her parents and grandparents are unknown...</p>	1864
b. 1, f. 37	<p>Pancho Spanish; Castilian</p> <p>1864, May this serve to bury the body of my slave, Pancho, in the cemetery; he died at 8:30 pm last night, according to the adjoined certification; he was from the Congo, single and 36 years...</p>	1864
b. 1, f. 38	<p>Miguel Spanish; Castilian</p> <p>1864, Today, in the early morning, the black man, Miguel, Carabali (African), single, who lives on Amistad Street, died; he was the slave of Pedro Valdez, which I share with you for your knowledge...</p>	1864
b. 1, f. 39	<p>Antonio Spanish; Castilian</p> <p>1864, Yesterday afternoon the black native man, Antonio, single, died; he was the slave of Jose Moreno who lives in the Cerro, which I share with you for your knowledge...</p>	1864
b. 1, f. 40	<p>Francisco Spanish; Castilian</p> <p>1864, This afternoon, Francisco, of the Congo, 65, slave of Carlo Perera of Mexico Street...</p>	1864
b. 1, f. 41	<p>Jose</p> <p>1864, the black man Jose, 48, from the Congo, died in this House of Health; he was the slave of Pedro Sabio in the neighborhood of Perserverencia Street #20, this which I share with you...</p>	1864

b. 1, f. 42	<p>Materials pertaining to Martina Criolla, an enslaved person Spanish; Castilian</p> <p>Two documents, bound together by string, pertaining to Martina Criolla, an enslaved person. The first item is a letter to the Junta de Patronatos from an enslaver stating that because of the good conduct of Martina Criolla, who he enslaved, and her treatment of his children, the enslaver wishes to grant Martina Criolla her freedom. The second document discusses Martina Criolla being offered redemption ("redencia").</p>	1879–1881
b. 1, f. 43	<p>Manuscript documenting a cemetery burial dispute Spanish; Castilian</p> <p>Manuscript, eight pages, in which a church parish accuses a judge of the abuse of allowing the burial of cadavers in a cemetery belonging to another parish, and gives the example of a African Gange burial that was ordered to be conducted in the wrong cemetery.</p>	1889
b. 1, f. 44	<p>Identity cards for Josefa Gonzalez, Lucrecia, Norberta, and Felipe, enslaved people Spanish; Castilian</p> <p>Three identity cards issued by the Junta Local de Patronato.</p>	1883
b. 1, f. 45	<p>Petition for freedom for Narciso, an enslaved Carabali man Spanish; Castilian</p> <p>A petition of freedom for an unidentified Carabali enslaved man, whose godparents were also African. One of their godparents was from Lucimi and the other Mina. The enslaved man received his "Sacred Sacrament" between 1810 and 1830.</p>	1873
b. 1, f. 46	<p>Fine for curfew violation of Andres Dominguez, an enslaved man Spanish; Castilian</p>	1886
b. 1, f. 47	<p>Manumission documents Spanish; Castilian</p> <p>Manumissions documents for two enslaved African people: one unidentified man from the Congo and one unidentified female Carabali.</p>	1848–1849
b. 1, f. 48	<p>Matrimonial registry for Juan Sanchez and Maria Eugenia Armenteros Spanish; Castilian</p>	1885
b. 1, f. 49	<p>Correspondence regarding Florentino Claro, an imprisoned Black man Spanish; Castilian</p> <p>Correspondence indicates that the jailkeeper has filed a complaint against an unidentified imprisoned Black man, and they are searching for his baptismal records.</p>	1874
b. 1, f. 50	<p>Arrest warrant for Dolores [?] Spanish; Castilian</p>	1859
b. 1, f. 51	<p>Petition for new slave officer Spanish; Castilian</p>	1885
b. 1, f. 52	<p>Letters from a provincial governor regarding the number of enslaved people held in towns Spanish; Castilian</p> <p>Four letters from the a provincial govenor to different towns in Cuba requesting the number of enslaved people held. One document states that the slavery law has changed and requests that information be sent by telegram.</p>	1885

