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RUNAWAY SLAVE ADVERTISEMENTS
FROM LOYALIST NEWSPAPERS OF THE MARITIME COLONIES

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Honors Capstone Project
Advised by Jared Hardesty
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On May 10, 1781, the day that his slave ran away from him, Abel Michener placed an advertisement in the weekly-published *Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*.¹ In about a week and a half, readers from Shelburne, Nova Scotia and the surrounding area learned that “a NEGRO Man, Named JAMES” had run away from Michener in Falmouth, Nova Scotia. Described as being “well made, 23 Years of Age” with a “thin smooth Face and lively Countenance,” James took with him a considerable quantity of clothing and Michener promised him forgiveness, should he return. Perturbed by his loss of labor, Michener warned “Masters of Vessels and others” not to conceal James or take him for themselves during his flight for freedom.

James’s story is not unique. Other enslaved black individuals absconded from Loyalist bondage in the Maritimes. From the end of the American War of Independence in 1783, runaway slave advertisements peppered the newspapers of the British North American colonies. Though it must be acknowledged that the enslaved constituted a relatively small percentage of the Maritimes (typically around 10 percent of the population of each settlement), the findings of runaway slave advertisements in Loyalist newspapers indicate that this history is far from negligible.² These documents reveal the nature of slavery in the Maritimes, complicate the simple understanding of Canada as a place of refuge, and highlight direct examples of resistance by individuals who faced enslavement. These advertisements force us to look at Loyalist slavery not through a generalized history but with an individualized approach. Each advertisement, (ironically, by detailing a profile of the runaway), subverts the dehumanizing nature of slavery in forcing a recognition of the individual experiences and particular cruelties of the institution.

¹ Runaway slave advertisement, *The Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, 22 May 1781, in Harvey Amani Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes: A History in Documents* (Peterborough, Broadview Press, 2018), 30.

² Harvey Amani Whitfield, *North to Bondage: Loyalist Slavery in the Maritimes* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), 43.

These advertisements from Loyalist newspapers reveal the active opposition to enslavement by black individuals in the Maritimes. As these people participated in the growth and development of various farms, trades, households, cities, and colonies of British North America, building “roads, homes... churches, and... every possible task in the shipping industry,” their personal experiences in resisting oppression warrant a devoted study.³

It is important to mention that within these newspapers, examples of advertisements for absconding indentured servants were also readily present. Historians have explored the complex and grey relationship between servitude and slavery in the region, suggesting that a “growing sensitivity” to the institution of slavery, informed by the moral and economic values of New England, made it so that slaveowners preferred to use the term “servant” became preferable.⁴ Recalling the argument of T.W. Smith, a late nineteenth-century historian of Canadian slavery, Harvey Amani Whitfield explains that servants and slaves were essentially “one and the same.”⁵ Coupled with the common practice of re-enslavement, as we will see, the security of free blacks was often tenuous. Calculating the actual number of slaves is therefore a challenge; by extension, discernment between runaway slave or servant advertisements is not always clear. Historians widely understand that the two versions of bondage were nearly identical in practice. Nevertheless, out of an intent to avoid speculation and to maintain a concentrated focus, this paper looks exclusively at advertisements that identify bound black laborers as slaves rather than servants.

Historians have long acknowledged the utility of runaway slave advertisements in providing an honest glimpse into the nature of slavery, yet a formal and devoted study of these

³ Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 49.

⁴ Robin W. Winks, *The Blacks in Canada: A History*. 2nd ed. (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997), 45.

