CHRYSALIS

[kris-*uh*-lis]

from Latin chrȳsallis, from Greek khrusallis

1. the obtect pupa of a moth or butterfly

2. anything in the process of developing

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SPECIAL ISSUE:
COMPARATIVE FUGITIVE SLAVE ADVERTISEMENT ANALYSIS: PART III

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CHRYSALIS was created by Dr. Charmaine A. Nelson as a vehicle to showcase the most innovative, rigorous, and sophisticated research produced by students within the context of her Art History courses at McGill University (Montreal, QC). Since launching in 2014, Nelson has also published the research of students at Harvard University (Cambridge, MA), NSCAD University (Halifax, NS), and the University of New Brunswick (Fredericton, NB). This volume features articles from students at University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Over the years, Nelson observed that undergraduate students in her courses were more than capable of producing exceptional research on par with that of graduate students, and at times even professional academics. Disappointed that most of these students were faced with a negligible audience (if any) for their incredible work, with the help of her graduate student Anna T. January (MA Art History, McGill University 2014), Nelson came up with the idea to provide another platform for their research dissemination. CHRYSALIS is that platform! Chrysalis has returned with a tenth issue, with Emily Davidson (MFA, NSCAD University, 2024) as Managing Editor.

CHRYSALIS is an open access, electronic journal that is published in several special issues on Nelson's research website: https://blackmaplemagazine.com/ The goal of CHRYSALIS is transformation: to publish scholarship that seeks answers to exciting new questions, to encourage students to undertake primary research, and to open the discipline of Art History in ways that make it more welcoming to a diverse population of students. For more information please contact: blackmaple2022@gmail.com

ARTICLES:

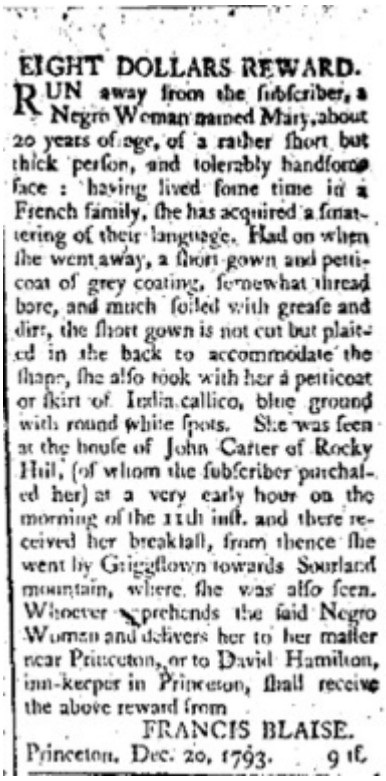
"IF SHE IS WILLING TO RETURN, AND PROCURE HERSELF A MASTER": WHITE MALE ENTITLEMENT TO ENSLAVED RUNAWAY FEMALE BODIES IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY NORTH AMERICA

Julia Eileen Dunne

American Slavery throughout its existence manifested itself into two distinct forms delineated by geography, North and South, around which cultures and attitudes to slavery grew and developed. The commonly accepted fallacy is that the Northern domestic and agrarian forms of slavery, were a more benign and "genteel"[1] type of slavery.[2] The reality, of course, is that there is no possibility of any form of forced bondage, by the very virtue of its nature, being a benign or gentle system in any society, and the American North is no exception. Slavery was, until its abolition, a pillar of the Northern economy and enslaved people contributed significant wealth and value by having their labour stolen by their enslavers.[3] Northern fugitive slave advertisements refute the notion that chattel slavery was a "peculiarly Southern institution"[4] especially when one looks at the scale at which Northern enslaved people ran away and subsequently "stole themselves."[5] These advertisements, and the enslavers who wrote them, essentially tell on themselves and fracture the image of the Northern enslaved person as one who is passive, dutiful, and happy to be in service to their enslavers.[6] The proliferation[7] of fugitive slave advertisements throughout the American North aptly demonstrates the brutality of the institution in question, and the desperation of those in power to maintain said establishment.

Fugitive slave advertisements have in them two dialectical and opposing portraits of desperation: the runaway, whose quest for freedom was so paramount that they put themselves at the mercy of the elements and the dangers of a life on the run, and the master, who, enraged[8] seeks to reassert their "ownership" and authority, and by extension, their whiteness and supremacy over the "blackness" which was steadily becoming codified as "slave" through these advertisements.[9]

Into this printed arena of the battle for emancipation arrives Mary, a young, enslaved woman who ran from her enslaver in Princeton, New Jersey, in December of 1793. Her enslaver, Francis Blaise, printed two separate advertisements for her recapture, across the span of nearly two years. (Figs. 1 and 2) This indicates that she is one of the lucky few who managed to successfully "steal themselves" and gain their



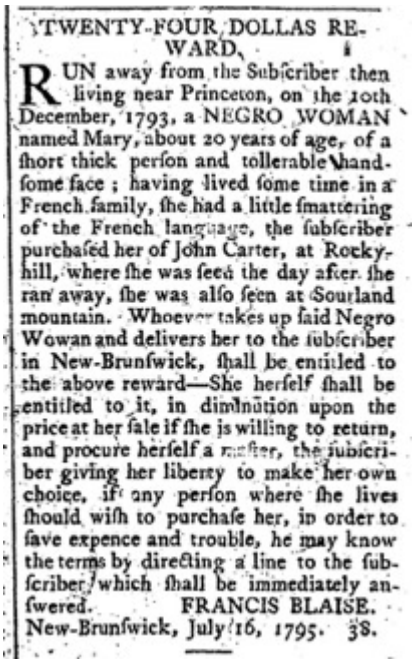
EIGHT DOLLARS REWARD.

RUN away from the ſubſcriber, a Negro Woman named Mary, about 20 years of age, of a rather ſhort but thick perſon, and tolerably handſome face: having lived ſome time in a French family, ſhe has acquired a ſmattering of their language. Had on when ſhe went away, a ſhort gown and petticoat of grey coating, ſomewhat thread bare, and much ſoiled with greaſe and dirt, the ſhort gown is not cut but plaited in the back to accommodate the ſhape, ſhe alſo took with her a petticoat or ſkirt of India callico, blue ground with round white ſpots. She was ſeen at the houſe of John Carter of Rocky Hill, (of whom the ſubſcriber purchaſed her) at a very early hour on the morning of the 11th inſt. and there received her breakfaſt, from thence ſhe went by Griggſtown towards Sourland mountain, where ſhe was alſo ſeen. Whoever apprehends the ſaid Negro Woman and delivers her to her maſter near Princeton, or to David Hamilton, inn-keeper in Princeton, ſhall receive the above reward from

FRANCIS BLAISE.

Princeton, Dec. 20, 1793. 9 tf.

Figure 1: Francis Blaise, "EIGHT DOLLARS REWARD" New Brunswick Advertiser (New Jersey), 31 December 1793.



TWENTY-FOUR DOLLAS REWARD,

RUN away from the Subſcriber then living near Princeton, on the 10th December, 1793, a NEGRO WOMAN named Mary, about 20 years of age, of a ſhort thick perſon and tollerable handſome face; having lived ſome time in a French family, ſhe had a little ſmattering of the French language, the ſubſcriber purchaſed her of John Carter, at Rocky-hill, where ſhe was ſeen the day after ſhe ran away, ſhe was alſo ſeen at Sourland mountain. Whoever takes up ſaid Negro Wowan and delivers her to the ſubſcriber in New-Brunſwick, ſhall be entitled to the above reward—She herſelf ſhall be entitled to it, in diminution upon the price at her ſale if ſhe is willing to return, and procure herſelf a maſter, the ſubſcriber giving her liberty to make her own choice, if any perſon where ſhe lives ſhould wiſh to purchaſe her, in order to ſave expence and trouble, he may know the terms by directing a line to the ſubſcriber, which ſhall be immediately anſwered. FRANCIS BLAISE.

New-Brunſwick, July 16, 1795. 3S.

Figure 2: Francis Blaise, "TWENTY-FOUR DOLLAS REWARD" New Brunswick Advertiser (New Jersey), 21 July,1795.

freedom through flight. These advertisements provide intimations of Mary's life and the relationship that she had to her enslaver Francis.[10] To paint a portrait of both the individual life of Mary and of slavery for women across the American North, one must look closely at what is said and what is omitted from the advertisement. Modern scholarship situates the life of Mary and others like her within the culture of the American North and provides the broader context within which systems of slavery operated.

Slavery for women not only came with the "strictest control of the physical and social mobility,"[11] but was compounded by the white male commodification and abuse of their sexuality and reproductivity.[12] The domestic labour the majority of enslaved women in the north were primarily engaged in[13] placed them in close proximity to their enslavers,[14] and therefore heightened the already high risk of continued sexual coercion and abuse.[15] It is from this hostile society fraught with the danger of daily physical and sexual violence that Mary fled, memorialized in the newspaper advertisement (Fig. 1). Many enslavers assumed their bond-person's return, or their recapture,[16] which often meant that advertisements offering a reward for the return of the escaped enslaved were published a number of days after the escape took place. Such is the case with Mary's advertisement, which was published nine days after her flight. Looking closer at the details of Mary's life through the advertisement, her being "about twenty years of age"[17] with a "tolerably handsome face,"[18] tells us that she is a young woman, and therefore most likely a victim of sexual abuse at the hands of her enslavers. With her exact age unknown, it is likely that she was enslaved in multiple households, which the reference to "John Carter of Rocky Hill, (from whom the subscriber purchased her)" in the advertisement confirms.[19] Her "smattering"[20] of French also hints at her childhood place of origin, which could be Haiti. A number of Haitian slave-owning families settled in the areas around Princeton to abscond from the Haitian Revolution,[21] so it is possible that Mary spent time enslaved to a Francophone household prior to her time with John Carter. At the time of her escape, she was wearing a short gown (Fig. 3) and a petticoat of matching grey material, "much soiled with grease and dirt"[22] a detail that indicates

Figure 3: Anonymous, short gown (c. 1790), cotton, Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Washington DC, USA.

Figure 4: Mathew Carey, Map of the State of New Jersey, Compiled from the most Authentic Information (1795), 47x31, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

the arduous land messy abour that she was likely subjected to within Blaise's household. Mary was also noted to have taken with her "a petticoat or skirt of India calico."[23] Clothing served a myriad of purposes that could help an enslaved person during their flight. Multiple articles of clothing enabled escapees to change their appearance and thus undermine their published description. Clothing could also be utilised as a bartering tool or form of currency, to help them on their journey.[24] Taken on its own, the advertisement for Mary's recapture gives us a brief but illuminating biography of the life of a young woman or girl who had been subjected to gruelling labour amidst the omnipotent threat of sexual assault and violence. The fact that Mary had multiple enslavers illuminates a disordered and chaotic childhood defined by the objectification inherent to enslavement. Her determination and resourcefulness to leave this life behind is evidenced by her running away in December in the American Northeast, rife with harsh conditions, where "geography and climate conspired against"[25] her. The timing of flight was oftentimes a deliberate and conscientious act, as "slaves rationally assessed their opportunities as runaways."[26]

The first notice also includes a brief sketch of the initial stages to Mary's escape, revealing the systems of communication and information between the slave owning population,[27] and the degree to which enslavers whose "property" ran away depended on the support of the surrounding community to recapture and recover them. This is reinforced by the inclusion of "Whoever apprehends the said Negro Woman and delivers her to her master near Princeton, or to David Hamilton, innkeeper,"[28] which effectively shows the communal effort that was required to maintain and enforce slavery. The direction Mary travelled, Northeast to Sourland Mountain, as seen in the map of New Jersey (Fig. 4), is unusual, as most enslaved people who fled at this time ran to Pennsylvania, which was a free state at the time of Mary's escape.[29] By going against the pattern of escape typical to her area, Mary demonstrates a calculation and preparedness that

implies a degree of cooperation, with people outside of Princeton. This establishes that Mary likely had some kind of network that supported her isolated journey to freedom.[30]

Published nearly two years later, Blaise's second advertisement for Mary's recapture includes some of the same details seen in the first advertisement, such as her "smattering" of French, "tolerably handsome face," and the name of her previous enslaver. The repetition of the details ascribed to Mary's escape, such as the most obvious one, the date of Mary's flight show that this is the same escape as the first advertisement. Indicating that Mary's efforts to flee were successful.

Where it diverges from the previous notice is where further meaning and details into the relationship between Mary and her enslaver can be uncovered. Despite Blaise having moved from Princeton to New Brunswick, and Mary's ostensibly successful flight, her enslaver was still obsessed with her recapture, to the point where the value of her labour has tripled and been offered to Mary herself.

Mary's enslaver exposed his intense determination to have her back under his control in the second advertisement. The language used by Blaise in the second advertisement published for Mary reveals the ingrained cultural entitlement to the bodies and sexuality of the enslaved. The hegemonic control the white male enslaver attempted to exert over the black female enslaved body was resisted most overtly by flight,[31] as in Mary's case. This entitlement is most notable when one looks at the language used in the second half of the advertisement: "*She herself shall be entitled to it*, in diminution upon the price at her sale if she is willing to return, and *procure herself a master*, the subscriber giving her *liberty* to make her own choice, if any person she lives with should wish to purchase her."[32] So ingrained in his mind is the institution of slavery, the state of enforced subservience enslaved women are subjected to, that Blaise cannot seem to allow himself to let Mary live a sovereign life as a free black woman; instead he would rather pay her to return to him.[33] He cannot seem to imagine Mary living in a state of emancipation, but instead, will "[give] her the liberty" of choosing her next enslaver, a choice no doubt intended to seem gracious and magnanimous, when in reality it demonstrates the insidious belief in the intrinsic nature of black subservience.

The use of the word liberty in the second advertisement is incredibly ironic. Having the "liberty" to choose the person who would deny her physical freedom and strip her of her very humanity, is not the benevolent offer Blaise may have thought he was extending. The use of "liberty" in the advertisement, meant to entice Mary back into enslavement, is telling of the cognitive dissonance the enslavers at the time operated under. This offer by Blaise demonstrates so distinctly the belief ingrained in enslavers' minds of the Africans' and African Americans' natural state of subjugation. This belief is codified by documents such as fugitive slave advertisements.

The language used in these specific advertisements illustrate northern reliance on enslaved labour despite their minority status with the northern areas of the United States. This enslaver's desperation to reclaim the labour and sexuality of an enslaved woman from his household has inferences which reveal the reliance upon slavery within the American North.

Evidence in fugitive slave advertisements discredits the widely held belief in a benign form of slavery existing in the American North and the implied moral superiority of the Northern states. The North was no less economically and culturally reliant on the stolen labour of enslaved people than the South. These newspaper notices serve as unimpeachable reminders of this history the people who sought to free themselves from the horrors of slavery. As previously stated, the more domestic and isolated nature of northern slavery did not preclude the capability of enslavers to inflict emotional, physical, and sexual violence on the enslaved people within their household. This isolation often exacerbated the risk of a certain population's exposure to such violence.[34] By studying the minutiae of one runaway's quest for freedom and her enslaver's printed attempts to regain control of her labour and body, these advertisements reveal the latent philosophies and attitudes of the society from which Mary fled; one rife with white male entitlement to black female labour and sexuality. Mary's story, told through these documents, exposes northern society as dependent on an institution that exploited the labour of a people. Northern society built the foundations of a prosperous economy and powerful region of the United States, yet also proliferated and encouraged the idea that the institution of slavery was inherently benevolent and gentle. By naming the act of choosing an enslaver an act of liberty, Blaise exposed the simultaneous dependence on and erasure of the labour of black enslaved women, which reflected, with incredible accuracy, the contemporary and retrospective northern attitude towards its history of slavery.

ENDNOTES

[1] Jonathan Prude, "To Look upon the 'Lower Sort': Runaway Ads and the Appearance of Unfree Laborers in America, 1750-1800," Journal of American History, vol. 78, no. 1 (1991). This essay explores the economics and undocumented visual culture of the people living 'below' the social strata of the elite, which illuminates the classed and gendered act of looking and observing in the visually-centred culture of eighteenth-century America. Prude uses the term "genteel" to imply an image of upper-class politeness, which I have used here to refer to the perspective that northern slavery was "more humane" or a "lesser" form of forced labour and bondage.

[2] Karen Cook Bell, " 'A Negro Wench Named Lucia': Enslaved Women during the Eighteenth Century," Running from Bondage: Enslaved Women and Their Remarkable Fight for Freedom in Revolutionary America (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), p. 378.

[3] Kelly A. Ryan, "Slaves," Everyday Crimes: Social Violence and Civil Rights in Early America (NYU Press, 2019), p. 78.

[4] Matthew Mason and Rita G. Koman, "Complicating Slavery: Teaching with Runaway Slave Advertisements," OAH Magazine of History, p. 31.

[5] Marvin L. Michael Kay and Cary Lorin Lee, "Slave Runaways in Colonial North Carolina, 1748-1775," North Carolina Historical Review, vol. 63, no. 1 (1986), p. 1.

[6] Antonio T. Bly, "Pretty, Sassy, Cool: Slave Resistance, Agency, and Culture in Eighteenth-Century New England," New England Quarterly, vol. 89, no. 3 (2016), p.459.

[7] Richard Wojtowicz, and Billy G. Smith, "Advertisements for Runaway Slaves, Indentured Servants, and Apprentices in the Pennsylvania Gazette, 1795–1796," Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies, vol. 54, no. 1 (1987), p. 34.

[8] Bly, "Pretty, Sassy, Cool," p. 465.

[9] Prude, "To Look upon the 'Lower Sort,' " p. 134.

[10] I use Wojtowicz and Smith's premise that the information in these fugitive slave advertisements is inherently skewed in their interpretations and descriptions of their runaways, owing to their biases, projected desires of willing black subjugation, and the inability to properly articulate blackness with the language of visual culture available to

them. The motivations and desires of the subscribers should be read onto what they have printed, as it maps their relationship to their runaways in what they have noticed about the people living in forced bondage with them.
[11] Cook Bell, " 'A Negro Wench Named Lucia,' " p. 40.
[12] Kurth, "Wayward Wenches and Wives," p. 208. See also Cook Bell, " 'A Negro Wench Named Lucia,' " p. 43.
[13] Ryan, "Slaves," p. 78.
[14] Cook Bell, " 'A Negro Wench Named Lucia,' " p. 34.
[15] Cook Bell, " 'A Negro Wench Named Lucia,' " p. 43.
[16] Prude, "To Look Upon the 'Lower Sort,' " p. 140.
[17] Francis Blaise, "EIGHT DOLLARS REWARD," New Brunswick Advertiser (New Jersey), 31 December 1793; Princeton and Slavery Project (date of last access 22 September 2023) https://slavery.princeton.edu/sources/mary-1.
[18] Blaise, "EIGHT DOLLARS REWARD."
[19] Blaise, "EIGHT DOLLARS REWARD."
[20] Blaise, "EIGHT DOLLARS REWARD."
[21] Joseph Yannielli, "Princeton's Fugitive Slaves," Princeton and Slavery Project (date of last access 22 September 2023) https://slavery.princeton.edu/stories/runaways
[22] Blaise, "EIGHT DOLLARS REWARD."
[23] Blaise, "EIGHT DOLLARS REWARD."
[24] Shane White and Graham White, "Slave Clothing and African American Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries." Past and Present, vol. 148, (1995), p 160.
[25] Antonio T. Bly, "A Prince among Pretending Free Men: Runaway Slaves in Colonial New England Revisited," Massachusetts Historical Review, vol. 14 (2012), p. 99.
[26] Kay and Lee, "Slave Runaways in Colonial North Carolina," p. 32.
[27] Tom Costa, "What Can We Learn from A Digital Database of Runaway Slave Advertisement?" International Social Science Review, vol. 76, no. 1/2 (2001), p. 37.
[28] Blaise, "EIGHT DOLLARS REWARD."
[29] Andre Fernando Biehl, "Strategies for Escape: A Study of Fugitive Slave Ads (1770-1819)," Princeton and Slavery Project, (date of last access 22 September 2023) https://slavery.princeton.edu/stories/strategies-for-escape
[30] Bly, "A Prince among Free Men," p. 108.
[31] Kurth, "Wayward Wenches and Wives," p. 200.
[32] Francis Blaise, "TWENTY-FOUR DOLLAS REWARD," New Brunswick Advertiser (New Jersey), 21 July 1795; Princeton and Slavery Project, (date of last access 22 September 2023) https://slavery.princeton.edu/sources/mary. Italics mine.
[33] The reward offered to Mary does, however, have a caveat. "In diminution upon the price at her sale." In diminution is a legal term that calculates the value of damages owed to a property owner after the breach of a contract or the loss of property, meaning that Mary owes her enslaver the cost of the labour she "stole" from him when she ran away. It also reinforces the perception of enslaved people as property, chattel, instead of living, breathing, sentient human beings.
[34] Kurth, "Wayward Wenches and Wives," p. 202.

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PLATE LIST

Figure 1: Francis Blaise, "EIGHT DOLLARS REWARD," New Brunswick Advertiser (New Jersey), 31 December 1793; Princeton and Slavery Project (date of last access 22 September 2023) https://slavery.princeton.edu/sources/mary-1.

Figure 2: Blaise, Francis, "TWENTY-FOUR DOLLAS REWARD" New Brunswick Advertiser (New Jersey), 21 July 1795; Princeton and Slavery Project, (date of last access 22 September 2023) https://slavery.princeton.edu/sources/mary.

Figure 3: Anonymous, short gown (ca. 1790), cotton, Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Washington DC, USA.

Figure 4: Mathew Carey, Map of the State of New Jersey, Compiled from the most Authentic Information (1795), 47x31, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

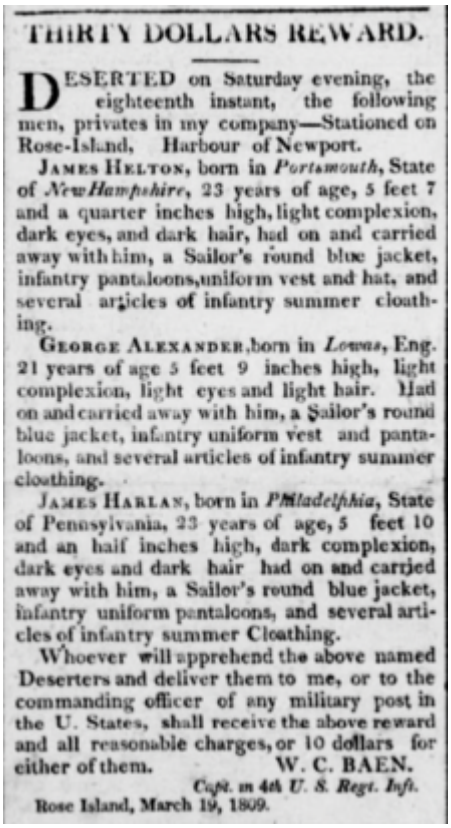
FLIGHT BY SEA: FUGITIVE SLAVE ADVERTISEMENT AND SEEKING FREEDOM ABOARD SHIPS

Owen Embury

During Transatlantic Slavery in the United States, fugitive slave advertisements, published in newspapers or as broadsides, functioned as a means of aiding in the recapture of escaped enslaved people for their enslavers. The fundamental elements of these advertisements are a description of the escape, as well as descriptions of the enslaved person's appearance, character, and skills, and often information about their possible location or continued means of escape. However, all of this information was processed through the lens of the enslaver. While often brief in words and presented through an inherently racist and dehumanizing system, these descriptions offer an unparalleled window into the motivations of enslaved individuals and the fears of enslavers on a widespread scale.

What is of particular interest to this paper is what these advertisements offer in the way of methods of escape, specifically escapes by boat. The enslavement of Africans was facilitated by a rapidly expanding transatlantic merchant network fueled by the colonization of North America and the Caribbean by European colonial powers.[1] Yet, it is through this same network of merchant and Navy ships that many enslaved people sought freedom by enlisting as sailors,[2] through piloting ships themselves,[3] or by mutiny.[4] Within a context in which freedom often meant escaping one's enslaver and the region of enslavement altogether, ships offered enslaved people a level of mobility that far exceeded their potential on land. With that mobility came the power to seek freedom in regions that had abolished slavery, and the ability to form informational networks between the free and the enslaved that spanned the Atlantic seaboard. However, waterways (especially the Atlantic Ocean) as pathways to freedom were far more accessible to enslaved males, since the ubiquity of sexual violence made the ships particularly dangerous places for enslaved females.

In areas with major ports, a frequent conclusion to fugitive slave advertisements was a warning from the enslaver, sometimes asserting their intention to pursue legal action, against any ship captains who enlisted, aided, harboured or carried off the advertisement's target.[5] Three advertisements posted in the Newport Mercury on 31 August 1774, 12 September 1774, and 19 September 1774 (Doc. 1; see p. 20) sought the capture of George Gregory, whose enslaver believed was headed to either Providence, Bristol or Dartmouth to join a whaling crew. These advertisements conclude with a warning reading, "N.B. All masters of vessels are forewarned carrying off said servant."[6] (sic) The prevalence of this cooperative relationship between escaping enslaved people (especially males) and ship captains was featured frequently in these advertisements because it was fueled by a desperate need for labour onboard ships due to



THIRTY DOLLARS REWARD.

DESERTED on Saturday evening, the eighteenth instant, the following men, privates in my company—Stationed on Rose-Island, Harbour of Newport.

JAMES HELTON, born in *Portsmouth*, State of *New Hampshire*, 23 years of age, 5 feet 7 and a quarter inches high, light complexion, dark eyes, and dark hair, had on and carried away with him, a Sailor's round blue jacket, infantry pantaloons, uniform vest and hat, and several articles of infantry summer cloathing.

GEORGE ALEXANDER, born in *Lowas*, Eng. 21 years of age 5 feet 9 inches high, light complexion, light eyes and light hair. Had on and carried away with him, a Sailor's round blue jacket, infantry uniform vest and pantaloons, and several articles of infantry summer cloathing.

JAMES HARLAN, born in *Philadelphia*, State of Pennsylvania, 23 years of age, 5 feet 10 and an half inches high, dark complexion, dark eyes and dark hair had on and carried away with him, a Sailor's round blue jacket, infantry uniform pantaloons, and several articles of infantry summer Cloathing.

Whoever will apprehend the above named Deserters and deliver them to me, or to the commanding officer of any military post in the U. States, shall receive the above reward and all reasonable charges, or 10 dollars for either of them. W. C. BAEN.

Capt. in 4th U. S. Regt. Inft.

Rose Island, March 19, 1809.

Figure 1: W.C. Baen, "THIRTY DOLLARS REWARD.," Rhode-Island Republican (Newport), 29 March 1809; Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

increased commercial and military demand[7] and desertion.[8] Enlistment as a sailor was likely one of the few labour opportunities presented to an escaped enslaved person in the United States, especially those not trained as artisans, and it also functioned as a means of putting a great distance between them and their enslaver in a short period of time.

Posted in the Rhode Island Republican on 12 April 1809, are two advertisements seeking the return of three deserting Navy sailors placed by one Captain W.C. Baen. (Fig. 1) This second advertisement employs a similar structure to fugitive slave advertisements, and showcases the fact that power dynamics aboard ships were not entirely dissimilar to that of slavery. Sailors aboard Navy ships were subject to unhygienic living conditions, received restricted amounts of poor quality food, were under constant surveillance, and were often the victims of brutal punishments from tyrannical rulers by means of whips, collars, and screws.[9] Frequently sailors were bound to their ships through debt bondage[10] accrued on voyages through the purchase of essential living materials from their captains at systematically inflated prices.[11] The isolation, however, afforded sailors the opportunity to employ collective bargaining and, when necessary, the effective removal of especially sadistic or incompetent captains. The presence of an unquestionable, domineering commander was common enough to build relationships that transcended racial boundaries on board ships, and often created a culture of mutual protection and advocacy.[12] The prospect of a life working aboard a ship, therefore, presented enslaved men with the opportunity to partially escape systemic racial discrimination and to enter an environment where punishments were performed according to a navigable set of rules with a form of checks and balances.

Demographics on board merchant ships in the United States during the time of slavery are impossible to recover due to inconsistent record keeping caused by the constant turnover of sailors in the service and exchange from ship to ship. Employment on merchant ships was entirely opportunistic and driven by economic ends as opposed to being bound by strong government regulation. Captains of whaling ships in the Pacific often employed Pacific Islanders while stopping in ports, and problematic sailors were regularly traded amongst ships.[13] This unregulated approach to enlistment makes it difficult to fully comprehend the full scope of the presence of black sailors on merchant ships that sailed from the United States with sufficient clarity, but their prevalence on ships can be attested to through the institutions constructed to facilitate black sailors. Most revealing is, by 1846, sixteen boarding houses for non-white sailors

were in operation in New York City alone.[14] From this rough understanding, knowing what percentage of this population were escaped enslaved people is nearly impossible. Sources that offer insight into this question are fugitive slave advertisements.

The potential enlistment of escaped enslaved people as sailors had become pervasive enough to garner pre-emptive warnings to ship captains from enslavers. Enslaved people in coastal regions frequently received specialist training in ship crafts while labouring in shipyards that would be desirable for any captain.[15] In an advertisement posted on 9 February 1795 in Charlestown, South Carolina's City Gazette (Doc. 2; see p. 20), the author, Solomon Legare, describes an enslaved man named George as "a sail maker by trade, and very active as a seaman."[16] Legare then concludes the advertisement with a warning that George is likely part of a larger group of escaped enslaved people seeking enlistment. The conclusion reads, "Captain of vessels are particularly cautioned against hiring him as he has a great inclination for the sea, and will no doubt, with some of his companions, who have also ran away, attempt to go in that line."[17] (sic) The unregulated and opportunistic employment practices on merchant ships evidently offered a consistent means of escape for enslaved men who would then become a part of a larger body of black sailors.

Searching for the demographics of United States Navy ships is similarly difficult since naval records at the time inconsistently included information concerning a sailor's race.[18] Similarly to merchant sailors, however, by analyzing the forces that constrained and defined the lives of black sailors, their significance within the Navy can be understood. After the American Revolution, leading up to the Civil War, the United States Government passed a number of laws and regulations that intended to severely restrict the agency and number of black sailors in the Navy. During the American Revolution, African American sailors served in large numbers in the Navy, with joining the war effort being used frequently as a means of escape.[19] Enslaved people were, also, often enlisted into the military as stand-ins for their enslavers.[20] Some enslaved sailors, like Jack Sisson of the Rhode Island First Regiment, were even lauded as national heroes.[21] The service of African Americans in the military at large was a driving force in the new nation's first abolitionist movements,[22] and as a result efforts were made to limit the use of service as a path to freedom in the future. In 1798, the Navy barred enlistment for all African Americans, [23] although by 1812, this order was abandoned as evidenced by numerous reports of African American sailors fighting against the British.[24] In 1839, the government issued regulations that the enlistment of African American sailors must not exceed five percent of a recruiting station's totals.[25] These restrictive measures were issued, in part, to diminish the visibility of black sailors serving in the military, but were also used as an attempt to dissolve the growing communication network between free and enslaved sailors on Navy and merchant ships across the Atlantic.

