

LANCASTER COUNTY'S RELATION TO SLAVERY.

PARTICULAR PHASES OF SLAVERY IN LANCASTER COUNTY.

The following interesting contribution to the history of slavery in this county was read before the Lancaster County Historical Society by Miss Martha B. Clark:

Contracts for and Commercial Transactions in Local Slaves.

Some interesting light on the slavery days in Lancaster county is shown in an examination of a number of bills of sale and contracts for and commercial transactions in local slaves. Samples of local bills of sale for slaves show us that they were not distinguished as to terms, etc., from the sale of other chattels. The following is a true copy of one of the earliest to be found in our county:

This Indenture, made the eleventh day of November, Anno domini, one thousand seven hundred and sixty-nine, Between Kirk Ellis of Cecil County of the one part and Robert Anderson of Lancaster County, of the other part, Witnesseth: That the said Ellis for himself, his heirs, Exors. and adms. have bargained sold and set over unto the said Robert Anderson, his heirs, exors. and assigns forever, a negro girl called Eve, about seven years old, to be the real property of the said Anderson and his heirs and assigns forever, for the consideration of Forty-five pounds to me in hand paid, which I acknowledge to have received.

I, the said Ellis, do bind and oblige myself, my heirs Exors. and administrators, to warrant and defend from all manner of person or persons whatsoever claiming or to claim the said negro, the same to warrant and forever defend, to the said Anderson, his heirs and assigns.

As witness my hands and seal this day and year first above written.

KIRK ELLIS (Seal).

Signed, sealed and delivered in the presence of:

ARCH. HENDERSON,

WM. McCAUSLAND.

This slave later came to Brice Clark, for October 10, 1780, when the seven-year-old child became eighteen, in compliance with the law of 1780 for gradual abolition of slavery. Brice Clark made this return to the Quarter Sessions of Lancaster county:

“October 10, 1780.

“Brice Clark, farmer, in Leacock Township and Lancaster County, both a negro woman named Eve aged eighteen years, also a negro boy named Jack aged eight years, both slaves for life.

“BRICE CLARK.”

When Eve was twenty-seven years old she had a son, Nat, born to her, whom Brice Clark made return of to Court as required by law as follows:

“Pursuant to an act of General Assembly, I, Brice Clark, of the Township of Donegal and County of Lancaster (Farmer), do enter a negro child born on the 16th day of December in the year One thousand seven hundred and eighty-nine, called Nat, his mother's name Eve, and that he is my property and is now in my possession.

“BRICE CLARK.

“March 14th, 17.”

The Law of 1780.

Briefly stated, the law of March 1, 1780, passed by Pennsylvania, provided (1) that all negroes and mulattoes born in Pennsylvania after the passage of the act, who otherwise would be slaves (as the children of slaves) should not be a slave; (2) but such a child shall be a servant until it reaches the age of twenty-eight unto such person to whom otherwise it would have been a slave; (3) that a return must be made to Quarter Sessions Court of all slaves held (that is, those born before Act of March 1, 1780, and also of all negro or mulatto children born and by the act made servants till twenty-eight) after the act; and (4) in default of such return the slave and the servant not so returned should be free.

Thus we see that the reason Brice Clark entered the boy born to Eve was that by such registry the boy remained his servant (not his slave) until twenty-eight years old. He was then entitled on discharge to certain moneys and clothing.

An Early Slave Contract.

Another early slave contract in Lancaster county, somewhat different from the one above set out, is the following, dated 1777:

“Know all men by these presents that I, Jarvis Bloomfield of Woodbridge, do bargain, sell and make over all my right, title and interest in a Negro boy named Daniel about eleven years old, which was my father's property left with me, disposed of at forty pounds, York money, do by these presents, bargain, sell and make over, all my right, title and interest in the above mentioned boy to James Hamilton, in consideration of the above

sum of Forty pounds York money, which boy I do hereby warrant and defend as my property against my father and all others.

"And do hereby acknowledge full satisfaction for the above boy.

"As witness my hand this 4th day of April, in the year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-seven.

"JARVIS BLOOMFIELD.

"Witness Present:

"SAMUEL STONE."

Boy Sold For Wheat and Rye.

