

# SIDELIGHTS ON SLAVERY

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In presenting this paper to our Society it is with no expectation of giving you anything new, startling or of great value. It only deals with sundry items which have been omitted by the preceding writers on the present subject, and which, however, seemed to be sufficiently interesting to be worth recording.

In the earliest tax list for Lancaster in existence, in the year 1754, which Mr. H. Frank Eshleman gives us in his paper, Vol. XIII., No. 10, we learn that at that date there were seven slaves owned and held in the borough. They belonged, respectively, to "David Stout, Isaac Morris, Adam Lyon, Geo. Sanderson and Elizabeth Smout, a widow." Each of these persons owned one slave; the two others were the property of Valentin Cruz (Krug), one of the very few instances to be found of the German slave-holder, for, as a rule, they belonged to the English-speaking population. But even long prior to this date there were negroes held as slaves throughout the county.

From the wills on record at our Court House we learn that the blacks were looked upon as property and bequeathed as such. Take, for instance, the will of Rev. James Anderson, pastor of Donegal church. Under date of July 14, 1740 (A. 48), he leaves to his wife, Rebecca, "ye use and services of the Negroe winch Dinah;" to his son, James, "the negro man Plines," and to his daughter, Susannah, "the negroe winch, Bell."

(Book C, page 60)—Josiah Scott, of

Hempfield township, September 5, 1760, leaves to his wife, Mary, "his Negro winch Nan."

(Book C, page 91)—John Torbit, of Leacock township, leaves his wife, Jean, "the use of my negroe girl during her life," and after his wife's death to his son, John. August 21, 1762.

(C, page 146)—John McConnell, of Colerain township, leaves to his son, William, "my negro boy called Antoney," and gives directions for the sale of "my negro Winc called Lemon, and her daughter, called Marce." July 19, 1773.

(C, page 156)—David Davis, of Earl township, leaves to his son, John, his "Negro Man Jack, and Negro Woman, Sal." October 10, 1768.

(C, page 165)—Evan Edwards, of Earl township, leaves to his son, Thomas, "a negro boy called Caesar," and to his daughter, Elizabeth, "a negro boy called Jo." May 30, 1771.

(C, page 232)—John Peden, of Hempfield township, leaves to "daughter, Esabella, Dina ye Negroe Girl." Will proved November 7, 1775.

(C, page 384)—Thomas Simpson, of Paxton township, leaves to "my wife, Nan, the Labour of my Negro Wench Nanny, to assist in raising my children." February 10, 1777.

Others might be quoted, but these are sufficient.

In consulting some sixty or seventy wills, only one or two were found in which the master desired the manumission of a slave, and one was the testament of Robert McCally, of Salisbury township (page 232), dated January 15, 1774, in which he directs that his "Negro Man Joseph" be set free four years after his death.

Another is the will of John Jenkins, of Caernarvon township (C, page 448), dated August 25, 1774. In his own

words: "And whereas I have hired my Negroeman Quash to my Son, John, for Eleven Years from the first day of March, 1772, at the end of which Time I do allow my said Negroeman to be free from serving any Person on my Account. And I give my Negroe woman Cooba to my daughter Rebekah; but if my Negroeman Quash will be able to pay my Daughter the sum of Forty Pounds any Time within three Years after the Expiration of the said Eleven Years, then my Will is that my said Negro woman be free and serve no Person any longer on my Account than til the said Forty Pounds are paid."

This is interesting as showing what money value was placed upon a female slave, and verifies the statement made in "A Century of Population Growth," page 140, that the average price of negroes in 1790 varied from \$150 to \$200. Public feeling was against the manumission of slaves, as the presence of the free negroes caused much dissatisfaction with their condition among those of the race who were still the property of their masters.

So much for the records of the Court House. The next paragraphs are gleaned from the advertising columns of the Lancaster Journal:

February, 1804—Jared Neal offers for sale "the time of a negro boy who has thirteen years to serve. He has had the smallpox and measles"—evidently considered a recommendation.

August 13, 1806—"The time of a mulatto girl who has six years to serve. She can do any kind of housework, and is to be disposed of for want of employment. For terms apply to the printer."

December 5, 1806—"The time of a stout, able-bodied Negro Man who has a term of years to serve. He is acquainted with farming, and understands the

business of a house servant. Enquire of John Kerr, Prisonkeeper."

September 6, 1805—"The time of a Mulatto Boy, about thirteen years of age, to serve until twenty-eight."

July 1, 1808, is found this advertisement:

#### FOR SALE.

The time of a black man, who has nine years to serve. He is very stout and healthy; he would prefer going to a forge, where he might have an opportunity of learning that business. For terms, apply to the subscriber, living in Salisbury township, Lancaster County. JACOB McDILL.

That the negroes were allowed to learn trades is proved by the following:

July 12, 1805—John Croll, of Middletown, offers \$12 reward for the lodging in jail of a "negro man named Bill Bevis," "a tanner by trade."