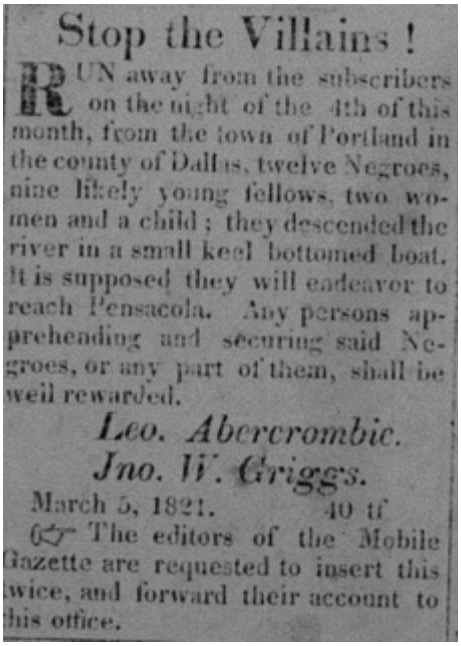
Through their mobility, black sailors formed a fast-traveling network of information that united freemen, abolitionists, and enslaved people on ships and on land. This phenomenon is what scholar Matthew D. Brown coined "The Sailor's Telegraph."[26] The most important communications along this network took place between sailors in port and enslaved people

working in shipyards. Through these exchanges of information, enslaved people on land could receive information vital in planning a potential escape, like the state of abolition in the north and where to find safety along their escape routes.[27] In the south especially, simply meeting a free black sailor would expose an enslaved person to the potential for freedom. This is similar to the case of Fredrick Douglass who wrote extensively about the role ships and sailors played in fueling his drive for freedom and in facilitating his escape. In his Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave, published 1 May 1845, Douglass recounted a chance encounter with two Irish sailors in the Baltimore shipyard to which he was assigned. Of their exchange he wrote, "One of them came to me and asked me if I were a slave. I told him I was. He asked, 'Are ye a slave for life?' I told him that I was… They both advised me to run away to the north; that I should find friends there, and that I should be free… from that time I resolved to run away."[28] In The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass (1881), Douglass discusses his use of a sailor's protection notice that was issued to all American sailors as a means of identification. These papers included a brief description of their owner and the official seal of the United States. It was not uncommon for free black sailors to lend their papers to an enslaved person as a means of escape. The lending of a sailor's protection papers gravely endangered the free sailor's freedom and relied entirely on the success of the escape attempt and the papers being returned. While lacking protection papers, a freeman may have been taken for an escapee, or, if their papers were seized from a captured escapee, they would have received substantial time in prison.[29] This inherent risk, however, attests not only to the bravery of generations of black sailors, but to how such collaborations became a dependable means of escape. In Douglass' account, he received his papers from a black sailor he met in port while working as a caulker. The description of the papers did not match Douglass (primarily his complexion), but, as evidenced by Douglass' account, the official seal was often enough to satisfy the questions of officials who stopped them.[30]

As this network of communication grew, its scope and effectiveness became apparent to the minds of enslavers, and, in response, they began to pass laws deliberately targeting the mobility of black sailors while in ports in the south. Charleston, South Carolina passed the 1822 "Negro Seamen Act" which required that all black sailors be imprisoned or held on their ship while in port entirely at the expense of their captain.[31] Charleston authorities had employed measures of restricting the mobility of black sailors for decades, but enacted the law in response to the planned uprising orchestrated by Denmark Vessey that same year.[32] Vessey was captured and put on trial. Denmark Vesey, a formerly enslaved carpenter, organized a plan to rally the black majority of Charleston into an armed overthrow of the city.[33] At the centre of the trial was a discussion of the role that black sailors from the north had played in aiding Vesey's conspiracy. The exchange of information between black populations in the north and the south through sailors was deemed a principle challenge facing the maintenance of slavery in the South by Charlestown Governor John Wilson who likened abolitionist ideas to an "infectious disease."[34] During the trial, co-conspirators claimed that Vesey was actively seeking to form a line of communication with Jean-Pierre Boyer in Haiti through the sailors' network to confirm that his

followers could seek asylum.[35] The trial of Denmark Vesey not only attests to the capacity to enact change black sailors held and the fear they struck in the minds of enslavers, but also sheds light on a more absolute freedom black people could find through piloting their own ships.

Communication with sailors provided enslaved people with information on the state of abolition within the United States, but also information on abolition throughout the Americas and the Caribbean. A number of fugitive slave advertisements have been uncovered detailing group escapes by ship with the hopes of reaching Spanish controlled territories further south where they would be granted limited freedom and a chance at self-governance. On 10 March 1821, a fugitive slave advertisement, headlined "Stop the Villains!," was published in Cahawba, Alabama's Cahawba Press and Alabama State Intelligencer. (Fig. 2) An excerpt from the advertisement detailing their escape reads, "Twelve Negroes, nine likely young fellows, two women and a child; they descended the river in a small keel bottomed boat. It is supposed they will endeavour to reach Pensacola."[36] By the end of 1821, the United States would annex Pensacola, but, until then, Florida had acted as a promised land for enslaved people in the south. In 1693, the Spanish Government offered limited freedom to all enslaved people who could reach Spanish territories in exchange for adopting Catholicism, and a large black community numbering in the thousands was actively growing in St. Augustine. As the population of escaped enslaved people grew in Florida communities like Mose formed that were locally governed by formerly enslaved people.[37]



Stop the Villains !

RUN away from the subscribers on the night of the 4th of this month, from the town of Portland in the county of Dallas, twelve Negroes, nine likely young fellows, two women and a child; they descended the river in a small keel bottomed boat. It is supposed they will endeavor to reach Pensacola. Any persons apprehending and securing said Negroes, or any part of them, shall be well rewarded.

Leo. Abercrombie.
Jno. W. Griggs.

March 5, 1821. 40 tf

☞ The editors of the Mobile Gazette are requested to insert this twice, and forward their account to this office.

Figure 2: Leo. Abercrombie and Jno. W. Griggs, "STOP THE VILLAINS!,"Cahawba Press and Alabama State Intelligencer, 10 March 1821.

The allure of Spanish territories offered enslaved people a way of life entirely impossible in the United States. So as the United States annexed more territory from the Spanish, enslaved people continued to seek freedom further south by ship. A fugitive slave advertisement published 8 June 1844 in New Orleans' Daily Picayune details a similar escape as the previously discussed advertisement, but the enslaver believed that the group was headed for Texas or Mexico.[38] (Fig. 3) The use of a ship in escaping an enslaver was far less accessible for a majority of the enslaved population as they required both

$500 REWARD.—The above reward will be paid on the delivery, *at the Pilot's Station, Balize, La.*, of the Pilot Boat LAFAYETTE, and EIGHT NEGRO SLAVES, belonging to the Louisiana Pilots' Association, or $300 for the Pilot Boat, and $25 for each of the slaves. The said slaves absconded with the Pilot Boat on the morning of the 25th instant from the South West Pass, with the wind from the South-Eastward, and it is presumed they will make for the coast of Texas or Mexico.

may31 10t S. HERRIMAN, Agent.

Figure 3: S. Herriman, "$500 REWARD.," Daily Picayune (New Orleans, LA), 8 June 1844.

access to a ship to begin with and an experienced crew.[39] As opposed to escaping by enlisting as a sailor, escaped enslaved people who used these means did not play a continuing role in upending slavery, but were the few that actualized freedom from the American system of slavery completely, therefore setting a precedent for its possibility.

Ships and the ocean played an integral role in the liberation of individual enslaved people and the centuries-long fight for the abolition of slavery in the United States. In cases of escape to foreign territories, ships on the ocean were the fastest and most effective means of achieving liberation from the system of British and American slavery. These instances, however, were impossible for a majority of enslaved people due to the resources, labour and knowledge needed to accomplish them. A far more accessible means was escaping by enlisting in a larger naval or merchant crew due to their need for sailors and the lack of experience required to join. Onboard these ships, escaping enslaved people were a part of a larger community of freemen, enslaved people, and abolitionists that were able to spread information amongst themselves and with enslaved people while in port. Through these communication channels enslaved people on land were able to organise on a larger scale and receive information aiding in their escape attempts. Historically, in discussions of abolition in the United States, the role this network played in ending slavery has been largely understated. The isolated community of a ship often acted as microcosms of interracial cooperation, and the wider sailor culture was an integral mediating body between the north and the south leading up to the Civil War. The presence of black sailors in the Navy and the merchant service drove early abolitionist efforts, and without their work at sea, slavery may have persisted in the south for significantly longer than it did.[40]

ENDNOTES

[1] Marcus Rediker, The Slave Ship: A Human History (New York: Viking, 2007) pp. 42-45.
[2] Samuel Tompson, "RUN away from the subscriber," Newport Mercury, (Newport, RI), 31 August 1774.
[3] S. Herriman, "$500 REWARD.," Daily Picayune, (New Orleans, LA), 8 June 1844; Leo. Abercrombie and Jno. W. Griggs, "Stop The Villains!," Cahawba Press and Alabama State Intelligencer, (Cahawba, AL), 10 March 1821.
[4] Lorenzo J Greene, "Mutiny on the Slave Ships," Phylon (1940-1956), vol 5, no. 4 (4th Quarter, 1944), pp. 346–54.
[5] Enoch Crandall, "FIVE CENTS REWARD!," Rhode-Island Republican, (Newport, RI), Wednesday, 29 March 1809, p. 3; Library of Congress, Washington, DC.
[6] Tompson, "RUN away from the subscriber."
[7] Niklas Frykman, Clare Anderson, Lex Heerma van Voss, and Marcus Rediker, "Mutiny and Maritime Radicalism in the Age of Revolution: An Introduction," International Review of Social History, *Special Edition 12: Mutiny and Maritime Radicalism in the Age of Revolution: A Global Survey*, vol. 58, (2013), p. 8; Benjamin Quarles, Thad W. Tate, and Gary B. Nash, "Arms-Bearers for America," The Negro in the American Revolution (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), pp. 83-84.
[8] Harold D. Langley, "The Negro in the Navy and Merchant Service–1789-1860, 1798," Journal of Negro History, vol. 52, no. 4 (October, 1967), p. 279.
[9] Rediker, The Slave Ship: A Human History, pp. 204-205.
[10] Rediker, The Slave Ship: A Human History, pp. 226-228.
[11] Rediker, The Slave Ship: A Human History, p. 206.
[12] Brown, Matthew D., "Olaudah Equiano and The Sailor's Telegraph: 'The Interesting Narrative' and the Source of Black Abolitionism," Callaloo, vol. 36, no. 1 (Winter, 2013), p. 195; Frykman, Anderson, Heerma van Voss, and Rediker, "Mutiny and Maritime Radicalism in the Age of Revolution," p. 6.
[13] Langley, "The Negro in the Navy and Merchant Service," p. 274.
[14] Langley, "The Negro in the Navy and Merchant Service," p. 285.

[15] Langley, "The Negro in the Navy and Merchant Service," p. 279.
[16] Solomon Legare, "TEN DOLLARS REWARD.," City Gazette, (Charleston, SC), 9 February 1795.
[17] Legare, "TEN DOLLARS REWARD."
[18] Langley, "The Negro in the Navy and Merchant Service," p. 274.
[19] Quarles, Tate, and Nash, "Arms-Bearers for America," p. 69.
[20] Quarles, Tate, and Nash, "Arms-Bearers for America," pp. 68-69.
[21] Quarles, Tate, and Nash, "Arms-Bearers for America," p. 73.
[22] Quarles, Tate, and Nash, "Arms-Bearers for America," p. 74.
[23] Langley, "The Negro in the Navy and Merchant Service," p. 275.
[24] Langley, "The Negro in the Navy and Merchant Service," p. 277; Bolster, W. Jeffrey, " 'To Feel Like a Man': Black Seamen in the Northern States, 1800-1860," Journal of American History, vol. 76, no. 4 (March 1990), p. 1179.
[25] Langley, "The Negro in the Navy and Merchant Service," p. 280.
[26] Brown, "Olaudah Equiano and The Sailor's Telegraph," p. 192.
[27] Frykman, Anderson, Heerma van Voss, and Rediker, "Mutiny and Maritime Radicalism in the Age of Revolution," pp. 9-10.
[28] Frederick Douglass, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave (New York: Open Road Integrated Media, Inc., 1976), pp. 83-84.
[29] Frederick Douglass, Life and Times of Frederick Douglass (North Scituate: Digital Scanning, Incorporated, 2000), pp. 242-246.
[30] Douglass, Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, p. 247.
[31] Brown, "Olaudah Equiano and The Sailor's Telegraph," p. 196; Langley, "The Negro in the Navy and Merchant Service," p. 283.
[32] Brown, "Olaudah Equiano and The Sailor's Telegraph," p. 196. The plan called for thousands of enslaved people within the city storming weapons caches and liberating enslaved people in the surrounding countryside. The end goal of the revolt was to arrive in Haiti using ships taken from the Charleston shipyard though Vesey's plot was uncovered before it could be enacted, and he was put on trial an subsequently executed on 2 July 1822.
[33] Walter C. Rucker, " 'I Will Gather All Nations': Resistance, Culture, and Pan-African Collaboration in Denmark Vesey's South Carolina," Journal of Negro History, vol. 86, no. 2 (Spring, 2001), pp. 133-34.
[34] W. Jeffrey Bolster, Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), pp. 232-233.
[35] Bolster, Black Jacks, p. 232.
[36] Abercrombie and Griggs, "Stop The Villains!"
[37] Patrick Riordan, "Finding Freedom in Florida: Native Peoples, African Americans, and Colonists, 1670-1816," Florida Historical Quarterly, vol. 75, no. 1, (July 1997), pp. 25-32.
[38] Herriman, "$500 REWARD."
[39] Amanda Trager, "Slavery North: An Exhibition of Art, Artifacts and Documents, 2022 - Video Catalogue," Slavery North, 2 September 2022 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jBYuD7ENV4&t=749s, 33:26-35:27. Instances are known of enslaved people escaping by small boats and canoes, but their small size and slower speeds limited the potential distance they could put between themselves and their enslaver.
[40] Brown, "Olaudah Equiano and The Sailor's Telegraph," p. 199.

DOCUMENTS

Document 1: Samuel Tompson, "RUN away from the subscriber," Newport Mercury (Newport, RI), 31 August 1774.

> RUN away from the subscriber, on the 13th instant, a molatto boy, about 16 years of age, named GEORGE GREGORY, had on when he went away a new felt hat, flannel jacket, striped with red and blue, tow and linen shirt and trowsers, two pair of each, new shoes, bushy hair, is supposed to have gone to Providence, Bristol or Dartmouth, in order to go a whaling; whoever will take up said boy, and secure him so that his master may have him again, shall have five dollars reward, and all necessary charges, paid by SAMUEL TOMPSON.
> N.B. All masters of vessels are forewarned carrying off said servant.

Document 2: Solomon Legare, "TEN DOLLARS REWARD." City Gazette (Charleston, SC), 9 February 1795.

> TEN DOLLARS REWARD.
> RAN AWAY from on board the schooner Mary, on Tuesday night a negro fellow named GEORGE, about five feet high, remarkable streight limbed and slender, yellow complexion, is a sail maker by trade, and very active as a seaman, formerly belonging to a Mr. Francis Bremar ; he had on when he went away a new suit of blue sailors clothes, and a blue duffil great coat. Whoever will deliver the said negro to the master of the work-house, or to the subscriber, in Charleston, or to captain Luther, of the schooner Mary, either at Charleston or Georgetown, shall receive the above reward, and all reasonable charges ; and if with such information as will convict the harborer, a further reward of five pounds will be paid. Captain of vessels are particularly cautioned against hiring him as he has a great inclination for the sea, and will no doubt, with some of his companions, who have also ran away, attempt to go in that line.
> Solomon Legare, jun. February 9.

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PLATE LIST

Figure 1: W.C. Baen, "THIRTY DOLLARS REWARD," Rhode-Island Republican (Newport, RI), 29 March 1809; Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

Figure 2: Leo Abercrombie and Jno W. Griggs, "Stop The Villains!," Cahawba Press and Alabama State Intelligencer (Cahawba, AL), 10 March 1821.

Figure 3: S. Herriman, "$500 REWARD," Daily Picayune (New Orleans, LA), 8 June 1844.

RESISTANCE IN RHODE ISLAND AND PURSUIT IN BOSTON: A NORTHERN PICTURE ON ENSLAVEMENT

Eryn Flynn

With its immense scale of population and brutality, many recognize the Plantation South as the face of Transatlantic Slavery in the United States. What is less recognized is how those same ideas of race and oppression manifested systemically in the US North. Rhode Island played a particularly significant role in erecting and maintaining the institution of Transatlantic Slavery, with as many as four ports (Newport, Providence, Bristol, and Warren) receiving ships from Africa, linking them directly in tandem with the horrors of the Middle Passage.[1] As much as 10 per cent of the Rhode Island population was enslaved by 1750, nearly five times more than its neighbours like Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts.[2]

Slavery in the US North took different forms than it did in the US South, reflecting the differences in geography, economy, climate, and more. While the plantation system did not exist in the north as it did in the south, enslaved people were still forced to work in agriculture with tasks such as cultivating crops and raising livestock. Beyond that, the mercantile economies of northern cities largely prioritized shipping and trades. Some enslaved tradesmen received training from their enslavers themselves while others likely learned the skills of blacksmithing and shipbuilding previously in their home communities in Africa.[3]

Methods of resistance likely differed in nuance and tactic in the north, as opposed to the south, just as its economy did. Certain methods, however, remained universal, such as running away from the enslaver. According to the late pioneering researcher Dr. Lorenzo Greene, attempted escape was so ubiquitous that "nearly every issue of a New England newspaper between 1704 and 1784 carried advertisements for fugitive slaves."[4] What is particularly interesting, and what prompts the following discussion, is the coordination between enslavers of Boston and Rhode Island in the attempt to recapture these people.

That enslavers often worked together in the pursuit of an enslaved runaway is not a new observation. Coordination between enslavers took place on every level of government and across regions. Indeed, such coordination was a vital aspect of upholding an unnatural, brutal, and large-scale system of oppression. As late as 1842, in Prigg vs. Pennsylvania, the Supreme Court upheld a ruling from 1793 which ensured enslavers' "complete right and title of ownership in their slaves, as property, in every state in the Union into which they might escape,"[5] meaning that even those who had escaped into free states could be recaptured into slavery, and moreover, it was the express responsibility of the federal government to enforce this law.[6] The federal government's involvement only increased with a new Fugitive Slave Law in 1850.

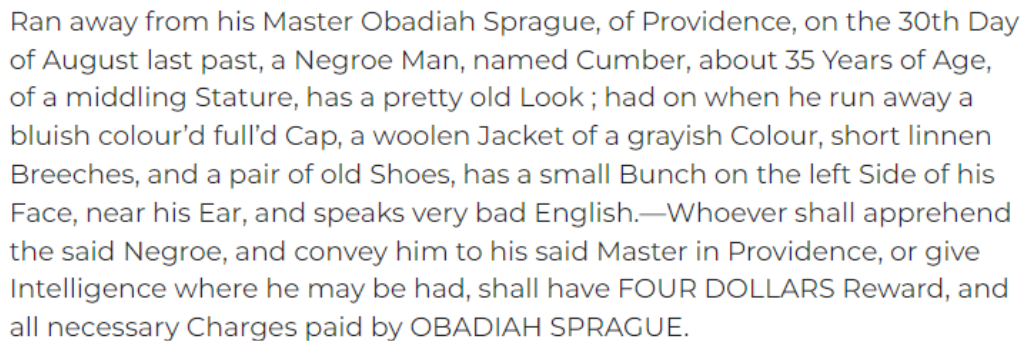

Ran away from his Master Obadiah Sprague, of Providence, on the 30th Day of August last past, a Negroe Man, named Cumber, about 35 Years of Age, of a middling Stature, has a pretty old Look ; had on when he run away a bluish colour'd full'd Cap, a woolen Jacket of a grayish Colour, short linnen Breeches, and a pair of old Shoes, has a small Bunch on the left Side of his Face, near his Ear, and speaks very bad English.—Whoever shall apprehend the said Negroe, and convey him to his said Master in Providence, or give Intelligence where he may be had, shall have FOUR DOLLARS Reward, and all necessary Charges paid by OBADIAH SPRAGUE.

Figure 1: Obadiah Sprague, "Ran away from his Master," Boston Gazette, 7 September 1761; transcribed in Freedom on the Move, https://fotm.link/092a6cfd-2f6b-45f8-b8c9-56893f7b3b24.

Those who attempted to flee understood the legal authority and geographical reach of their oppressors and had to adapt while on the run. Fugitive slave advertisements offer a meaningful window into how the enslavers pursued these freedom seekers and conversely how they avoided recapture. On 7 September 1761, a fugitive slave advertisement appeared in the Boston Gazette for the return of an enslaved person described as "a Negro Man, named Cumber, about 35 Years of Age."[7] (Fig. 1)

The advertisement appeared in Boston despite the fact that Cumber had fled from Providence. One might naturally ask if the enslaver, Obadiah Sprague, had first published advertisements in Rhode Island based newspapers such as the Newport Gazette.[8] Regardless of whether he did or not, the fact that he paid for publication in Boston directs us to several possibilities. Firstly, it proves the economic and social value of Cumber's stolen labour, that he should warrant such pursuit. Secondly, Sprague believed Cumber capable of traveling the near-fifty-mile distance on foot within the nine days between his escape and the printing of the advertisement, and thereby navigating the wilderness, as well as various individuals and communities. Next, the business and social networks of enslavers between Boston and Providence were so strong that Sprague needed not even to go to Boston to retrieve Cumber if captured, as he requested conveyance to his homestead in Providence. Finally, Sprague did not merely offer a reward for Cumber's recapture, but expressly for mere intelligence of Cumber's whereabouts, further emphasizing his incentive, Cumber's apparent value to his household, and heightening the enslaver networks working at odds against Cumber's freedom.

With the mechanics of the enslaver's operations in mind, one may now also turn to a deeper investigation of Cumber himself. The advertisement detailed his age as thirty-five and his body type "middling stature," but the stress of Cumber's life was apparently visible on his body in what Sprague defined as his "pretty old Look." Whereas his age and average height describe his appearance rather simply, characterizing his countenance indicates the enslaver's attempt at the description of something more related to personality which required interpretation. Ultimately, such descriptions certainly distanced him from youth. He also apparently spoke "very bad English." Considering altogether his age, lack of English fluency, and the context of

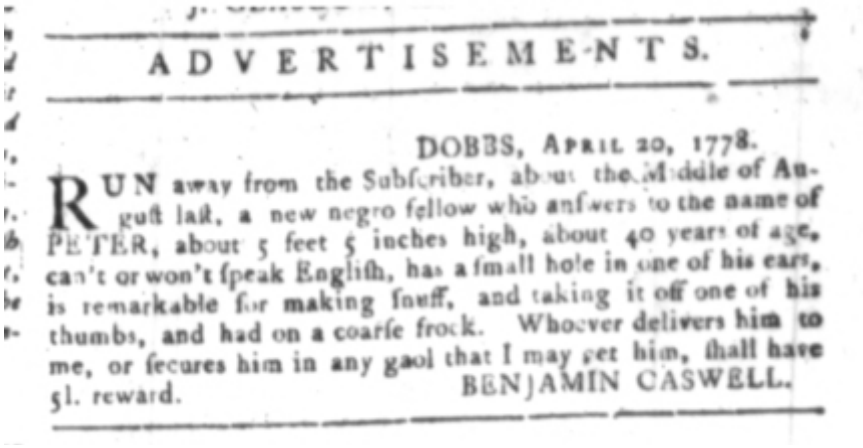
Ran away from their Master Capt. William Mirick of Boston, on Tuesday the 27th of September last, Two Servant Men, one a Negro Man named Peter, about 27 Years old, of a middle Stature, but rather short. Had on when he went away, a blue Jacket, two pair of old Trouzers, and a hat painted of several Colours.

N.B. His Hair is longer than Negro's hair commonly is, and he talks good French and Spanish, and pretty good English. The other is an English Man

Figure 2: Master Capt. William Mirick, "Ran away from their Master," Boston Gazette, 2 October 1737; transcribed in Freedom on the Move, https://fotm.link/1afb9ead-012a-4cec-b158-b493c28a0f2b.

mid-eighteenth-century Providence as a major slave port, it is possible that Cumber was born in Africa and survived the Middle Passage. Accounting for his language barriers, alternatively, he could have been born outside of the British Empire, such as the French or Spanish. However, enslavers typically detailed all of the languages through which an enslaved person could communicate, such as in a fugitive slave advertisement for a man named Peter, which read, "he talks good French and Spanish, and pretty good English."[9] (Fig. 2) Therefore, the absence of a discussion of languages other than English likely indicates that Cumber was not multi-lingual in European languages.

Another alternative explanation could be that he refused to learn or speak English as another mode of resistance. Fugitive slave advertisements that remark things such as "can't or won't speak English,"[10] as found in southern locations such as North Carolina, highlight the refusal to learn or speak the enslaver's language as resistance. In the instance of one North Carolina advertisement, the enslaver may have been somewhat aware of this resistance, given the specific word choice. (Fig. 3) The lack of explanation in Cumber's advertisement implies the enslaver's ignorance of this tactic, or several possibilities regarding Cumber's personal origins to otherwise explain his lack of fluency.[11]



ADVERTISEMENTS.

DOBBS, APRIL 20, 1778.

RUN away from the Subscriber, about the Middle of August last, a new negro fellow who answers to the name of PETER, about 5 feet 5 inches high, about 40 years of age, can't or won't speak English, has a small hole in one of his ears, is remarkable for making snuff, and taking it off one of his thumbs, and had on a coarse frock. Whoever delivers him to me, or secures him in any gaol that I may get him, shall have 5l. reward.

BENJAMIN CASWELL.

Figure 3: Benjamin Caswell, "Run Away from the Subscriber," North Carolina Gazette, 1 May 1778; transcribed in Freedom on the Move, https://fotm.link/1fbba477-64eb-4176-ac20-a53b2652e537.

The advertisement offers other notable characteristics, as well. It describes "a small Bunch on the Left side of his Face, near his Ear." Rather ambiguously, this formation may refer to a birthmark of some type, or perhaps evidence of physical abuse at Sprague's hand. If it referred to a welt or bruise from injury, it would be one of many

vaguely coded and highly suggestive descriptions of enslaver-inflicted harm, as other examples exist where enslavers went so far as to describe injuries they inflicted upon enslaved people including young black girls.[12]

Cumber had attempted to run a week before this advertisement printed, meaning that he already successfully managed to remain free for longer than many, who sadly were recaptured within a few days. Given that amount of time, he certainly interacted with other people, whether enslaved or free persons. Before this advertisement even hit the press, then, Cumber had already successfully maneuvered through social interactions as a wanted man with a potential language disadvantage in an immensely oppressive society that was fundamentally suspicious of black people. It is possible that he attempted to pass as a still-enslaved man moving about on business for his enslaver if he was questioned. As a person without English fluency, depending upon his accent, Cumber may have been easily identified as African born. Therefore, when combined with other aspects of his appearance, he would not have easily passed for a free man, most of whom were Creole (born in the Americas). Other fugitive advertisements describe similar instances where freedom seekers "prevented Persons taking of him up as a Runaway, by telling them he was there Working for his Master." (Fig. 4) The advertisement ran again, a week later on 14 September 1761. As with many fugitive advertisement, it is nearly impossible to track Cumber's story further. Offering a comparison to Cumber's story is that of Pompy, who ran away sometime before 22 June 1760, just the year before. (Fig. 5) Fleeing from a man named Edmand Leavenworth, Pompy was also described as a "Negro Man…aged 28 Years."[13] The advertisement also described his height, body type, and complexion. Recall that Sprague merely wrote, "of a middling stature," in regard to Cumber's height. Such a description was not

RUN-away from the Subscriber (about a Month since) a well set likely Negro Fellow, of a middling Stature, named Cesar, aged about 25 Years. Said Runaway had on when he went away, a blue Kersey Coat with blue Lining, flat Brass Buttons, a stript homespun Waistcoat without Sleeves, a Pair of Moose Skin Breeches, ript on the back Part of the Thigh, a Cotton and Linnen Shirt, grey Yam Stockings, and is suppos'd to be in some of the neighbouring Towns, as he has been frequently seen, and prevented Persons taking of him up as a Runaway, by telling them he was there Working for his Master.—Whoever shall take up said Runaway, and convey him to his Master, shall have TWO DOLLARS Reward for their Trouble, and necessary Charges paid, by
THOMAS DAWES.
Boston, September 14, 1761.
N. B. All Persons whatsoever are hereby forewarned from harbouring, concealing or carrying off said Servant on Penalty of the Law.

Figure 4: Thomas Dawes, "RUN-away from the Subscriber," Boston Gazette, 14 September 1761; Freedom on the Move, https://fotm.link/092a6cfd-2f6b-45f8-b8c9-56893f7b3b24.

Ran away from his Master, Edmand Leavenworth, a Negro Man named Pompy, aged 28 Years, about five Feet and a half high, or there abouts; high, well set, of a middling Black Colour, talks good English, he can read and write, and it is likely that he hath got a Pass, and will pass for a free Man. Whoever shall take up said Negro, and secure, or send him to his Master in Stratford, shall have FIVE POUNDS Lawful Money Reward, and all reasonable Charges paid by me the Subscriber. Edmand Leavenworth.

Figure 5: Edmand Leavenworth, "Ran away from his Master," Boston Post Boy, 22 June 1760; transcribed in Freedom on the Move, https://fotm.link/f2645e00-65f1-4c7d-a586-c78edb252214.

uncommon among Rhode Island fugitive advertisements, which also featured the variations "middle stature" and "middling size." These phrases may represent a northern enslaver attitude that gave less attention to such details.[14] In the end, neither Sprague nor Leavenworth printed the exact height of their enslaved person, and Leavenworth knew little of how to characterize Pompy's skin colour which he described awkwardly as a "middling Black Colour."[15]

In the south, the white oppressive group had to stay hypervigilant over the large-scale, enslaved-majority population in order to keep the violent system running and the potential of violent rebellion contained. Moreover, southern enslavers also had much more opportunity for study of enslaved populations due to the scale of their economic enterprises which necessitated more enslaved labour. In the north, however, the white-majority oppressive group did not have the same need for hypervigilance against rebellion, and although they often forced the enslaved to live in their homes, many enslavers had less familiarity with diverse populations of black people especially in places where slave ships did not arrive directly from Africa. Therefore, to the majority white populations, the exact shade of an enslaved person's skin seemed not to matter as much as their racial type, since both enslaved and free black people attained an unwelcome hypervisibility within such societies. This attitude is reflected in the language that each enslaver used to describe the runaway men. Sprague merely used the race-focused term "Negroe"[16] to describe Cumber, not describing Cumber's complexion further. (sic) Leavenworth described Pompy's complexion as a "middling Black Colour,"[17] whereas enslavers in the south would have instead utilized a term such as "mulatto," or another of many racially and physically descriptive terms that resulted from tracking a generationally whiter enslaved population.[18]

Unlike Cumber, Pompy was described as possessing both English fluency and literacy, traits which Leavenworth suspected him of using to his advantage in the process of escape. The advertisement stated that Pompy, "talks good English, he can read and write, and it is likely that he hath got a Pass, and will pass for a free Man."[19] The word pass was used in two ways. The former was indicating Leavenworth's suspicion that Pompy had a paper document which falsely represented his permission for the enslaved man to move about. Since Pompy was literate, this may have been a complete forgery or an old pass which he had stolen and altered. The latter use of pass meant to perform identity convincingly to be perceived as what you were not; in this case an enslaved man taking on the identity of a free black man.

Another notable difference between Cumber and Pompy is the latter's "good English" and ability to read and write. Enslaved men in the mercantile north often learned trades, including but not limited to shipbuilding, blacksmithing, and printing.[20] Immediately, the introduction of literacy into any discussion of slavery holds large importance. In regard to the south, the vast majority of enslavers wanted to keep their enslaved populations as illiterate as possible, to prevent the tools of knowledge and ability being used for resistance. Some, however, offered literacy as a tool of manipulation, in the attempted indoctrination of Christian worship and catechization. This has led historians to note a difference between "Bible literacy" and "liberating literacy."[21] Given the need for skilled labour in a printing office, enslavers in the north, evidently did not grapple with this divide of literacy nearly as much.[22] Leavenworth understood the extent of Pompy's literacy as potentially liberating, surmising that Pompy had a pass, which he likely made or altered, as previously discussed.

Leavenworth's understanding prompted him to declare the likelihood of Pompy's having a pass and his intent to pass for a free man. Not only would this have been the most obvious and accessible path to freedom, but it had precedence in both the US North and the US South. Where southern enslaved persons would have written their own passes simply to escape the locations of oppression, because Pompy lived in a state with a small population of free black people, he had the option of trying to remain within the state.[23] Adding yet another layer of turmoil, one must imagine the free black men (women and children) who were routinely accosted and physically assaulted in public in the name of recapturing Pompy or his fellow freedom-seekers, a reminder that there was no such thing as safety on American soil or anywhere that slavery was legal. Like Cumber, Pompy ran from a town in Rhode Island and his name ended up in a Bostonian newspaper. Pompy's advertisement was reprinted a week later on 30 June 1760 and again on 7 July 1760. Once again, his story is rather impossible to trace further. The ability to avoid recapture for two weeks, however, is remarkable. His mode of staying away was likely the opposite of Cumber's; declaring himself a free man, which demonstrated the vastness of the shape that resistance could take in the period.