Under date of 1779 there is another Lancaster county slave contract in the terms of wheat and rye, as follows:

"To all whom it may concern. Know ye that I, Joseph Kittera, of the Brough of Lancaster and State of Pennsylvania, gent, for and in consideration of the quantity of fifty bushels of wheat and fifty bushels of rye to me, delivered by Brice Clark, at the Township of Lampeter in the county and State aforesaid, have granted, bargained, sold and delivered, and by these presents do grant, bargain, sell and deliver unto the said Brice Clark, one negro boy called Jack. To have and to hold the said negro boy to the said Brice Clark, his heirs and assigns, to the only proper use and behoof, of him, the said Brice Clark, his heirs and assigns forever. And the said Joseph Kittera, his heirs executors and administrators, the said negro boy called Jack unto the said Brice Clark, his heirs and assigns, against him, them, any or either of them and against all and every person or persons whomsoever claiming or to claim the said boy, by from or under him, them or any of them, shall and will warrant and forever defend these presents.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal, the 7th day of December, 1779.

JOSEPH KITTERA (Seal).

Witness Present:

JOHN W. KITTERA,
SAMUEL TURBITT.

The same day Brice Clark agreed by a writing not signed on the back of the above deed to transfer all his property in the boy December 14, 1779, to William Smith, Jr., for 2,000 pounds of Pennsylvania money. The interesting part about the deed last set out is that it considers the slave boy real estate rather than personal property. The deed uses the word "grant, bargain and sell," which are the words used in a deed to sell real property and not to sell personal goods, viz: "sell, assign, transfer and set over." And inasmuch as John Kittera, our first Congressman and a lawyer of ability, likely drew it, there must have been some good reason for it.

We remember that in 1780 Mr. Clark returned the boy Jack as one of his slaves, as I have shown above. Thus it seems that the 2,000 pound sale did not go through.

In our county also a series of transactions concerning the services of a slave called Amos Michaels took place. The first was when Baron de Beelen Bertholff on November 17, 1795, for 9 pounds and 10 shillings, transferred him to James Hamilton; second, when Hamilton on July 21, 1799, transferred him to John Bicking and the third when Bicking re-assigned him to James Hamilton, September 4, 1800. (Hist. of Gazzam and de Beelen Families, p. 67.)

A Novel Transaction.

Another novel transaction traffick-
ing in human beings in Lancaster

county is the following, likely that of a slave made free by law again indenturing himself to an owner. It is as follows:

“Know all men by these presents, thot I, Aaron Jackson, a black man, for various good considerations moving me hereunto, do promise and engage to serve James Hamilton of t̄ae township of Salisbury and County of Lancaster, as hired servant, the full term of five months from date hereof and the said James Hamilton, shall and will find and provide for the said Aaron sufficient drink, apparel, washing and lodging during said term, and at the expiration thereof give him two complete suits of apparel, one of them to be new.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal April 28, in the year of our Lord, 1807.

his
AARON X JACKSON (Seal).
mark

Witness Present:
WILLIAM BOYD,
JOHN BOYD.

Another interesting slave contract, showing how slaves were brought into Lancaster county from the South, is that of Samuel Bell, of New Castle, Delaware, dated June 8, 1814, to John Clark, of Lancaster, selling and conveying to John Clark his slave boy Lawson, aged fourteen years, for the sum of \$300.

An article appearing in the Marietta Register about the year 1875 tells us that the Lawson, known as Lawson Taylor, died about that time, aged seventy-five years, and that he was well known and respected on the “Clark Farm,” where he remained fifty-six years, that is, until he went to work for Dr. Cushman, about five

years before his death. The article said he left a much better record than many more fortunate than he. The Clark family, with whom he lived, stated that Lawson always voted the Democratic ticket, for the reason that his master did.

An insight of what formalities were necessary to allow slaves to be brought from the South is shown in the next item, under date of 1814, in which Levi Boulden, of Delaware, petitions the Supreme Court and the Court of Common Pleas, setting forth that he had manumitted his three slaves, Eliza, Thomas and James Staats, to be free, when they arrive at the age of twenty-eight, and prays that he may be permitted to remove the said slaves into Lancaster county. This was April 11, 1814.

The same day the Justices of the said Courts and of the General Quarter Sessions licensed the petitioner to export, sell and carry out of Delaware for sale into Lancaster county, Pa., the three slaves, with the condition that they be free when twenty-eight years old.

After this was done, on April 20, 1814, Boulden sold the boy, Thomas Staats, for seventeen years, and the boy, James Staatz, for nineteen years, to John Clark, of Donegal Township, Lancaster county, at the end of which time they would be twenty-eight years old and be free, for the sum of \$360.

