



**Record Group:** Burlington County  
**Subgroup:** Clerk's Office  
**Series:** Birth Certificates of Children of Slaves, 1804-1826  
**Accession #:** 1992.046  
**Series #:** CBUCL001  
**Guide Date:** 10/1996 (JK)  
**Volume:** 0.1 c.f. [15 items]

[Content Note](#) | [Contents](#)

### Legislative History

The filing of birth certificates for children of slaves was the direct result of "An act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery," passed by the New Jersey Legislature on 15 February 1804 (P.L. 1804, chap. CIV, p. 251). This law pronounced every child born to a slave mother after 4 July 1804 "free" at birth, but bound as a servant to the owner of the mother until the age of twenty-five for males and twenty-one for females. Any person entitled by the law to such bound service was required to file with the county clerk, within nine months of the birth of the child, a written certificate containing the name of the slave owner and the name, age and sex of the child. The clerk, in turn, was directed to record the information into a special book for this purpose. The penalty for neglecting to deliver such a certificate was \$5, plus an additional \$1 for each month of delinquency.

The law also allowed for the abandonment of such children by the owners of their mothers at the age of one year. In this case, the child would become a ward of the local overseers of the poor; the slave owner was required to file a notification of abandonment with the county clerk.

### Content Note

The fifteen birth certificates included in this series were found, bundled together, among loose papers of the Burlington County Clerk's Office/Court of Common Pleas transferred to the State Archives in 1992. At the time of their discovery in 1996, an effort was made to locate the county clerk's birth book, which is known to have been kept (as the law directed) from notations on these certificates. The volume was not found in the clerk's office, however (nor was it listed in the 1939 WPA survey of the historical records held by the Burlington County Clerk). The collections of the New Jersey Historical Society, the Burlington County Historical Society, and Rutgers Special Collections and University Archives were also searched with no success. It would appear, therefore, that the manuscripts included in this series contain the only surviving government record of births of children of slaves in Burlington County.

It is probably also safe to assume that this series is complete (i.e., that no certificates are missing), or near-complete, since the manuscripts were bundled together. There would not have been a large number of children born to slave mothers in Burlington County - a largely Quaker, and therefore abolitionist, area. We know from the certificates that only four pages were used in the county clerk's "Birth Book A."

The certificates are listed below in order of their receipt by the county clerk, not by the date of the child's birth. All of them include references to being recorded in "Birth Book A" except for the last, which has no recording notation. While the 1804 law did not require that the mother's name be recorded in the birth certificate, it frequently was. The father's name, unfortunately, was not recorded in any of these certificates, although one (item 6) indicates that the mother was

married.

### Contents

1. Birth certificate of Edward Eairs, born 13 August 1804, son of an unnamed slave of Isaac Budd, Northampton Twp., 5 November 1804 [recorded in Book A, page 1].
2. Birth certificate of Efamy Harman, born 25 March 1805, daughter of Leah Harman, slave of Uz Leach, Chester Twp., 27 March 1806 [recorded in Book A, page 1].
3. Birth certificate of John Prout, born 5 September 1806, son of Abigail, slave of Joseph Gardiner, no place, no date [recorded in Book A, page 1].
4. Birth certificate of Jef Hull, born 2 July 1804, and Lewis Hull, born 23 December 1807, children of an unnamed slave of Charles Hughes, no place, no date [recorded in Book A, page 2].
5. Birth certificate of Jude, born 20 January 1808, daughter of an unnamed slave of Cornelius Thomson, Springfield Twp., no date [recorded in Book A, page 2].
6. Birth certificate of Chales [sic], born 13 August 1808, son of Susan, a married slave of Daniel C. Runyan, no place, 25 October 1808 [recorded in Book A, page 2].
7. Birth certificate of Jeremiah Hone, born 27 September 1810, son of Claessa, slave of George Davis, Chester Twp., no date [recorded in Book A, page 2].
8. Birth certificate of Lot, born 21st of 2nd Mo. 1811, child of an unnamed slave of John Pancoast, no place, received 14 March 1813 [recorded in Book A, page 2].
9. Birth certificate of Lem, born 10 October 1813, son of Parmelia, slave of Benjamin Hollinshead, farmer, Chester Twp., 8 February 1814 [recorded in Book A, page 3].
10. Birth certificate of Diana, born 9 May 1814, daughter of an unnamed slave of John Cornell, Nottingham Twp., received 23 May 1815 [recorded in Book A, page 3].
11. Birth certificate of William, born 17 May 1817, son of Jemima, slave of John S. Lippincott, Bordentown, 16 February 1818 [recorded in Book A, page 3; this child is referred to as William Evelman in Lippincott's will, 1828, file #13812C].
12. Birth certificate of Lucanda, born 19 December 1816, daughter of an unnamed slave of Job Mathis, Little Egg Harbour Twp., 8 September 1817 [recorded in Book A, page 4].
13. Birth certificate of George Eayres, born 14 January 1807, son of Lydia Eayres, slave of Isaac Budd, no place, received 18 September 1823 [recorded in Book A, page 4].
14. Birth certificate of Emeline, born 15 March 1824, daughter of Fanny Franks, slave of Nathaniel Fenimore, Springfield Twp., received 28 October 1825 [recorded in Book A, page 4].
15. Birth certificate of Charles Sharp, born 2 November 1814 at Bordentown, Chesterfield Twp., son of Phillis Williams, and Mark [Ashdon?], born 4 May 1817 at Bloomsbury, Nottingham Twp., son of Phillis [Ashdon?], the mothers slaves late belonging to Nathaniel Shuff, deceased, no place, 25 May 1826 noted on reverse [no reference made to recording; reported by Aaron O. Shuff, executor; Mark and his mother are mentioned (without a surname) in Nathaniel Shuff's will, 1824, file #13470C].

Created April 2004

If you have any questions about the information in this collection guide, please contact [njarchives@sos.state.nj.us](mailto:njarchives@sos.state.nj.us)