Slavery in the US North operated differently than the plantation systems of the US South. Rhode Island, in particular, shaped northern slavery. The two examples studied here demonstrate that resistance in this region took various forms, as creativity and survival inspired. To date, Cumber's and Pompy's stories cannot be traced much further than their escapes, although the genealogies and wealth of their enslavers prosper ever onward.[24] Nor do people, in the United States, Canada, and elsewhere seek to remember or understand histories of slavery. Despite Rhode Island's deep responsibility for the Transatlantic Slave Trade and even the Middle Passage, a statewide memorialization project ultimately failed as recently as 2017.[25] Rhode Island has immense work to do in the ways of remembering and redressing the horrors of the past, starting with its first steps.

ENDNOTES

[1] De Bruin, Karen, "From Cape Verde to Newport: A Failed Attempt to Memorialize a Specifically Rhode Island History of Slavery," Public Historian, vol. 43, no. 3 (1 August 2021), p. 42.

[2] Clark-Pujara, Christy, Dark Work: The Business of Slavery in Rhode Island (New York: NYU Press, 2016), p. 4.

[3] Hardesty, Jared Ross, "Laboring Lives," Unfreedom: Slavery and Dependence in Eighteenth-Century Boston, (New York: NYU Press, 2016), p. 106.

[4] Greene, Lorenzo J. "The New England Negro as Seen in Advertisements for Runaway Slaves," Journal of Negro History, vol. 29., no. 2 (April 1944), p. 126.

[5] Quoted in Patrick Jenning and Carlton Martz, "The Fugitive Slave Law of 1850," Constitutional Rights Foundation, vol. 24, no. 2 (Winter 2019), p. 5-6. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.crf-usa.org/images/pdf/Fugitive-Slave-Law-1850.pdf

[6] Jenning and Martz, "The Fugitive Slave Law of 1850," p. 5-6.

[7] Obadiah Sprague, "Ran away from his Master," Boston Gazette, 7 September 1761; transcribed in Freedom on the Move, https://fotm.link/092a6cfd-2f6b-45f8-b8c9-56893f7b3b24.

[8] Regrettably, such an answer may not yet be pursuable, as the Rhode Island Digitized Newspaper Project has not yet begun to digitize newspapers earlier than the 1770s, and other forms such as microfilm remain rather inaccessible. "Rhode Island Digital Newspaper Project," Rhode Island Digital Newspaper Project (date of last access 22 September 2023) https://rinewspapers.org/.

[9] Master Capt. William Mirick, "Ran away from their Master," Boston Gazette, 2 October 1737; transcribed in Freedom on the Move, https://fotm.link/1afb9ead-012a-4cec-b158-b493c28a0f2b.

[10] Benjamin Caswell, "Run Away from the Subscriber," North Carolina Gazette, 1 May 1778; transcribe in Freedom on the Move, https://fotm.link/1fbba477-64eb-4176-ac20-a53b2652e537.

[11] For instance, if Sprague purchased Cumber with an understanding that he had disembarked from a slave ship from Africa, he would have understood that he arrived in Providence with little to no English. But if Sprague purchased Cumber from another enslaver or a slave trader, he would have relied upon that person to inform him of how long Cumber had been in the region.

[12] Charmaine A. Nelson, "Slave Advertisements," Black Subjects in Historical and Popular Culture (Art History 390A/697S), course lecture, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Amherst, MA, 19 September 2023. In the lecture, Nelson cited a fugitive slave advertisement wherein enslaver John Rock describes an eye injury on the young, enslaved girl named Thursday who he was pursuing; see John Rock, "Ran away from her Master John Rock," Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle, Tuesday, 1 September 1772, vol. 3, no. 105, p. 3; (repeated September 8, 22, 1772); PANS MFM #8155, Reel 8155, 1772–1774, Nova Scotia Archives, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

[13] Edmand Leavenworth, "Ran away from his Master," Boston Post Boy, 22 June 1760; transcribed in Freedom on the Move, https://fotm.link/f2645e00-65f1-4c7d-a586-c78edb252214.

[14] Greene, "The New England Negro," pp. 132-133.

[15] Leavenworth, "Ran away from his Master."

[16] Sprague, "Ran away from his Master."

[17] Leavenworth, "Ran away from his Master."

[18] In the US South and other tropical regions, the ubiquity and organization of cross-racial sexual violence often led white male enslavers and other white men, to have mixed race enslaved offspring. This generational whitening of enslaved populations led whites to conceptualize deeper and more complex systems of racial naming to track and police populations who might increasingly "pass" for white people of so-called pure blood.
Donald L. Horowitz, "Color Differentiation in the American Systems of Slavery," Journal of Interdisciplinary History, vol. 3, no. 3 (Winter 1973), pp. 509-41.

[19] Leavenworth, "Ran away from his Master."

[20] Hardesty, Jared Ross, "Laboring Lives," Unfreedom: Slavery and Dependence in Eighteenth-Century Boston, (New York: NYU Press, 2016), p. 105.

[21] Janet Cornelius, "We Slipped and Learned to Read": Slave Accounts of the Literacy Process, 1830-1865," Phylon, vol. 44, no. 3 (3rd quarter 1983), p. 171

[22] Hardesty, "Laboring Lives," p. 104.

[23] City of Boston Archeology, "Boston Slavery Exhibit," City of Boston, 25 February 2023 (date of last access 22 September 2023) https://www.boston.gov/departments/archaeology/boston-slavery-exhibit. Free black populations, however small, existed in Boston and other northern locations at the time. The most famous free black Bostonian of the era was Crispus Attucks, who was killed in the Boston Massacre on 5 March 1775.

[24] See "Obadiah Sprague," Ancestry (date of last access 22 September 2023) https://www.ancestry.com/genealogy/records/obadiah-sprague-24-1w44w78 and Erin Ishimoticha, "Capt. Edmund

Leavenworth, Sr," Geni (date of last access 22 September 2023) https://www.geni.com/people/Capt-Edmund-Leavenworth-Sr/6000000002314271860.
[25] De Bruin, "From Cape Verde," p. 43.

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Erin Ishimoticha, "Capt. Edmund Leavenworth, Sr," Geni (date of last access 22 September 2023) https://www.geni.com/people/Capt-Edmund-Leavenworth-Sr/6000000002314271860.

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PLATE LIST

Figure 1: Benjamin Caswell, "Run Away from the Subscriber," North Carolina Gazette, 1 May 1778; transcribed in Freedom on the Move, https://fotm.link/1fbba477-64eb-4176-ac20-a53b2652e537.

Figure 2: Master Capt. William Mirick, "Ran away from their Master," Boston Gazette, 2 October 1737; transcribed in Freedom on the Move, https://fotm.link/1afb9ead-012a-4cec-b158-b493c28a0f2b.

Figure 3: Benjamin Caswell, "Run Away from the Subscriber," North Carolina Gazette, 1 May 1778; transcribed in Freedom on the Move, https://fotm.link/1fbba477-64eb-4176-ac20-a53b2652e537.

Figure 4: Thomas Dawes, "RUN-away from the Subscriber," Boston Gazette, 14 September 1761; transcribed in Freedom on the Move, https://fotm.link/092a6cfd-2f6b-45f8-b8c9-56893f7b3b24.

Figure 5: Edmand Leavenworth, "Ran away from his Master," Boston Post Boy, 22 June 1760; transcribed in Freedom on the Move, https://fotm.link/f2645e00-65f1-4c7d-a586-c78edb252214.

FUGITIVE SLAVES ON HORSEBACK: FROM DEHUMANIZATION TO DEFIANCE
Emma Hoffman

> *"The slave is a man, and ought not to be treated like a horse, but like a man, and his manhood is his justification for shooting down any creature who shall attempt to reduce him to the condition of a brute."* - Frederick Douglass, 1851[1]

From the beginning of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, to its ending in 1867, enslaved people have yearned for freedom.[2] Some of the most courageous ran away, in defiant acts to their enslavers, while others, fearful of the repercussions of being caught or of leaving behind family members, remained in bondage. Most runaway enslaved people escaped on foot, but a select few took their enslavers' horses with them. Often viewed as animals or subhuman creatures by their enslavers, taking and riding a horse sent a clear message to those chasing them of their humanity. Taking a horse was a huge risk for enslaved people, but proved to be the ultimate act of defiance for many. Horses as a means of escape were a tool of both dehumanisation and empowerment for enslaved people.

Advertisements from both the US South and US North describing enslaved people escaping with horses paint the runaways as subhuman. One such advertisement from Georgia for two men (Nathan and Will) offers "fifty dollars for each of the fellows" or "suitable reward for the recovery of the horses," though one of the horses is, according to the writer of the advertisement, "worth one hundred and fifty dollars." (Fig. 1) By offering a reward for both the enslaved person and the horse, the enslavers (Josiah Mathews and Demsey R. Glanton) equate the value of two people to the value of horses. In the case of one of the horses, the enslavers believe that the horse is potentially worth more than a human being. Another advertisement printed in Pennsylvania but describing runaway enslaved people from New Jersey offers "five hundred dollars…for securing the slave and the horse or two hundred and fifty dollars for either." (Fig. 2) In this case, the horse and the enslaved person (Michael) are monetarily shown as equals, either one exchangeable for the other. This again showcases the enslavers' attitude toward the enslaved man, where he clearly views Michael as a subhuman creature exchangeable for a horse.


RANAWAY from the subscribers on SUNDAY night the 28th of FEBRUARY last, two negro fellows, towit: NATHAN, a fellow, about twenty-five years of age, six feet or upwards in height, rather yellow complected, dressed in black cloth, blue jeans pantaloons, and white hat, said boy rode a fine bay saddle horse, worth one hundred and fifty dollars, about seven or eight years old, a white hind foot, and no other mark that is prominent, unless it be that he had one uncommonly large fine eye; Nathan is a fellow that can read and write well, and will doubtless make out such papers as will suit their purposes to escape. WILL is a fellow twenty-two years of age, about five feet eight or nine inches high, dressed in blue mixed scirted coat and satinet pantaloons, with new fur hat, he also rode off a sorrel horse, with a small white streak in his face, short mane, all hanging on the mounting side, with one hind foot white, when rode, trots short and racks well when held up by the bridle, age not recollected. A reward of FIFTY Dollars will be paid for each of the fellows, so that they are confined in any safe Jail within the State, and that we get them, and a suitable reward for the recovery of the Horses will also be paid: any information in regard to the foregoing will be thankfully received, by addressing the subscribers at Barnesville, (post-office) Pike county, Ga.
4t-37 JOSIAH MATHEWS,
DEMPSEY R. GLANTON.
SALE OF TOWN LOTS

Figure 1: Josiah Mathews and Dempsey R. Glanton, "RANAWAY from the subscribers on SUNDAY," Federal Union (Milledgeville, GA),1836; Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research, Ithaca, NY.

At the time of the writing of these advertisements, the dominant idea about slavery among enslavers was that slavery was "natural" and that the enslaved were more animal than human.[3] According to Frederick Douglass, a formerly enslaved man who became a prominent abolitionist and writer, "the only law in which the alleged slave has a right to know anything about, is the law of nature. This is his only law. The enactments of this government do not recognize him as a citizen, but as a thing."[4] In Douglass' eyes, it was hypocritical to hold a slave accountable for their actions in the law, while still asserting that they were more similar to animals as beings (since it was natural for an animal to be controlled by humans). Therefore, he asserted that it was both unnatural for a human being to be enslaved and a natural reaction for a human being who was enslaved to want to rebel against their enslaver.

However, this is not the view taken by the enslavers writing the fugitive slave advertisements. In their minds, the enslaved people were their property, no different to animals as such they were frequently equated to livestock.[5] But while animals could of course stray, enslaved human beings frequently devised sophisticated plans to escape, "stealing themselves" from their enslavers. Running away was paradoxically considered "self-theft" since enslaved people were considered to be stealing themselves from their enslavers.[6] A missing horse would still be searched for, as these advertisements demonstrate, but would not be punished in the same way, since it is logical that horses do not have the capability of making and coordinating plans of escape. By describing the enslaved people in their advertisements as animal-like but with some capabilities in their ability to plan an escape, enslaved people were in some ways placed lower than animals since their enslavers believed that they had legally stolen from them when planning their escapes. These enslavers were extraordinarily hypocritical since, of course, they were always stealing the labour, lives, and experiences from those they enslaved.

One way in which the writers of these advertisements dehumanised the people they are writing about is through the comparison of both the physical descriptions of the enslaved people and the horses they took with them. In the advertisement from Georgia, the description of Nathan is put in the same sentence as the description of the horse he took with him, while the description of Will is shorter than the description of the horse he took. The only characteristics described of Nathan are that he is "about twenty-five years of age, six feet or upwards in height, rather yellow complected, dressed in black cloth, blue jeans pantaloons, and white hat,"[7] while Will is described as "twenty-two years of age, about five feet eight or nine inches high, dressed in blue mixed skirted coat and satinet pantaloons, with new fur hat."[8] Besides this basic information (age, height, and clothing), essentially no information is given about the physical appearances of the men. One remarkable thing about the advertisement, however, is that it states that Nathan can "read and write well"[9] and that he will likely try to forge papers to allow the pair to travel and also potentially to declare their freedom.[10] Despite being described equally to an animal in the physical characteristics that are listed in the advertisement, Nathan also is able to do something uniquely human: read and write. Although it is hard to know how or when he learned to do this, the advertisement was printed a total of four times over the course of about five weeks, so it seems that it was a successful plan for them for at least a little while.[11]

Arguably, more information is given about the appearance and behaviour of the horses in the advertisements than the enslaved people who took them: one is "a sorrel horse, with a small white streak in his face, short mane, all hanging on the mounting side, with one hind foot white, when rode, trots short and parks well when held up by the bridle, age not recollected,"[12] while the other is a "saddle horse…about seven or eight years old, a white hind foot, and no other mark that is prominent, unless it be that he had one uncommonly large fine eye."[13] Not only is the type of description similar for the enslaved people and the horses, with their age and colour of mane or clothing being listed, but the number of words and space in the text taken up by the description of the horses is larger than the description of the enslaved people. Since there are no images of the enslaved people or the horses in the advertisements, even as small icons as some newspapers would print, they are further placed at the same level. Both are reduced to descriptions of possessions on a page. This begs the question: what were the enslavers' true intentions when writing the advertisements? Were they really that desperate to see the enslaved people returned or did they just want their horses back and to punish the enslaved people for taking them? Although it is impossible to know for sure, it is true that the advertisement urges readers to bring the men to a jail in the state which signals that the subscribers recognize that the men may have had to be physically stopped, manhandled, and forced back across state lines.

Similar insights can be found in the advertisement printed in Pennsylvania, although the enslaved person described in this advertisement has a much more unique story. (Fig. 2) Printed in 1780, the enslaved person described in the advertisement, Michael Hoy, escaped during the time of the American War of Independence, which ended in 1783. He is described as having been "seduced to undertake to carry letters or intelligence into New York."[14] These letters probably would have contained information related to the ongoing war. Just weeks after the advertisement was published, the final battles in New Jersey took place in Connecticut Farms and Springfield.[15] The British boarded boats in New York and landed in Elizabethtown, New Jersey.[16] These campaigns were ultimately a failure, and it is very possible that the information Hoy was bringing was unrelated to these battles. However, due to the timeline of his escape and the fact that most enslaved people were on the side of the British (since they were promised freedom), it is also likely that the information Hoy carried with him was intended to help the British in their plan to cross into New Jersey. Bringing a horse with him may have

Princeton, May 23, 1780.

A MULATTO SLAVE, who it is ſuppoſed has been ſeduced to undertake to carry letters or intelligence into New-York, ran away from the ſubſcriber, and took off with him a dark bay horſe, 6 years old, 14 and an half hands high, with two white feet and a blaze, and is a natural trotter. The Slave is near 6 feet high, ſtrong and well made; had on, and took with him, a variety of cloaths, but thoſe he will moſt probably wear are, a ſuit of ſuperfine mixt broad cloth, a new red great coat, white ſtockings, half boots, a black velvet ſtock and a beaver hat, but little worn. He appears to be 40 odd years of age, ſpeaks good Engliſh, reads and writes a tolerable hand, and is a decent and well behaved ingenious fellow, capable of a variety of works. His name is Michael Hoy, but may go by ſome other, and it is probable he may travel as a ſervant to a white man who is ſuppoſed to have gone off with him; and as ſuch may change his dreſs. He went off in the night of the 20th inſtant. *Five Hundred Dollars* will be given, and all charges paid for ſecuring the ſlave and the horſe, or *Two Hundred* and *Fifty Dollars* for either, paid by GEORGE MORGAN.

P. S. A deep blood bay mare, with a black mane and tail, was ſtolen the ſame night the above mentioned ſlave went off, ſuppoſed by him or his accomplice. She has a ſhort dock and a lump, that looks like a wind gall or ſmall wen, on the hindermoſt part of one of her thighs. She is half blooded, pretty old, trots, and is with foal. Six Hundred Dollars will be paid by the Rev. Mr. Smith, of this town, to the perſon who ſhall return the mare and convict the thief, or Three Hundred Dollars for the mare alone.

Figure 2: George Morgan, "A MULATTO SLAVE," Pennsylvania Gazette, 1780; Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research, Ithaca, NY.

ensured that he was able to get to his destination in time to deliver information to the British Army and empowered him to be more equal to the white men fighting in the war.

Another piece of evidence that would support Hoy's involvement in transporting intelligence during the American War of Independence is the fact that his enslaver, George Morgan, was an Indian Agent and colonel in the Continental Army during the war. His estate in Princeton, which won a gold medal by the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture, is likely where Hoy lived and worked during his enslavement.[17] Morgan worked to establish relationships with Native American tribes to gain their support for the side of the colonists during the war, and even fostered several Native American children in his home. Given Hoy's proximity to a colonel in the war, it seems likely he would have had access to information a lot of British generals would have wanted. The other subscriber in the advertisement, who asks for the return of his horse which had been stolen is Rev. Mr. Samuel Smith, a professor and later president of the College of New Jersey (now known as Princeton).[18] It is interesting to note that he chose to co-sponsor this advertisement, however, since he was known for his progressive views on race and opposition to racial classifications.[19] Although Hoy was an enslaved person who therefore did not have the ability to control all of his decisions and movements, his proximity to powerful white men allowed him to create an escape route for himself and possibly aid the British during the war.

One other unique aspect of Hoy's escape is what the enslaver detailed as his plan to avoid getting recaptured. He thought that Hoy had been "seduced" into running away and would "travel as a servant to a white man who is supposed to have gone off with him."[20] However, that the white male accomplice went unnamed is evidence that Morgan could not identify him. Remarkably, Hoy, like Nathan, "reads and writes a tolerable hand."[21] The two men also seem to have stolen a horse from another man, Smith, who was not the enslaver. This shows a very clear plan to both help Hoy escape from slavery and to deliver whatever information they had about the war to New York. However, by stating that Hoy was "seduced" into wanting to escape, the advertisement makes clear that the enslaver did not believe that Hoy was smart enough or capable of devising this plan on his own, a move designed to discredit his intelligence and infantilize him.

This advertisement further discredits Hoy in the description of both him and the horses. There is hardly any description of Hoy's physical appearance, and most of the text of the advertisement focuses on describing his clothing and the appearance of the horses he and his accomplice have stolen: all that is said about Hoy himself is that he is "mulatto,"[22] "appears to be 40 odd years of age,"[23] and is "near six feet high, strong and well made."[24] Even the clothing that he took with him gets more description. He is said to most likely be wearing "a suit of superfine mixt broadcloth, a new red great cloth, white stockings, half boots, a black velvet stock and beaver hat, but little worn."[25] Like Josiah Mathews and Dempsey Glanton, the enslavers in the Georgia advertisement, the enslavers in this advertisement seem to be more focused on the material possessions, such as horses and clothing, that the enslaved people took with them rather than valuing the lives of the enslaved people themselves.

Despite this pervasive societal view which stripped the enslaved of their individuality and sought to equate their value with animals, both Hoy and Nathan and Will's stories of escape are ones of empowerment. They took not only themselves, but their enslavers' horses, which were expensive and valuable creatures, and they were suspected of using their literacy to serve the ends of people who could aid them. In 1870, a horse cost between $150-200, and although this was quite a few years after the advertisements were printed, they were still worth a lot more than an entire barrel of flour, which was three dollars.[26] Stealing a horse was also a dangerous move, because, since the enslaved were routinely impoverished and without the means to purchase large livestock, possessing a horse would make the enslaved person look suspicious and easily recognizable. Those who were hunting them had the physical information both for them and for the horses with which they were travelling. Additionally, most free black people were too poor to own a horse, so any black person travelling with a horse would raise some suspicion regarding where they got it from. In 1860, free blacks claimed to own on average $85 worth of property, while whites claimed an average of $751.[27] However, what is remarkable about the enslaved people who escaped with horses is that they decided that it was worth the risk for them to take a horse with them. For all runaways, the hope of freedom was something that counteracted the fear of being caught, but given the extra risks involved in escaping and taking a horse, the enslaved people in these advertisements exhibited extraordinary bravery.

Escape by horseback was not just a possible way that many enslaved people chose to attempt to escape, it was also an idealised notion in the view of white abolitionists. Although many enslaved people likely would have sold the horse they took with them to make some money and avoid arousing suspicion, Eastman Johnson's painting, A Ride for Liberty - The Fugitive Slaves (1862), depicts an enslaved black family riding towards freedom in the north on horseback. (Fig. 3) The painting does a lot of things that the advertisements do not. It humanises the enslaved people by giving them visual form, it shows family and kinship bonds, bravery, and emotion, and it shows them in control of the horse they are riding, and thus in control of their own futures. However, the painting was made for the cultural engagement and pleasure of white elites, and enslaved people likely would have never stepped foot in the same room as the painting. This creates an interesting dichotomy between the surface-level reading of the painting as a means of empowering enslaved people and the reality of the fact that it was painted by a white painter for a white audience. In comparison to the advertisements, which were also written by white enslavers for white audiences, the painting was intended much more for an elite, upper class audience. It is interesting that, just as the

Figure 3: Eastman Johnson, A Ride for Liberty - The Fugitive Slaves, 1862, oil on paperboard, 55.8 x 66.4 cm, Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY.

descriptions of Nathan, Will, and Michael Hoy were created to engage white readers, the family in the painting had to fit into what white society viewed as heroic (rushing towards the sunrise, on horseback), to be seen as powerful. Horses in Western popular and "high" culture tend to represent strength and masculinity: statues of war heroes sit atop horseback, and horses played a big role in industrialization and modernity. Oftentimes the strength of a machine is measured in "horsepower." Still, even for elites who, if enamoured with the painting most likely supported abolition, the painting demonstrates a strange kind of fascination with the stories of enslaved fugitives, taking the narrative away from the enslaved people themselves and forming it to fit what whites saw as acceptable.

One final remarkable story of empowerment when stealing horses (and carriages) is the story of the enslaved woman named Harriet Shephard. She ran away in 1855 with her five young children and five other adults, who took with them four horses and two carriages.[28] What is even more remarkable about this story is that they managed to make it to Wilmington, Delaware where they found people involved in the Underground Railroad.[29] Eventually the group was split up but managed to escape to Canada where they found freedom. To Shephard, the allure of freedom and better living conditions for her children was worth the extreme risks that would come with travelling as a group of black people in horses and carriages, which would have no doubt raised suspicion. Not only was the risk worth it to her, and not only did she choose to run away, but the way in which she did so was a defiant act in itself. Stealing her enslavers' horses and carriages would have "produced a shock, scarcely less stunning than an earthquake."[30] Riding in a carriage would have been an activity only meant for the wealthy and powerful, so by taking her enslavers' horses and carriages, she not only stole from him, but also engaged in an activity that was seen as dignified, empowering herself and her children in a bold act of defiance. Another remarkable thing about her story is that, unlike the fugitive slave advertisements, she and those who helped free her were able to tell their own story. Shephard said that she was never shown "kind treatment" by her enslaver, and much of the historical evidence used to piece together her story came from letters sent between people who laboured to free people through the Underground Railroad.[31]

Having the ability to hear the story from those who were directly involved in it, rather than those outside of it, is a powerful thing. However, this is very rare since unfortunately many stories of enslaved people have been lost to history. What is clear from the evidence that remains is that many runaway enslaved people showed great courage and defiance in the face of the persecution that they faced. Taking horses with them when they ran away was one way in which they were able to express this defiance and empower themselves.

ENDNOTES

[1] "Rochester (NY) Frederick Douglass' Paper, 'Freedom's Battle at Christiana,' September 25, 1851," House Divided: The Civil War Research Engine at Dickinson College (date of last access 23 November 2023) https://hd.housedivided.dickinson.edu/node/1782

[2] Steven Mintz, "Historical Context: Facts About the Slave Trade and Slavery," Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History (date of last access 23 November 2023) https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-resources/teacher-resources/historical-context-facts-about-slave-trade-and-slavery

[3] Cristin Ellis, "Douglass's Animals: Racial Science and the Problem of Human Equality," Antebellum Posthuman: Race and Materiality in the Mid-Nineteenth Century (New York: Fordham University Press, 2018), p. 49.
[4] Ellis, "Douglass's Animals," p. 49.
[5] For example, in many plantation ledgers and other record-keeping documents, a head count of enslaved people was kept in a similar fashion to documentation of livestock.
[6] Marcus Wood, Blind Memory: Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 79.
[7] Josiah Mathews and Dempsey R. Glanton, "RANAWAY from the subscribers on SUNDAY," Federal Union (Milledgeville, GA),1836; Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research, Ithaca, NY.
[8] Mathews and Glanton, "RANAWAY from the subscribers on SUNDAY."
[9] Mathews and Glanton, "RANAWAY from the subscribers on SUNDAY."
[10] Mathews and Glanton, "RANAWAY from the subscribers on SUNDAY."
[11] The first time the advertisement was printed was on 11 March 1836, and was reprinted weekly on 18 March, 25 March, and 1 April 1836.
[12] Mathews and Glanton, "RANAWAY from the subscribers on SUNDAY."
[13] Mathews and Glanton, "RANAWAY from the subscribers on SUNDAY."
[14] George Morgan, "A MULATTO SLAVE," Pennsylvania Gazette, 1780; Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research, Ithaca, NY.
[15] David C. Munn, Battles and Skirmishes in New Jersey of the American Revolution (Trenton: New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, 1976), p. 23.
[16] Munn, Battles and Skirmishes in New Jersey of the American Revolution, p. 33.
[17] Joseph Yanielli, "Princeton's Fugitive Slaves," Princeton and Slavery Project (date of last access 23 November 2023) https://slavery.princeton.edu/stories/runaways
[18] Yanielli, "Princeton's Fugitive Slaves" (date of last access 23 November 2023).
[19] Nicholas Guyatt, "Samuel Stanhope Smith," Princeton and Slavery Project (date of last access 23 November 2023) https://slavery.princeton.edu/stories/samuel-stanhope-smith
[20] Morgan, "A MULATTO SLAVE."
[21] Morgan, "A MULATTO SLAVE."
[22] Morgan, "A MULATTO SLAVE."
[23] Morgan, "A MULATTO SLAVE."
[24] Morgan, "A MULATTO SLAVE."
[25] Morgan, "A MULATTO SLAVE."
[26] 1870 Catalogue of Goods (1870), National Parks Service, Washington, DC.
[27] Steven Ruggles and Matthew Sobek, "1860 Free Population - Preliminary," Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 2.0 (Minneapolis: Historical Census Projects, University of Minnesota, 1997)
[28] William Still, "Escaping with Master's Carriages and Horses: Harriet Shephard, and her Five Children, with Five Other Passengers," The Underground Railroad (Philadelphia: William Still, 1872), p. 302.
[29] Still, "Escaping with Master's Carriages and Horses," p. 303.
[30] Still, "Escaping with Master's Carriages and Horses," p. 302.
[31] Still, "Escaping with Master's Carriages and Horses," p. 302.

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PLATE LIST

Figure 1: Josiah Mathews and Dempsey R. Glanton, “RANAWAY from the subscribers on SUNDAY,” Federal Union (Milledgeville, GA),1836; Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research, Ithaca, NY.

Figure 2: George Morgan, “A MULATTO SLAVE,” Pennsylvania Gazette, 1780; Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research, Ithaca, NY.

Figure 3: Eastman Johnson, A Ride for Liberty - The Fugitive Slaves, 1862, oil on paperboard, 55.8 x 66.4 cm, Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY.

BLACK WOMEN'S RESISTANCE TRADITION EXPLORED IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY FUGITIVE SLAVE ADVERTISEMENTS

Olivia Haynes

"The mother of slaves is very watchful." - Harriet Jacobs, 1861[1]

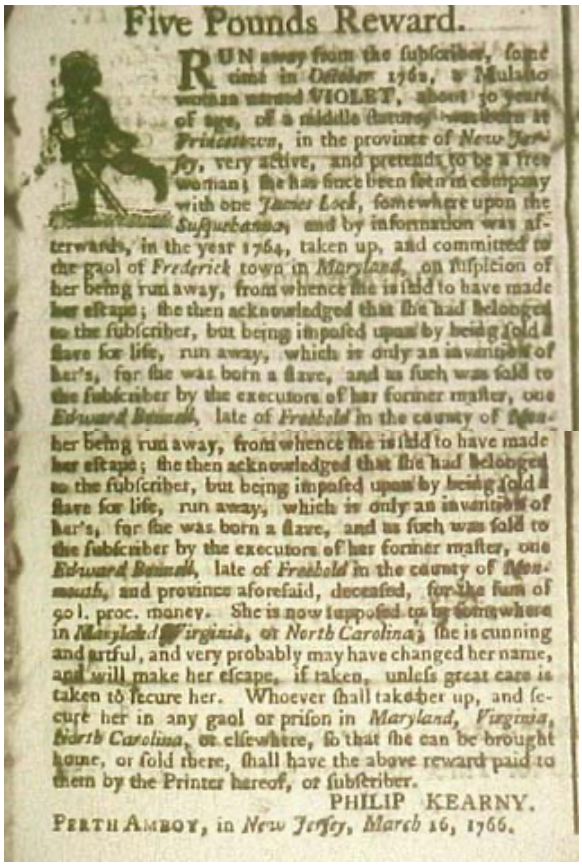
Harriet Jacobs's autobiography, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl: Written by Herself (1861), details her experience as an enslaved woman and her self-emancipation and liberation.[2] Within the text Jacobs creates space for the exploration of the realities of enslaved black women and their obstacles and hardships when it comes to the societal pressures of performing womanhood. A central theme is the maintenance of the black family through the lens of enslaved black motherhood. We bear witness to Jacobs's attempts to resist and escape the brutality and terrors of enslavement while also maintaining close proximity to her two young children and family.[3] Enslaved African-descended people were the literal embodiment of wealth and the reproduction of an uncompensated and dehumanized labour force was central to the slavery project in the Western world.[4] Scholar Jennifer Morgan, in her work Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery (2004), argues that it is necessary to critically investigate the experiences of enslaved women in the colonial period to understand the entire framework of the institution of slavery in the West.[5] Morgan notes,

> […]as slaveowners contemplated women's reproductive potential with greed and opportunism, they utilized both outrageous images and callously indifferent strategies to ultimately inscribe enslaved women as racially and culturally different while creating an economic and moral environment in which the appropriation of a woman's children as well as her childbearing potential became rational and, indeed, natural.[6]

The burden to replenish and maintain the free labour force was mainly placed on enslaved black women. Labour for black women took on a double meaning.[7] The future of slavery depended on the exploitation of black women's physical labour as domestics and in cultivating cash crops, such as cotton and sugar, but also on the appropriation of their ability to reproduce and go through the labour of childbearing.[8] This reconfigured and severed black kinship ties. The way in which black women and men related to each other was altered as well as the relationship between mother and child. The lives of black women were co-opted to be in service of their slaveholders. Enslaved women, however, resisted the notion that "women are considered of no value, unless they continually increase their owner's stock (sic)."[9] While there was a plethora of ways in which enslaved women resisted the institution of slavery, in this article I wish to pursue two methods - black women's maintenance of kinship ties and running away - through the comparative analysis two eighteenth-century fugitive slave advertisements. These advertisements suggest and emphasize the white patriarchal dependence on black women's ability to labour *and*

reveal black women denying access to their bodies - destabilizing and subverting the institution of slavery.

