

# SLAVERY IN NEWARK EARLY IN LAST CENTURY

When the slavery question is brought up these days those of the present generation may at first thought believe that most of the victims of the African race, as depicted in Harriet Beecher Stowe's famous novel, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," bore the brunt of the bondage system in the South. Slavery was conducted north of the Mason and Dixon line, even in Newark and other cities of New Jersey, for many years after the War for Independence.

As a forcible reminder of this, here is a copy of an advertisement which appeared in the "for sale" column of the Sentinel of Freedom, a newspaper which was published in Newark a hundred years ago:

**"FOR SALE**—A young black woman, with a male child of about three months. Late the property of Doctor McWhorter. She is a smart girl, healthy, and capable of performing all kinds of kitchen work and of waiting on table. She will be sold very cheaply, and a liberal credit will be given, if desired.

**"ANNA OGILVIE.**

"Newark, October 5, 1807."

This advertisement, with others of a similar character, appeared in the same columns that announced the sale of houses, building lots, horses or cattle. Here in this very city was a woman and her babe offered for sale "very cheaply," and "credit" would be given if desired, just as when a person takes a mortgage in purchasing a house these days, or in buying a suit of clothing on the installment plan: so much down, so much a week.

Then here are other advertisements which appeared in the same columns of the Newark newspaper:

**"FOR SALE**—A young negro man, about 24 years old. He is powerful and active, understands the milling business and is tolerably well acquainted with farming, particularly plowing and mowing. For terms apply to the subscriber.

**"OLIVER WADE.**

"Newark, January 8, 1810."

Frequently, it seems that slaves, owned in this city and vicinity, sought flight in escaping from their bondage, just as Eliza Harris did in the novel; but if bloodhounds were not set on their tracks, as in the case of fugitives "down on the Mississippi river," other means were adopted for their capture here. For instance, the following "ad" appeared among the "personals" of the Newark newspaper:

**"FIVE DOLLARS REWARD** — Ran away from subscriber, a young negro woman answering to the name of Phillis; 5 feet 7 inches high; of light complexion, and when last seen wore (here followed a description of her clothing). Any person delivering the woman to owner, or lodging her in a gaol, or giving information of her whereabouts, shall receive the above-named reward, with reasonable charges.

**"MOSES JAQUES.**

"Rahway, N. J."

Here is still another:

**"THIRTY DOLLARS REWARD**—Ran away from subscriber at Orange, State of New Jersey, on or about the 16th inst., a negro man, Frank, about 28 years old, 5 feet 7 or 8 inches in height, of a yellowish complexion, a very morose countenance, and grum voice; had on when he went away a brown cloth coat, dimity vest, dark green velvet pantaloons and a common castor hat. It is supposed he

went first to New York, having relatives there. Whoever will take up said runaway and deliver him to subscriber, shall have above named reward and reasonable expenses.

**"CALEB HARRISON.**

"Orange, N. J., September 15, 1807."

Such advertisements, announcing the sale of slaves or offering rewards for the capture of fugitives, appeared in nearly every issue of the Newark newspaper, which was published once a week up to 1832, and revealed conditions as to slavery in this city in the days before the Civil War.

The plight of apprentices in the early days may be imagined from the following advertisement in Newark's weekly paper of those times:

**"FIVE DOLLARS REWARD**—Ran away from subscriber in August last an apprentice to the shoemaking business; name William Kind; age 19; height 5 feet, 6 or 7 inches; wore short blue coat and black pantaloons and fur hat. Whoever returns said boy to his master shall have above named reward. All persons are forbidden harbouring or employing said apprentice at their peril.

**"ABRAHAM L. BRANT.**

"Newark, September 15, 1809."

Time has fortunately brought about a change in all this, and apprentice boys have cause to rejoice that conditions in 1809 are somewhat different from those that existed here a century ago.

*paper and date not known*

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