

1738-1822. Runaway Slave Advertisements from New York

Source: Brown, Alan and Hodges, Graham, editors (1994). "Pretends to Be Free": Runaway Slave Advertisements from Colonial and Revolutionary New York and New Jersey (Garland Pub).

Each team will examine a different Runaway Slave Advertisement.

1. Answer the question that goes with your advertisement.
2. As historians trying to understand the past, "brainstorm" a list of things you learn about slavery in New York from the advertisement.

A. *The New York Weekly Journal*, October 2, 1738. Runaway from Frederick Zepperly of Rhinebeck in Dutchess County, a copper colored Negro fellow named Jack, aged about 30 years, speaks nothing but English and reads English. Whoever takes up said run away and secures him so his master may have him again or gives notice of him to Harry Beekman or to John Peter Zenger shall have forty shillings and all reasonable charges.

Question: The advertisement for "Jack" says to give notice to John Peter Zenger. Who was John Peter Zenger?

B. *New York Gazette*, August 13, 1750. Runaway about four weeks ago, from Simon Cregier of the City of New York, a Negro wench named Phoebe aged about 45 years, middle sized, and formerly belonged to Dr. Cornelius Van Wyck at Great Neck; she is well known at that part of Long Island, and about Flushing; she had a note with her to look for a master, but has not returned again; her clothing is uncertain. Whoever takes up and secures said Negro wench, so that her Master may have her again, should have forty shillings reward and all reasonable charges paid by Simon Cregier.

Question: Who is the former owner of "a Negro wench named Phoebe"? Why is this a famous name?

C. *New York Gazette*, July 24, 1758. Runaway from Ide Meyer on the 20th of June last, a Mulatto wench named Ohnech, but goes by the name Hannah and pretends to be free: She is about 4 feet 4 inches high and 28 years of age; is well set and speaks both English and Dutch very well, had on when she went away a homespun stole, a petticoat, blue short cloak and white cap; whoever takes up and secures the said wench so that her Master may have her again shall have TWENTY SHILLINGS reward and all reasonable charges paid.

Question: Ohnech speaks both English and Dutch. Why is this information included in the advertisement?

D. *New York Gazette*, June 30, 1760. Runaway on Monday the 20th instant from Dennis Hicks of this city, Shipwright, a likely Negro Lad of about 14 years old, a short chubby fellow, full faced: had on a blue sailors jacket with a striped homespun one under it, an old brown cloth pair of breeches, an old hat and cap. Whoever takes up and secures said Negro, in that he may be had again, shall have Twenty Shillings reward and charges paid by Dennis Hicks.

Question: The advertisement placed by Dennis Hicks describes the clothing worn by the "Negro Lad." In your opinion, will this description lead to his capture? Explain.

E. *Long Island Farmer*, July 11, 1822. Ranaway form the subscriber; on the sixth of May, a Black boy named DAVID APPLEBY, five feet five inches high, very black, and very large white teeth. All persons are warned against harboring or employing said boy, at the peril of the law. Whoever will secure said boy and return him to his master, or lodge him in any public Prison, shall receive the above reward, but no charges paid.

Question: "All persons are warned against harboring or employing said boy, at the peril of the law." What does that mean?