Wherever the tentacles of Transatlantic Slavery spanned, advertisements soliciting the retrieval of fugitive enslaved people could be found in colonial newspapers.[10] Hannah Walser in "Under Description: The Fugitive Slave Advertisements as Genre" (2020), points out that "an FSA [Fugitive Slave Advertisement] was not meant to be read as an argument or an intellectual exercise; it was an address from a white slaveholder to a (usually) white audience aimed at the practical goal of identifying and apprehending a particular individual."[11] These advertisements are physical manifestations of the prolific social surveillance and the early criminalization of black people in the Americas.[12] The advertisements featured information such as the imposed name, given by the slaveholder, of the fugitive in addition to their chosen name as well as biological data (age, sex, height, and complexion), clothing, occupation, geographical origins, details concerning the enslaved persons escape, and the offering of an ample reward for the successful re-capture of the runaway.[13] Jan Kurth in the article "Wayward Wenches and Wives: Runaway Women in the Hudson Valley, N.Y., 1785-1830" (1988-1989), notes that scholarship investigating fugitive slave advertisements has revealed enslaved men ran away at a higher rate than enslaved women.[14] It was rarer for enslaved women to escape because of their limited opportunities to flee due to the typical nature of their work requiring them to be close to the slave household.[15] Enslaved women were also less likely to escape alone because of their roles as mothers and caretakers. One's choices (if



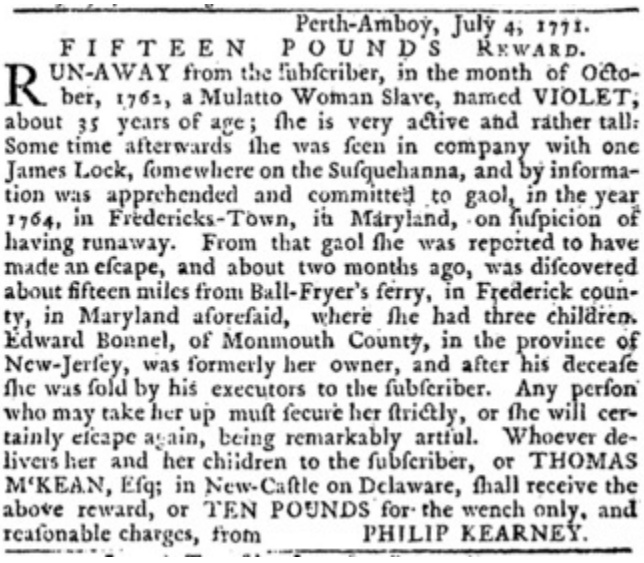
Five Pounds Reward.

RUN away from the subscriber, some time in October 1762, a Mulatto woman named VIOLET, about 30 years of age, of a middle stature, was born at Princetown, in the province of New Jersey, very active, and pretends to be a free woman; she has since been seen in company with one James Lock, somewhere upon the Susquehanna, and by information was afterwards, in the year 1764, taken up, and committed to the gaol of Frederick town in Maryland, on suspicion of her being run away, from whence she is said to have made her escape; she then acknowledged that she had belonged to the subscriber, but being imposed upon by being sold a slave for life, run away, which is only an invention of her's, for she was born a slave, and as such was sold to the subscriber by the executors of her former master, one Edward Bonnel, late of Freehold in the county of Monmouth, and province aforesaid, deceased, for the sum of 90l. proc. money. She is now supposed to be somewhere in Maryland, Virginia, or North Carolina; she is cunning and artful, and very probably may have changed her name, and will make her escape, if taken, unless great care is taken to secure her. Whoever shall take her up, and secure her in any gaol or prison in Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, or elsewhere, so that she can be brought home, or sold there, shall have the above reward paid to them by the Printer hereof, or subscriber.

PHILIP KEARNY.

PERTH AMBOY, in New Jersey, March 16, 1766.

Figure 1: Philip Kearney, "Five Pounds Reward," Virginia Gazette, 2 May 1766.



Perth-Amboy, July 4, 1771.

FIFTEEN POUNDS REWARD.

RUN-AWAY from the subscriber, in the month of October, 1762, a Mulatto Woman Slave, named VIOLET, about 35 years of age; she is very active and rather tall: Some time afterwards she was seen in company with one James Lock, somewhere on the Susquehanna, and by information was apprehended and committed to gaol, in the year 1764, in Fredericks-Town, in Maryland, on suspicion of having runaway. From that gaol she was reported to have made an escape, and about two months ago, was discovered about fifteen miles from Ball-Fryer's ferry, in Frederick county, in Maryland aforesaid, where she had three children. Edward Bonnel, of Monmouth County, in the province of New-Jersey, was formerly her owner, and after his decease she was sold by his executors to the subscriber. Any person who may take her up must secure her strictly, or she will certainly escape again, being remarkably artful. Whoever delivers her and her children to the subscriber, or THOMAS M'KEAN, Esq; in New-Castle on Delaware, shall receive the above reward, or TEN POUNDS for the wench only, and reasonable charges, from PHILIP KEARNEY.

Figure 2: Philip Kearney, "Fifteen Pounds Reward," Pennsylvania Journal and Weekly Advertiser, 4 July 1771.

we could even call them choices) were to either escape leaving behind their children or to travel with young children, increasing their chances of being recaptured.[16] Wrapped into these short fugitive slave advertisements we see the decisions that enslaved women had to make and the notion that the prosperity of the slave society and white economic security rested on their existence as exploited labourers.

Violet and Amoritta (named Maria by her slaveholder) are two examples of self-emancipated women in the US North. The advertisements reject the notion that running away was exclusively a masculine form of resistance or performance of manhood and instead highlight fugitivity as a form of enslaved women's resistance.[17] Between 10 March 1766 and 4 July 1771, slaveholder Phillip Kearney posted at least three advertisements in the Maryland Gazette,[18] the Virginia Gazette[19] (Fig. 1), and the Pennsylvania Journal and Weekly Advertiser[20] (Fig. 2) soliciting help in recapturing Violet, a runaway "Mullatoe" enslaved woman (sic).[21] Violet first ran away in October of 1762 in Perth Amboy, New Jersey at the age of 26 years old. How she ran away is not mentioned in the advertisements. A central theme throughout these advertisements is the description of Violet's movements and an ongoing pattern of resistance. The advertisement posted in the 10 April 1766 issue of the Maryland Gazette noted:

> Perth-Amboy, New Jersey, March 10, 1766. FIVE POUNDS REWARD. RAN away from the Subscriber, in October 1762, a Mulatto Woman, about 30 Years of Age, named Violet, she was born in New-Jersey, is of a middle Stature, very active, and it's said she pretends to be a Free Woman; she has since been seen in Company with one James Lock, on Susquehanna, and was afterwards, in 1764, taken up and committed to the Jail of Frederick-Town [today known as Frederick], in Maryland, on Suspicion of her being run away, from whence she is said to have made her Escape; she then acknowledged that she had belonged to the Subscriber, but that she being imposed upon by being sold a Slave for Life, run away, which is only an Invention of hers, for she was born a Slave, and as such, was sold to the Subscriber, by the Executors of her former Master, of Freehold, in the County of Monmouth [New Jersey], and Province, aforesaid, deceased, for the Sum of Ninety Pounds, Proclamation Money: She is now suppos'd to be somewhere in Maryland, Virginia, or North-Carolina; she is Cunning and Artful, and very probably may have chang'd her Name, and will make her Escape if taken, unless great Care is taken to secure her. Whoever shall take her up, and secure her in any of the Prisons in Maryland, Virginia, or North-Carolina, or elsewhere, so that she can be brought Home, or sold there, shall have the above Reward, paid by JONAS GREEN, at Annapolis [Annapolis, Maryland], or the Subscriber. PHILIP KEARNY.[22]

To elude capture, Violet passed herself off as a "Free Woman" and upon capture in 1764 for being suspected as a runaway in Frederick, Maryland argued that she was illegally captured and sold into slavery.[23] Prior to her capture in 1764, it is noted that she was seen with a James Lock. Due to the lack of a racial description of Lock and the mention of both his first and last name,

one could reasonably assume that he was a white man. There is no information that would suggest he was an indentured servant. Kearny did not provide details of the nature of the relationship between Violet and Lock, perhaps because he did not know. We do not know if he was aiding her in her escape or if he was unaware of her status as a runaway, the possibilities are endless. Kearney, however, assures his audience that Violet "was born a Slave"[24] and that he purchased her for "Ninety Pounds, Proclamation Money"[25] from her former slaveholder.[26] Throughout his dehumanization and criminalization of Violet, Kearney constantly reminded his readers that she was indeed "born a Slave"[27] and described her as "cunning and artful,"[28] terms used to deliberately characterize her as deceitful and devious (as opposed to intelligent and observant). Kearney also theorized that Violet was hiding in Maryland, Virginia, or North Carolina, thus explaining his posting of advertisements in Virginia, and it can be assumed, also in newspapers in North Carolina. The advertisement placed in the Virginia Gazette was also marked with an icon of an enslaved person frozen in the act of running which made it easier to identify fugitive slave advertisements.[29] Within five years, nine years after her initial escape from Kearney, the language and information in the 4 July 1771 advertisement is noticeably different. The reward advertised in both 1766 advertisements for the retrieval of Violet was originally five pounds; in 1771 the reward was raised to fifteen pounds.[30] The 1771 advertisement reads:

> Perth Amboy, July 4, 1771. Fifteen Pounds Reward Runaway from the subscriber, in the month of October, 1762, a Mullatoe Woman Slave, named Violet, about 35 years of age; she is very active and *rather tall,* sometimes afterwards she was seen in the company of one James Lock, somewhere on the Susquehannah, and by information was apprehended and committed to gaol, in the year 1764, in Frederick's Town, In Maryland, on suspicion of having runaway. From that gaol she was reported to have made an escape and *two month's ago, was discovered about fifteen miles from- in Frederick's county, in Maryland aforesaid where she had three children*, Edward Bonnel of Monmouth County, in the Province of New Jersey, was formerly her owner, and after his decease she was sold by his executors to the subscriber. Any person who may take her up must secure her strictly or she will certainly escape again, being remarkably artful. W*hoever delivers her and her children to the subscriber or Thomas Kean, Esq, in New Castle, on Delaware, shall receive the above reward, or ten pounds for the wench only, and reasonable charges from Philip Kearney* (emphasis added).[31]

In this advertisement we see Kearney changing his language. Instead of describing Violet as of "middle stature,"[32] she is now described as "rather tall."[33] Was this a slight exaggeration of her height? Since it is hard to understand how Kearney would benefit from providing inaccurate physical information about Violet, it is more likely that either his opinion of her height in comparison to other women had changed, or that Violet had grown taller in the years since her previous escape. The advertisement no longer included details of her passing as a free woman.

There is an update that she was seen in Frederick, Maryland - over 200 miles away from Perth Amboy - and that she had three children with her. There was no mention of children in the previous 1766 advertisements and despite the lack of ages of the children in the 1771 advertisement, we can deduce that Violet likely had her three children in Maryland and that they ranged between a few months old and five years old. Violet's children could have potentially further re-incentivized Kearney's desire to obtain Violet and now her children. The concluding line in the 1771 advertisement further exemplifies the entitlement that Kearney felt not only towards Violet, but also her children. The longer Violet eluded Kearney the more she resisted and subverted that entitlement.[34]

Amoritta (named Maria by her slaveholder, John Duffield) ran away the night of 25 December 1780 - Christmas - with her four-year-old daughter, Jane in Philadelphia. In Duffield's advertisement placed in the 17 January 1781 issue of the New Jersey Gazette, (Doc. 1; see p. 51), Amoritta is described as "about thirty-four years of age, tall and well-made, her face long and features more regular than are common with her colour."[35] To be "well-made"[36] implies that Amoritta was a solid and strong labourer and the fact that she had "features more regular than are common with her colour"[37] would suggest that Duffield was saying she was more attractive or phenotypically white than what was societally expected of black women. Throughout the colonial and antebellum periods, we see the dehumanization and masculinization of black women as a justification for the abuse they are continuously forced to endure. As Morgan has argued, "[European] travelers depicted black women as simultaneously unwomanly and marked by a reproductive value that was dependent on their sex and evidence of their lack of femininity."[38]

Duffield went on to describe Amoritta's dress and what she potentially "stole"[39] from the household, the clothing insufficient for the cold winter months in Philadelphia. Amoritta "had on or took with her a pale blue and white fine short linsey gown and petticoat almost new, a petticoat of tow linen, a pair of men's shoes and good shifts of brown homespun linen and aprons of the same."[40] The description suggests that Amoritta was gathering whatever she could prior to her departure. Duffield described four-year-old Jane similarly to her mother, "She [Amoritta] also took with her her female child named Jane, about four years old, well made, fat, round faced and lively had on or took with her a blue and white linsey frock."[41] The term "well made"[42] is used to describe both Amoritta *and* Jane. Jane, at four years-old, is already recognized for her potential as a labouring body and is emblematic of Amoritta's value since not only could Amoritta produce children, but she could produce children that would potentially grow up to be useful labourers and "breeders." Their value to the maintenance of slavery also manifested and displayed itself in the reward for the two, Duffield offered 2,000 dollars for their retrieval.[43] As previously mentioned, it was rare for enslaved women to run away especially when they had children. It was also especially rare for enslaved people in northern/temperate climate regions, regardless of gender, to flee during the winter due to the dangers of the frigid temperatures and lack of suitable clothing or food to potentially forage.[44] Despite the dangers of fleeing during the winter, the time between Christmas day and New Year's day were opportune moments to escape

due to the typical relaxing of restrictions and diminished surveillance of enslaved people. In Frederick Douglass's autobiography, he described that for enslaved people,

> "the days between Christmas and New Year's day are allowed as holidays; and, accordingly, we were not required to perform any labor, more than to feed and take care of the stock. [...] Those of us who had family at a distance, were generally allowed to spend the whole six days in their society."[45]

Duffield mentioned in the advertisement that he anticipated Amoritta would return to "the jersey (New Jersey)"[46] because that is where she was once enslaved with a Mr. Thomas Lowrey of Flemington. A possibility for Amoritta's return to New Jersey could have been her returning to family to potentially aid in retrieving them from enslavement. In the meantime, however, Duffield suspected Amoritta had not yet left Philadelphia and was instead being harboured by free blacks. At this time, Philadelphia was beginning the process of gradual emancipation. In 1780 the Pennsylvania Assembly passed the Act for the Gradual Emancipation of Slavery, the first of its kind in the nation, the act deemed "every Negro and Mulatto child born"[47] within the State after the passing of the Act would be free upon reaching the age of twenty-eight.[48] Duffield's reference to Amoritta potentially being harbored by free blacks in the area alludes to possible networks of free blacks aiding runaways throughout Pennsylvania.[49] This network that Duffield is indirectly acknowledging suggests that Amoritta had some sort of access to these networks of support prior to her fleeing with her daughter. There was some sort of prior organization and planning that would have needed to occur that would have ensured the safety of Amoritta and Jane during the winter months. This is also borne out by the mention of James Lock (somewhere on the Susquehanna) in both notices. The advertisement for Amoritta continues to paint the picture of the dependence on and surveillance of black women and girls within slavery. The advertisement also displays the amount of thought, intelligence, and planning that went into escape.

Looking at both the advertisements concerning Violet and Amoritta, it is blatant that running away was also a form of enslaved women's resistance during slavery. Although only giving us a very biased, curated, and narrow lens into understanding these women, a theme that is revealed in their fugitive slave advertisements is the blatant co-opting of black women's bodies and families by white slaveholding society. Violet and Amoritta were exercising "self-theft" and self-repossession, refusing to exist simply for the maintenance of white supremacy and racial capitalism in North America.[50]

ENDNOTES

[1] Harriet Jacobs, "Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl: Written by Herself," 1861, The Classic Slave Narratives, ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (New York: New American Library, 2012), pp. 466-67.
[2] Harriet Jacobs initially published Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl in 1861 under the pseudonym Linda Brent.
[3] Jacobs, "Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl," pp. 525-29.
[4] Jennifer L. Morgan, Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p. 11.

[5]Morgan, Laboring Women, p.11.
[6] Morgan, Laboring Women, p. 7.
[7] For more on the sexual exploitation of black enslaved men, see Thomas A. Foster, "The Sexual Abuse of Black Men under American Slavery," Journal of the History of Sexuality, vol. 20, no. 3 (September 2011), pp. 445-64.
[8] Morgan, Laboring Women, p. 1.
[9] Jacobs, "Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl," p. 459.
[10] Hannah Walser, "Under Description: The Fugitive Slave Advertisements as Genre," American Literature, vol. 92, no. 1 (March 2020), p. 61.
[11] Walser, "Under Description: The Fugitive Slave Advertisements as Genre," p.63.
[12] Charmaine A. Nelson, "Slavery and Fugitive Slave Advertisements," Black Subjects in Historical and Contemporary Popular Culture (Art History 390A/697S), University of Massachusetts Amherst, Amherst, MA, 13 September 2022, 15 September 2022, and 20 September 2022. We see this criminalization of black people continuing today, exemplified by treatment of Trayvon Martin, Ahmaud Arbery, Christian Cooper, and the many black men who are targeted due to Stop and Frisk policies.
[13] Nelson, "Slavery and Fugitive Slave Advertisements."
[14] Jan Kurth "Wayward Wenches and Wives: Runaway Women in the Hudson Valley, N.Y., 1785-1830," NWSA Journal, vol. 1 no. 2 (Winter 1988-1989), p. 200. Due to the fact that enslaved men ran away more frequently than enslaved women, research and scholarship concerning black fugitivity has been very masculinist neglecting the act of running away as also being a form of enslaved women's resistance.
[15] Kurth, "Wayward Wenches and Wives," p. 203.
[16] We see this internal struggle in Jacobs's Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl (1861) and her finding a loophole escaping while remaining on the plantation in the chapter "Loophole of Retreat."
[17] Kurth, "Wayward Wenches and Wives," p. 200.
[18] Philip Kearney, "Five Pounds Reward," Maryland Gazette (Annapolis, MD), 10 April 1766. http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos/search/search_ads.php?page=0&rows=10&slaveid=000245&status=y&popUp=yes.
[19] Philip Kearney, "Five Pounds Reward," Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg, VA) 2 May 1766. http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos/search/search_ads.php?page=0&rows=10&slaveid=000245&status=y&popUp=yes.
[20] Philip Kearney, "Fifteen Pounds Reward," Pennsylvania Journal and Weekly Advertiser, 4 July 1771; "Pretends to Be Free": Runaway Slave Advertisements from Colonial and Revolutionary New York and New Jersey, eds. Graham Russell Gao Hodges and Alan Edward Brown (Fordham, New York: Fordham University Press, 2019) pp.160-61.
[21] It can be assumed that there were also advertisements placed prior to 1766 beginning in 1762. However, I have been unable to locate advertisements that go back that far. Readers of the newspaper at the time would have known that "Mullatoe" meant Violet was mixed race - most likely having a white father and an enslaved black mother. (sic)
[22] Kearney, "Five Pound Reward," Maryland Gazette.
[23] For more information about free blacks being kidnapped into slavery, see Solomon Northup, Twelve Years a Slave: Narrative of Solomon Northup, a Citizen of New York, Kidnapped in Washing City in 1841 and Rescued in 1853, from a Cotton Plantation Near the Red River in Louisiana (Auburn: Derby & Miller, 1853).
[24] Kearney, "Five Pound Reward," Maryland Gazette.
[25] Kearney, "Five Pound Reward," Maryland Gazette.
[26] We later learn in the advertisement posted in the 2 May 1766 issue of the Virginia Gazette that the name of her former enslaver was Edward Bonnel. One might be able to find his will in the New Jersey State Archives Collection. They have wills and inventories from Monmouth County, NJ ranging from 1670 to 1900. However, as of September 23, 2022 documents have not been digitized.
[27] Kearney, "Five Pound Reward," Maryland Gazette.
[28] Kearney, "Five Pound Reward," Maryland Gazette.
[29] Nelson, "Slavery and Fugitive Slave Advertisements."
[30] Currency prior to the Revolutionary War in the American colonies were extremely varied. Each colony had its own conventions, tender of payment laws, and coin ratings and each colony issued its own paper money. The primary units of accounts in colonial times were pounds, shillings, and pence. However, these values shifted across colonies. Prior to the eve of Revolution, inflation in the colonies was rare. Therefore, while we cannot be 100 per cent certain and a deeper investigation of market values and currency in colonial New Jersey is necessary, the raise in Violet's reward might be attributed to greater value being placed on Violet. For more detailed conversations about currency consult Ron Michener, "Money in the American Colonies." Economic History Association 13 January

2011 (date of last access 20 November 2023) https://eh.net/encyclopedia/money-in-the-american-colonies/; John J. McCusker, Money and Exchange in Europe and America, 1600-1775: A Handbook (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1978); Farley Grumb, "Colonial New Jersey Paper Money, 1709-1775: Value Decomposition and Performance," Journal of Economic History, vol. 76 no. 4 (December 2016), pp.1216-1232, Lucius Q.C. Elmer, History of the Early Settlement and Progress of Cumberland County New Jersey; and of the Currency of this and the Adjoining Colonies (Bridgeport, New Jersey: George F. Nixon Publisher, 1869).

[31] Kearney, "Fifteen Pounds Reward," Pennsylvania Journal and Weekly Advertiser.

[32] Kearney, "Five Pound Reward," Maryland Gazette.

[33] Kearney, "Fifteen Pounds Reward," Pennsylvania Journal and Weekly Advertiser.

[34] It is unclear if Violet was ever recaptured. The New Jersey State Archives in the collection "*Volume XXXIV, Abstracts of Wills, 1771-1780*" found through Ancestry.com and the Allen County Public Library "Proceedings of the New Jersey Historical Society" digitized by the Internet Archive have wills for a Philip Kearney in Perth Amboy, New Jersey written in 1770 that have a lot of overlapping information. However, because there are minor discrepancies we cannot be entirely sure what is accurate. There is no mention of Violet in either transcription of the wills. However, there are the names of two other enslaved women that Kearney leaves to his daughters. This might suggest that at least in 1770, Violet continued to elude recapture.

[35] John Duffield, "Two Thousand Dollars Reward," New Jersey Gazette (Trenton), no. 160, 17 January 178; "Pretends to Be Free": Runaway Slave Advertisements from Colonial and Revolutionary New York and New Jersey, eds. Graham Russell Gao Hodges and Alan Edward Brown (Fordham, New York: Fordham University Press, 2019) pp. 241-42.

[36] John Duffield, "Two Thousand Dollars Reward."

[37] John Duffield, "Two Thousand Dollars Reward."

[38] Morgan, Laboring Women, p. 14.

[39] John Duffield, "Two Thousand Dollars Reward."

[40] John Duffield, "Two Thousand Dollars Reward."

[41] Duffield, "Two Thousand Dollars Reward."

[42] John Duffield, "Two Thousand Dollars Reward."

[43] Due to this advertisement being placed during the Revolutionary War there was not a standardized currency yet in place, in my research determining the value between dollars (there were multiple different types of dollars) shillings, pounds, pence, etc. was difficult. However, in looking at advertisements placed in similar newspapers, that were from Philadelphia, around the same time a $2000 reward seems significant. For example, 27 December 1780 Ebenezar Blackly Jr. placed an advertisement in the New-Jersey Gazette calling for the recapture of three fugitives - Joe, a thirty-year-old black man, an unnamed twenty-eight-year-old enslaved woman, and her six-week-old child. For the capture of *all* of them, Blackly Jr. was offering a $1200 reward. In 7 February 1781, less than a month after Amoritta's escape, Adam Van Hart placed an advertisement in the New Jersey Gazette (Trenton) calling for the retrieval of "a mullatto girl named Agnes Beat." Hart offered "three hundred dollars" for her retrieval. Adam Van Hart "Ran Away," New Jersey Gazette (Trenton), no. 163, 7 February 1781; "Pretends to Be Free": Runaway Slave Advertisements from Colonial and Revolutionary New York and New Jersey, eds. Graham Russell Gao Hodges and Alan Edward Brown (Fordham, New York: Fordham University Press, 2019) p. 243. More advertisements centered on New Jersey can be located in "Pretends to Be Free": Runaway Slave Advertisements from Colonial and Revolutionary New York and New Jersey.

[44] Kaia Niambi Shivers, "Steal away on New Year's Day. Why most enslaved people ran away as the year began," Ark Republic, 1 January 2022 (date of last access 22 September 2022) https://www.arkrepublic.com/2022/01/01/steal-away-on-new-years-day-why-most-enslaved-people-ran-away-as-the-year-began/

[45] This is explored in Frederick Douglass's 1845 autobiography, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass. Frederick Douglass, "Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass," 1845, The Classic Slave Narratives, ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (New York: New American Library, 2012), pp. 366-367.

[46] John Duffield, "Two Thousand Dollars Reward."

[47] "An Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery - March 1, 1780," Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (date of last access 22 September 2022) http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/documents/1776-1865/abolition-slavery.html

[48] "An Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery - March 1, 1780."

[49] In 1780 there were approximately 240 free blacks in Philadelphia. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the population had grown to over 6,000 free blacks. "Black Founders: The Free Black Community in the Early Republic," Library Company of Philadelphia (date of last access 22 November 2023)

https://www.librarycompany.org/blackfounders/section6.htm#:~:text=Philadelphia's%20free%20black%20population%20grew,1780%20to%2010%25%20by%201810.

[50] Marcus Wood, "Rhetoric and the Runaway: The Iconography of Slave Escape in England and America," Blind Memory: Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America, 1780-1865 (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 79.

DOCUMENTS

Document 1: John Duffield, "Two Thousand Dollars Reward," New Jersey Gazette (Trenton), no. 160, 17 January 1781

> Philadelphia December 25, 1780. Two Thousand Dollars Reward. Ran Away this evening from the subscriber, a Negro wench named Maria alias Amoritta, she is about thirty-four years of age, tall and well-made, her face long and features more regular than are common with her colour. She had on or took with her a pale blue and white fine short linsey gown and petticoat almost new, a petticoat of tow linen, a pair of men's shoes and good shifts of brown homespun linen and aprons of the same. It is supposed she will endeavour to get into the jersey as she came from thence and once lived with Mr. Thomas Lowrey of Flemington, but it is suspected that she is now lurking in this city or concealed by some free negroes. She also took with her her female child named Jane, about four years old, well made, fat, round faced and lively had on or took with her a blue and white linsey frock. Whoever will deliver the said wench and child to the subscriber in Philadelphia, shall have the above reward. John Duffield. N.B. All persons are forebid to harbour her at their peril.

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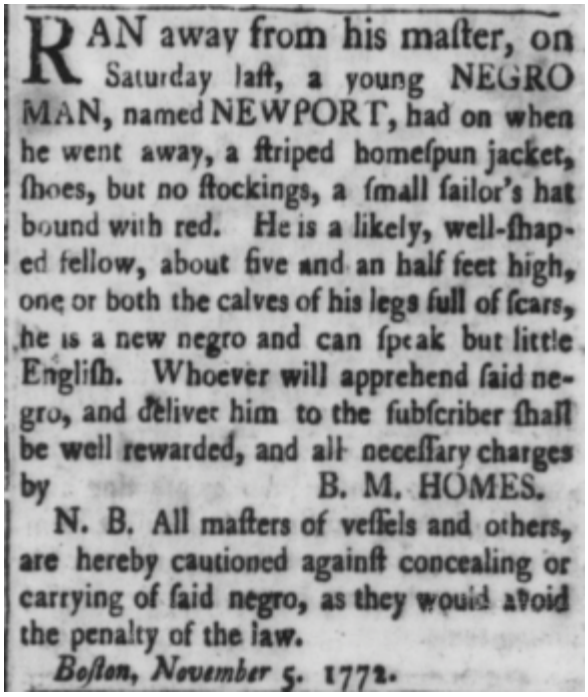
DISABILITY AS A PUNISHMENT: HOW SLAVERY AND FUGITIVE SLAVE ADVERTISEMENTS DISABLED THE ENSLAVED

Walt Manasse-Latham

Relatively speaking, viewing disability as a social construct is a recent concept.[1] It is not people themselves who are "disabled," but the society around them that disables them. Beginning in the 1980's, studies by Adrienne Asch and Michelle Fine introduced the idea that it is the environment that surrounds a person that creates disabilities.[2] It is only recently that the general conception of disability within communities of all different types has been expanded. This recent theory holds particular power when applied to the history of enslaved people in the Americas.

The American public has yet to come to grips with just how horrible slavery was, let alone to take steps to provide reparations.[3] An examination of the ways in which enslavers treated disabled enslaved people only increases the sense of horror about the institution of slavery. One valuable source that provides insight into this specific topic is the fugitive slave advertisements that enslavers ran in newspapers when those they had enslaved broke free of bondage. These advertisements are unfortunately one of the closest looks that we have into the lives and identities of enslaved individuals and provide a detailed description of their physical characteristics and mannerisms.[4] Frequently, these advertisements would describe physical or mental disabilities that runaways had, and it was abundantly clear that many of these were directly caused by enslavers.[5] Taking a closer look into disabled enslaved people as portrayed in these fugitive slave advertisements paints a fuller picture of their treatment by their enslavers and the physical effects that it caused, demonstrating in an extremely direct way how disability has been constructed in the Americas.

On 5 November 1772, B. M. Homes placed an advertisement in Thomas's Boston Journal (Fig. 1) calling for the return of a man named Newport whom he had enslaved. In addition to giving a thorough description of the clothes Newport was wearing upon his flight, Homes stated that, "one or both the calves of his legs [are] full of scars."[6] Homes' description of Newport as a "new negro"[7] likely indicated his African birth because it was accompanied by the declaration that "he can speak but little English."[8]



RAN away from his maſter, on Saturday laſt, a young NEGRO MAN, named NEWPORT, had on when he went away, a ſtriped homeſpun jacket, ſhoes, but no ſtockings, a ſmall ſailor's hat bound with red. He is a likely, well-ſhaped fellow, about five and an half feet high, one or both the calves of his legs full of ſcars, he is a new negro and can ſpeak but little Engliſh. Whoever will apprehend ſaid negro, and deliver him to the ſubſcriber ſhall be well rewarded, and all neceſſary charges by B. M. HOMES.

N. B. All maſters of veſſels and others, are hereby cautioned againſt concealing or carrying of ſaid negro, as they would avoid the penalty of the law.

Boſton, November 5. 1772.

Figure 1: B. M. Homes, "RAN away," Massachusetts Spy, or, Thomas's Boston Journal (Boston, MA) 5 November 1772; Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83021194/1772-11-05/ed-1/seq-2/

It is likely that the scars that marked Newport's legs were caused by whippings either directly or indirectly from the enslaver. Generally, enslavers would indicate when scars were the result of cultural practices in Africa, scarification known as "country marks" in the Anglophone Americas,[9] so the lack of such a statement here makes it more probable that these injuries were caused during enslavement. By modern standards it may be difficult to understand such a marking as an example of a disability. However, given that these scars were likely a result of whipping at the hands of a white enslaver or a fellow enslaved person, or some other hardship associated with slavery, it becomes clearer that in accordance with the time, such markings would have served to position Newport and other enslaved people as inferior and abject through the public knowledge of their ability to be controlled and marked by another's hand. As Graham White and Shane White have argued,

> Throughout the centuries of their enslavement the bodies of African and African American slaves were surfaces on which were inscribed the signs of inferior status. Partly, of course, this mutilation was the inevitability of slaves' allotted role, labouring at tasks that were hard and physically dangerous in a time and place where medical care was severely limited. Badly set legs, missing fingers, and mangled feet were commonplace.[10]

In his quest for freedom, Newport would have been seen as disobedient and judged even more harshly in an already prejudiced climate due to his race and chattel status. The scarring caused by an enslaver's whip would have been a visual marker of disability for the enslaved person. In addition to this, these scars demonstrated the brutality of the enslaver and served as a threat of violence to other enslaved people who may have hoped to resist enslavement. But what does it mean that enslavers like Homes were unafraid to literally advertise their brutality in print? Clearly, they were operating with impunity.

These marks served as both a psychological and physical tool of abuse at the hands of enslavers who wished to keep their enslaved population in line.[11] The simple fact that these scars are pointed out in the advertisement also shows that they acted as a signifier which made it easier for white people to recognize a person escaping

Raleigh, March 28 JOEL BROWN.
13-4t

$20 Dollars Reward.