⁵ Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 10.

primary documents from the Loyalist Maritimes has never been done at length. Loyalism is a well-studied topic, both on the Maritimes and beyond. A clear majority of the history written about Loyalists around the world focuses on the experience of the white settlers, although a sizable amount of these works mention the history of black Loyalists.⁶ Surprisingly, although historians have examined slavery to a great extent in other parts of the colonial Atlantic, less time has been devoted to the study of the institution in what eventually became Canada.⁷

Similarly, written histories on runaway slaves are pervasive in the cases of other North American

⁶ Much has been written on Loyalist history. For a closer look at the history of the Island of Saint John (Prince Edward Island), see J.M Bumsted, *Land, Settlement, and Politics on Eighteenth-Century Prince Edward Island* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987). Similarly, scholars of Nova Scotian Loyalists should consult Neil MacKinnon, *This Unfriendly Soil: The Loyalist Experience in Nova Scotia 1783-1791* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986). Those interested in a global history of Loyalists should see Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), a book that asserts that Loyalists had an active role in imperial growth, that they held values of liberty, and that they increasingly resisted the hierarchical and centralized aspects of the British empire. Regarding blacks in the Maritimes, Jasanoff focuses mainly on free black Loyalists and the experience of those who went to Sierra Leone. Her discussion on slavery is present but should be read with the support of more specific works on enslavement, such as an article by Catherine M.A. Cottreau-Robins, "Searching for the Enslaved in Nova Scotia's Loyalist Landscape," *Acadiensis* 43, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2014), <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/Acadiensis/article/view/22041/25576>. Cottreau-Robins's work is a case study on Loyalist slavery that uses the historical record, archaeological evidence, and landscape study of Nova Scotia to reconsider the effects that slavery had in a world traditionally remembered as a haven for free black Loyalists. Cottreau-Robins wonders "could another research layer be added" to support a dearth of historical evidence on the enslaved in Nova Scotia. To this point, the findings of runaway slave advertisements are very useful in contributing to her multidisciplinary approach to Loyalist history.

⁷ Those interested in the relevant histories written about slavery south of the Maritimes in the American colonies (and eventual states) should see works like Antonio T. Bly, "A Prince among Pretending Free Men: Runaway Slaves in Colonial New England Revisited," *Massachusetts Historical Review*, 14 (2012), 87-118, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5224/masshistrevi.14.1.0087>, and Robert E. Desrochers, Jr., "Slave-For-Sale Advertisements and Slavery in Massachusetts, 1704-1781," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 59, no. 3 (July 2002), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3491467>, as well as Carole Watterson Troxler, "Re-enslavement of Black Loyalists: Mary Postel in South Carolina, East Florida, and Nova Scotia," *Acadiensis* 37, no. 2 (Summer/Autumn 2002), <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/Acadiensis/article/view/11149/11873>, the latter of which bridges the history of global Loyalism, the Maritimes, and the re-enslavement of free black Loyalists. History of slavery within Canada is much less prevalent, although several books on black Canadians devote a chapter or so to this study. See Robin W. Winks, *The Blacks in Canada: A History*. 2nd ed. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997) and James W. St.G. Walker, *A History of Blacks in Canada: A Study Guide for Teachers and Students* (Ottawa: Minister of State Multiculturalism, 1980). Full-length work on slavery in Canada is quite limited, although the work of T. W. Smith, "The Slave in Canada," *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society*, 10: (1899), is an early and useful essay. The only full-length published work on Loyalist slavery in the Maritimes is that by Harvey Amani Whitfield, *North to Bondage: Loyalist Slavery in the Maritimes* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016). This book provides much of the critical context and specific details to my research. The book hones in on the unique definition of Maritime slavery, the agency retained by the enslaved, and the rise of racism in the region. It does leave space, however, for a deeper, original study to take place on the area's printed runaway slave advertisements and on runaway slaves in general.

colonies, yet any extensive work remains to be written on the fugitive experiences of those who absconded in the Maritimes.

