

troubles, you could not hire a servant or slave for love or money, so that unless robust enough to cut wood, to go to mill, to work at the hoe, etc., you must starve, or board in some family where they both fleece and half starve you. There is no set price upon corn, wheat and provisions, so they take advantage of the necessities of strangers, who are thus obliged to purchase some slaves and land. This of course draws us all into the original sin and curse of the country of purchasing slaves, and this is the reason we have no merchants, traders, or artificers of any sort but what become planters in a short time.

A common labourer, white or black, if you can be so much favoured as to hire one, is a shilling sterling or fifteen pence currency per day; a bungling

carpenter two shillings or two shillings and six-pence per day; besides diet and lodging. That is, for a lazy fellow to get wood and water, £19. 16. 3, current per annum; add to this seven or eight pounds more and you have a slave for life.

## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Was Peter Fontaine's answer defensive in tone?
2. Did he answer his brother with theological, legal, or pragmatic reasons for slavery? What were the reasons?
3. Who or what does he blame for the continuation of slavery?

## NEWSPAPERS

### Ads for Runaway Servants and Slaves (1733–72)

*Both slavery and freedom thrived in colonial America. Desire for the latter meant that people constantly sought opportunities to escape the former. As the number of indentured servants and slaves rose, so too did the number of runaways. Many such runaways, or fugitives, were soon caught, or they voluntarily returned to their masters. If they did not do so, and if the owners believed the expense and effort (and indeed the servants or slaves) worthwhile, then the owners published advertisements in the provincial newspapers. These ads often provided physical descriptions of the runaways, accounts of what kind of work these laborers performed, and why their masters believed they ran away. Such observations can reveal much about the society and individuals, specifically about masters and servants, and about the differences in such working relationships over time and place.*

From Lathan A. Windley, comp., *Runaway Slave Advertisements: A Documentary History from the 1730s to 1790*. Volume 2: *Maryland* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983), pp. 22–23, 26–27, 41–42, 93–94, and Volume 3: *South Carolina*, pp. 6–7, 81, 158–59, 220. Billy G. Smith and Richard Wojtowicz, eds., *Blacks Who Stole Themselves: Advertisements for Runaways in the Pennsylvania Gazette, 1728–1790* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1989), pp. 54–55. [Editorial insertions appear in brackets—Ed.]

***South-Carolina Gazette***  
**(Whitemarsh), April 28 to**  
**May 5, 1733.**

Run away three Weeks ago, a Negro Man named Hampshire, belonging to Mrs. Elizabeth Bampfild. Whoever will bring the said Negro to his Mistress, shall have 40 s. Reward, and if taken out of the Town, any reasonable Charge as the Law allows. The aforesaid Negro is to be sold, as is another young Fellow named Stafford, who has been bred a Butcher, and a Negro Woman that is a very good Cook, Washer, and understanding any Sort of Houshold [sic] Work. Enquire of

Elizabeth Bampfild.

***South-Carolina Gazette***  
**(Whitemarsh), May 26 to**  
**June 2, 1733.**

Run away the 14<sup>th</sup> of last month, a Mustee Wench, that may be taken for an Indian, about 20 Years of Age, speaks good English, and can do anything about House, as spinning, carding, needle-work &c. [S]he is a short, well sett, fat Wench, and may be taken to be a Free Wench, and has her Tongue at Pleasure, and her Back will shew the Marks of her former Misdeeds. Whoever will bring the said Wench to James Mackewn, at Stono, shall have 5 l. Reward.