RAN AWAY from me about the 4th of February last, a negro man, by the name of Emaly, about 25 or 26 years of age, well grown, of a common height, tolerable slim made, rather of yellow complexion, a very smooth skin; one of his eyes is out—I rather think it is his right. I do not recollect any other mark. I expect he is in or about Raleigh, as he has several acquaintances and relations in town. I will give the above reward to any person who will deliver him to me in Johnston county, 22 miles from Raleigh, on Little River, or confine him in jail so that I get him again—or $5 dollars for him dead. Any information can be obtained from Wm C Tucker, in Raleigh, about the boy, as he is acquainted with him.

BRYANT RICHARDSON.
Johnston county, March 29. 13-6tp

State of North-Carolina.

Figure 2: Bryant Richardson, "$20 Dollars Reward," Star and North Carolina State Gazette (Raleigh, NC), 29 March 1822; transcribed in Freedom on the Move, https://fotm.link/s7PPTurmdEAt8S7yQpNoR7.

enslavement. As Stefanie Hunt-Kennedy puts eloquently in her book, Between Fitness and Death: Disability and Slavery in the Caribbean (2020), "These bodily marks - whether transient, permanent, natural, or inflicted - provide a narrative and testimony to their wearers' lives of suffering and survival."[12] While slavery in the northern part of the United States may be little known compared to that of southern states, this advertisement makes clear that it was no less brutal. In a Nota Bene section at the end of the advertisement, Homes stated that the law did not protect those who harboured enslaved people. In other words, slavery was a completely legal system that not only led to the physical disabling of the enslaved, but was also itself a disabling force in both physical and mental capacities.

Another example of a disability likely caused by the horrors of slavery comes from North Carolina. On 29 March 1822, enslaver Bryant Richardson of Johnson County placed an advertisement in the Star and North Carolina State Gazette (Fig. 2) offering a twenty-dollar reward for the return of a recently escaped man named Emsly. The advertisement also included an offer of five dollars if Emsly was to be returned to him dead. To the extent that such appeals were not unusual, we must question the motivations of enslavers in the placement of such advertisements. Clearly, it was not solely about the possibility of staving off economic loss, but the possibility of enacting vengeance. Richardson's description of Emsly states, "one of his eyes is out—I rather think it is his right."[13] As Hunt-Kennedy writes, injuries that befell the enslaved "could have resulted from accident, disease, field labor, or chance violence, all of which were part of the daily experiences of the enslaved."[14] While an injury like Emsly's indicated violence, most enslavers were loath to state that this was the case in their advertisements.[15] But through close reading, it is not hard to see that the specific loss of one's eye could only have been caused by an accidental or purposeful incident. A further piece of evidence that this is the case lies in the fact that Emsly is stated to be "rather of yellow complexion," indicating that he is not dark-skinned and therefore more than likely was not a first-generation African (Fig. 2). In many cases, injuries that befell enslaved people were the fault of their enslavement, and because Emsly could have spent his whole life in slavery, it is clear that directly or indirectly, Bryant Richardson (or a former enslaver) was responsible for the loss of Emsly's eye. My reference to a potential former enslaver is no accident. Similar to how Homes, in the previous advertisement, fully understood and made clear the legality of what he was doing, Richardson indicates in this advertisement that there was a network operating behind the scenes to effectively capture fugitive enslaved people. Richardson states that Emsly is "acquainted with" C. Tucker of Raleigh.[16] Whether Tucker was a former enslaver, an official of some kind, or something else altogether, Richardson clearly felt that this man over twenty miles away was in line with his cause and would do whatever he could to return Emsly. Enslavers clearly mobilized their personal and business networks to assist them in the capture and return of fleeing enslaved people.[17]

If we consider a range of physical and mental afflictions, the loss of an eye perhaps fits more common understandings of disability because it impairs vision. This advertisement may be a blatant example of an enslaver disabling an enslaved person and yet still offering a reward for

their return in an attempt to keep them in bondage and working - most likely in this case - on a plantation.

It becomes clear by looking at these two examples of fugitive slave advertisements that punishments that enslavers meted out upon those they had enslaved not only physically disabled them, but were then included in advertisements as distinguishing characteristics, in the hope that the white reading public would more easily recognize these runaways and return them to their enslavers. While disabilities may in some cases have rendered enslaved people "unsound" in the eyes of their enslavers - and in fact one North Carolina Supreme Court case upheld that defective vision constituted "unsoundness" in an enslaved woman[18] - the enslavers who posted these two advertisements clearly did not seem to share the view that equated defective vision and "unsoundness." Perhaps these advertisements were placed long before the concept of "unsoundness" and the question of enslaved people being unfit for work became widespread, or perhaps Homes and Richardson did not care, seeing Newport and Emsly respectively as two otherwise able-bodied young men who had absconded; men from whom they would still be able to extract economic profit from their unfree labour. This determination leads to another connection between the two advertisements which more fully illustrates the attitude of enslavers toward those they enslaved.

Paradoxically, while these advertisements are now one of the best sources contemporary scholars have to examine the characteristics of enslaved individuals, they also indicate a clear lack of interest or specificity with regards to the brutal disabling of those in enslavement. Such advertisements are what White and White have referred to as, "the most detailed descriptions of the bodies of African Americans available."[19] In the first advertisement, when Homes describes Newport's scars, he stated that they covered "one or both the calves."[20] Certainly this indicates Homes' invasive familiarity with the body of a man he claimed to own. But it also may have indicated that Homes had inflicted punishments which caused the scarring on Newport's legs. Newport may have had to suffer throughout his entire life with the scars of some violent action carried out by his enslaver. But on which calf: his left, or right, or both? Homes could not recall the details.

Richardson also seems to forget which part of Emsly's body has been mutilated while in his custody. In his advertisement placed for Emsly, he mused, "I rather think it is his right."[21] These two enslavers exhibit an extremely casual attitude toward the violence which had been carried out under their supposedly watchful eyes; the violence which they may have themselves enacted.[22] These advertisements, which were meant to contain very specific information so that these escaped fugitives could be captured and forcibly placed back in enslavement, end up betraying the enslavers' hubris and being less useful than intended. How is someone looking for escaped enslaved people supposed to know if they have found the right person if the enslaver cannot even be sure where they have been injured? The seeming randomness and carelessness of their descriptions indicates that the reading public, emboldened by the promise of rewards, would have felt empowered to search every black person they came across, enslaved *and* free, for markings such as these.[23] Advertisements like these enabled whites to assault black people,

essentially turning everyone into an enslaver. All of this was carried out without the enslavers doubting for one moment that they would be protected by the law. Indeed, many such advertisements included statements about the enslavers' access to legal protections. The social climate, constituted through legal, scientific, and popular misconceptions of white racial superiority allowed enslavers to arrogantly assume the right to carry out these horrors, without suffering public condemnations or political or legal interventions.

As I have argued throughout this article, fugitive slave advertisements frequently described the disabilities of enslaved people as outcomes of the harms inflicted upon them by their enslavers. That such advertisements were ubiquitous across the Americas informs us that the white public did not uniformly reject the cruelty that was being daily advertised until quite late in the eighteenth century with the rise of organized abolitionism. However, some readers did eventually note the harms. Even at the time that these advertisements were written, abolitionists reading them took note of such brazen and obvious descriptions of violence carried out upon enslaved people.[24] While we now are starting to understand how these injuries tie into the construction of disability in the United States, they have always been understood by some as examples of the brutality carried out upon the enslaved.[25] Turning once again to Hunt-Kennedy's brilliant writing, enslavers made "black skin a living reflection of imperial and slave-holding power."[26] As the two advertisements mentioned above clearly show, enslavers sought to enshrine laws and enact prohibitions that deliberately inflicted harm upon black people.

In the mid-1800's, as white America continued to attempt to justify slavery to itself, even the act of running away came to be viewed as a symptom of disability, labeled "drapetomania."[27] This term was created by physician Samuel Cartwright in 1851, who theorized enslaved flight as some sort of "pathology."[28] Although Massachusetts was one of the first states to outlaw slavery, the US North still continued to sustain slavery through economic and social ties before *and* arguably after the Emancipation Proclamation.[29] It was still legal in southern states, such as North Carolina - the site of our second advertisement, and Louisiana - where Cartwright was creating his theories. In creating this idea of drapetomania, Cartwright gave white people something even beyond the legal basis for slavery - he expanded the *medical* basis. While race science had long been used to portray black people as inferior, here was a scientist going to great lengths to prove that black people were meant to be in bondage and to remain so. For him, and for many white people who followed his ludicrous theory, enslaved people had no cause to run away; doing so was just a result of a flaw in their psychology.

In reality, however, it is evident that the reverse was true.[30] Slavery created trauma that enslaved people would carry with them for the rest of their lives. This may have presented itself in obvious ways, such as suicide or attempted suicide, but even if it did not present itself in obvious ways, that does not make the disability or related suffering any less real or impactful. It is impossible to subject an entire racial group to such inhumane treatment for absolutely no reason and expect everyone's mental health to be unaffected. Mental illness or what today is commonly referred to as post-traumatic stress would of course have been an extremely natural response to the horrifying things to which the enslaved were subjected. Yet whites continued to

insist that there was something innately wrong with black people. They were labeled monsters, with every part of their beings called out as inherently damaged, inferior, or disabled. Disability was thought of as being passed down matrilineally, and so was slavery, creating a link for white people between the two.[31] Despite this conflation of blackness and disability, as we have seen, black people were considered a natural choice for enslavement. The lengths to which white people went to attempt to justify the subjugation, enslavement, abuse, and murder of black people are still incalculable, incomprehensible, and largely unacknowledged in the public consciousness of the United States.[32] All enslaved people became disabled under slavery, whether that disability presented itself physically or not.

Fugitive slave advertisements themselves were a disabling force against all black people, enslaved and free alike. The combination of race and disability, particularly with the knowledge of "drapetomania" and with how common it was for enslaved people to be disabled, was used to further separate black people from white people, painting them as a different, defective "other."[33] Let us not forget that these advertisements, which may now be valuable tools for research in some respects, were written through a white gaze which viewed all black people as naturally inferior.[34] The advertisements were based upon the hyper surveillance of black individuals and gave a close-up view of all their injuries and scars - which had been inflicted by the enslavers and their surrogates. These advertisements contributed to the ideas that white people had created about black inferiority. This notion has affected both the black and white consciousnesses for centuries and still affects us today. Fugitive slave advertisements were also intended to make runaways and free black people feel trapped and closed in on all sides, watched from every angle. A contemporary understanding of disability shows that disabilities only exist because of factors in the outside world that are disabl*ing*, and fugitive slave advertisements were clearly disabling to black people throughout slavery.

Although slavery has left a lasting mark on the United States, the nation clearly has not come anywhere close to processing the horrors of slavery. By scripting enslaved freedom seekers as criminals and incentivizing their recapture, fugitive slave advertisements contributed to those horrors, and therefore are a valuable resource for those seeking to be more fully aware of and combat the legacy of enslavement. Books such as Stefanie Hunt-Kennedy's Between Fitness and Death (2020) amalgamate a much broader range of fugitive slave advertisements to read between the lines and demonstrate that they are essentially descriptions straight from the horse's mouth of the violence carried out against black people, purely because of their race, during slavery. But what is most notable, as has been discussed throughout, is the fact that even in their efforts to regain what was legally considered their property, enslavers did not seek to hide their own arrogance, and ignorance at the horrific damage done to the bodies and minds of enslaved people.

This should not be shocking since all of this was completely legal. Enslavers felt entitled in every sense of the word because by law, they did own enslaved people and could act with impunity. For a very long time, there was absolutely nothing to stop them from disabling or killing completely innocent people without cause or consequence. There is much still to learn

and to explore with regards to the way in which enslavers created the disabilities that the enslaved then had to live with, but above all, it is clear that this was an absolutely monstrous moment in our history, for which there is still much to atone.

ENDNOTES

[1] Susan R. Jones, "Towards Inclusive Theory: Disability as Social Construction," NASPA Journal, vol. 33, no. 4 (Summer 1996)
[2] Jones, "Towards Inclusive Theory."
[3] Efforts by modern politicians such as Ron DeSantis even attempt to hide the historical treatment of black people in the United States. See Ishena Robinson, "What Florida Stands to Lose from Its War on Books and Black History," (date of last access 4 December 2023) https://www.naacpldf.org/florida-war-on-black-history/.
[4] Graham White and Shane White, "Slave Hair and African American Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," Journal of Southern History, vol. 61, no. 1 (February 1995), pp. 45-76.
[5] Stefanie Hunt-Kennedy, "Incorrigible Runaways: Disability and the Bodies of Fugitive Slaves," Between Fitness and Death: Disability and Slavery in the Caribbean (University of Illinois Press, 2020)
[6] B. M. Homes, "RAN away," Massachusetts spy, or, Thomas's Boston Journal (Boston, MA), 5 November 1772; Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83021194/1772-11-05/ed-1/seq-2/.
[7] B. M. Homes, "RAN away."
[8] B. M. Homes, "RAN away."
[9] Hunt-Kennedy, "Incorrigible Runaways," p. 102.
[10] White and White, "Slave Hair and African American Culture," p. 48; see also Hunt-Kennedy, "Incorrigible Runaways," p. 96.
[11] Hunt-Kennedy, "Incorrigible Runaways," p. 114.
[12] Hunt-Kennedy, "Incorrigible Runaways," p. 102.
[13] Bryant Richardson, "$20 Dollars Reward," Star and North Carolina State Gazette (Raleigh, NC), 29 March 1822; transcribed in Freedom on the Move, https://fotm.link/s7PPTurmdEAt8S7yQpNoR7
[14] Hunt-Kennedy, "Incorrigible Runaways," p. 95.
[15] Hunt-Kennedy, "Incorrigible Runaways," p. 97.
[16] Richardson, "$20 Dollars Reward."
[17] Charmaine A. Nelson has demonstrated the same practice in the British province of Quebec as documented in fugitive slave advertisements. See Charmaine A. Nelson, "He 'is supposed to have with him forged Certificates of his Freedom, and Passes': Slavery, (Im)mobility, and the Creolized Counter-Knowledge of Resistance," Special Issue: Humanity on the Move in the Era of Enlightenment and Colonisation, Global Intellectual History, eds. Bruce Buchan, Linda Andersson Burnett, and Ingeborg Hovik, vol. 7, no. 2, 14 June 2022.
[18] Dea H. Boster, " 'Unfit for Ordinary Purposes': Disability, Slaves, and Decision Making in the Antebellum American South," Disability Histories, eds. Susan Burch and Michael Rembis (University of Illinois Press, 2014)
[19] White and White, "Slave Hair and African American Culture," p. 49.
[20] Homes, "RAN away."
[21] Richardson, "$20 Dollars Reward."
[22] White and White, "Slave Hair and African American Culture," p. 49.
[23] Unfortunately, this has had a clear influence on policing tactics carried out against black people today. For more information, see Andrew Gelman, Jeffrey Fagan, and Alex Kiss, "An Analysis of the New York City Police Department's 'Stop-and-Frisk' Policy in the Context of Claims of Racial Bias," Journal of the American Statistical Association, vol. 102, no. 479 (Sep. 2007), pp. 813–23, and Rima Vesely-Flad, "Policing Dark Bodies in Polluted Spaces: Stop and Frisk in New York City, 1993–2013," Racial Purity and Dangerous Bodies: Moral Pollution, Black Lives, and the Struggle for Justice (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), pp. 119–52.
[24] Hunt-Kennedy, "Incorrigible Runaways," p. 98.
[25] Brutality was not the sole preserve of tropical and semi-tropical plantation regimes. For a study of the harms inflicted upon enslaved people in Canada, see Charmaine A. Nelson, " 'Ran away from her Master…a Negroe Girl named Thursday': Examining Evidence of Punishment, Isolation, Trauma, and Illness in Nova Scotia and Quebec Fugitive Slave Advertisements," Unsettling Canadian Art History, ed. Erin Morton (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 2022).

[26] Hunt-Kennedy, "Incorrigible Runaways," pp. 113-14.
[27] Christopher D. E. Willoughby "Slavery and Disability Discourse," Black Perspectives (date of last access 21 September 2023) https://www.aaihs.org/slavery-and-disability-discourse/#:~:text=In%20an%201851%20report%20to,the%20enslaved%20to%20run%20away.
[28] Willoughby, "Slavery and Disability Discourse."
[29] See James J. Jigantino, "'The Whole North Is Not Abolitionized': Slavery's Slow Death in New Jersey, 1830–1860," Journal of the Early Republic, vol. 34, no. 3 (Fall 2014), pp. 411–37 and David Montero, The Stolen Wealth of Slavery: A Case for Reparations (New York: Legacy Lit, 2024)
[30] Nelson, " 'Ran away from her Master."
[31] Willoughby, "Slavery and Disability Discourse."
[32] Sadly, the same is true for other western nations like Canada. See Charmaine A. Nelson, "The Canadian Narrative about Slavery is Wrong," The Walrus, 21 July 2017 (date of last access 23 November 2023) https://www.bgc.bard.edu/files/NelsonC_CV.pdf
[33] Hunt-Kennedy, "Incorrigible Runaways," p. 99, p. 118.
[34] Hunt-Kennedy, "Incorrigible Runaways, p. 108.

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PLATE LIST

Figure 1: B. M. Homes, "RAN away," Massachusetts Spy, or, Thomas's Boston Journal (Boston, MA) 5 November 1772; Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers; Library of Congress, Washington, DC https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83021194/1772-11-05/ed-1/seq-2/.

Figure 2: Bryant Richardson, "$20 Dollars Reward," Star and North Carolina State Gazette (Raleigh, NC), 29 March 1822; transcribed in Freedom on the Move, https://fotm.link/s7PPTurmdEAt8S7yQpNoR7.

"TO PASS FOR AN INDIAN": FUGITIVE SLAVE ADVERTISEMENTS, PASSING, AND READING A RACIALIZED WORLDVIEW

Piper Cruze Prolago

In 1764, Gilbert Smith placed an advertisement in the New York Gazette (Doc. 1; see p. 73) seeking to reclaim a man he called Jacob, who had "several Times changed his Name, calling himself James Start, and James Pratt, &ct," [1] and "passes himself" [2] as "Indian."[3] James (like many others) sought to escape enslavement through the act of "passing" as an Indigenous person, redefining himself through what David Waldstreicher describes as an act of self-making or self-fashioning.[4] James's act of self-naming is particularly radical within a system that customarily involved imposing the enslaver's family name upon the enslaved person, not just asserting ownership of their labour, but of their entire identity.[5] In transgressing racial boundaries, James was able to exploit the instability of a racial classificatory system supposedly based upon visual certainty, which was becoming increasingly rigid and inherent in upholding the institution of slavery. Within this system, James fought to assert a level of control through the act of naming, defining, and categorizing himself outside of the categorizations imposed on him.

A discussion of the significance of passing between racial categories is necessarily situated in discourse about the changing role of race in relation to the institution of slavery. Waldstreicher explains that race was not yet inextricably linked to enslavement in the mid-eighteenth century mid-Atlantic region, but instead that one could make a "vague and roughly accurate common sense forecast" about the *likeliness* of one's status (free, servant, enslaved) based on their ethnicity - African born, American born, "mulatto," Irish, Scottish, etc. - which could be surmised in part based on skin colour.[6] Thus, skin colour was not prescriptive of enslavement, nor was it a reliable marker of one's race or ethnicity at all. This is demonstrated in James' opportunity to "pass" as an Indigenous person and the importance of details like clothing or language in constituting ethnic identity.

However, as Charmaine A. Nelson contends, at some point "under the burden of White-imposed slave codes, laws, and prohibition," ethnic specificity became subsumed by a catchall "black" category.[7] This process projects an imagined sameness onto a heterogeneous and culturally complex group of people. One's parents, place of birth, and cultural background were meaningful insofar as they were linked to things like potential as a worker or as an identifier in advertisements but were less relevant than if one was "black" and therefore assumed to be enslaved in a kind of self-affirming circular logic. A racialized worldview developed that enabled Euro-Americans to not only differentiate themselves from the people they were enslaving, but also to flatten the enslaved into a closed group that became prescriptive of certain behaviors, traits, and status: that of a slave.

I argue that the racialized language and process of categorization used by enslavers in fugitive slave advertisements, particularly to describe those who moved between racial categories or did not fit squarely within one category, played an instrumental role in socially producing the category of blackness and conflating it with slavery. Published and distributed

prior to the invention and widespread use of photography, as Nelson has argued, the printed descriptions in fugitive slave advertisements had to function as seemingly objective *images* of the enslaved, the most precise possible way of communicating who they were and how to identify them.[8] The dissemination of advertisements visually identifying individuals through their race meant that these categories were increasingly inherent in the ways that Euro-American subscribers coded the non-white people with whom they engaged. In a moment where racial categories were not entirely solidified, creating seemingly objective boundaries between "white" and "black" - between free and enslaved - made subjugation appear natural or biological and as a result, psychologically inescapable. We can read fugitive slave advertisements both as an index of how Euro-Americans understood race and as a contributing agent in the project of naturalizing the fabricated connection between blackness and enslavement.

Fugitive slave advertisements ironically recorded acts of resistance by the same people they sought to criminalize, memorializing those who took their lives into their own hands by running away from their enslavers. In his attempt to recapture James, Smith was obligated to record his acts of rebellion - his chosen names and his transgressive act of passing. These advertisements record an index of resistors like James's unique and identifiable characteristics, which Nelson asserts should not be read solely as texts, but as portraits, creating a means to visually identify a specific runaway enslaved person.[9] In rebuilding these portraits, we not only find evidence of enslaved peoples' visual appearance, but moreover of their experiences and motivations. Therefore, an ethical practice of Slavery Studies tasks us not just with reconstructing the visage of the enslaved person, but furthermore with re-ascribing them as thinking, feeling, motivated beings.

In this vein, the "remarkable Scar"[10] on James's cheekbone that Smith suggests was "occasioned by a Scald or a Burn"[11] might be read as evidence of his abuse at the hands of enslavers.[12] James's flight "without shoes or stocking,"[13] though taking place in August in comparatively mild or hot weather, suggests James's urgency to escape the Smith household.[14] We might read Smith's note that James is "addicted to Smoaking and Drinking"[15] [sic] as a mechanism for coping with his unfreedom or (although not mutually exclusive) as an attempt by the enslaver to discredit James or assert his irresponsibility.[16] Contradicting this implication of James's irresponsibility, he is described as having carried out an intricate plan to free himself, working with an individual named Aaron Buck and moving to a different territory on a "sloop".[17] On this, they travelled from New Jersey to New York, a place that some enslaved people perceived to be a "free zone," to which many freedom seekers sought to escape. Therefore, James also demonstrated his knowledge of a network within which enslaved people and those helping them escape operated.[18]

Tom, another freedom-seeker, is also described as attempting to pass as an Indigenous person in the 1751 advertisement that his enslaver Nicolas Everson placed in the Pennsylvania Gazette. (Doc. 2; see p. 73) Published about 10 months after Tom's escape, Everson also inadvertently memorialized Tom's resistance in several ways. The date of this advertisement suggests that Tom's flight was successful in terms of permanent escape. This timeline indicates

that he may have been living outside of bondage, evading recapture at least between his escape "July last" and the publication of this advertisement in May of the following year.[19]

More than this, Everson was obligated to transcribe what he knew of Tom's plans, including how Tom sought to elaborately maneuver his knowledge of how he would be racialized. Tom planned to "cut off his watch-coat, to make him Indian stockings, and to cut off his hair, and get a blanket, to pass for an Indian."[20] Tom's intentions to cut off his "black curled hair"[21] acknowledges the fact that he understood that his hair would be recognizably linked to his blackness. He planned to dress himself in a way that would suggest inclusion within another racial group, replacing his "twisted yarn leggings" with the "Indian stockings."[22] His strategy of passing between racial categories was contingent on Tom's recognition of what features, both of his body and of his clothing, would be racially coded. Everson's note that Tom "enquired for one John and Thomas Nutus, Indians at Susquehanna, and about the Moravians," further demonstrates Tom's knowledge of a broad community, geographically spanning from New Jersey to Philadelphia. Clearly, Tom knew who exactly to ask for and what communities might be willing to aid in his escape.[23] Through Everson's loaded language, we find details about Tom's skill, intelligence, and persistence. In both the examples of James and Tom, it becomes clear that enslaved people were pre-meditating escapes through carefully planned routes and disguises, utilizing their knowledge of social geography and of the ambiguities in racial categories to free themselves.

Due to the nature of fugitive slave advertisements, which operated on the basis of the visual, the information which enslavers published about the enslaved was generally filtered through descriptions of their bodies. Despite their function of creating a description that would allow the reader to visually identify the freedom-seekers, these advertisements often include data about the enslaved person's parentage. Recalling the question of when ethnicity became subsumed into "race," the language in these advertisements hint at a perceived connection between the visual and biological that served the enslavers by reenforcing their detachment from the enslaved, casting them as a categorically distinct.

Everson describes Tom as a "Mullatto Negroe"[24] with the expectation that readers would fill in what they understood a mulatto to look like, helping to identify him.[25] (sic) Based on the varied applications of the term mulatto, this was also functioning as a social category. In most definitions, mulatto is understood in terms of parentage, for example as "One begot between a white and a black, as a mule between different species of animals."[26] In drawing this comparison with a mule, this definition illustrates the dehumanization embedded in this system of racial categorization. In the mid-eighteenth century, this term was not just used to refer to someone with one black and one white parent, but more broadly centred on the idea that one of the individual's parents was black and the other was not.[27]

Particularly with the non-specificity of "mulatto" in mind, the use of the term to describe Tom can be understood both as an index of what he looked like, as well as an index of how his appearance could be racially coded. This term differentiated Tom from someone with two black parents, suggesting that he had lighter skin, eyes, and hair and straighter hair, all visual markers.

Additionally, his categorization suggests something more about his social standing. In the varied definitions of mulatto, the feature of a single black parent was held constant, situating it as a marker that Tom is categorically "Negroe," regardless of his skin colour and regardless of his specific ancestry. (sic) The language that he used was not a neutral visual descriptor, but an assignment of value and of social status. By assigning Tom to this category, Everson was making a visual *and* social determination.

Returning to Smith, in searching for James he also invoked language demonstrating that the enslaved person's parentage determined their racial category. Smith explains that James's "Mother was a Negro and his Father an Indian, but he passes himself for an Indian and is like one, of a yellowish Tawney colour."[28] (sic) The stated function of fugitive slave advertisements such as this are to recover the escaped enslaved person (James in this example) which would likely be achieved through a description that was as visually specific as possible. In terms of the visual, Smith did this by noting the colour of James's skin, which he likened to an Indigenous person, or proximate to it. However, Smith asserted that James *is not* "Indian," regardless of how he appears visually, but rather *similar to* an Indigenous person. This qualification demonstrates the way in which blackness had become the dominant racial identification of an abject, enslaved status which was assumed to override any other racial categories with which it may have been mixed. While Everson collapsed Tom's physical appearance with his parentage (mulatto), Smith's description of James made visible a tension and contradiction between these: that the presence of one black parent is not prescriptive of a particular physical appearance. While noting James's physical appearance as falling closer to the category of "Indian," Smith strategically foregrounded his African maternal ancestry as the primary determinant of his race, a race that as blackness allowed Smith to possess James as a literal inheritance of his mother's enslaved status.

Racial categories at this time may not have been directly mapped onto one's status (slave, free, servant), but these advertisements suggest the drive to do so. Here, "race" is being categorized by tracing ancestry, ideologically linking biology, race, and enslavement. This framework for thinking about these ideas as being fundamentally related created a sense that differences between the enslavers and enslaved were inherent, biologically identifiable, and in turn, naturalized the exploitation of those considered outside of the white, dominant class. Race, determined through ancestry and identifiable through certain racialized characteristics, would come to operate not as an indicator of one's level of freedom, but as the justification or prerequisite for bondage.

The consolidation of ancestry and enslavement was also reflected and enforced through legislation like a 1706 Act in the New York colony declaring that "all and every Negro and Indian Mulatto and Mestee Bastard Child & Children"[29] will follow in the condition of their mothers and be "esteemed reputed taken & adjudged a Slave …"[30] With this act, it was legally codified that individuals were born into enslavement. Thus, even if, as Waldstreicher asserts, an individual's skin colour could only be an *assumed* link to their degree of freedom, their parentage became an *objective* one. In this way, the detailing of James's parentage functions as an assertion of his natural status as a slave - his mother was black, assumed to be a slave, and

therefore he was enslaved. The 1706 Act cements the fact that individuals could be born into enslavement, but only if they had a black mother or grandmother - which would continue to extend to increasing degrees of separation, essentially meaning that a single black ancestor should mean that subsequent generations would all also be black and therefore also enslavable.

This line of thinking coincided with racial "science" that understands blackness as a contaminant of whiteness and Indigeneity as potentially dilutable. This framework underscored the perceived ability to exterminate Indigenous peoples by subsuming them into the dominant white class after several generations.[31] So too did this framework create a population of enslaved people that was perpetually growing, which enslavers benefitted from in innumerable ways. In one way, this represented an economic venture in which enslavers could exploit the labour of more and more people they fundamentally saw as naturally, biologically inferior and unfree. Perhaps more insidious, this incentivized the systemic sexual violation of enslaved women, whose children became the property of their abusers.[32]

A problem emerged for enslavers in the fact that people such as Tom and James were able to take advantage of the ambiguities in how race was being visually coded, seeking freedom by disguising themselves as non-black and therefore accessing a social status distanced from their parents. The necessity arose, then, of finding ways to locate race not just through one's parenthood, but also on the body of the enslaved. This was negotiated in fugitive slave advertisements, where the bodies of freedom seekers are textually constructed through language which closed the distance between race and enslavement by making an individual's racial categorization a foundational part of describing what they looked like.

Race, as a system of social stratification, was necessarily produced by Europeans and Euro-Americans to differentiate themselves from African and Indigenous peoples, and further to naturalize their exploitation based on "white" superiority. Thus, race emerges not as a biological, but rather as a social reality which has functioned to define racial grouping, and assumptions about said groups, based upon shared physical characteristics.[33] In years around the publication of the advertisements for Tom and James, race was increasingly thought to be scientific. Carl Linnaeus identified four "varieties" of people, classified based on physical features that were correlated with character traits; later, mankind was understood to progress through these varieties, with various degrees of intelligence and "civilization," culminating in the superior category assigned to white people.[34] With this, social hierarchies between "varieties" appeared to simply mirror the natural order.

These discourses retrospectively provided scientific justification for a worldview that had already begun to emerge, one founded in the understanding that race was inherited, inherent, and identifiable by reading the body. Mining the body for evidence of race was enacted in one way through fugitive slave advertisements wherein the writer, often the enslaver, built portraits for the readers (who were also viewers) that were seemingly objective based upon their emphasis on visual characteristics. Here, the writer walked readers through building their own mental image of the person and in the process infused racial categorization both into their descriptions and in turn into the portraits that they invoked.[35] In the absence of photographs or any visual rendering

of the enslaved (aside, perhaps, from the cartoon icons attached to some publications), these mental images were taken as the *only* way to make meaning of the bodies of people that the readers had not themselves necessarily ever seen.

The dissemination and availability of fugitive slave advertisements cannot be overlooked in understanding the role that they played both in reflecting and constructing a framework for thinking about race, ancestry, and slavery. Since they were more publicly accessible than scientific writings, they must be examined as particularly influential in modeling how to identify and interpret non-white people. The details writers chose to include left gaps in these portraits, encouraging suspicion of anyone fitting into often ambiguous descriptions; therefore, any possibly mulatto man of a similar age was eligible to be misidentified as Tom, whose clothing and hair were likely changed. The power imbalances of slavery meant that the misidentifications which of course resulted from such advertisements resulted in the ubiquity of abuse against people of African descent and those who were mistaken for them. The specification of racial categories used in advertisements encouraged solidarity amongst white people along perceived racial, rather than class lines. Threats against those who harboured freedom-seeker and financial incentives to turn them in, invited more and more people to become complicit in upholding racialized hierarchies, regardless of whether they were themselves enslavers or directly profiting from slavery. The resistance of Tom, James, and countless other freedom-seekers radically undermined the worldview of increasingly rigid racial divisions by insisting that people could move between categories and manipulate their limitations. In this, they destabilized the hierarchies that were founded on the supposition that "race" was a fixed, naturally occurring identity.