Though historians do not leave us with a complete history of runaway slaves of the Loyalist Maritimes, we can draw upon their works to situate this paper amidst a comprehensive context. After the 1783 Treaty of Paris brought an end to the American War of Independence, thirty thousand Loyalists evacuated the new United States and made their way north, bringing with them at least twelve hundred slaves.⁸ The ideals of the recent American Revolution surrounded Loyalists who fled the United States, thus, notions of freedom and liberty complicated and contributed to the ideologies of Loyalist masters and the people they enslaved. Faced by the influx, the Maritimes became a unique setting where the enslaved lived alongside nearly three thousand free blacks.⁹ Although such an incongruous situation was somewhat unusual in the context of North American slavery, similarities to other parts of the continent serve as a reminder of the strong ties between this region to elsewhere. The geographic origins of the Loyalist migration served as the source of influential institutional patterns of slavery. Shaped by the diverse and “broader trends of New England, northeastern North America, and the British Atlantic,” the Maritimes reflected certain aspects of the societies and economies of these regions.¹⁰ Indeed, the mixed labor and economy of the Maritimes reflected those of New England and the Middle Colonies.¹¹ As they relocated north, Loyalists brought with them their printing presses. They founded newspapers, and by those means they created a space for masters

⁸ Identifying the precise population of the enslaved is impossible; a “growing sensitivity” to the problematic morality of the institution meant that slaves were often interchangeably called servants, rendering historical documents ambiguous to this end. Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 151; Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 11.

⁹ Winks, *The Blacks in Canada*, 28; Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles*, 353.

¹⁰ Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 7.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 45.

to place advertisements for runaway slaves. These documents are “invaluable.”¹² They offer honest profiles of individual slaves and thus give crucial insight into the nature of slavery of a particular region.

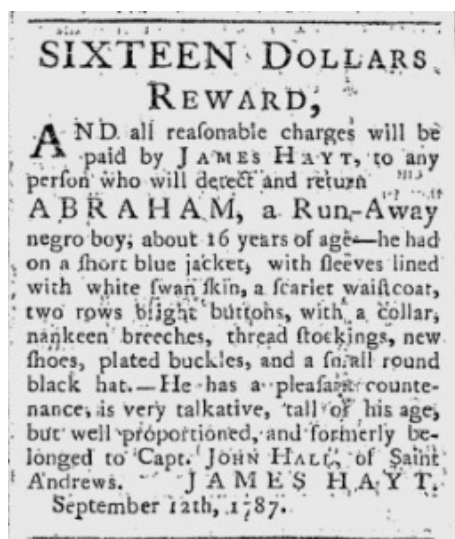
Recognizing the inherent indispensability of these advertisements and attempting to fill a lack of scholarship on the subject, this paper seeks to better understand the nature of slavery in the Maritimes and to highlight moments where individuals resisted enslavement. In order to achieve this aim, it is necessary to begin with a detailed overview of the findings of runaway slave advertisements from Loyalist newspapers in the Maritimes. Next, a discussion will take place on how these advertisements complicate traditional understanding of the Loyalist Maritimes. Following this review, an analysis of the patterns observed throughout the findings and a comparison to runaway slave advertisements from other regions will reveal the nature of the region’s slavery. Lastly, this paper will underscore how runaway slave advertisements importantly reveal moments where individuals resisted enslavement.

THE FINDINGS

To get a sense of a typical finding, one illustrative example from *The Saint John Gazette* is included below:¹³

¹² Antonio T. Bly, “A Prince among Pretending Free Men: Runaway Slaves in Colonial New England Revisited,” *Massachusetts Historical Review*, 14 (2012), 88, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5224/masshistrevi.14.1.0087>

¹³ Runaway slave advertisement, *The Saint John Gazette* (Saint John), 2, no. 75, 19 October 1787.



The advertisement for Abraham is similar in size and content to other findings. Though brevity was an important consideration for masters, their willingness to invest in lengthy descriptions (and therefore the printing space) indicates the significance of slaves to their master. Like most runaway slave advertisements found in Loyalist newspapers, this particular posting contained a description of the runaway, mention of his clothes and of a reward, and details that offered context to the situation and suggested direction of the flight. Other runaway slave advertisements from the Loyalist Maritimes reveal these generalized aspects of the notice — identification details, the value of the individual, and the situational details. Looking at runaway slave advertisements from these three angles will allow us to draw patterns about the nature of slavery in the Maritimes. As we will see later, these statistics are useful because they help to set Maritime colonies in the greater context of North American slavery.