***South-Carolina Gazette***  
**(Timothy), February 22 to**  
**February 29, 1748.**

Run-away on the 20<sup>th</sup> Inst. from Silas Parvin, at Cobausey in New-Jersey, a very lusty Negro Man named Sampson, aged about 58 Years, and has some mixture of Indian Blood in him, he is Hip shot and goes very Lame. He has taken with him a Boy about 12 or 14 Years of Age named Sam, who was born of an Indian Woman, and looks much like an Indian only his Hair. They were both well Cloathed, only

the Boy is barefoot, they have taken with them a gun and Ammunition, and two Ruggs. They both talk Indian very well, and it is likely have dress'd themselves in an Indian Dress, and gone towards Carolina. Whoever secures the said Slaves so that their Master may have them again, or delivers them to Thomas Shute in Charles-Town, shall have THIRTY POUNDS Reward, from the said Shute or

Silas Parvin.

***Annapolis Maryland Gazette,***  
**March 20, 1755.**

***Ten Pistoles Reward.***

Kent County, Maryland, March 19, 1755.

Whereas there were several Advertisements, (some of which were printed, and others of the same Signification written), dispers'd through this Province, describing, and offering a Reward of Two Pistoles, &c. for taking up a Servant Man, named James Francis, and a Mulatto Man Slave call'd Toby, both belonging to the Subscriber, and ran away on the 11<sup>th</sup> Instant: And whereas it has been discover'd since the Publishing of the said Advertisements, that they carried with them many more Things than is therein described, I do hereby again and farther give Notice, that the white Man, James Francis, is aged about 21 Years, his Stature near five Feet and an half, slender bodied, with a smooth Face, almost beardless, born in England, and bred a Farmer. The Mulatto is a lusty, well-set Country born Slave, with a great Nose, wide Nostrils, full mouth'd, many Pimples in his Face, very slow in Speech, he is a tolerable good Cooper and House-Carpenter, and no doubt will endeavour to pass for a Free-Man: Each hath a Felt Hat, Country Cloth Vest and Breeches, and Yarn Stockings; one of them has a light colour'd loose Coat of Whitney or Duffel: the white Man a dark close bodied Coat, a striped short Vest of Everlasting, another of blue Fearnothering, with other Cloaths. The Slave has also many other more valuable Garments; they took with them likewise a Gun, Powder and Shot, and are suppos'd either to cross, or go down the Bay in a Pettiauger.

Whoever brings the said Servant and Slave to the Subscriber on the Mouth of Chester River, or to Thomas Ringgold at Chester-Town, shall have for a Reward Ten Pistoles, and all reasonable Charges in taking and securing the said Servant and Slave, paid by

James Ringgold.

That this Slave shou'd ran away and attempt getting his Liberty, is very alarming, as he has been always too kindly used, if any Thing, by his Master, and one in whom his Master has put great Confidence, and depended on him to overlook the rest of his Slaves, and he had no kind of Provocation to go off. It seems to be the Interest, at least of every Gentleman that has Slaves, to be active in the beginning of these Attempts, for whilst we have the French such near Neighbours, we shall not have the least Security in that kind of Property. I should be greatly obliged to any Gentleman that shall hear of these Fellows, to endeavour to get certain Intelligence which Way they have taken, and to inform me of it by Express, and also to employ some active Person or Persons immediately to take their Track and pursue them and secure them, and I will thankfully acknowledge the Favour, and immediately answer the Expence attending it.

Thomas Ringgold.

### *Annapolis Maryland Gazette,* November 11, 1756.

Ran away on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October last, from the Subscriber, living near George-Town on Rock-Creek, in Frederick County, a Mulatto Woman Slave, named Kate, who formerly belonged to Mr. Benjamin Lane in Anne-Arundel County, and bought of him last June; she is a pert pallaverer, of a middle Size, about 30 Years old. She took with her a small Black Horse, branded on the near Buttock with a large S: And as she is pretty well dressed may sometimes pass for a free Woman where she is not known to be otherwise. It is supposed she is secreted by a Mulatto Slave called Jemmy (a Carpenter by Trade), belonging to Mr. Thomas Sprigg, on West-River, with the Assistance and Contrivance of some other

Slaves in the neighbourhood where she was bought, who (it seems she has bragg'd) had promised to conceal her whenever she would run away from me. I understand she has been a great Rambler, and is well known in Calvert and Anne-Arundel Counties, besides other Parts of the Country. She may indulge herself a little in visiting her old Acquaintance; but it is most probable she will spend the greater Part of her Time with or near wherever the aforesaid Mulatto Slave of Mr. Sprigg's may be at Work.