ENDNOTES

[1] Gilbert Smith, "Run-away on Monday," New York Gazette or Weekly Post-Boy, 13 September 1764. I will henceforth refer to the individual described by the name he chose to give himself, James.
[2] Smith, "Run-away on Monday."
[3] Smith, "Run-away on Monday."
[4] David Waldstreicher, "Reading the Runaways: Self-Fashioning, Print Culture, and Confidence in Slavery in the 18th c. Mid-Atlantic," William and Mary Quarterly, vol. 56, no. 2 (April 1999), p. 244.
[5] Charmaine A. Nelson, "A 'tone of voice peculiar to New-England': Fugitive Slave Advertisements and the Heterogeneity of Enslaved People of African Descent in Eighteenth-Century Quebec," Current Anthropology, vol. 61, no. 22 (October 2020), p. 306.
[6] Waldstreicher, "Reading the Runaways," pp. 257-58.
[7] Nelson, "A 'tone of voice peculiar to New England'," p. 315.
[8] Charmaine A. Nelson, " 'Ran away from her Master…a Negroe Girl named Thursday': Examining Evidence of Punishment, Isolation, Trauma, and Illness in Nova Scotia and Quebec Fugitive Slave Advertisements," Unsettling Canadian Art History, ed. Erin Morton (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 2022)
[9] Charmaine A. Nelson, "From African to Creole: Examining Creolization through the Art and Fugitive Slave Advertisements of Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Canada and Jamaica," McCready Lecture on Canadian Art, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada, 20 January 2016 (date of last access 21 September 2022) https://ago.ca/events/mccready-lecture-canadian-art-charmaine-nelson#mccready-lecture-on-canadian-art-%20charmaine-nelson; Charmaine A. Nelson, "Servant, Seraglio, Savage or 'Sarah': Examining the Visual Representation of Black Female Subjects in Canadian Art and Visual Culture," Women in the Promised Land?: Essays in African Canadian History, eds. Wanda Thomas Bernard, Boulou Ebanda de B'béri, Nina Reid-Maroney (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018).

[10] Smith, "Run-away on Monday."
[11] Smith, "Run-away on Monday."
[12] Smith, "Run-away on Monday."
[13] Smith, "Run-away on Monday."
[14] A woman called Bell was recorded escaping from George Hipps under similar conditions, with no shoes or stockings in an August 1778 Quebec Gazette advertisement. See Frank Mackey, "Appendix I," Done with Slavery: The Black Fact in Montreal, 1760-1840 (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2010), p. 321. As Nelson points out, unlike tropical locations like Jamaica, shoelessness was not a normal attribute of slave life in temperate-climate regions like Canada and the US North. See: Charmaine A. Nelson, "Beyond Sugar: James Hakewill's Vision of Jamaican Settlements, Livestock Pens, and the Spaces between: Caretaking Animals ,Identity and Penkeeping," Slavery, Geography, and Empire in Nineteenth-Century Marine Landscapes of Montreal and Jamaica (London: Routledge/Taylor and Francis, 2016)
[15] Smith, "Run-away on Monday."
[16] Nicolas Everson, "Run-away in July last," Pennsylvania Gazette, 9 May 1751.
[17] Everson, "Run-away in July last."
[18] William B. Hart, "Black 'Go-Betweens' and the Mutability of 'Race' Status, and Identity on New York's Pre-Revolutionary Frontier," Contact Points: American Frontiers from the Mohawk Valley to the Mississippi, 1750-1830, eds. Andrew R. L. Cayton, Fredrika J. Teute (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), p. 98.
[19] Everson, "Run-away in July last," Pennsylvania Gazette, 9 May 1751. The Freedom on the Move database from which this was sourced does not include any additional advertisements placed by Everson, suggesting that the search was either successful or given up. The latter may be the most likely given how long after Tom's escape he was writing.
[20] Everson, "Run-away in July last."
[21] Everson, "Run-away in July last."
[22] Everson, "Run-away in July last."
[23] Everson, "Run-away in July last"; Nelson, "From African to Creole," (date of last access 21 September 2022).
[24] Everson, "Run-away in July last."
[25] Nicolas Everson, "Run-away in July last," Pennsylvania Gazette, 9 May 1751.
[26] Samuel Johnson, Dictionary of the English Language, vol. 2 (London, 1766), p. 164.
[27] Jack D. Forbes, "The Classification of Native Americans as Mulattoes in Anglo-North America," Africans and Native Americans: The Language of Race and the Evolution of Red-Black Peoples, 2nd ed. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), p. 30.
[28] Smith, "Run-away on Monday."
[29] An Act to Incourage the Baptizing of Negro, Indian and Mulatto Slaves (1706), New York Heritage Digital Collections, Elton Memorial Library, New Paltz, New York.
[30] An Act to Incourage the Baptizing of Negro, Indian and Mulatto Slaves (1706).
[31] Eve Tuck and Kim Tallbear, "Episode 4 – Red and Black DNA, Blood, Kinship and Organizing with Kim Tallbear," The Henceforward, audio podcast, 25 July 2016, 30 minutes and 41 seconds, (date of last access 23 September 2022), http://www.thehenceforward.com/episodes/2016/7/25/episode-3-red-and-black-dna-blood-kinship-and-organizing-with-kim-tallbear.
[32] Jessica Millward, "Reproduction and Motherhood in Slavery, 1757-1830," Finding Charity's Folk (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015), p. 15.
[33] Michael Omi and Howard Winant, "Introduction," Racial Formation in the United States, 3rd Edition (New York: Routledge, 2015), p. 13.
[34] Nancy D. Fortney, "The Anthropological Concept of Race," Journal of Black Studies, vol. 8, no. 1 (September 1977), pp. 35-37. This source provides additional details about scientific debates surrounding race, but for the purposes of this discussion it is primarily relevant that race would be generally understood to have basis in science and objectivity.
[35] Nelson, "From African to Creole."

DOCUMENTS

Document 1: Gilbert Smith, "Run-away on Monday," New York Gazette or Weekly Post-Boy, 13 September 1764.

> Run-away on Monday the 27th of last Month, August, from Gilbert Smith, of Upper Freehold, in Monmouth County, East-New-Jersey, a Slave, named Jacob, but has several Times changed his Name, calling himself James Start, and James Pratt, &ct. his Mother was a Negro and his Father an Indian, but he passes himself for an Indian, and is like one, of a yellowish Tawney colour, is about 23 years of age, 5 feet 4 or 5 inches high; his Hair cut short on his Crown, but curls around his neck; has a remarkable Scar on one of his Cheekbones, occasioned by a Scald or a Burn, and speaks good English. He is much addicted to Smoaking and Drinking. He went from his Work at the Plough and was without shoe or stocking, and had no other clothes but an Oznabrig Shirt and Trowsers, an old ragged Waistcoat and an old Hat. He came to New York on Wednesday Morning last, with one Aaron Buck, on a sloop from Barnegat or Tom's River and has since been seen in Town. Any person that will bring the said Run-away to Mr. John Talman in New York, Butcher, or Mr. Francis Field, on Golden Hill, or commit him to any public gaol will receive from either of them, Forty Shillings reward, and all reasonable charges. Gilbert Smith. N.B. All Masters of Vessels are forbid to harbour conceal or carry him off as they will answer it at their peril.

Document 2: Nicolas Everson, "Run-away in July last," Pennsylvania Gazette, 9 May 1751.

> Run-away in July last, from Nicolas Everson, living in East [?] New-Jersey, two miles from Perth Amboy ferry, A Mullatto Negroe named Tom, about 37 Years of age, short, well-set, thick lips, flat-nose, black curled hair and can play well on the fiddle; Had on when he went away, a red-coloured watch-coat, without a cape, a brown coloured leather Jacket, a hat, blue and white twisted yarn leggings; speaks good English and Dutch, and is a good Shoemaker; his said master has been informed that he intends to cut off his watch-coat, to make him Indian stockings, and to cut off his hair, and get a blanket, to pass for an Indian; that he enquired for one John and Thomas Nutus, Indians at Susquehanna, and about the Moravians, and the way there. Whoever secures him in the nearest goal or otherwise, so that his Master may have him again, shall have Forty Shillings reward and reasonable charges paid by Nicolas Everson.

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RECLAIMING TIME AND MUSIC: RESISTANCE AMONG ENSLAVED MUSICIANS IN COLONIAL MAINE AND NEW YORK

María Sparrow

Given the deliberate erasure of perspectives of enslaved people, researching the lives of the enslaved in the northern United States is fragmentary at best. While deeply contradictory, fugitive slave advertisements from these states can offer us specific windows that are both nauseatingly honest and deliberately indirect. In the first scenario such advertisements often related the realities of slavery, such as shameless depictions of bodily harm and violence against black people's bodies,[1] and in the second, they frequently hinted obliquely at the personhood of the escapee, in the case of this article, describing their skills as musicians and, more specifically, as violinists and fiddlers. Considering individuals' skills and their geographic and temporal contexts, as well as specific information given to us by the advertisements, can lead us to picture the wider context of that individual's circumstances. An analysis of these advertisements can help us consider both how enslaved musicians were forced to entertain their enslavers and how their musical talents also positioned them to facilitate crucial acts of collective resistance in the form of celebrations unique to northern slave communities. While Gary A. Donaldson contends that Congo Square in New Orleans was exceptional in terms of its public display of African celebrations of music and dance cultures,[2] in fact in the northern colonies the enslaved were constantly resisting together, both publicly and amongst themselves, and preserving African practices. Similar to Congo Square, these events simultaneously evidence resistance and creolization as it was taking place in the north. And while it is accurate that the enslaved minority populations could not have replicated the scale of Congo Square, nevertheless large groups of a hundred or more enslaved people have been recorded participating in Election Day gatherings in the US North and the evidence in one particular advertisement suggests that similar gatherings, although likely smaller, were taking place in colonial Maine.[3]

On 26 May 1774 in the Province of Massachusetts, today known as the state of Maine, an advertisement was placed in the Boston Gazette concerning a runaway named Prince. Slavery would not be abolished in the Province of Massachusetts until 1783. Having run nine years prior to this date, Prince chose to resist through flight again, thereby adding his flight to the increasing escapes which ultimately contributed to the end of the institution in Maine and Massachusetts.[4] There are several interesting things about the advertisement placed for Prince.

> Ran-away from the Subscriber, living in Gorham, which joins Falmouth, Cumberland County, in the Massachusetts Province, a short Negro Man named Prince, about 26 Years of Age, 5 Feet some Inches high, talks broken English, has remarkable small Ears and a Jewel Hole in one of them. Had on almost a new Felt Hat, a reddish grey home made Cloth Coat Jacket and Breeches with silk knee Garters, a dark Callicoe under Jacket, a white Linnen Shirt, red Collar and Cuffs to his Coat with Metal Buttons, white Cutton Stockings, Calf-Skin Pumps. It may be he has a Pass. Said Negro plays tolerable well on

> a Violin. Whoever will take up said Negro, or bring him to his Master shall have Sixteen Dollars Reward, and all Charges paid by WILLIAM M'LENNEN N.B. Said Negro Leaving done some Damage at the House where the Negroes met to hold their Frolick on Election Day, did not return to his Master again. All Masters of Vessels are forewarned not to carry him off at their Peril.[5]

The first task of the enslaver, due to his relative geographic remoteness, was to locate himself: "*in Gorham, which joins Falmouth, Cumberland County, in the Massachusetts Province…"* (italics mine). As Gorham was a small inland community, Falmouth[6] would have been more recognizable to newspaper readers across the province.[7] In the early eighteenth century in Maine an enslaved person would have been bought via the slave markets two hundred miles farther south in Boston, moved to Maine by their enslaver or sold through a more informal transaction.[8] By the mid-eighteenth century, however, there were slave markets in Maine in the southern coastal towns of Kittery and York shipping enslaved people from the West Indies and contributing to an increase of people held in bondage in Maine.[9] Still, enslaved populations remained much higher in Boston.[10] Thus, separated by geography from larger, slave-trading urban centers, those arriving in such majority-white towns in bondage were immediately isolated from other black people.[11]

Maine's climate would have had repercussions on the lives of the enslaved in ways similar to other northern states: long winters kept people in their homes for many months at a time, while the nearest neighbour might be miles away, let alone the nearest enslaved person.[12] Most Maine enslavers owned one to four human beings; by estimates from 1764, the enslaved population of Falmouth represented slightly less than one percent of the total population.[13] In addition to physical isolation and cultural alienation,[14] black codes in Maine strove to cause profound psychological alienation by insisting on further, constant segregation.[15] One local historian, Edward Bourne, wrote of one enslaved individual's segregated seat in church: "We of Kennebunk well remember him in the house of God, separated from his fellow-men in his lone seat,[...] far above all the other worshippers."[16]

Returning to the advertisement, what follows next is a physical description of Prince, indicating that he is young, short, and oddly, specifying the size of his ears of which one was pierced. Absent an earring, and notwithstanding a gauged piercing, specifying this level of detail about a person's body would imply permission on behalf of the enslaver to forcibly manhandle Prince to identify him.[17] It also reveals the level of bodily scrutiny to which the enslaved were constantly subjected.

Prince is described as "talking broken English."[18] He was purportedly from Guinea where he was kidnapped as a child before being sold in the West Indies to William McLennen of Gorham, Maine.[19] In the north, his origins would have made Prince a minority within an existing minority, an African-born enslaved person amongst Creoles of the United States and the Caribbean. But in Maine in the mid-eighteenth century, to be black and enslaved already placed one in a tiny minority.[20] How alienating was his process of learning English within this

particularly oppressive context? Did his accent make him stick out among the enslaved community and did this fact alone create an additional risk in trying to escape?

Subsequently, there is a comparatively lengthy description of Prince's clothes, including an enumeration of articles, their colour, and the material specificity of each garment: felt, linen, cotton, silk, homespun, leather, and metal. Furthermore: Prince possibly has a "pass" with him, which would have been a written or type set note indicating permission from his enslaver to move freely within certain parametres.[21] Given his "broken English,"[22] it seems unlikely that Prince was able to write in English and thus forge his own pass. According to Charles P. M. Outwin, Prince was employed primarily as an agricultural worker, which represented about a third of the labour realized by and stolen from enslaved people in Maine.[23] Perhaps his working outdoors, as opposed to within a household, allowed him to be better acquainted with the terrain and with passersby.[24] What kind of collaboration enabled Prince to have a pass and how did his enslaver know that he might have one in his possession?[25]

Further along in the advertisement, it is noted that Prince "plays tolerably well on the violin." This fact clearly indicates that the enslaver McLennen understood that Prince may have bartered his skills as a musician for food, shelter or other forms of support. The advertisement reveals that Prince's enslaver, William McLennen, clearly knew of Prince's musical abilities and he or a previous enslaver had coerced Prince to perform music in addition to his other labours.[26] This represented a form of control and yet another way that enslavers psychologically manipulated, tormented, and subjugated the enslaved.[27]

But they could not do so without resistance. The details in the Nota Bene are extraordinary. They read: "Said Negro leaving done some Damage at the House where the *Negroes met to hold their Frolick on Election Day*, did not return to his Master again." (italics mine). This interesting note seems to reference a tradition particular to the enslaved communities of New England, that of 'Lection Day, which were observed the months of May or June, depending on the locale.[28] According to ethnomusicologist Eileen Southern,

> "On this occasion the blacks elected their own 'governors' (or 'kings' in New Hampshire), in elaborate ceremonies that paralleled those of Election Day for the white population. The custom seems to have originated in Connecticut about 1750 and lasted, in some New England towns, as late as the 1850s. [...] Generally, slaves were given the vacation period from Wednesday to the following Sunday in which to elect their rulers and to celebrate."[29]

Prince ran away, according to the advertisement, in May of 1774, situating his escape in the earlier decades of the 'Lection Day tradition. Arguably what made this tradition possible in New England was that enslaved people were given five whole days to celebrate, which in turn was considered feasible perhaps because the (agricultural) economies of New England were not reliant on enslaved labour, but rather, were inextricably tied up in the slave trade. It is important to note how rare leisure time was for enslaved people. That said, what would this unprecedented precious leisure time have been like? According to Southern,

> "First in the order of events would be the election parade. A parade in Hartford, Connecticut, often involved as many as one hundred slaves, either mounted on horseback or marching, two by two, on foot. The procession of slaves, dressed in their finest apparel, would advance with colors flying *to the music of fifes, fiddles, "clarionets," and drums*. But [...] be sure, *only the best musicians were given the honor of playing for the election parade*. [...] After the election ceremony came the merrymaking, consisting of games, wrestling, jumping, singing, and *dancing to the music of fiddles.*"[30] (italics mine) [sic]

I have emphasized the two possible moments where a fiddler like Prince might have participated in such festivities: either in the parade itself or in the merrymaking afterwards, which would have included dancing. William McLennen described Prince's musical skills as playing violin only "tolerably well," and while we must consider the inherent bias in the perspective of the enslaver, perhaps Prince might not have received the particular honour of performing in the parade. Furthermore, with five whole days off, it is possible that he and others walked the eleven miles from Gorham to celebrate in Falmouth or even the fifty miles to York, Kittery, and Portsmouth to join the larger enslaved communities there, where he could meet and spend precious leisure time with other enslaved people in Maine and New Hampshire who had also traveled for the holiday. If, however, the group of enslaved people (who may have only numbered four people) in Gorham celebrated in town, it could well have been that Prince was the only fiddler among them. [31] Southern argues that,

> "Although black folk in the North were fairly well integrated into community activities—at least, to the extent possible for a servant class—they *nevertheless engaged in their own African style of merrymaking* as well. And the festivities undoubtedly brought back race memories, if not individual memories, of the elaborate ceremonies attendant upon the election and inauguration of chiefs and kings in Africa."[32] (italics mine)

It is unclear how young Prince was when he was kidnapped into slavery. Yet, whether he had memories of Africa or not, 'Lection Day festivities would have afforded him time, space, and the opportunity to connect with African - and increasingly African-American - cultural practices.

While Donaldson claims that this type of event was particular to places with higher populations of enslaved people, and Southern claims that this tradition existed mainly in northern urban centers such as Hartford, the advertisement evidences the fact the 'Lection Day festivities were quite likely taking place in Maine, possibly even in communities where there were twenty or fewer enslaved people. Was Prince perhaps playing the fiddle at this event to entertain fellow enslaved people? Those who were able to do so - that is, taking leisure time to create music which in turn could inspire dancing and collective reprieve from forced labour - were resisting the forces of slavery that sought to take everything from them. For many too, 'Lection Day was also about *taking their time back* for their own leisure. 'Lection Day was evidence that enslaved

people in Maine did so. The advertisement furthermore reveals that Prince capitalized on this moment of resistance to escape and that he succeeded. [33]

Nineteen years earlier in Poughkeepsie, New York, an advertisement was placed for an enslaved runaway named Tom. Written and paid for by Leonard Van Cleek and Myndert Veile,[34] Tom is reported to have run away in March, to bear marks of small-pox on his lighter-toned skin, to be good-looking, and that he, like Prince, "plays well on the Fiddle." He was also literate and his pursuers noted that he might, like Prince, have had a false pass. Remarkably, he had also obtained a horse for his escape, which was described in similar fashion to the human being hunted:

> Run away from the Heirs of Barent Van Cleek, of Poughkeepsie, deceased on Tuesday the 23rd Instant March, a Mulatto colour'd Man Slave named Tom, pock-broken, about 5 feet 10 inches high, a well set likely Fellow, plays well on the Fiddle, and can read and write; perhaps he may have a false Pass: Had on when he went away, a red plush breeches, a full trim' d Coat, a cloth Jacket, and it's supposed several other clothes: took with him a bay Horse about 13 hands and a half high with a [ ] on his fore head, bridle and sadle: whoever takes up said Negroe, and delivers him to Poughkeepsie, or secures him in a gaol, and gives notice thereof to Leonard Van Cleek, or Myndert Veile, of Duchess County, shall receive five Pounds Reward, and all reasonable charges paid by LEONARD VAN CLEEK and MYNDERT VEILE. [35] (sic)

While the advertisement does not specify what languages Tom spoke, it was Dutch colonists in the Hudson Valley who brought with them the holiday of Pinkster, which was celebrated seven weeks after Easter (March or April).[36] It shared many commonalities with 'Lection Day in New England, including: the time of year observed. The enslaved were permitted up to a week's respite from their forced labour and they chose and honoured a king who was among the enslaved. Music and dance too were at the heart of the traditions: while drums were of central importance, fiddles, banjos, and fifesall accompanied the Pinkster King.[37] Jeroen Dewulf contends that the holiday became a Dutch-named day that was otherwise wholly African American. Rejecting the typical interpretation of Pinkster as a form of black carnival, he argues that it is instead a ritual practice rooted in mutual aid.[38] Furthermore, he borrows from Hodges to make the case that "the festival [w]as a sign that, by the late eighteenth century, 'enslaved Africans in the mid-Atlantic were moving from tribal affiliation to a new concept of nationhood based on slave culture."[39] Given the notable similarities to 'Lection Day traditions in New England, it could perhaps be argued that 'Lection day functioned similarly in New England. Maybe Tom had observed Pinkster, gathering with the enslaved community of the Hudson Valley and played his fiddle to accompany the dancing. Perhaps through the "rudimentary self-help organizations"[40] that were arising at Pinkster he was able to collaborate and facilitate his escape.

Again, as was the case with Prince, Van Cleek and Veile would have known of Tom's musical skills through forcing him to perform and stealing this labour from him as well. Katrina Dyonne Thompson reminds us that "[a]lthough whites continually coerced music and dance from their enslaved people, such performances often were incongruous aspects of order in the slave society. The performing arts never simply represented the complacency of blacks, though whites continually enforced this ideology."[41] However, as Thompson goes on to say, "Blacks were aware of this facade and used ingenuity to negotiate power through music and dance."[42] Evidence of both of these musical events from Maine and New York demonstrates the resistance of enslaved people, despite the alienation of living within a stark racial minority community. Although the specific participation of Tom and Prince may always remain intentionally obscured from our sights through the erasure affected by the legacy of slavery, their ability as musicians to gather and create art testifies to their resistance to a system which sought to destroy their very humanity

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ENDNOTES

[1] Charmaine A. Nelson, Black Subjects in Historical and Contemporary Popular Culture (ART HIST 390/690), course lecture, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Amherst MA, 12 and 14 September 2023.
[2] Gary A. Donaldson, "A Window on Slave Culture: Dances at Congo Square in New Orleans, 1800-1862," Journal of Negro History, vol. 69, no. 2 (Spring, 1984) pp. 63-72.
[3] Donaldson, "A Window on Slave Culture," pp. 63-72.
[4] Charles P. M. Outwin, "A Company of Shadows: Slaves and Poor Free Menial Laborers in Cumberland County, Maine, 1760–1775," Maine History, vol. 46, no. 2 (6/1/2012) p. 131.
[5] William McLennen, "RAN-AWAY FROM THE SUBSCRIBER," Boston Gazette, 26 May 1774; transcribed in Freedom on the Move (date of last access 29 September 2023) https://app.freedomonthemove.org/advertisements/bb51cdfd-cf44-44a9-8f4d-51ebf3c49224?limit=12&page=4&q=gorham Reprints of this advertisement were issued in the Boston Gazette on 13 June 1774 and 20 June 1774.
[6] The town of "Falmouth" is known today as Portland, Maine.
[7] For comparison, estimates of Boston's population in 1760 are 15,631 people; in 1764, Falmouth's population was estimated to have been 5,000 people. Falmouth was also a trading port, although the author has not yet found evidence that enslaved people were shipped directly to Falmouth. "Boston Historic Population Trends," Boston History and Architecture, (date of last access 27 September 2023) http://www.iboston.org/mcp.php?pid=popFig; Randolph Stakeman, "Slavery in Colonial Maine," Maine History, vol. 27, no. 2 (October 1987) pp. 60-66; Charles P M Outwin, "A Company of Shadows: Slaves and Poor Free Menial Laborers in Cumberland County, Maine, 1760–1775," Maine History, vol. 46, no. 2 (June 2012) pp. 127-148.
[8] Stakeman, "Slavery in Colonial Maine," pp. 60-66.
[9] Stakeman, "Slavery in Colonial Maine," pp. 64-65.
[10] Katrina Dyonne Thompson, Ring Shout, Wheel About: The Racial Politics of Music and Dance in North American Slavery (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014) p. 77; see also Stakeman, "Slavery in Colonial Maine," pp. 58-78.
[11] Mark Sammons and Valerie Cunningham, Black Portsmouth: Three Centuries of African-American Heritage (New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 2004), p. 16.
[12] Sammons and Cunningham, Black Portsmouth p. 16.
[13] Outwin, "A Company of Shadows," p. 131.
[14] Kate McMahon, "The Use of Material Culture and Recovering Black Maine," Material Culture Review, vol.77-78 (2013), pp 92-106.
[15] For more on isolation as a form of abuse and a source of trauma for enslaved people who lived in temperate climate, slave minority sites, see: Charmaine A. Nelson, " 'Ran away from her Master…a Negroe Girl named Thursday': Examining Evidence of Punishment, Isolation, Trauma, and Illness in Nova Scotia and Quebec Fugitive Slave Advertisements," Unsettling Canadian Art History, ed. Erin Morton (Montreal: McGill

Queen's Press, 2022)
[16] Stakeman, "Slavery in Colonial Maine," p. 70.
[17] Nelson, Black Subjects in Historical and Contemporary Popular Culture (ART HIST 390/690), 12 and 14 September 2023. A fugitive slave advertisement placed by Hugh Kirkham in the Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle stated this explicitly when Kirkham printed of the enslaved man Peter, "N.B. If he is stript he has his Country marks on his back in the form of a Square, thus." (sic)
[18] McLennen, "RAN-AWAY FROM THE SUBSCRIBER."
[19] Outwin, "A Company of Shadows," pp. 127-148.
[20] As Nelson has revealed, African-born people were also a minority within an enslaved black minority in Quebec. See Charmaine A. Nelson, "A 'tone of voice peculiar to New-England': Fugitive Slave Advertisements and the Heterogeneity of Enslaved People of African Descent in Eighteenth-Century Quebec," *Atlantic Slavery and the Making of the Modern World: Experiences, Representations, and Legacies*, Current Anthropology, guest eds. Ibrahim Thiaw and Deborah Mack, vol. 61, no. 22 (September 2020), 14 pages.
[21] Nelson, Black Subjects in Historical and Contemporary Popular Culture (ART HIST 390/690), 12 and 14 September 2023.
[22] McLennen, "RAN-AWAY FROM THE SUBSCRIBER."
[23] Outwin, "A Company of Shadows," pp. 127-148.
[24] Nelson, (ART HIST 390/690) unrecorded course lecture, 12 and 14 September 2023.
[25] If Prince's lack of English fluency and relatedly, literacy, prohibited him from being able to forge a pass, we must consider if there was a trade in old or stolen passes or if people in the area were working as forgers. For more on passes and resistance as flight in cold climate regions, see Nelson, "A 'tone of voice peculiar to New-England'."
[26] Nelson, Black Subjects in Historical and Contemporary Popular Culture (ART HIST 390/690), 12 and 14 September 2023. Within Transatlantic Slavery, music and dance were used as punishments or coerced activity from the point of the Middle Passage when African captives were brought above deck and "danced" to prevent their muscles from atrophying. Marcus Rediker, The Slave Ship: A Human History (United Kingdom: Viking, 2007).
[27] Thompson, Ring Shout, Wheel About, p. 98; see also Nelson, (ART HIST 390/690) unrecorded course lecture, 19 and 21 September 2023.
[28] Eileen Southern, The Music of Black Americans: A History, 3rd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton) pp. 52-55.
[29] Southern, The Music of Black Americans, p. 52.
[30] Southern, The Music of Black Americans, pp. 52-55; see also index of Charmaine A. Nelson, Slavery, Geography, and Empire in Nineteenth-Century Marine Landscapes of Montreal and Jamaica (London, UK: Routledge/Taylor & Francis, June 2016).
[31] Josiah Pierce, A History of the Town of Gorham, Maine (Portland: Foster & Cushing, 1862), p. 95.
[32] Southern, The Music of Black Americans, p. 53.
[33] Outwin writes that Prince escaped and joined the Continental Navy. He returned to Gorham after the war as a free man and received a military pension.
[34] Note the Dutch names, as the Hudson Valley had been a Dutch Colony.
[35] At the time of writing, it was not possible to locate an image of the original newspaper. This is another example of how archival work can make scholarship on slavery possible, but also, the roadblocks still encountered in this field. Leonard Van Cleek and Myndert Veile, "Run away from the Heirs of Barent Van Cleek," New-York Gazette or, The Weekly Post-Boy, 3 March 1755; transcribed in Freedom on the Move (date of last access 28 September 2023) https://app.freedomonthemove.org/advertisements/14b00d53-66a3-4d80-b097-898842ae7951?limit=12&page=4&q=poughkeepsie
[36] Jeroen Dewulf, The Pinkster King and the King of Kongo: The Forgotten History of America's Dutch-Owned Slaves (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2017).
[37] Southern, Music of Black Americans, p. 54.
[38] Dewulf, The Pinkster King, p. 2.
[39] Dewulf, The Pinkster King, p. 5.
[40] Dewulf, The Pinkster King, p. 5.
[41] Thompson, Ring Shout, Wheel About, p. 98.
[42] Thompson, Ring Shout, Wheel About, p. 98.

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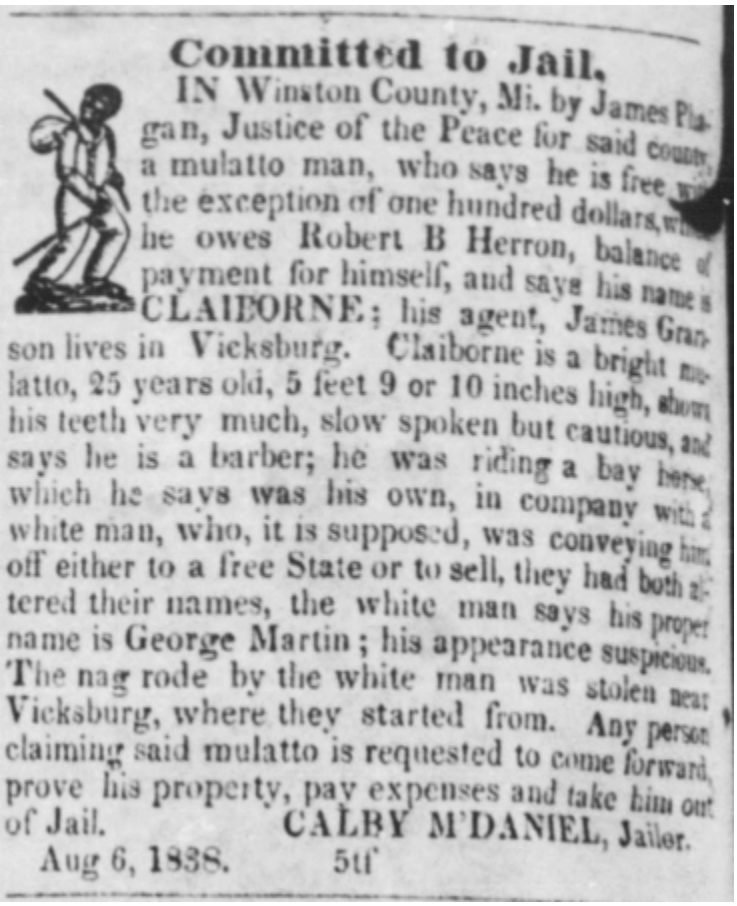
THE ORIGINS OF RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION IN NORTH AMERICA THROUGH FUGITIVE SLAVE ADVERTISEMENTS

Sean Waas

In 2004 a black man from Oregon, Jessie Johnson, was placed on death row for the stabbing of Harriet Thompson in 1998.[1] To the Jury it seemed like an easy case, Johnson's thumbprint was found on a five-dollar bill in Thompson's wallet which had been placed on top of her. His DNA was found on a cigarette butt in Thompson's kitchen and a beer bottle under the sink.[2] What they did not know and what the police never informed them of, is that according to Thompson's neighbour, Johnson was innocent. Patricia Hubbard told a detective she heard screaming from Thompson's apartment before watching a white man flee the scene. In response, the white detective told her, "A Black woman got murdered and a Black man is going to pay for it."[3] Instead of doing his job, he let his racist ideals strip a black man of 25 years of his life that he can never get back. The detective had no idea who the white man who committed the crime was, but in his mind, it did not matter. The white man's freedom was still more important than Johnson's.

