

Collection #  
SC 2740

## THOMAS HARGIS DOCUMENT, 14 APRIL 1814

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Processed by

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### COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 folder
COLLECTION DATES:	14 April 1814
PROVENANCE:	Larry LaFoe, Indianapolis, IN, 4 February 2005
RESTRICTIONS:	None

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**ALTERNATE FORMATS:**

**RELATED HOLDINGS:**

**ACCESSION NUMBER:** 2005.0146

**NOTES:**

**HISTORICAL SKETCH**

Article VI of the Northwest Ordinance made it impossible for slavery to exist legally in the new territories. In 1805, the newly-elected Indiana territorial legislature passed an act (Indenture, 1805) concerning Negroes and Mulattoes who had been brought into the territory. This meant that although slavery and involuntary servitude were illegal in the territories governed by the Northwest Ordinance, it could be circumvented through the new law. Basically, a slave would become the indentured servant of the owner or be sent back to the slave state from which they came. This indenture was normally for no less than ten years but has been recorded as being as long as ninety-nine.

The Indenture Act is being utilized in the document in this collection. Sela, a thirty-three year old black woman, is being indentured to Thomas Hargis who had brought her as a slave from Kentucky with him into Knox County, Indiana. Her term of indenture was twenty years. The document includes a statement from 14 April 1814 indicating that the previous notice is a true statement and copy of the original as it was laid down on 3 June 1809.

**Sources:**

Barnhart, John D., & Dorothy L. Riker. *Indiana to 1816: The Colonial Period*. Indianapolis, IN: Indiana Historical Bureau & Indiana Historical Society, 1971, pp. 347-348.

Enochs, Richard A. "Side Steps to Compromise: Expansion and the Issue of Slavery in the Old Northwest." *Black History News and Notes* no.82 (November 2000): 4-6.

Philbrick, Francis S., ed. *The Laws of the Indiana Territory, 1801-1809*. Indianapolis, IN: Indiana Library and Historical Bureau, 1931, pp. 136-139.

Thornbrough, Gayle, and Dorothy Riker, comp. *Readings in Indiana History*. Indianapolis, IN: Indiana Historical Society, 1956, pp. 143-156.

**SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

The collection contains a legal document that describes the indentured servitude of a black woman named Sela to Thomas Hargis for the term of twenty years. Sela had previously been held by Hargis as his slave in Kentucky. This is a handwritten copy of the original created and signed by the county clerk of Knox County, Indiana five years after the indenture was set forth in 1809.

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## CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: <http://opac.indianahistory.org/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, SC2740).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.