Whoever brings the said Wench to the Subscriber, shall have Two Pistoles for their Trouble, besides a good Reward if they discover the Persons that harbour her, so that they may be brought to Justice.

Henry Threlkeld.

### *South-Carolina Gazette* (Timothy), October 13, 1757.

Run away from the Subscriber, at Wando, a negro woman named KATE, about 32 years old, of a yellowish complexion, hollow jaw'd, a pouting look, all her upper fore-teeth gone, and speaks good English, formerly belong'd to Mrs. L'Escott, and afterwards to Paul Villepontoux, of whom she was purchased. She is well known in Charles-Town, and it's supposed has changed her name and is harboured there (as she formerly was for 23 months together); and 'tis probable she will get into some of the negro washing-houses or kitchens, to be employ'd in them, and say she belongs to Mr. Villepontoux aforesaid. She is 7 months gone with child; and carried with her, her son Billy (a squat well-set boy about 13 years of age, who is apt to stutter when spoke smartly to), and her daughter Alce [*sic?*] (a girl about 5 years old, with a mark in her forehead and another somewhere about her breast, occasioned by accidental burns, and silver drops in her ears). She will no doubt change her dress, but had on when she went away, a blue jacket (the sleeves scoloped) and petticoat. As this inhuman creature, when she went away, left myself extreme ill in one bed, her mistress in another, and two of my children, not one

able to help the other, she must be conscious of some very atrocious crime: I therefore humbly request every friend and acquaintance I have, in town and country, to use their utmost endeavours, in taking and delivering the said wench and children to me, or to the warden of the work-house; hereby promising a reward of 10 l. for so doing, and 20 l. to whoever will prove where she is harboured or employed.

Stephen Hartley.

**Annapolis Maryland Gazette,  
August 20, 1761.**

**Fairfax County (Virginia)  
August 11, 1761.**

Ran away from a Plantation of the Subscriber's, on Dogue-Run in Fairfax, on Sunday the 9<sup>th</sup> Instant, the following Negroes, viz.

Peres, 35 or 40 Years of Age, a well-set Fellow, of about 5 Feet 8 Inches high, yellowish Complexion, with a very full round Face, and full black Beard, his Speech is something slow and broken, but not in so great a Degree as to render him remarkable. He had on when he went away, a dark colour'd Cloth Coat, a white Linen Waist-coat, white Breeches and white Stockings.

Jack, 30 Years (or thereabouts) old, a slim, black, well made Fellow, of near 6 Feet high, a small Face, with Cuts down each Cheek, being his Country Marks, his Feet are large (or long) for he requires a great Shoe. The Clothing he went off in cannot be well ascertained, but it is thought in his common working Dress, such as Cotton Waistcoat (of which he had a new One) and Breeches, and Osnabrig Shirt.

Neptune, aged 25 or 30, well-set, and of about 5 Feet 8 or 9 Inches high, thin jaw'd, his Teeth stragling and fil'd sharp, his Back, if rightly remember'd, has many small Marks or Dots running from both Shoulders down to his Waistband, and his Head was close shaved: Had on a Cotton Waistcoat, black or dark colour'd Breeches, and an Osnabrig Shirt.

Cupid, 23 or 25 Years old, a black well made Fellow, 5 Feet 8 or 9 Inches high, round and full faced, with broad Teeth before, the Skin of his Face is coarse, and inclined to be pimply, he has no other distinguishable Mark that can be recollected; he carried with him his common working Cloaths, and an old Osnabrigs Coat made Frockwise.