The racism that underpins the unfair treatment of black populations dates back to Transatlantic Slavery. Europeans and Euro-Americans kidnapped Africans from the 1400's to the 1800's, with approximately 12 million surviving.[4] These African captives were brought across the Atlantic Ocean to be sold to white buyers. The enslavers treated the enslaved inhumanely with no regard for their lives, aspirations, desires, dreams, familial bonds, health or safety. Since only black Africans were deemed to be universally "enslavable," slavery was the basis for a racial hierarchy through which white people came to associate blackness (skin colour, hair texture etc.) with being inferior in almost every way. This colonial racial logic is the reason that racism persists in our contemporary societies.

Jesse Johnson's false conviction is a prime example. But Johnson's unjust incarceration was one case in a devastatingly long line of abused and incarcerated black people. More examples like this, but from hundreds of years ago, are evident in fugitive slave advertisements. Such advertisements were printed on behalf of enslavers seeking to recapture enslaved people who resisted through flight. These advertisements show common themes about the relationship between black and white people across the Americas. Racism and unfair treatment may have been something that started in the fifteenth century, but it is very much still prevalent today. By analyzing fugitive slave advertisements, this conclusion becomes obvious. In this article, I will analyze specific advertisements to highlight a few themes. First, fugitive slave advertisements incentivized participation in the recapture of freedom-seekers and worsened the mistreatment of black people. For instance, there is evidence that some sheriffs seized incarcerated any black person (especially black men who comprised the largest number of runaways) whom they suspected of being a runaway, for financial gain. Second, jail was used as a way to physically and mentally abuse black people. Lastly, due to their dehumanization and racist mischaracterization by white people, the enslaved were looked upon as untrustworthy, cunning, and inferior, making all of their actions and words suspect.



Committed to Jail,

IN Winston County, Mi. by James Flagan, Justice of the Peace for said county, a mulatto man, who says he is free, with the exception of one hundred dollars, which he owes Robert B Herron, balance of payment for himself, and says his name is CLAIBORNE; his agent, James Granson lives in Vicksburg. Claiborne is a bright mulatto, 25 years old, 5 feet 9 or 10 inches high, shows his teeth very much, slow spoken but cautious, and says he is a barber; he was riding a bay horse, which he says was his own, in company with a white man, who, it is supposed, was conveying him off either to a free State or to sell, they had both altered their names, the white man says his proper name is George Martin; his appearance suspicious. The nag rode by the white man was stolen near Vicksburg, where they started from. Any person claiming said mulatto is requested to come forward, prove his property, pay expenses and take him out of Jail.

CALBY M'DANIEL, Jailer.

Aug 6, 1838. 5tf

Figure 1: Calby M'Daniel, "Committed to Jail," Columbus Democrat, 11 August 1838, p. 3; Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

One of the main sources I will be utilizing is a fugitive slave advertisement from 1838 printed in the Columbus Democrat, a Mississippi-based newspaper that ran from 1834 to 1878.[5] Fugitive slave advertisements were used by enslavers to find enslaved runaways or by jailers to find the owner of the enslaved. These advertisements gave the reader a view into the lives of the enslaved including, but not limited to, how they were treated and their methods of resistance. This advertisement was first printed on 11 August 1838 and disappeared on 22 September 1838.[6] It was printed by a jailer from Winston County, Mississippi, named Calby M'Daniel.

Calby M'Daniel had found a light-skinned ("mulatto") man named Claiborne who was accompanied by a white man named George Martin. M'Daniel used words that conveyed his suspicion of what the two men had told him such as "says his name is,"[7] "says he is a barber,"[8] "says he is free,"[9] and "says was his own."[10] This wording is very intentional and shows M'Daniel's mistrust of any information he received from Claiborne and George. The most likely reason for this pervasive doubt was Claiborne's race which caused M'Daniel, a white man, to immediately mistrust anything Claiborne or his companion said or did. M'Daniel racially profiled Claiborne by believing that there was no way that he could have been free. Given the pervasive impoverishment of enslaved black and free black people in the period of slavery, the even bigger sign for M'Daniel that Claiborne was lying to him was the fact that Claiborne was caught riding a horse. There was a preconceived notion that free black people must have been poor. This assumption was not entirely incorrect however, because the intensity and pervasiveness of racism and discrimination, especially in the US South, led to economic disenfranchisement that ensured that very few black men were given the opportunity to make as much money as a white man. As Charmaine A. Nelson has explained regarding her research on Jamaican Slavery, "few free black or coloured Jamaicans...and even fewer enslaved ones...were able to accrue the wealth to own a horse."[11] Horses were seen as a sign of status, class, and wealth. So, similar to Jamaica and other regions of the Americas, it would have been very

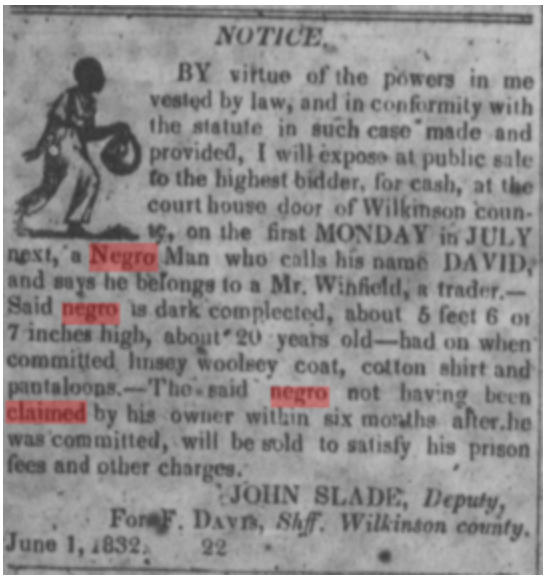
difficult for an enslaved person in the US to be able to afford one. White people would do anything in their power to make sure of this because they wanted as large of a disparity between them and African Americans as possible. As I will discuss later, fugitive slave advertisements contributed to these biased racial ideas.

Another way this advertisement gives us insight into the relationship between black and white men is that they were not supposed to be companions. Since they were viewed as unequal, if a white man and a black man were seen together then it would be assumed the white man was his enslaver, employer, or otherwise exploiting him for financial reasons. Claiborne was found by M'Daniel with a white man, George Martin, and instead of believing a free black man and a white man could be friends, he decided that Martin was either trying to help Claiborne escape slavery or trying to sell him. M'Daniel called Martin's appearance "suspicious" but gave no reasons for this conclusion. Although it cannot be confirmed, I presume the reason he was suspicious was because of his association with a black man and his supposed theft of a horse. We must keep in mind that Claiborne told M'Daniel that he was free and named the person to whom he supposedly still owed money. But M'Daniel's advertisement begs the question of whether or not he followed up on Claiborne's claim and contacted Robert B. Herron. Most likely, it was easier for him to assume that Claiborne was a runaway, and instead, either let someone claim him and pay his expenses or sell him for profit. This leads to my next point.

Either the jailer, sheriff, or both, would benefit from the capturing of an African American. Whether they were free or fugitive, it did not always matter. If the person was a fugitive, then the owner claimed them and paid the jail fees (decided by the jail). Or, if they went unclaimed, there is evidence that they would then be sold at auction by various regional sheriffs. Examples of this practice can be found in Mississippi, but the National Museum of African American History and Culture reports a similar situation in Hagerstown, Maryland.[12] Due to its proximity to Pennsylvania, there were many fugitives caught on their way to the free state. The local sheriffs would have captured any accused fugitives and sold them at auction either in front of the courthouse or in the jail yard.[13] I have deliberately used the word accused because, these public servants could not have proven whether all of these people were fugitives. But they profited regardless.

This leads me back to Claiborne. It was possible that he was a free man, but it would have been beneficial to the jail to capture him and sell him at auction to reap the benefits. What this tells us is that free black people were sold (back) into slavery indiscriminately. In fact, an article written in the Smithsonian Magazine by Jonathan Daniel Wells confirms my suspicions. He writes about a New York City police captain (beginning around 1830) by the name of Isiah Rynders who made it his mission to profit off his hatred for the black community. In the Fugitive Slave Act, the government made it the duty of northern police to capture and return any enslaved fugitives who fled to the north.[14] However, much like M'Daniel, it did not matter to Rynders and other New York City police whether the men were free or enslaved. In fact, corruption was incentivized by the state government. Rynders Confederates (people working towards the same goal) were paid fees set by the law, so the more arrests they made, the more they were paid.

Also, at this time police did not carry badges or wear uniforms so they could not be easily identified as police. This not only demonstrates the white hatred of black communities, but also how the North and the South were not as different as history books would like us to think. Instead of allowing free black people to be treated with the deserved respect, these corrupt sheriffs would instead use the image of the North to their financial advantage. That image being, a sanctuary for black people to escape slavery.

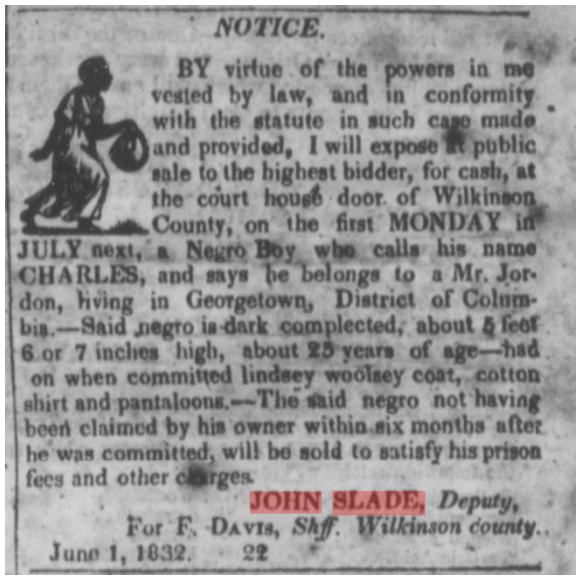


NOTICE.

BY virtue of the powers in me vested by law, and in conformity with the statute in such case made and provided, I will expose at public sale to the highest bidder, for cash, at the court house door of Wilkinson county, on the first MONDAY in JULY next, a Negro Man who calls his name DAVID, and says he belongs to a Mr. Winfield, a trader.—Said negro is dark complected, about 5 feet 6 or 7 inches high, about 20 years old—had on when committed linsey woolsey coat, cotton shirt and pantaloons.—The said negro not having been claimed by his owner within six months after he was committed, will be sold to satisfy his prison fees and other charges.

JOHN SLADE, *Deputy*,
For F. Davis, *Shff. Wilkinson county.*
June 1, 1832. 22

Figure 2: John Slade, "NOTICE," Southern Planter, 1 June 1832, p. 2; Library of Congress, Washington, DC.



NOTICE.

BY virtue of the powers in me vested by law, and in conformity with the statute in such case made and provided, I will expose at public sale to the highest bidder, for cash, at the court house door of Wilkinson County, on the first MONDAY in JULY next, a Negro Boy who calls his name CHARLES, and says he belongs to a Mr. Jordon, living in Georgetown, District of Columbia.—Said negro is dark complected, about 5 feet 6 or 7 inches high, about 25 years of age—had on when committed lindsey woolsey coat, cotton shirt and pantaloons.—The said negro not having been claimed by his owner within six months after he was committed, will be sold to satisfy his prison fees and other charges.

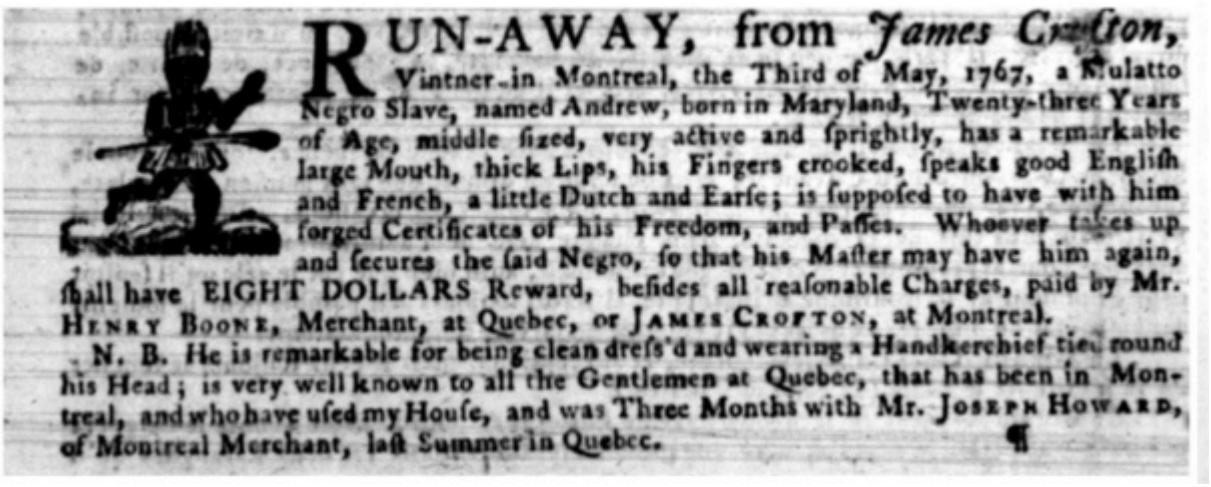
JOHN SLADE, *Deputy*,
For F. Davis, *Shff. Wilkinson county.*
June 1, 1832. 22

Figure 3: John Slade, "NOTICE," Southern Planter, 1 June 1832, p. 2; Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

These advertisements were published in the same newspaper, on the same day, on the same page. They are from the Southern Planter and stated that the sheriff was selling two runaways due to them being unclaimed by their enslavers for six months.[15] This confirms that although the jailer could not sell the runaways directly, the sheriff was invested with such authority. One thing to note is that both men were young and apparently able-bodied, meaning they would have been valuable to potential enslavers. One possibility, although nearly impossible to confirm, is that the sheriff did not try very hard to find the owner (if they were in fact runaways). The sale of the men could be more financially beneficial to the sheriff than the compensation provided by the potential owner.

Significantly, both David and Charles had been jailed for six months. To explain the significance of this I must first explain the treatment of African Americans in these jails. However, I believe the conditions of these jails are best summarized by abolitionist Samuel G. Howe in a letter to Massachusetts Senator Henry Wilson: "The building is a wretched one...caged like wild beasts...filthy...disgraceful by any State claiming to be Christian and civilized."[16] He was speaking of the Alexandria Jail in Virginia, but the inhumane and "wild beast" type arrangements made for these enslaved fugitives were much the same throughout North America. These jails were just another way to torture and dehumanize the enslaved to

make them feel inferior. As Nelson has explained, "Jails were routinely used in the northern settlements to lodge the enslaved so that their owners could reclaim them."[17] This means that if the enslaved showed any amount of rebellion, then the white enslaver could send them to jail to try to abuse the enslaved into submission. The less equal they felt, the less likely they were to comprehend or resist their awful living conditions.



RUN-AWAY, from *James Crofton*, Vintner in Montreal, the Third of May, 1767, a Mulatto Negro Slave, named Andrew, born in Maryland, Twenty-three Years of Age, middle ſized, very active and ſprightly, has a remarkable large Mouth, thick Lips, his Fingers crooked, ſpeaks good Engliſh and French, a little Dutch and Earſe; is ſuppoſed to have with him forged Certificates of his Freedom, and Paſſes. Whoever takes up and ſecures the ſaid Negro, ſo that his Maſter may have him again, ſhall have EIGHT DOLLARS Reward, beſides all reaſonable Charges, paid by Mr. HENRY BOONE, Merchant, at Quebec, or JAMES CROFTON, at Montreal.

N. B. He is remarkable for being clean dreſs'd and wearing a Handkerchief tied round his Head; is very well known to all the Gentlemen at Quebec, that has been in Montreal, and who have uſed my Houſe, and was Three Months with Mr. JOSEPH HOWARD, of Montreal Merchant, laſt Summer in Quebec. ¶

Figure 4: James Crofton, "RUN-AWAY," Quebec Gazette, 3 May 1767, p. 4; Crofton, James "RUN-AWAY," Quebec Gazette, 3 May 1767, p. 4; transcribed in Le marronnage dans le monde atlantique : sources et trajectoires de vie (date of last access 18 September 2023) http://www.marronnage.info/fr/document.php?id=11601

In May 1767, James Crofton placed an advertisement in the Quebec Gazette for the "runaway," Andrew. There are a few major things to notice when analyzing this advertisement. Crofton astutely described Andrew's clothing in an effort to ensure that the gazette's readers could identify him. Also, Crofton stated that Andrew was born in Maryland; a revelation that alerted the public to the possibility Andrew might have been returning to that region.

If Andrew was indeed African American, it was likely that he had been removed from friends and family in Maryland when he was forced to move to Quebec. This created an even larger search area and informed a bigger audience of white people to be on the lookout.[18] Another very important thing Crofton mentioned is that he believed Andrew was carrying forged Certificates of Freedom and Passes. This ties into the fact that Crofton said that Andrew was very well-known to people in Quebec because he had also been exploited through rental. Specifically, Crofton mentioned that Andrew had spent three months with a merchant named Joseph Howard.

If he indeed had passes, Andrew was likely trying to use them to pretend that he had Crofton's permission to travel. It is likely that if Andrew tried to pass as a free man, anyone who knew of him, or his enslaver would not have believed him. Therefore, passes may have been useful to him only to a certain point, after which he may have used the certificate of freedom in regions where no one knew him or Crofton. Andrew was trying to use the racism of whites to his advantage.

This leads back to both key aspects of my thesis, that whites were constantly suspicious of black people leading to abuse, physical and mental, and that fugitive slave advertisements incentivized the abuse. The reason they incentivized this suspicion and abuse was that, as in Andrew's case, the advertisements functioned by encouraging the readers to manhandle, strip, search, capture, or jail people like Andrew merely on the basis of the words of the enslaver. This created societies in which white people felt entitled to black people's bodies and the right to challenge their claims about their identities with physical force. By criminalizing black people, such advertisements incentivized racial hatred and normalized racial stereotypes of black inferiority and untrustworthiness. This leads to jailers like Calby M'Daniel being suspicious of people like Claiborne and treating them inhumanely based on their race. To M'Daniel and many others, black people were the lowest in the societal hierarchy and therefore were to be treated as such.

On 24 January 2023, six Rankin County (Mississippi) police officers kicked in the door of two black men without a warrant.[19] With no probable cause, the men were handcuffed, called racial slurs, and told to stay out of Rankin County. The officers attacked the men, tasing them 17 times, as well as punching and kicking them. After officer Christian Dedmon fired twice to intimidate the two men, Hunter Elward removed a bullet from his gun and dry-fired in the mouth of one of the men. On a second dry-fire attempt he pulled the trigger, but the gun fired this time. The bullet broke the man's jaw and exited out of his neck. The five white officers left the man bleeding on the floor and decided to devise a cover story outside of the home. They placed fake evidence on the man who was shot as well as filed false reports and alleged crimes that had not occured. When the trial date arrived, they pressured witnesses into telling the story they had formulated.[20] The six officers have plead guilty to the charges against them but sentencing has been postponed by the judge. This story shows that the racial stereotypes and racist abuse first normalized within Transatlantic Slavery are still very much alive. The damage done to the black population by hundreds of years of suffering is irreparable. We have come a long way from these fugitive slave advertisements but there is still much work to do.

In conclusion, as seen throughout this writing, fugitive slave advertisements allow us to learn a lot about the treatment of black people and the black-white relationship during the period of Transatlantic Slavery and beyond. They show us that white people have taken advantage of and profited from black people's suffering and labour in a ludicrous number of ways. From selling free men back into slavery to torture, the horrific truth has been printed in black and white across innumerable slave advertisements. Through these brave acts of rebellion by those such as Claiborne, Andrew, David, and Charles we know the truth. They cemented their legacies through resistance.

ENDNOTES

[1] "Exonerated! Wrongly Convicted Black Folks Whose Names Have Been Cleared," Newsone, 11 September 2023 (16 September 2023)

[2] Sage Van Wing, "Jesse Johnson released from Oregon prison after 25 years," Oregon Public Broadcasting, 7 September 2023 (ate of last access 16 September 2023) https://www.opb.org/article/2023/09/07/oregon-prison-

release-jesse-johnson-think-out-loud/
[3] "Oregon man sentenced to death for 1988 murder is free after conviction reversed: 'A lot of years for something I didn't do'," CBS News, 7 September 2023 (16 September 2023) https://www.cbsnews.com/news/jesse-johnson-sentenced-to-death-1988-murder-is-free-2-years-after-conviction-reversed/
[4] Henry Louis Gates Jr., "How Many Slaves Landed in the U.S.?," PBS (date of last access 16 September 2023) https://www.pbs.org/wnet/african-americans-many-rivers-to-cross/history/how-many-slaves-landed-in-the-us/
[5] Calby M'Daniel, "Committed to Jail," Columbus Democrat, 11 August 1838, p. 3; Library of Congress, Washington, DC.
[6] Unfortunately, the issue that ran August 15 is not available. Therefore, whether the advertisement was run that week or not is not known.
[7] M'Daniel, "Committed to Jail."
[8] M'Daniel, "Committed to Jail."
[9] M'Daniel, "Committed to Jail."
[10] M'Daniel, "Committed to Jail."
[11] Charmaine A. Nelson, Slavery, Geography and Empire in Nineteenth-Century Marine Landscapes of Montreal and Jamaica (London, UK: Routledge/Taylor & Francis, June 2016), pp. 319-320. Nelson's use of the word coloured recuperated the colonial term for mixed race people (white and black) during the period of slavery in Jamaica.
[12] Mary Elliot, "Slavery and Freedom," National Museum of African American History & Culture (date of last access 18 September 2023) https://www.searchablemuseum.com/slavery-and-freedom
[13] "Fugitive slave Acts," History Channel, 29 June 2023 (date of last access 18 September 2023) https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/fugitive-slave-acts
[14] Jonathan Daniel Wells, "The So-Called 'Kidnapping Club' Featured Cops Selling Free Black New Yorkers Into Slavery," Smithsonian Magazine (date of last access 18 September 2023) https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/so-called-kidnapping-club-featured-new-york-cops-selling-free-blacks-slavery-180976055/
[15] John Slade, "NOTICE," (David) Southern Planter, 1 June 1832, p. 2; John Slade, "NOTICE," (Charles) Southern Planter, 1 June 1832, p. 2; Library of Congress, Washington, DC.
[16] "Slaves in the Alexandria Jail, 1861" The Friends of Freedmen's Cemetery (date of last access 16 September 2023) http://www.freedmenscemetery.org/resources/documents/jail.shtml
[17] Charmaine A. Nelson, " 'Ran away from her Master…a Negroe Girl named Thursday': Examining Evidence of Punishment, Isolation, and Trauma in Nova Scotia and Quebec Fugitive Slave Advertisements," Legal Violence and the Limits of the Law, eds. Joshua Nichols and Amy Swiffen (NYC: Routledge, 2017), p. 76.
[18] It would be important to determine if Crofton also placed notices for Andrew in Maryland newspapers. But unfortunately, such research was beyond the scope of this article.
[19] Michael Goldberg, "How 6 Mississippi officers tried to cover up their torture of 2 Black men," AP News (date of last access 20 September 2023) https://apnews.com/article/mississippi-deputies-guilty-pleas-civil-rights-e4937b4cd1d2ed2388b2fd1c3aeefcb9
[20] "Six Mississippi Law Enforcement Officers Plead Guilty to torturing and Abusing Two Black Men," Office of Public Affairs (date of last access 20 September 2023) https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/six-mississippi-law-enforcement-officers-plead-guilty-torturing-and-abusing-two-black-men

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PLATE LIST

Figure 1: Calby M'Daniel, "Committed to Jail," Columbus Democrat, 11 August 1838, p. 3; Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

Figure 2: John Slade, "NOTICE," Southern Planter, 1 June 1832, p. 2; Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

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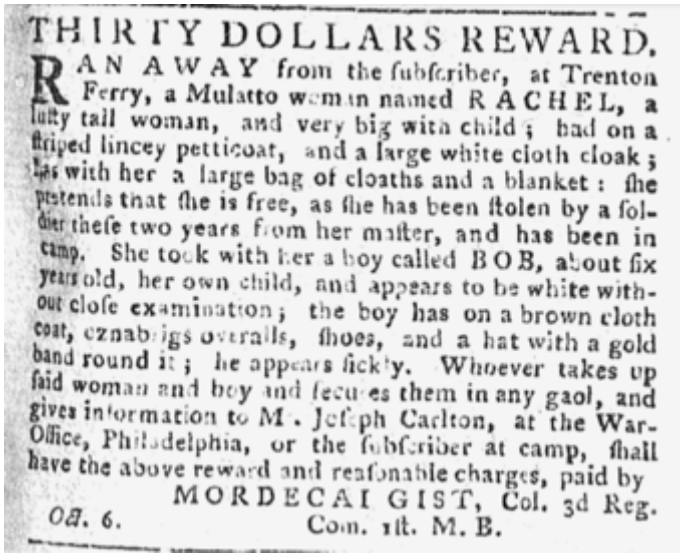
RACHEL AND MIRA: ENSLAVED RUNAWAYS DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

Olivia White

Archived newspaper advertisements aimed at recapturing enslaved runaways, often called fugitive slave advertisements, provide information on enslaved persons pre-abolition that otherwise may have been completely erased from history by enslavers. It is ironic, then, that it is the enslaver's words, while looking to reclaim their "property," that ultimately preserved the identity of runaways. When an enslaver posted a fugitive slave advertisement, it meant they saw value in the runaway's labour and knew enough about the person to describe them, often in great detail. Indeed, as Shane White and Graham White have argued, fugitive slave advertisements provide "the most detailed descriptions of the bodies of enslaved African Americans available."[1]

In a perverse way, it is thanks to the enslavers that we have the proper names of some runaways, as enslavers provided known aliases in the advertisements in addition to the names imposed upon them. The enslavers, or "subscribers," sometimes listed their own names as well, consequently tying their historical identity to that of the enslaved, whom they described in terms that ranged from racist and derogatory to vicious personal attacks.

With this background in mind, a comparative analysis of fugitive slave advertisements can provide useful insight on otherwise erased and anonymized persons in history. In this paper, I will argue that something specific to the time of the Revolutionary War can be surmised by comparing two fugitive slave advertisements posted by men on either side of the divide - one by a patriot, Colonel Mordecai Gist, and one by a loyalist, Reverend John Agnew. I believe that the two runaways, Rachel and Mira, found or created opportunities of escape and resistance within the framework of the Revolutionary War, prompting the question: what happens when we recenter the narrative of the Revolutionary War around the survival acts of enslaved persons, rather than the glorification or condemnation of political allegiances?



THIRTY DOLLARS REWARD.

RAN AWAY from the ſubſcriber, at Trenton Ferry, a Mulatto woman named RACHEL, a lufty tall woman, and very big with child; had on a ſtriped lincey petticoat, and a large white cloth cloak; has with her a large bag of cloaths and a blanket: ſhe pretends that ſhe is free, as ſhe has been ſtolen by a ſoldier theſe two years from her maſter, and has been in camp. She took with her a boy called BOB, about ſix years old, her own child, and appears to be white without cloſe examination; the boy has on a brown cloth coat, oznabrigs overalls, ſhoes, and a hat with a gold band round it; he appears ſickly. Whoever takes up ſaid woman and boy and ſecures them in any gaol, and gives information to Mr. Joſeph Carlton, at the War-Office, Philadelphia, or the ſubſcriber at camp, ſhall have the above reward and reaſonable charges, paid by

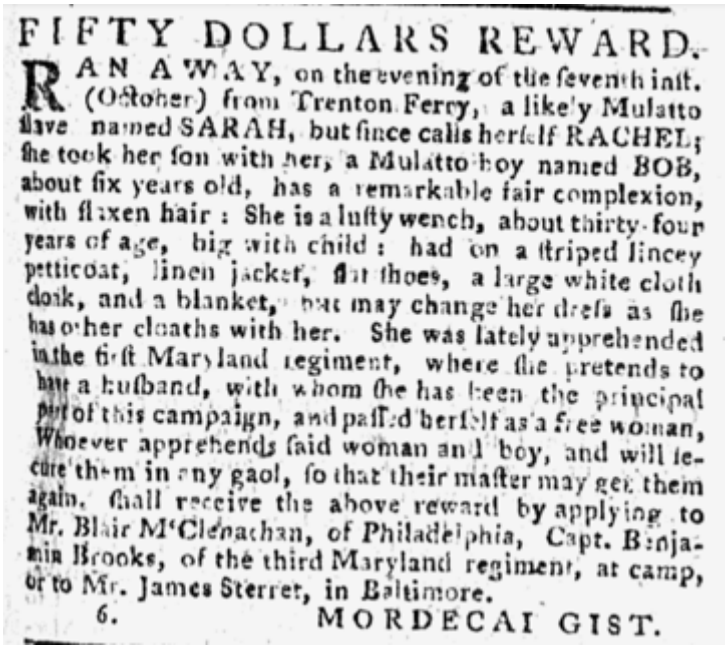
MORDECAI GIST, Col. 3d Reg. Com. 1ſt. M. B.

Oct. 6.

Figure 1: Mordecai Gist, "Thirty Dollars Reward. RAN AWAY from the subscriber," Pennsylvania Packet, 15 October 1778.

Fifty Dollars Reward. RAN-AWAY on the evening of the 7th inst. from Trenton ferry, a likely MULATTO slave, named Sarah, but since calls herself Rachael; She took her son with her, a Mulatto boy named Bob, about six years old, has a remarkable fair complexion, with flaxen hair: She is a lusty wench, about 34 years of age, big with child; had on a striped linsey petticoat, linen jacket, flat shoes, a large white cloth cloak, and a blanket, but may change her dress, as she has other cloaths with her. She was lately apprehended in the first Maryland regiment, where she pretends to have a husband, with whom she has been the principal part of this campaign, and passed herself as a free woman. Whoever apprehends said woman and boy, and will secure them in any gaol, so that their master may get them again, shall receive the above reward, by applying to Mr. Blair M'Clenachan, of Philadelphia, Capt. Benjamin Brooks, of the third Maryland regiment, at camp, or to Mr. James Sterret, in Baltimore. Oct. 18, 1778. MORDECAI GIST.

Figure 2: Mordecai Gist, "Fifty Dollars Reward. RAN-AWAY on the evening of the 7th," New-Jersey Gazette, October 18, 1778; transcribed in Freedom on the Move, https://database.freedomonthemove.org/advertisements/ce41de99-a9d9-4ffd-8bda-22aaf65e31b5



FIFTY DOLLARS REWARD.

RAN AWAY, on the evening of the seventh inst. (October) from Trenton Ferry, a likely Mulatto slave named SARAH, but since calls herself RACHEL; she took her son with her, a Mulatto boy named BOB, about six years old, has a remarkable fair complexion, with flaxen hair: She is a lusty wench, about thirty-four years of age, big with child: had on a striped linsey petticoat, linen jacket, flat shoes, a large white cloth cloak, and a blanket, but may change her dress as she has other cloaths with her. She was lately apprehended in the first Maryland regiment, where she pretends to have a husband, with whom she has been the principal part of this campaign, and passed herself as a free woman. Whoever apprehends said woman and boy, and will secure them in any gaol, so that their master may get them again, shall receive the above reward by applying to Mr. Blair M'Clenachan, of Philadelphia, Capt. Benjamin Brooks, of the third Maryland regiment, at camp, or to Mr. James Sterret, in Baltimore.

6. MORDECAI GIST.

Figure 3: Mordecai Gist, "FIFTY DOLLARS REWARD. RAN AWAY on the evening of the seventh," Pennsylvania Packet, October 24, 1778.

In the midst of the Revolutionary War (1775–1783),[2] on the evening of 7 October 1778, Rachel gathered as much clothing as she could, took her six-year-old son by the hand, and fled into the night. She succeeded in evading capture for at least seventeen days, even with a child and late-term pregnancy complicating her escape.[3] (Figs. 1, 2, 3) There are three known newspaper advertisements that posted reward for her capture: the first for thirty dollars in the Pennsylvania Packet;[4] the second for fifty dollars in the New-Jersey Gazette;[5] and the third for fifty dollars in the Pennsylvania Packet.[6] These advertisements may be the only record we have of Rachel, but together they provide a snapshot of the woman's life at the time of escape.