b. 1, f. 53	Letter to municipales asking for the number of enslaved people freed Spanish; Castilian	1886
b. 1, f. 54	Response acknowledging the request for a list of enslaved people Spanish; Castilian Response acknowledging the request for a list of slaves	1886
b. 1, f. 55	Document from an official complying with the request to send a list of enslaved people Spanish; Castilian No list is included.	1885
b. 1, f. 56	Official response to the request for a list of enslaved people Spanish; Castilian Response to the request for list of slaves	1886
b. 1, f. 57	Letter acknowledging the arrival of documents Spanish; Castilian	1885
b. 1, f. 58	Petition from Ana, an enslaved woman, for her identity card Spanish; Castilian Petition from an enslaved man requesting his identity card so that he can be free.	1885
b. 1, f. 59	Manuscript on enslaved African people from the San Jose Asylum Spanish; Castilian Manuscript, six pages, on enslaved African people from the San Jose Asylum. Particularly details the lives of two enslaved African people, one from the Congo and one Carabali.	1874
b. 1, f. 60	Kidnapping accusation Spanish; Castilian	1874
b. 1, f. 61	Manuscript on enslaved women in the Hospital de Caridad de San Francisco de Paula Spanish; Castilian Mnuscrypt, eight pages, on enslaved women in the Hospital de Caridad de San Francisco de Paula. The manuscript states that the hospital exists to help poor women only. It states that enslaved women on the street are vagabonds with no discipline and that some women may be rejected if they disturb the institution.	1863
	Documents concerning Luciano and Celedonio, minor enslaved people in Matanzas Spanish; Castilian Fifteen documents, originally bound together, concerning "el pardo" Luciano and "el moreno" Celedonio, two minor freed "liberatos." Documents detail their movements, well-being, injuries, and education.  The materials are arranged in the order in which they were originally bound together.	1884
b. 1, f. 62	Communications regarding moving minors Spanish; Castilian	1884 October 13
b. 1, f. 63	Communications regarding moving minors Spanish; Castilian	1884 October 19

b. 1, f. 64	Communications regarding moving minors Spanish; Castilian	1884 October 13
b. 1, f. 65	Formal request to have minors moved Spanish; Castilian	1884 October 18
b. 1, f. 66	Notification that minors have been moved Spanish; Castilian	1884 October 23
b. 1, f. 67	Notification of minors traveling by horse Spanish; Castilian	1884 October 19
b. 1, f. 68	Documents regarding extracting minors by force Spanish; Castilian	1884 October 23
b. 1, f. 69	Documents regarding moving minors Spanish; Castilian	1884 October 23
b. 1, f. 70	Documents acknowledging movements Spanish; Castilian	1884 October 24
b. 1, f. 71	Document confirming that minors will be delivered Spanish; Castilian  Document indicates that the minors are in the hands of Sebastian Montalvo and confirms that they will be delivered to Manuel Acebal.	1884
b. 1, f. 72	Document recognizing minors as an "agrupacion" Spanish; Castilian  Declaration from the President of the Junta stating that the two minors are a part of the "agrupacion" of the plantation (ingenio).	1884 November 12
b. 1, f. 73	Confirmation of delivery Spanish; Castilian	1884 November 12
b. 1, f. 74	Reconfirmation of "agrupacion" Spanish; Castilian	1884 October 24
b. 1, f. 75	Declaration regarding minors' education Spanish; Castilian  Declaration from the Secretary of the Junta that there is a commission in place to discuss if the children received a primary school education.	1884 October 28
b. 1, f. 76	Documentation of minors' injuries Spanish; Castilian  Document originally bound out of chronological order.	1884 October 28

## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Geographic Names**

Cuba -- Economic conditions  
Cuba -- History -- 1810-1899  
Cuba -- Social conditions

### **Subjects**

Slavery -- Caribbean Area -- History  
Slavery -- Cuba  
Slaves -- Cuba  
Sugarcane industry -- Cuba