The two last of these Negroes were bought from an African Ship in August 1759, and talk very broken and unintelligible English; the second one, Jack, is Countryman to those, and speaks pretty good English, having been several Years in the Country. The other, Peres, speaks much better than either, indeed has little of his Country Dialect left, and is esteemed a sensible judicious Negro.

As they went off without the least Suspicion, Provocation, or Difference with any Body, or the least angry Word or Abuse from their Overseers, 'tis supposed they will hardly lurk about in the Neighbourhood, but steer some direct Course (which cannot even be guessed at) in Hopes of an Escape: Or, perhaps, as the Negro Peres has lived many Years about Williamsburg, and King-William County, and Jack in Middlesex, they may possibly bend their Course to one of those Places.

Whoever apprehends the said Negroes, so that the Subscriber may readily get them, shall have, if taken up in this County, Forty Shillings Reward, beside what the Law allows; and if at any greater Distance, or out of the Colony, a proportionable Recompence paid them, by

George Washington.

**Pennsylvania Gazette,  
April 29, 1762**

**New-York, Printing-Office,  
in Beaver-Street, April 17, 1762.**

Run away, on Monday the 12<sup>th</sup> Instant, from the Subscriber, a Mulattoe Servant Man, named CHARLES, and known by the Name of CHARLES

ROBERTS, or GERMAN. He is a likely well set Fellow, 28 or 30 Years of Age, about 5 Feet 6 Inches high, and has had the Small-Pox. He has a Variety of Clothes, some of them very good, affects to dress very neat and genteel, and generally wears a Wig. He took with him two or three Coats or Suits, viz. A dark brown, or Chocolate coloured Cloth Coat, pretty much worn; a dun, or Dove coloured Cloth, or fine Frize, but little worn; and a light blue grey Summer coat, of Grogram, Camblet, or some such Stuff; a Straw coloured Waistcoat, edged with a Silver Cord, almost new; and several other Waistcoats, Breeches, and Pairs of Stockings; a blue Great coat, and a Fiddle. His Behaviour is excessively complaisant, obsequious and insinuating; he speaks good English, smoothly and plausibly, and generally with a Cringe and a Smile; he is extremely artful, and ready at inventing specious Pretences to conceal villainous Actions or Designs. He plays on the Fiddle, can read and write tolerably well, and understands a little of Arithmetick and Accounts. I have Reason to believe some evil minded Persons in town have encouraged, and been Accomplices with him in villainous Designs; and it is probable he will contrive the most specious Forgeries to give him the Appearance of being a Free Man: I have already been informed of a Writing he has shewn for that Purpose, by which he has imposed upon many People; who may all be easily satisfied that he has no legal Claim to Freedom, even from Slavery, nor any Pretence to it but by the very Law by which he is my Servant for 40 Years, as the Records of the Superior Court at New Haven will Witness. At that Place, where the former Owner of the said Slave lived, he was guilty of a Variety of Crimes and Felonies, for which he was several Times publicly whipped, and only escaped the Gallows by want of Prosecution. When he became my Servant, I intended to have shipped him to the West Indies, and sold him there; and kept him in Prison till I should get an Opportunity; but on his earnest Request, solemn Promises of his good Behaviour, and seeming Penitence, I took him into my Family upon Trial, where for some Time he behaved well, and was very serviceable to me. Deceived by his seeming Reformation, I placed some Confidence in

him, which he has villainously abused; having embezzled Money sent by him to pay for Goods, borrowed Money, and taken up Goods in my Name unknown to me, and also on his own Account, pretending to be a Freeman. By this villainous Proceeding I suppose he has collected a considerable Sum of Money, and am also apprehensive that he has been an Accomplice in some of the late Robberies committed in and near this City. Whoever will take up the said Servant, and bring him to me, or secure him in some of His Majesty's Goals, so that I may get him again, if taken up in the City of New-York, shall have Five Pounds Reward, and a greater, if taken up at a greater Distance. Any Persons who take him up, are desired to be careful to carry him before the next Magistrate, and have him well searched, leaving all the Money and Goods found upon him, except the necessary Clothes he has on, in the Hands of the said Magistrate; and to be very watchful against an Escape, or being deceived by him, for he is one of the most artful of Villains.