Genesis of Act of 1780, Abolishing Slavery.

On the 5th of February, 1779, the Supreme Executive Council in a message to the Assembly suggested that a plan be adopted for the gradual abolition of slavery—honored will that State be in the annals of mankind. After much discussion a motion to dismiss the subject was carried by a vote of 29 yeas to 21 nays.

A new Assembly was elected and George Bryan, formerly Vice President of the Executive Council, was a member and moved that the subject of emancipation be referred to a committee. The motion was carried, and Mr. Bryan prepared the draft of a law for gradual emancipation, and on the 29th of February, 1780, it was adopted by a vote of 34 to 21. "Our bill," wrote Mr. Bryan, "astonishes and pleases the Quakers. They looked for no such benevolent issue of our government, exercised by the Presbyterians." The bill declared that no child born hereafter in Pennsylvania of slave parents should be a slave, but a servant until the age of twenty-eight years, at which time all claim of service on the part of the master should cease. All slaves then in the State were required to be registered before the first of November, under penalty of their becoming immediately free, as none was to be deemed a slave unless registered. Negro slaves were to be tried in the same manner as other persons, and in case of sentence of death, to be valued, and the price be paid out of the State Treasury.

The following tribute to George Bryan may be found on his tombstone, which was originally in the burying ground of the Second Presbyterian Church, on Arch street, near Fifth, Philadelphia:

"To the memory of George Bryan, who died 27th of January, 1791, aged sixty years. Mr. Bryan was among the earliest and most active and uniform friends of the rights of man before the Revolutionary War. As a member of the Assembly of Pennsylvania and of the Congress of New York in 1765, and as a citizen, he was conspicuous in opposition to the Stamp Act and other acts of British tyranny. He was equally an opponent of domestic sla-

very. The emancipation of the people of color engaged the feelings of his heart and the energies of his mind, and an act of abolition which laid the foundation of their liberation issued from his pen. He filled several important offices during the Revolutionary contest, and for the last eleven years of his life he was one of the Judges of the Supreme Court. In his private deportment he was exemplary—a Christian in principle and practice.”

Abolition Sentiment in America.

About the time of the Revolution societies of prominent men were formed for the purpose of ameliorating the condition of the slaves. Pennsylvania was the first State to organize such a society in 1787 with Franklin as President and Dr. Benjamin Rush as secretary, and a message was sent to Congress bearing the names of these illustrious men, asking to devise means for removing the incumbency of slavery from the United States. This Pennsylvania society continued in existence until 1862, when President Lincoln sent forth his proclamation for the abolition of slavery, and declared that all persons held as slaves “are and henceforth shall be free.” The slave population, according to the census of 1790, in Pennsylvania, was 3,417.

Slavery was deemed as inconsistent with the principles of free government and many declared slave-holding a sin against God and a crime against humanity.

Slave Children Born in Lancaster County After March 1, 1780.

In the paper on slaves read at the last meeting the list of slaves in our county from the time of the first census in 1790 was set out; but no record

of the number prior to that time has been given.

There was a docket containing the list in 1780, and prior, in Lancaster county, and also a docket containing a record of children born of slaves in our county after March 1, 1780. John Hubley, clerk, made the record of the returns of the children born after 1780 of slave parents, with full information as to age, sex, time of birth, etc. Both these dockets, or records, however, seem to be lost; but their contents were copied by some one a dozen years ago or more into blank books, and there was also a typewritten list made of such births, etc. These blank books and lists are in the possession of Mr. Hensel, who has kindly loaned them to the writer for the purposes of this paper. Who copied them we can not ascertain.

The return shows that up to 1790 there were reported to the said clerk 118 children born to slave parents since 1780, of whom 58 were male and 60 female.

From 1790 to 1800 there were 138 children reported of whom 65 were male and 73 female.

From 1800 to 1810 there were 81 children reported, of whom 43 were male and 38 female.

From 1810 to 1820 there were 72 children reported, of whom 37 were male and 35 female.

From 1820 to 1831 there were 18 children reported, of whom nine were male and nine female.

This is the end of the record, and it shows 427 reported since 1780, of whom 212 were male and 215 female.

Slaves in Lancaster County March 1, 1780, When the Gradual Emancipation Act Was Passed.

