

Evidence Explained: Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace

9.28 Mortgages & Sales of Servants

Slaves were typically classed as *chattel*. They could be mortgaged and sold. While sales of chattel did not have to be publicly recorded in most jurisdictions, the recording of chattel *mortgages* was almost always required. When citing a mortgage, if the title of the register does not include the word *mortgage* (or *deed of trust* as it might be variously called), you should add that detail to your First Reference Note.

Source List Entry

Florida. Escambia County. Deed Records, 1821–1865. Comptroller’s Office, Pensacola.

First Reference Note

1. Escambia County, Florida, Deed Book G: 32, Christin to de Rioboo, mortgage of Joe, 1839; Comptroller’s Office, Pensacola.

Subsequent Note

11. Escambia Co., Fla., Deed Book G:32.

9.29 Slave Passes for Travel

Most slave passes were documents used temporarily and locally, allowing slaves to travel within their neighborhood without being taken up as a runaway. Permanent recording in county or city registers was not the practice. When a master did choose to record a pass for out-of-state travel, it usually represented de facto manumission to circumvent a state’s anti-manumission laws. A typical citation might be constructed like this one:

Source List Entry

Louisiana. Natchitoches Parish. Conveyance Records, 1857. Clerk of Court’s Office, Natchitoches.

First Reference Note

1. Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana, Conveyance Book 53:23, John Payne to Jane et al., free pass to slaves for interstate travel; Clerk of Court’s Office, Natchitoches.

Subsequent Note

11. Natchitoches Par., La., Conveyance Book 53: 23.

VITAL REGISTRATIONS (BIRTHS, DEATHS, ETC.)

9.30 Background

Across time, maintaining vital registrations (aka *vital records*) has been