Runaways were by no means unusual in those days. November 15, 1805, William Hamilton offers \$200 reward for the taking up and securing "in goal" two runaway negroes, Adam and Ephraim, slaves. They are thus described: "Ephraim, about 17 or 18, very black, never had the mark of a switch on him before he run off. Adam, 36 years old, 'has several marks of the switch on his back.'" He had "been branded on the right cheek with the letter R for his former villainy." He goes on to say, "their clothing I don't think worth while to mention, as I suppose they can easily change them."

On August 29, 1806, Jonathan Royer offered \$20 for the putting in jail of a negro man, Thomas Morgan—Leacock township.

April 21, 1806, under the heading, "Eloped," Samuel Neeper, of Little Britain township, offers \$50 reward for the return of a "negroe boy," Jack. He is described as "impudent in discourse and remarkable for loud laughing."

In the records of St. James' Church there is frequent mention of the baptisms and burials of the colored people. The Year Book of 1800, page 102, speaks of "the old sexton, John Webster, a colored man, and his wife, Dina, who used to rustle past in her old-fashioned silks, apron and 'kerchief." Some were buried in the churchyard, and tradition tells us that the part facing directly on North Duke street was their resting place. When the church was built, in 1750, a place was reserved at its western end as "Seates for Servants and Negroes," and in 1769 (page 128) "a rail and banisters fixed to the end of pew No. 12, to prevent the persons who take that pew from being inconvenienced by servants and others who at present have easy access thereto and often take possession of it."

Here are a few of the records of baptisms:

April 18, 1783: "Louise, Flavia and James, slaves of Paul Zantzinger."

January 1, 1786: "Priscilla, a negro child of Mary, a slave of Robert Lockham."

February 14, 1786: "Phoebe, a negro woman, slave of William McCally."

April 4, 1784: "William Brown (negro), son of Mary and Caesar Brown."

July 12, 1793: "Mazete Reeds, (a negro man of Robert Reeds.)"

Very curt are the marriage records:  
August 1, 1773: Tom and Catharine (negroes).

September 2, 1773: London and Judy (negroes).

From Chester county comes the following inscription. It holds the story of a lifetime:

"Erected by the Great Valley Baptist Church in memory of Phillis Burr, who was born in Africa. Brought to America in the slave ship Ganges, and

sold into slavery to pay for her passage, and died April 18, 1872, aged nearly 100 years."

To return to the Lancaster Journal. Its columns have many advertisements for the return of fugitive slaves. They came from Maryland, Virginia and even from Tennessee. In fact, Lancaster county appears to have been a Mecca for those who, prompted by that love of liberty which seems to be in-born in the human breast, sought freedom from the toils and shackles of slavery. Some of these runaway notices are of sufficient interest to claim your attention, and a few have been copied:

SEPT. 30, 1808.

#### FIFTY DOLLARS REWARD.

Run away from the subscriber, on the 1st inst, two negro fellows, named James and Abraham. James is about five feet high, 30 years of age, and of a pleasant countenance when spoken to. Abraham is about five feet eight or nine inches high, about 25 years old, rather of a sulky disposition. Their clothing cannot be described, as James was in possession of different suits, and it is probable he may furnish the other with a change. It is expected they will endeavor to get into the State of Pennsylvania. I will give the above reward and all reasonable charges for securing or bringing the above fellows home.

WILLIAM MORGAN.

London County (Virg.).

JULY 8, 1808.

#### STOP THE RUNAWAY.

Ran away from me, living between Harper's Ferry and Charlestown, Jefferson County, Virginia, on Whitsunday last, a stout negro slave, called Ben Johnson, of a black complexion, very white teeth, and rather a smiling countenance when speaking. He is about 32 years of age, and 5 feet 10 inches high; his clothing need not be described, as he frequently exchanges it, but he may be known from the following circumstances: He is a great thief and very lazy; and knows no kind of business but farm work; is a very good reaper, reaps with his left hand, and generally uses it instead of his right; across the back of his left

hand has a long scar. He is very artful and talkative, a great pretender to religion and preaches. Some time ago he possessed, as I am informed, a license to preach, signed by Bishop Asbury, which was doubtless a forgery, and he probably has other spurious papers. I believe he has gone to the Northward, in hopes to procure his freedom, for he went off without warning or provocation, at a time when he was not likely to be missed for two days. I will give 25 dollars reward for securing him in any jail so that I get him again, over and above any lawful charges, or 50 dollars for bringing him home.

JOHN YATES.

### 30 DOLLARS REWARD.

Ran away from the subscriber, living in Baltimore County, Maryland, a mulatto servant man, named Jack, about 42 or 43 years old, 5 feet 10 or 11 inches high, middling slim built. Had on and took with him an old woollen hat, the crown sewed in with thread; a flax-chained shirt, filled with tow, tow trousers, a lead-coloured, home-made woollen waist-coat, and an old pair of shoes. He was formerly owned by Mr. Thomas Airs, of Harford County, Maryland.

ELISHA GORSUCH.

July 7, 1809.

Perhaps this is the most interesting of all, as this Elisha Gorsuch was probably a member of the same family which was connected with the Christiana Riot.

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