Runaway slave advertisements are useful by nature, because they provide detailed profiles of enslaved individuals. One common identification detail included in these advertisements was a name for every runaway. Advertisements for runaway black slaves always identified the individual solely by their first name, for example, “ABRAHAM,” “PHILLIS,”

“TOM,” “POLL,” “PRINCE,” “STATIA,” “BOB,” “NERO.”¹⁴ On the other hand, masters identified black, white (or unspecified) absconding servants and apprentices by both their first and last names, in the cases of “JOHN GIBSON ALIAS JOHN BOOCHER,” “*Henry Jones*,” “Amos Sweet,” “DICK HOPEWELL,” “JOHN KNAPP,” “JOSEPH MURPHY,” and “ELIZABETH SWABB.”¹⁵ We can find one exception to this trend in a single runaway slave advertisement where Joseph Odel had his master’s last name, and where his fellow absconder Peter Lawrence had a surname that differed from his master Phillip Earl.¹⁶ Aside from this outlier, most masters generally did not use last names when naming their slaves.

Slaveowners also frequently specified the sex and age of the enslaved, as well as mention of any unique markers (see Appendix B, Tables 1 and 2). Over 60 percent of the runaway slaves were men, a clear majority. Many men were described as tall, a detail in these advertisements that should not be overlooked — though a noticeable height could condemn a slave to recognition by a subscriber of the paper, it also suggests the advantages to size and strength for the escapee’s journey. For age, the advertisements specify the ages of ten out of sixteen women (63 percent) and sixteen out of twenty-eight examples of men running away (57 percent). From this data, it is clear that the majority of absconding women and men were in their mid-to-late

¹⁴ Runaway slave advertisement, *The Saint John Gazette*, 2, no. 75, 19 October 1787; Runaway slave advertisement, *The Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle* (Halifax), 15, no. 1019, 18 October 1785; Runaway slave advertisement, *The Nova Scotia Packet and General Advertiser* (Shelburne), 1, no. 62, 6 July 1786; Runaway slave advertisement, *The Saint John Gazette*, 6, no. 281, 30 September 1791; Runaway slave advertisement, *The Saint John Gazette*, 7, no. 320, 29 June 1792; Runaway slave advertisement, *The Saint John Gazette*, 7, no. 320, 29 June 1792; Runaway slave advertisement, *The Saint John Gazette*, 11, no. 555, 6 January 1797; Runaway slave advertisement, *The Saint John Gazette*, 11, no. 572, 5 May 1797.

¹⁵ Runaway slave advertisement, *The Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, 15, no. 1005, 12 July 1785; Runaway slave advertisement, *The Nova Scotia Packet and General Advertiser*, 1, no. 78, 19 October 1786; Runaway slave advertisement, *The Saint John Gazette*, 7, no. 320, 29 June 1792; Runaway slave advertisement, *The Saint John Gazette*, 7, no. 320, 29 June 1792; Runaway advertisement, *The Saint John Gazette*, 12, no. 591, 15 September 1797; Runaway slave advertisement, *The Nova Scotia Royal Gazette* (Halifax), 2, no. 76, 17 June 1802; Runaway slave advertisement, *The Nova Scotia Royal Gazette*, 2, no. 66, 8 April 1802.

¹⁶ Runaway slave advertisement, *Royal Gazette*, 10 July 1792, in Harvey Amani Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes: A History in Documents* (Peterborough, Broadview Press, 2018), 61.

twenties (see Appendix B, Table 2).¹⁷ Whitfield notes that “women and families made up a significant minority” of runaway slaves, and indeed, women made up nearly 37 percent of individuals running away in the findings (see Appendix B, Table 2).¹⁸ Overall, though, it is not surprising to see men running away more often than women, due to the fact that men often had more relative advantages in the context slavery by which to escape. Though enslaved men and women of the Maritimes alike were “multi-occupational labourers,” the maternal responsibilities of women represented a challenge to escape and therefore restricted their mobility.¹⁹