The docket containing these facts is called the "Register of Negro and Mu-

latto Slaves and Servants" for Lancaster county, 1780.

In it we find there were in the county at that time 807 slaves for life, of whom 394 were males and 412 were females. The slaves in age ran from two and one-half years to sixty years and the average was from twenty to twenty-five years. They were owned by the Scotch-Irish and the Germans in the following proportions, viz: Scotch-Irish, two-thirds; English, Germans, Huguenots, Welsh, etc., one-third.

According to this record, the thickest slave centers of the county seemed to be in and about Donegal and Salisbury townships and Lancaster borough.

The densest centers of slavery are shown by the reports of children born of slaves after 1780 and their division among the various townships. All children born of slave parents after 1780 became servants till twenty-eight years old. But it is evident that when the time came that all existing slaves died, then no longer would children born of colored people in Pennsylvania be servants at all; but they would be born free, too.

The record shows the following as the extent of slavery in the different townships in 1780:

In Bart township only four children of slaves were reported born from 1780 to the extinction of slavery—three males and one female. Therefore, Bart was not much given to slavery.

In Caernarvon there were twenty-six of such births reported from 1789 to 1825, being ten males and sixteen females. In only a few cases were there more than one each year in the entire township. The Olds, Hudsons, Evans, Jacobs, Levertys and other Welsh owned them.

In Conestoga it seems none was reported.

In Donegal there were 56 such births reported from 1780 to 1820, of whom 23 were males and 33 were females. This was a pretty thick slave center. The Bayleys, Cooks, Clarks, Andersons, Middletons, Kilbaughs, Works, Nicholsons, Keys, Moores, Lowreys, Whitehills, Farquahars, Watsons, Evans, Van Leers, Hamiltons, Vances and Boggs owned them.

In Drumore there were 39 such births reported from 1780 to 1823, of whom 24 were males and 15 females. They were owned by the Maxwells, Gambles, Bighams, Evans, Amblers, Steeles, Reeds, Krugs, Neels, McAnteres, Monroes, Moores, Boyds, Bowers, Withers and Steeles. They seemed fully numerous there.

In Elizabeth township but 14 births of slaves were recorded, four males and ten females. Twelve were held by Robert Coleman and two owned by the heirs of Curtis Grubb.

In Earl township there were only eight such births reported from 1780 to 1810, of whom six were males and two females. The Smiths, Kitteras, Wallaces, Martins and Jacobs owned the parents of these slave children. Thus slavery in Earl was confined to a narrow center in that great township. The Germans there did not own slaves.

In Hempfield township there were thirteen such births of children of slaves reported from 1780 to 1815, of whom five were males and eight were females. The parents of these children were owned by the Spears, Tidballs, Scotts, Sprouts and Stricklers. Slaves were thus not numerous in this township.

In Lancaster borough there were sixty-eight such births reported to the Quarter Sessions Clerk from 1780 on-

ward, of whom twenty-eight were males and forty females. They were owned by the Shippens, Etings, Jacks, Regers, Edwards, Lockharts, Misses, Millers, Zantzingers, Hubleys, Slougas, Bausmans, Rosses, Cunninghams, Kirkpatrick, Kuhns, Bowsmans, Clendens, Bartons, Groffs, Duffields, Reigarts, Smiths, Colemans, Galbraiths, Gundakers, Dicksons, Hambrights and Wilsons. Slavery flourished in the borough pretty generally.

In Little Britain there were thirty-three such births reported from 1780 to 1809, of whom fifteen were male and eight female. Their parents were owned by the Scotts, McCulloughs, Blacks, Breadings, Gibsons, Frazers, Caldwells, Porters, Longs, Williamsons, Campbells, Scotts, Stubbs, Pattersons and Neepers. This was a fair number of slaves for that township.

In Leacock township there were twenty-two such births reported from 1780 to 1820, of whom eight were males and fourteen females. Their parents were owned by the Caldwells, Watsons, Lightners, Porters, Woods, Ferrees, Coopers, Hamiltons. This was not a large number for so populous a township.

From 1802 to 1809 in Manor township James Armstrong held one male slave and Charles S. Sewell one male and one female.

In Mount Joy township, from 1791 to 1811, but four slaves were reported—two males and two females, owned by the Moreheads, Boal, Jacobs and Rev. Colin McFarquahar.