Consistent across all three advertisements, the subscriber cautions the reader that Rachel is a "likely mulatto slave"[7] and a "lusty wench"[8] who escaped from the first Maryland regiment, "pretends to have a husband,"[9] and has "passed herself as a free woman."[10] To this enslaver, she is a sly runaway, attractive but lascivious, dangerous in her provocative nature, certainly not to be trusted.[11] Rachel is described as having a "remarkable fair complexion, with flaxen hair,"[12] meaning her skin was lighter than the subscriber (and readers) may have expected of Black[13] people, her hair was possibly blond,[14] and one of her parents was white.[15] The clothing mentioned in the advertisement is indicative of the colder weather approaching and the foresight

she had for packing additional items. The blanket could have been used for warmth and shelter, especially after her infant was born.

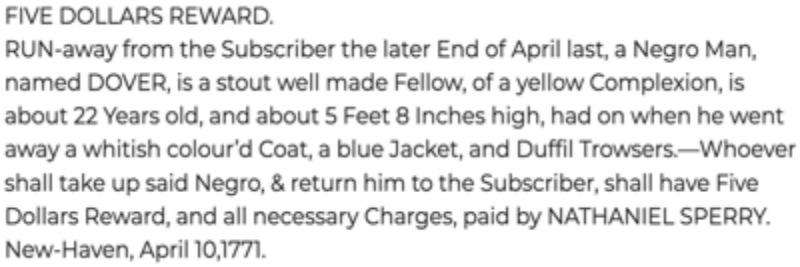
The first advertisement provides more information on the part of Rachel's family structure and Gist's blatant disregard for her identity as she conceived it. The Maryland State Archives[16] describe Rachel's husband as follows:

> The identity of Rachel's (or Sarah's) "pretend" husband, is unknown ("pretend" because slaves were not allowed to get married). The First Maryland Brigade, of which he was a part, had 60 black soldiers, and [Rachel's husband] could have been one of them, or he could have been white; interracial relationships were not unknown in the late eighteenth century. More likely is that Rachel could pass as white - Gist said she had "a remarkable fair complexion, with flaxen hair," and that she "passed herself as a free woman." Nothing of Rachel's fate, nor her husband's, is known.[17]

Interestingly, Gist did not name the husband in any of the advertisements, which suggests he did not know the husband's name. If he was a soldier in the same regiment as Gist, it seems unlikely that Gist would not have known the soldier's name. Perhaps Rachel met her husband while Gist was away from camp, or maybe they were together long before the war.[18]

In addition to the husband who "stole" Rachel away from Gist, it is important to remember that Rachel's family also included her son, Bob, and her unborn child, both of whom Rachel had to consider when choosing to flee and continually evade her enslaver and the military force behind him. As Charmaine A. Nelson[19] and others have argued, sexual assault by white enslavers upon the Black women they enslaved was ubiquitous. It is possible that Mordecai Gist was Bob's father, especially if Rachel's husband was Black, since Bob was also described by Gist as "mulatto."[20] Although disturbing, it is possible that Mordecai Gist sanctioned a brutal hunt for the woman he impregnated through assault, whom he was deluded into thinking he *owned*, to effectively force the mother and child away from whatever semblance of family they had made for themselves, so he could make them live under his control once more. These are the inhumane situations we must consider when looking at fugitive slave advertisements.

Although we do not know what labour Rachel was forced to provide during her enslavement, we can assume it was arduous and potentially dangerous for both pregnant mother and developing fetus. Whatever her life was like while enslaved to Gist, it made running away a *necessity*. The advertisements noted she was apprehended at the first Maryland regiment, though we do not know if that was her permanent place of enslavement or if she was traveling with Gist as he was placed in various military camps. Regardless, in her third trimester of pregnancy, with swollen ankles, back pain, and possibly early contractions hindering her, Rachel chose to run. Rachel may have known from her experience giving birth to Bob, or from knowledge passed to her by other enslaved women, that infants born around late summer to early autumn had a higher risk of sickness, infection, and death.[21] Perhaps the possibility of the child dying in birth seemed just as likely if she stayed or if she ran away, given the harsh environments to which enslaved



FIVE DOLLARS REWARD.
RUN-away from the Subscriber the later End of April last, a Negro Man, named DOVER, is a stout well made Fellow, of a yellow Complexion, is about 22 Years old, and about 5 Feet 8 Inches high, had on when he went away a whitish colour'd Coat, a blue Jacket, and Duffil Trowsers.—Whoever shall take up said Negro, & return him to the Subscriber, shall have Five Dollars Reward, and all necessary Charges, paid by NATHANIEL SPERRY.
New-Haven, April 10,1771.

Figure 4: Nathaniel Sperry, "RUN-away from the Subscriber," Connecticut Journal, 10 April 1771; transcribed in Freedom on the Move, https://database.freedomonthemove.org/advertisements/24e287f9-5dea-4cb2-89cf-ff4c350a2ced. Note the "FIVE DOLLAR REWARD."

mothers were subjected.[22] Regardless, escaping while heavily pregnant would have been an extraordinary task, prompting the question of if any collaborators, such as her husband, assisted in the escape. Another contributing factor to Rachel's choice to flee may have been the heart-sickening trauma of watching her six-year-old son forced into labour, and knowing her new baby, if he/she survived, would face the same fate. Children born to enslaved mothers were automatically considered the enslaver's property under the law, and were forced into labour as young as three years old.[23] The psychological toll this must have had on enslaved mothers cannot be underestimated and it very well could have been the impetus behind Rachel's risky flight in October.

The labour stolen from Rachel made her of high value to the subscriber, Mordecai Gist. From the first Pennsylvania Packet advertisement, Gist offered a thirty-dollar reward, which was already high compared to similar advertisements from the time period, some of which had rewards of just two dollars. (Figs. 4 and 5) By the tenth day of Rachel's escape, Gist increased the reward to fifty dollars and added additional military contacts: M. Joseph Carlton (first advertisement); Mr. Blair McClenachan, Captain Benjamin Brooks, and Mr. James Sterret (second and third advertisements). Each of these men, not to mention Gist himself, were posted in areas around Rachel's last known whereabouts. The final line of each advertisement was meant to entice the reader into aiding in the timely seizure of Rachel and her son. It reinforced the reward of fifty dollars,[24] specified the instructions - apprehend and secure the runaways - and the conditions for payment ("their master" must receive the runaways). Between the cost of running advertisements, offering up to fifty dollars in reward money, and calling upon the aid of men in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and both the first and third Maryland regiment camps, the subscriber clearly intended to use all of his resources to capture the runaways as quickly as possible.

FIFTEEN DOLLARS REWARD.

Ran-AWAY from me the Subscriber on Thursday the Twentieth of October Instant, a Negro Man named CAESAR, about 26 Years Old, five Feet four Inches high: had on when he went away, a Green Ratteen Coat, Red Everlasting Jacket, White Linnen Breeches, Blue Yam Stockings, he has a Mark or Scar over one of his Eyes, the little Finger of his left Hand is a little crooked by the Cut of a Sickle; it is suspected that some one assisted him by changing Cloaths or gave him a pass: Whoever will take up said Negro and return him to me, or confine him to any of his Majesty's Goals, so that he may be return'd to me, shall have the above Reward and all necessary Charges paid by SIMEON HAZELTINE. Hardwick, October 21, 1774.

Reprints: Boston Gazette, 10-31-1774; 11-07-1774; 01-16-1775. This notice was also printed in the Essex Gazette, 10-18 to 10-25-1774; 10-25 to 11-01-1774; 11-1 to 11-08-1774.

Boston Gazette, 2-06-1775 (Supplement).

RANAWAY on Thursday last, from her Master Capt. Nathaniel Patten, a Negro Woman, named Dillar, about 30 Years of Age: She carried off with her a Child, about 5 Years of Age, she had on homespun Clothes, and took with her two Callico and one Cambleteen Gown:—Whoever will return said Negroes to their Master at New Boston, shall have TWO DOLLARS Reward.—

All Persons are cautioned against harbouring, concealing, or carrying off said Negroes, as they would avoid the Penalty of the Law.

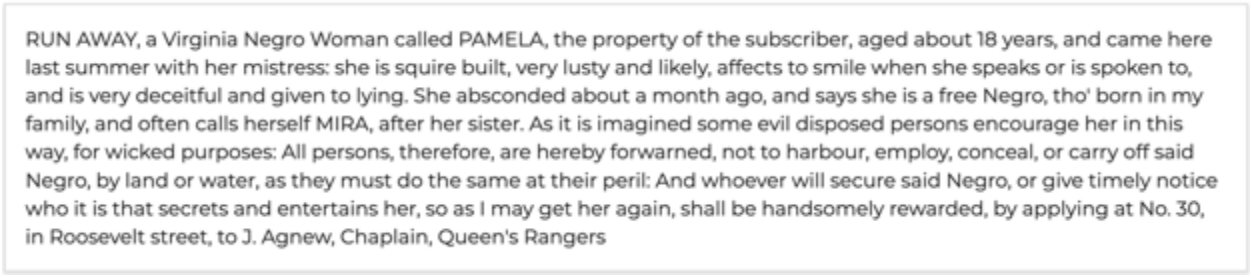
Figure 5: Simeon Hazeltine, "Ran-AWAY from me," The Boston Gazette, October 21, 1774; (Supplement) Nathaniel Patten, "RANAWAY on Thursday last," Boston Gazette, 6 February 1775, transcribed in Freedom on the Move, https://database.freedomonthemove.org/advertisements/4ea2ee1e-0e0c-4a0f-8e55-1f0f5f03a88c

Note the fifteen-dollar reward for the runaway male and the *two- dollar* reward for both mother and child in the supplementary advertisement.


Figures 6 (left) and 7 (right): Mordecai Gist (1774) by Charles Willson Peale, in the collection of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco (CA) and George Washington as Colonel in the Virginia Regiment (1772) by Charles Willson Peale, in the Washington-Curtis-Lee Collection (VA).

Note the similar gesture of the right hand inside the breast pocket, aligning these two high-ranking officials proudly dressed in their military uniforms.

A brief look into the life of Mordecai Gist allows us to better understand the life Rachel and her son may have had under his control. Being a white man of high military rank, there is a plethora of documentation on Brigadier-General Mordecai Gist, including a portrait by Charles Willson Peale, the artist well known for his portraits of George Washington.[25] (Figs. 6 and 7) No fewer than nineteen correspondences between Gist and Washington are preserved in the National Archives, with at least one thread of correspondence between the two published in the Gazette of the United States in 1791.[26] At the time of Rachel's escape in 1778, Gist had recently been promoted to colonel and was working under George Washington's command. Gist moved around frequently to various military camps in Maryland and fought in several battles, such as the Battle of Brandywine in 1777 in Pennsylvania.[27] Uncharacteristic for his diligent military record, while the Continental Army was at Valley Forge for the winter of 1777–1778, "Gist returned home and married Mary 'Polly' Sterrett on 22 January 1778,"[28] who became gravely ill within the next year and passed soon after giving birth to their son, Independent (born January 1779).[29] This information is pertinent to the life of Rachel for three reasons: one, Gist was possibly home with this ailing wife near the time Rachel absconded; two, Rachel may have been forced into pregnancy to be a wet nurse for Mary's child;[30] and three, knowing of Gist's attraction to the supposedly "lusty" Rachel, in addition to the stress of serious illness whilst pregnant, Mary may have caused Rachel even more pain by directing her resentment for her husband toward Rachel.[31] The added labour, stress, and abuse Rachel likely faced in this environment may have compelled her to flee as soon as possible.



RUN AWAY, a Virginia Negro Woman called PAMELA, the property of the subscriber, aged about 18 years, and came here last summer with her mistress: she is squire built, very lusty and likely, affects to smile when she speaks or is spoken to, and is very deceitful and given to lying. She absconded about a month ago, and says she is a free Negro, tho' born in my family, and often calls herself MIRA, after her sister. As it is imagined some evil disposed persons encourage her in this way, for wicked purposes: All persons, therefore, are hereby forwarned, not to harbour, employ, conceal, or carry off said Negro, by land or water, as they must do the same at their peril: And whoever will secure said Negro, or give timely notice who it is that secrets and entertains her, so as I may get her again, shall be handsomely rewarded, by applying at No. 30, in Roosevelt street, to J. Agnew, Chaplain, Queen's Rangers

Figure 8: John Agnew, "RUN AWAY, a Virginia Negro Woman called PAMELA," Royal Gazette, August 23, 1780.

Two years after Rachel and her child escaped from a leader of the Continental Army, an advertisement in the Royal Gazette was placed by enslaver John Agnew to recapture "A Virginia Negro Woman called PAMELA."[32] (Fig. 8) There are multiple similarities between the advertisements placed about Rachel and the descriptions used for Pamela. For one, both runaway women resisted the erasure of their individual identity by going by their true names instead of those imposed upon them by the subscribers ("Sarah" and "Pamela" respectively). Secondly, they ran away around a similar time of year - October for Rachel, August (possibly late July) for Mira. Thirdly, both women were described as "lusty" and "likely" by the enslavers. Lastly, each professed their freedom. Rachel claimed her human right to have her own family (children and a husband) and practiced "passing" as a white woman, and Mira (as noted by her enslaver) "says she is a free Negro, tho' born in my family."[33] It is possible that Mira was enslaved by someone else related to John Agnew before she was brought to him "with her mistress" [34] the previous summer.[35] It seems likely that Mira planned to return to the location from which she had been forcibly removed, perhaps to find her sister or other familial connections from whom she was taken. The fact that she "often [called] herself MIRA, after her sister" was a strong example of resistance and an assertion of her kinship bonds. Mira chose to honour her sister and retain family ties in opposition to the unjust laws that forced their separation.

The differences between Rachel and Mira's circumstances as described by the advertisements include the ages of the runaways, accusations of deceit, suggestions of innocence, and threats of danger. While Rachel was pregnant in her mid-thirties, Mira was just eighteen years old with a sister and a white woman (described as her "mistress") who had previously enslaved her. Rachel was not directly accused of deceit (though Gist's description of her "passing" as a white woman certainly implies deceit), but Agnew specifically claimed that Mira was "very deceitful and given to lying."[36] Lying and feigning amusement, pleasure, and docility by "[affecting] to smile"[37] was a tactic of survival employed by many enslaved persons,[38] especially by women who worked in the home in close proximity to the enslaver, as Mira may have. Interestingly, while John Agnew believed Mira capable of purposeful deceit, he did not believe her to have the will or intelligence to run away on her own: "[I]t is imagined some evil disposed persons encourage her in this way, for wicked purposes."[39] Because of the "evil" persons supposedly with her, Agnew also cautioned the public against aiding or concealing Mira, as they would do so "at their peril," [40] meaning they were at risk of harm by those with Mira or,

perhaps, by Agnew himself. Agnew concluded the advertisement by encouraging people to return Mira to him as soon as possible, ensuring that they would be "handsomely rewarded."[41]

By looking into the enslaver, John Agnew, we can learn more about Mira's circumstances. As listed in the advertisement, "J. Agnew" was the chaplain for the Queen's Rangers, a loyalist regiment of the British army.[42] As rector, he had a large estate in Nansemond County, Virginia, where he lived on a sizeable income with his wife, Teresa, herself quite wealthy, and had "one of the most flourishing estates on the lower James River."[43] His property included fields of thriving crops, much livestock, and fifty-one enslaved people.[44] Agnew was a passionate loyalist who unwaveringly supported the British monarchy throughout his life, doing "everything he could both in his public and private capacity to persuade [his] parishioners to continue firm in their loyalty to the king and mother country."[45] As can be imagined, tensions grew as the Revolutionary War began, and the Virginians did not approve of John Agnew's loyalist activities. He was routinely harassed, abused, and shunned by the increasingly anti-loyalist public, to the point where the enslaved people forced to associate with him were endangered:

> [John Agnew's] tormentors posted notices in public places with the most violent threats against his life and desperadoes waylaid and chased him. Armed mobs surrounded his house at night, shot at his slaves, broke open his doors, threatened to burn his house, and insulted his wife.[46]

By 1776 - three years before Mira was forced to live on Agnew's estate - Agnew was imprisoned by the Nansemond Court of Commissioners and convicted of "conduct inimical to the liberties of America."[47] If any semblance of sentimentality remains for John Agnew and his circumstances, let it be known that while he was confined in a guard house awaiting trial, he protested that he was initially "with 'sick and distempered Negroes' without bedding, fire, or food, but after friends complained they removed [Agnew] to the county jail."[48] Clearly, this enslaver was shocked at being associated with enslaved persons, who were probably no happier to be locked up with an enslaver known for his reckless actions. Over the next few years, his life was a tumultuous series of events where he was variously imprisoned, released, hired as chaplain; moved from Virginia, to New York, to Pennsylvania, to the Carolinas; lost all of his enslaved people and estate, escaped imprisonment, was on the run and hid in the woods for several days; was captured by the French; and nearly given freedom through a prisoner exchange, only to be blocked by George Washington, who decided that he was " 'too dangerous for the cause of France or America' to be released, paroled, or exchanged."[49]

To return to Mira and her escape, the advertisement was placed in the Royal Gazette on 23 August 1780. More research will have to be conducted to sort out the details, but it seems that from mid-1779 through late-1780, John Agnew lived in New York and carried out some duties for the Church with other loyalist parishioners.[50] He apparently reacquired enslaved persons, at least Mira and perhaps others, and sold his estate in Virginia.[51] At some point, perhaps when the

reverend was out performing a baptism, memorial service, or preaching his pro-monarchy doctrine to a cantankerous public, Mira seized her opportunity and escaped. Agnew published the advertisement for her recapture in the New York paper, but within a couple months he and his wife had moved to Charleston, South Carolina, and soon after that he was captured by the French.[52] What became of Mira is not known. More research will have to be conducted to see if Mira was listed in John Agnew's will or other documents after 1780. However, it seems unlikely that he was able to recapture her, given his own imprisonment.

What was the Revolutionary War to the enslaved? What possible modes of resistance and opportunities for escape were people able to find, or create, amongst the turmoil? This brief study of advertisements for two runaways from enslavers on opposite sides of the political divide of the Revolutionary War allows us to imagine the lives of Rachel and Mira, thereby refocusing the narrative of the war. It did not matter to them if their enslaver was a patriot or a loyalist - they were still enslaved. When they ran away, they were both sought after with advertisements that attacked their characters and labeled them as missing property. Rachel had the challenge of running from a high-ranking patriot on his "home turf," while Mira had the relative advantage of running from a loyalist who had less resources and power than the Brigadier-General Mordecai Gist. Conversely, it seems that Rachel had assistance somehow in her escape, and was also much lighter-skinned than Mira may have been, affording Rachel the ability to convincingly act the part of a free white woman. What brought the two together most of all was their shared resolve to resist through escape (especially remarkable considering far more men escaped than women during enslavement),[53] their ability to find opportunity in the chaos created by the political climate of the Revolutionary War, and the hope that they got away.

ENDNOTES

[1] Graham White and Shane White, "Slave Hair and African American Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," Journal of Southern History, vol. 61, no. 1 (February 1995), p. 49.

[2] "American Revolution History & Time of the Revolutionary War," Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum (date of last access 20 September 2023) https://www.bostonteapartyship.com/american-revolution.

[3] We know this because the advertisements list October 7 as the date Rachel absconded and the last found advertisement was printed on 24 October 1778.

[4] Mordecai Gist, "Thirty Dollars Reward. RAN AWAY from the subscriber," Pennsylvania Packet, 15 October 1778; Daniel Blattau, "Mordecai Gist, MSA SC 3520-15852," Archives of Maryland (Biographical Series) (2013), n. 9 (date of last access 20 September 2023) https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc3500/sc3520/015800/015852/html/15852bio.html. Pennsylvania Packet was a tri-weekly general advertiser that ran from 1777–1783 in Lancaster and Philadelphia, PA; See Library of Congress, Washington, DC, for more https://lccn.loc.gov/sn83021127.

[5] Mordecai Gist, "Fifty Dollars Reward. RAN-AWAY on the evening of the 7th," New-Jersey Gazette (Burlington, NJ), Sunday, 18 October 1778; transcribed in Freedom on the Move, (date of last access 17 September 2023) https://fotm.link/rtev9zEkUUDzFdo4CBmgsD. New-Jersey Gazette was a weekly publication that ran from 1777–1786, published in Burlington, New Jersey. From 4 March 1778–27 November 1786, it was published in Trenton, NJ, which falls within the time Mordecai Gist placed the advertisement (Fig. 2). For more, see Library of Congress, Washington, DC https://lccn.loc.gov/sn83025471.

[6] Mordecai Gist, "FIFTY DOLLARS REWARD. RAN AWAY on the evening of the seventh," Pennsylvania Packet, 24 October 1778; Daniel Blattau, "Mordecai Gist, MSA SC 3520-15852," Archives of Maryland Biographical Series, 2013, no. 9 (date of last access 20 September 2023) https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc3500/sc3520/015800/015852/html/15852bio.html.

[7] Gist, "Fifty Dollars Reward," New-Jersey Gazette, 18 October 1778; Gist, "FIFTY DOLLARS REWARD," Pennsylvania Packet, 24 October 1778.
[8] Gist, "Fifty Dollars Reward," New-Jersey Gazette, 18 October 1778; Gist, "FIFTY DOLLARS REWARD," Pennsylvania Packet, 24 October 1778.
[9] Gist, "Fifty Dollars Reward," New-Jersey Gazette, 18 October 1778; Gist, "FIFTY DOLLARS REWARD," Pennsylvania Packet, 24 October 1778
[10] Gist, "FIFTY DOLLARS REWARD," Pennsylvania Packet, 24 October 1778.
[11] The contradictory ways in which enslavers describe Black women in this period reminds me of the concept of the "Black Venus" as explored by Tracy Denean Sharpley-Whiting. I would like to find more contemporaneous examples of this happening in the Maryland-Virginia area before ascribing the same theories. See Tracy Denean Sharpley-Whiting, Black Venus: Sexualized Savages, Primal Fears, and Primitive Narratives in French (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999).
[12] Gist, "Fifty Dollars Reward," New-Jersey Gazette.
[13] In this paper, I capitalize the "B" in "Black" when referring to the racialized category because I believe it is the right thing to do. I have become a scholar during the Black Lives Matter movement, which reached a fever pitch in 2020 after the murder of George Floyd. When I see the "B" in "Black" capitalized, I am reminded of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Sandra Bland, Tamir Rice, and Trayvon Martin, and the painful knowledge that the list of Black adults *and children* murdered, usually by white people, continues to grow. Language is constantly evolving. I will continue to adjust my writing in an effort to be respectful and honour the spaces to which I am granted access to contribute, such as within this publication, Chrysalis. For more, visit "Say Every Name," a site that is self-described as a "work in progress highlighting Black people killed by U.S. law enforcement, civilians, [and] unknown" ("#Say Their Names," Say Their Names [date of last access 21 November 2023] https://sayevery.name/). Also see Coleman, Nancy, "Why We're Capitalizing Black," New York Times, 5 July 2020 (date of last access 21 November 2023) https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/05/insider/capitalized-black.html.
[14] The description of Rachel's hair as "flaxen" is particularly interesting because of the associations of flax with enslavement, both as a crop and as a product to create clothing often used to clothe enslaved persons. More research would need to be done to connect these strings, but if done it may add to scholarship about "slave hair" such as: Shane White and Graham White, "Slave Hair and African American Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," Journal of Southern History, vol. 61, no. 1 (1995): pp. 45–76.
[15] The term "mulatto" was used to describe a biracial person with one Black parent and one white parent. For more on dated racial terminology, see Charmaine A. Nelson, "A 'Tone of Voice Peculiar to New-England': Fugitive Slave Advertisements and the Heterogeneity of Enslaved People of African Descent in Eighteenth-Century Quebec." Current Anthropology, vol. 61, no. S22 (October 2020), p. S310 https://doi.org/10.1086/709976 and Charmaine A. Nelson, "Slave Advertisements," Black Subjects in Historical and Popular Culture (Art History 390A/697S), course lecture, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Amherst, MA, 19 September 2023.
[16] The Maryland State Archives lead a project called "Finding the Maryland 400," which aims to uncover the identities of four hundred ill-prepared American soldiers who were ordered to battle the British, resulting in mass casualties; for more information, see "About," Finding the Maryland 400 (date of last access 20 September 2023) https://msamaryland400.com/about/.
[17] "Maryland's African American Troops," Finding the Maryland 400, 26 February 2015 (date of last access 20 September 2023) https://msamaryland400.com/2015/02/26/marylands-african-american-troops/. See also Dorothy Roberts, Killing the Black Body (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), p. 28 for more on marriages between enslaved persons not being legally recognized or respected.
[18] More primary source research may reveal more about Rachel, such as when and how she became enslaved to Gist. Perhaps she lived with her husband at a different enslaver's estate before being sold to Gist. Until more research can be done, this is all speculation.
[19] Nelson, "Slave Advertisements."
[20] See Charmaine A. Nelson, "Our Unspoken Discomfort with Interracial Relationships: Canada's History of Slavery has had a profound impact on how we view cross-racial couples," The Walrus, 1 October 2020 (date of last access 7 November 2023) https://thewalrus.ca/our-unspoken-discomfort-with-interracial-relationships/.
[21] Roberts, Killing the Black Body, p. 42.
[22] "Slaveholders forced women to lie face down in a depression in the ground while they were whipped," punishing the woman they saw as insolent property while, supposedly, "protecting" the reproductive *product* that was legally their future labour force. See Roberts, Killing the Black Body, p. 39.
[23] Nelson, "Slave Advertisements." For more information on the subject of children born into slavery, see "Prenatal Property" (p. 33) in Killing the Black Body by Dorothy Roberts.

[24] Gist, "Fifty Dollars Reward," New-Jersey Gazette; Gist, "FIFTY DOLLARS REWARD," Pennsylvania Packet.
[25] William Kloss, "Treasures from the National Museum of American Art: Artist Charles Willison Peale," National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution Press (1985), (Washington, D.C.) (date of last access 20 September 2023) https://americanart.si.edu/artist/charles-willson-peale-3720. See also Charles Willson Peale, Mordecai Gist, 1774, oil on canvas, 1979.7.79, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, San Francisco, CA (date of last access 20 September 2023) https://www.famsf.org/artworks/mordecai-gist.
[26] Mordecai Gist, "The Address of the Grand-Master," Gazette of the United States: A National Paper (Philadelphia, PA) vol. 3, no. 10, Wednesday, 1 June 1791, p. 37; Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC (date of last access 20 September 2023) https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030483/1791-06-01/ed-1/seq-1/.
[27] Harry Schenawolf, "General Mordecai Gist and the Maryland Line Were Among the Best Troops in Washington's Army," Revolutionary War Journal, published online 8 July 2019 (date of last access 20 September 2023) https://revolutionarywarjournal.com/general-mordecai-gist-and-the-maryland-line-macaronis-who-were-among-the-best-in-the-continental-army/.
[28] It is possible that Mary Sterrett was related somehow to Mr. James Sterret, who was listed as a contact person in the second and third advertisements, although the spelling of the last name is slightly different. More research would have to be done to find any concrete link and determine what this reveals about the relationships between Rachel's enslavers.
[29] Daniel Blattau, "Mordecai Gist, MSA SC 3520-15852," Archives of Maryland (Biographical Series) (2013), (date of last access 20 September 2023) https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc3500/sc3520/015800/015852/html/15852bio.html.
[30] For more on enslaved wet nurses, see Stephanie E. Jones-Rogers, "Wet Nurses for Sale or Hire," They Were Her Property: White Women as Slave Owners in the American South (Yale University Press, 2019) pp. 101-122.
[31] Shane White and Graham White, "Slave Hair and African American Culture," p. 49: "[Some] eighteenth-century owners did resort to hair cropping, or shaving the head, as a form of punishment." See also Charmaine A. Nelson, "James Hakewill's *Picturesque Tour*: Representing life on Nineteenth-Century Jamaican sugar plantations," Slavery, Geography, and Empire in Nineteenth-Century Marine Landscapes of Montreal and Jamaica (London, UK: Routledge/Taylor & Francis, June 2016), p. 306: "Although the white woman's husband was engaged in a coercive sexual relationship with the slave and according to Bickell the slave could not resist his 'entreaties and presents,' the jealous white wife was in the habit of punishing [the slave] severely 'with her own hand.'" See also, generally, Stephanie Jones-Rogers, They Were Her Property: White Women as Slave Owners in the American South (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2020).
[32] John Agnew, "RUN AWAY, a Virginia Negro Woman called PAMELA," Royal Gazette (New York, NY), Wednesday, 23 August 1780; transcribed in Freedom on the Move (date of last access 17 September 2023) https://fotm.link/vUpnA5huhgaQBb3EjLqWxF. Royal Gazette was a semi-weekly newspaper published in New York, N.Y., from 1777-1783; for more, see Library of Congress, Washington, DC https://lccn.loc.gov/sn83030850.
[33] Agnew, "RUN AWAY, a Virginia Negro Woman called PAMELA," The Royal Gazette.
[34] Agnew, "RUN AWAY, a Virginia Negro Woman called PAMELA," The Royal Gazette.
[35] Note Agnew's wording: "[Mira] came here last summer." Agnew suggested Mira had agency, although we know that enslaved people had no say on where they were brought or to whom they were sold. John Agnew, "RUN AWAY, a Virginia Negro Woman called PAMELA," Royal Gazette.
[36] Agnew, "RUN AWAY, a Virginia Negro Woman called PAMELA," Royal Gazette.
[37] Agnew, "RUN AWAY, a Virginia Negro Woman called PAMELA," Royal Gazette.
[38] Nelson, "Slave Advertisements."
[39] Agnew, "RUN AWAY, a Virginia Negro Woman called PAMELA," Royal Gazette. More could be written here about the "wicked purposes" he imagines await her outside of his control.
[40] Agnew, "RUN AWAY, a Virginia Negro Woman called PAMELA," The Royal Gazette.
[41] Agnew, "RUN AWAY, a Virginia Negro Woman called PAMELA," Royal Gazette.
[42] Otto Lohrenz, "Impassioned Virginia Loyalist and New Brunswick Pioneer: The Reverend John Agnew." Anglican and Episcopal History, vol. 76, no. 1 (2007), p. 46 http://www.jstor.org/stable/42613039.
[43] Lohrenz, "John Agnew," p. 36.
[44] Lohrenz, "John Agnew," pp. 36, 37. I have listed enslaved persons amongst his "property" as a deliberate reminder that enslaved persons were considered property in this time period.
[45] Lohrenz, "John Agnew," p. 37.
[46] Lohrenz, "John Agnew," pp. 38, 39.
[47] Lohrenz, "John Agnew," p. 41.

[48] Lohrenz, “John Agnew,” p. 41. The quoted phrase within the excerpt from Lohrenz was written by Agnew in his formal complaints to the claims commissioners (see note 28, p. 41).
[49] Lohrenz, “John Agnew,” pp. 42–49, esp. 48.
[50] Lohrenz, “John Agnew,” pp. 45, 46.
[51] Lohrenz, “John Agnew,” pp. 45, 46.
[52] Lohrenz, “John Agnew,” p. 47.
[53] Nelson, “Slave Advertisements.”

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Figure 1: Mordecai Gist, “Thirty Dollars Reward. RAN AWAY from the subscriber,” Pennsylvania Packet, 15 October 1778.

Figure 2: Mordecai Gist, “Fifty Dollars Reward. RAN-AWAY on the evening of the 7th,” New-Jersey Gazette, 18 October 1778.

Figure 3: Mordecai Gist, “FIFTY DOLLARS REWARD. RAN AWAY on the evening of the seventh,” Pennsylvania Packet, 24 October 1778.

Figure 4: Nathaniel Sperry, “RUN-away from the Subscriber,” Connecticut Journal, 10 April 1771.

Figure 5: Simeon Hazeltine, “Ran-AWAY from me,” Boston Gazette, October 21, 1774; (Supplement) Nathaniel Patten, “RANAWAY on Thursday last,” Boston Gazette, 6 February 1775.

Figures 6: Mordecai Gist (1774) by Charles Willson Peale, in the collection of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, CA.

Figure 7: George Washington as Colonel in the Virginia Regiment (1772) by Charles Willson Peale, in the Washington-Curtis-Lee Collection, VA.

Figure 8: John Agnew, “RUN AWAY, a Virginia Negro Woman called PAMELA,” Royal Gazette, 23 August 1780.