John Holt.

*South-Carolina Gazette*  
(Timothy), August 7 to  
August 14, 1762.

*Five Pounds Reward.*

Run away about 12 days ago, a negro girl named MARY, about 20 years old, well known in Charles-Town, and has been entertained in several houses at needle-work, &c. to whom she has past herself for free. Whoever will apprehend the said negro girl, and deliver her to the warden of the work-house, or to the subscriber, shall receive five pounds currency reward, besides all reasonable charges, and thirty pounds reward to any person who will inform me of her being harboured by a white person, on conviction of the offender, or five pounds to a negro: She has on a blue negro cloth habit, and a strip'd jacket under, with a coat of the same; she is artful and speaks good English, but fast, and stutters a little; by pretending to be free

may endeavor to get on board some vessel, as she has a mother that lives at Winyah; or may make for John's or James-Island where she has a father and brother: She is said to have changed her name, and says she belongs to Mrs. Matthews. All persons are hereby forbid to carry off or harbour the said slave, as they may depend on being prosecuted by

John-Paul Grimke.

N.B. If the said negro wench will return home, she shall be forgiven.

### *Annapolis Maryland Gazette,* July 16, 1772.

#### *Ten Pounds Reward.*

July 6, 1772.

Ran away from the Subscribers, living near Soldiers Delight, in Baltimore County, Maryland, a dark Mulatto Slave, who goes by the Name of CHARLES HARDING, but formerly by the Name of DICK; about 30 Years of Age, 5 Feet 7 Inches high, large Nose, hollow eyed, low Forehead, has upwards of Forty Scars on his Head of different Sizes, well made, has a small Scar on the upper Part of his Nose on the left Side, a small Scar on the right Side his under Lip, close knee'd, his Shins bend forwards, some Scars on the small of his legs occasioned by wearing of irons, a large Scar on the Outside of his left Leg occasioned by a Burn, a Scar on one of his Thumbs, he has been unmercifully whipped from his Neck to his Knees, which he says was by his former Master, is a Carpenter and Joiner by Trade, and can paint, which he learned of Lewis Allmorn, of Nanceman County in Virginia, who sold him to Edward Voss, a Bricklayer by Trade, and worked in sundry Parts of Virginia, and when the said Slave ran away from him, lived in King and Queen County near Rapahannah, got by Water to Philadelphia, and

from thence travelled through Lancaster and York Counties to Hanover-Town, and worked there about a Year, and from thence into Baltimore County near Baltimore-Town, where he continued, from about the Year 1765 to the Year 1772, as a free Man, and since he left his former Masters in Virginia, has learnt to read and write, and to play on the Violin; it is possible he may forge a Pass and change his Name, as he has done before: Took with him a Castor Hat, a Suit of white Russia Drab Cloaths, a blue Cloth Coat, red striped Jacket, a new redish brown Broad-Cloth Jacket much too large for him, new darkish coloured Cotton Velvet Breeches with large old fashioned Pocket Flaps, Shirts, Stockings and Shoes of different Sorts, and large plated Buckles. Whoever secures the above Slave in any jail, so that his Masters get him again, shall receive Five Pounds, and if 50 Miles from Home Seven Pounds Ten Shillings, and if 100 Miles the above Reward, and reasonable Charges if brought Home, paid by

Samuel Owings, jun.

Alexander Wells.

### REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What kind of physical characteristics were mentioned in the ads? Why may these have been deemed significant enough to mention? What do they reveal about the composition of slave society?
2. What kind of work did the slaves noted in these ads perform? What does this indicate about the slave labor force?
3. Do these advertisements state or suggest why the slaves may have run away? What may have been some of these reasons?
4. What do the notices reveal about the masters who submitted them?
5. What do these pieces suggest about colonial-American slavery in general?