In Rapão there were twelve such births reported from 1780 to the end, of whom five were males and seven females. They were owned by the Pattersons, Currans, Pedans, Scotts, Jenkins and Hays. Thus we see here that there were few slaves in this German township.

In Strasburg township there were thirteen such births reported from 1780 to 1823, of whom eight were males and five females. Their parents were owned by the Rines, Hathorns, Prices, Ferrees, Van Lears, Lefevers, Witmers, Lightners, Whitehills, Bears and Withers. Here we see that the Germans and Huguenots did not scruple to hold slaves.

In Martic township but one slave-owner was recorded and that was Geo. McLaughlin, in 1789. He had two girls.

In Salisbury township there were fifty-five such births reported from 1780 to 1819, of whom thirty-four were males and twenty-one females. Their parents were owned by the McCulleys, Clemsons, McCamants, Andersons, Smiths, Slaymakers, Hendersons, Skiles, Henrys, Buckleys, Boyds, Ky-sers, McClelans, Tweeds, Thompsons, Johnsons, Whitehills, Ellmakers, By-ers, Lytles and Bakers. This was a populous slave center. But the slaves were not owned by the Germans living there.

In Sadsbury township nine slaves were born from 1789 to 1805—three males and six females, owned by the Taylors, Tweeds, Johnsons, Sterrit and James Culbertson. The Quakers in this township seemed true to their convictions and did not own slaves.

From Warwick there were seven such births reported from 1780 to 1823, of whom one was male and six female. The parents of these children were owned by the Grubbs, Jacobs and Colemans. The slave population was confined to a small center in Warwick.

This gives a good survey of the distribution of slaves among the different townships of the county at the date of slavery abolition in 1780. Where the most children of slaves were reported there the parents were held in slavery most numerously.

Voluntary Manumission in Lancaster County After the Act of 1780.

Although the Act of 1780 to abolish slavery in Pennsylvania gradually did not free slaves held and owned by the people of the State at the time of the passage of the act except such who were not returned and registered by the owners, yet the custom early sprang up of voluntary manumission. There was a docket in the Quarter Sessions office of our county containing a list of the manumissions and from it we find that from 1794 onward there were at least seventeen slaves so freed by their owners in our county. Persons so manumitting their slaves are William Montgomery, Josiah Lockhard, Joseph Simons, James Evans, John Woodhill, Robert Maxwell (of Drumore), John Bausman, Nathaniel Ellmaker, Dr. Maxwell McDowell, John Graeff, of Lancaster borough, Hanna Baily (of Donegal), Chas. S. Sewell (of Manor), Richard Miller, Natnan L. Baldwin, Louisa Smith and James Bigham (of Drumore). They assigned various causes which moved them to do so.

These are set out in the record, and I now give some of the leading facts connected with the same, since it will throw a light on certain phases of slavery here at home not generally thought of.

His "boy Jerry" was given his freedom by William Montgomery, of Lancaster, the lawyer and father of John R. Montgomery, on May 3, 1794, showing appreciation of faithful services.

Josiah Lockhart, the shop-keeper in Lancaster, manumitted his slave, Abbie Dominikin, also for faithful services, on November 2, 1796.

Joseph Simon, the rich Jew merchant, on the 7th of July, 1797, liberated Catharine, the wife of a negro

named Pleasant, from slavery, and also released from servitude the children of Catharine, viz: William and Catherine.

James Evans, of West Nottingham Hundred, in the county of Cecil, Maryland, manumitted as follows: "I do of my own free will and accord liberate, discharge and set free a negro man named Toby, which was willed to me by my father, John Evans, deceased, of Drumore township, Lancaster county," on the 10th of March, 1798.

John Woodhull, of Monmouth county, N. J., on the 19th day of March, 1799, tells us: "This is to certify that I have set free from slavery a negro man named James, now in the county of Lancaster, Pa., so that he may make bargains and contracts for himself as other free negroes do or have the privilege of doing." Was Woodhull the Presbyterian minister at Lancaster?

Robert Maxwell, of Drumore township, says: "I do manumit and set free my boy Jack for faithful service and for divers good causes and considerations this 29th day of March, 1799."

John Graeff, of the borough of Lancaster, Pa., moved by motives of benevolence and humanity, says that he manumits his negro boy. Andrew Peters, on the condition that Andrew do forthwith bind himself by indenture to serve the said Graeff for the full term of two years. Done the 4th of September, 1801.

John Bausman, of Lancaster, from "motives of benevolence and humanity manumits and sets free from slavery his mulatto girl, Jane, aged twenty-five years, on consideration that she will forthwith bind herself by indenture to serve Christian Sower, Esq., of Tulpehocken, in Berks county, for the term of two years, from the 2d of April, 1803."

Nathaniel Ellmaker, of Lancaster, on the 30th of January, 1804, from motives of humanity and benevolence, set free from slavery his "negro man Jack, aged twenty-seven years, eleven months and twenty days."

The last will and testament of Hanna Bailey, late of Donegal township, empowers Dr. Samuel Maxwell McDowell, executor of the same, from motives of benevolence and humanity to set free from slavery a negro woman named Sarah, who was lately the property of Hanna Bailey, on June 3, 1708.

Charles Sewell's manumission is as follows: "Know all men by these presents, That I, Charles Sewell, of Manor Township, Lancaster county, have lately purchased a negro man for life from George Finley, of Queen Ann County, Maryland, aged about thirty years—now know ye that, in consideration that the aforesaid negro named Charles shall indenture and bind himself a servant for the term of seven years, during which term he is faithfully to serve the aforesaid Charles Sewell, his heirs and assigns, from the date hereof, I Charles Sewell do manumit and set at liberty the said negro from the 12th of November, 1808."

On the 12th day of July, 1814, Richard Miller, of Kent county, Maryland, for divers good causes, in consideration of \$1, paid to him in hand, released from slavery and manumitted his slave woman Venus, being of the age of twenty-three years, and able to work and make a sufficient livelihood.

Nathaniel Boulden manumitted his slave as follows: "Believing as I do that no human being has a right in reason or in good conscience to hold his fellow man in bondage, I hereby certify that some years ago I freed

and gave full and entire liberty to my slave George, who called himself George Washington, now about thirty years of age, born in New Castle county, Delaware.

“Witness my hand and seal this 30th day of July, 1821.

“NATHANIEL L. BOULDEN,
“Attorney at Law, Lancaster, Pa.”

Louisa Smith asserts her freedom as follows: “To All Whom it May Concern, Louisa Smith, about nineteen years of age, claims to be a free woman, agreeably to the laws of Pennsylvania. She was a slave to William Ritsell, of Hagerstown, Md., and the said master moved to Pennsylvania about two years ago with his family and brought the said Louisa with him, and after remaining with the said master about four months she left him in Pennsylvania, first being well assured that she was free according to the laws of Pennsylvania.

her
“LOUISA X SMITH,
mark

“Witness:

“ROBERT SPEAR.”

James Bigham manumitted as follows: “Know ye that James Bigham, of Drumore Township, hath for certain good causes emancipated and set free his negro man Jack on the 10th of August, 1799. Jack hath of his own free will covenanted to agree that he is to serve the said master six years, during which time the master is to find him in meat, drink, wearing apparel, boarding, lodging as formerly and also to allow him to do the business of a sexton for the congregation of Chestnut Level; and the said Jack is to receive the perquisites for said service for his own use and receive two months' schooling for three years;

and at the end of said time to receive the sum of 50 pounds and lay out a piece of land for his use and also a new suit of apparel, a new Bible, axe, mattock and hoe."

George McCullough freed his slave as follows: "The subscriber does of his own accord and free will acquit and release his negro Joe, from being any longer with him as a slave, upon consideration that he shall be a faithful servant at his master's call, as a hireling for the space of four years from the date hereof—he is only to call upon him not above nine months each year. April 1, 1797.

his
"Signed—NEGRO X JOE,
mark
"GEORGE McCULLOUGH."

This is a chapter that shows a very commendable spirit in our early Lancaster county citizens; and it is especially refreshing to recall it in our day, at a time when so many laboring men and women feel that their employers, especially corporations, own them almost body and soul.

Author: Clark, Martha Bladen.

Title: Lancaster County's relation to slavery / by Miss Martha B. Clark.

Primary Material: Book

Subject(s): Slavery--Pennsylvania--Lancaster County.
Slavery--Law and legislation--Pennsylvania--Lancaster County.
Lancaster County (Pa.)--Population.

Publisher: Lancaster, Pa. : Lancaster County Historical Society, 1911

Description: 43-61 p. ; 23 cm.

Series: Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society ; v. 15, no. 2

Call Number: 974.9 L245 v.15

Location: LCHSJL -- Journal Article (reading room)

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