It is also clear that masters relied heavily on descriptions that would set their slaves apart in a crowd. Advertisements listed many unique markers. The prevalent descriptions tended to be physical. “Smooth face” was nearly as common as descriptions of the enslaved being “very much pitted with the small pox,” although portraits were not always so corporeal.²⁰ Enslavers duly noted the facial expression and usual humor of a slave’s “countenance,” whether it tended to be agreeable or brooding.²¹ Advertisements also revealed injuries and wounds afflicting the enslaved, hints towards abuse, and possible signs of African origins. “Lump above eye,” “scar on his cheek and another on his chin,” and “has his Country marks on his back in the form of a Square” are all descriptions of said unique markers that appeared in the findings.²² Though masters intended for these descriptions to support the identification of individual slaves, common

¹⁷ Runaway slave advertisement, *Royal Gazette*, 25 July 1786, in Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes*, 47; Runaway slave advertisement, *Royal Gazette*, 9 July 1816, in Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes*, 70.

¹⁸ Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 80.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 53.

²⁰ Runaway slave advertisement, *Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, 22 May 1781, in Harvey Amani Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes: A History in Documents* (Peterborough, Broadview Press, 2018), 30.

²¹ Runaway slave advertisement, *The Saint John Gazette* (Saint John), 2, no. 75, 19 October 1787.

²² Runaway slave advertisement, *Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, 1 September 1772, in Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes*, 26; Runaway slave advertisement, *Royal Gazette*, 20 August 1799, in Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes*, 65; Runaway slave advertisement, *Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, 20 May 1783, in Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes*, 32.

trends reveal that many enslavers signaled towards similar aspects of a runaway's physicality, therefore underscoring typical physical features and afflictions found among fugitive slaves.

Another common unique marker in the advertisements, besides the plentiful physical descriptions, were the linguistic ones. Though not in every example, some advertisements disclosed that slaves spoke "broken English" or that they spoke "English like the West India negroes," suggesting probable African or Caribbean origins.²³ When an enslaver qualified a slave's speech as being "good English," it suggests that a runaway's English may not have been native.²⁴ The diverse origins and influences of many Maritime slaves shine through linguistic details such as these.

Beyond the identification details of names, sex, age, and unique markers, patterns regarding the value of the enslaved are also evident through the advertisements. The amount of reward posted, the skills possessed by the enslaved, and the valuables they carried with them as they fled are the factors that suggest values. Most of the thirty advertisements offered a specific reward (see Appendix B, Table 4). Others still were as vague as suggesting that masters would "handsomely" reward capture.²⁵ One Nova Scotian advertisement promised only an eight-dollar reward for the return of a runaway family to bondage, but even information leading to their capture would have resulted in "a Reward of FIVE DOLLARS."²⁶ These amounts varied greatly, from two to twenty dollars, one to five pounds, and one to five guineas. As will be examined in comparative detail later, the inclusion of a reward is important to recognize, as it was tied to a

²³ Runaway slave advertisement, *Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, 20 May 1783, in Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes*, 32; Runaway slave advertisement, *Saint John Gazette*, 15 July 1784, in Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes*, 36.

²⁴ Runaway slave advertisement, *Weekly Chronicle*, 15 March 1794, in Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes*, 62.

²⁵ Runaway slave advertisement, *The Saint John Gazette*, 7, no. 320, 29 June 1792.

²⁶ Runaway slave advertisement, *Nova Scotia Packet and General Advertiser*, 12 October 1785, in Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes*, 42; Runaway slave advertisement, *Saint John Gazette*, 30 September 1791, in Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes*, 57.

greater, growing Atlantic trend of “the individual pursuit of wealth.”²⁷ Interestingly, the one example that did not specify the reward was one of the latest runaway slave advertisements, published in 1806.²⁸ Still, the overall data supports the aforementioned importance of a monetary reward in retrieving an absconder.

No doubt tied to the posted reward amounts, the values of these runaway slaves were often dependent upon the skills they possessed. If listing a skill at all, the newspapers revealed similar occupations within the advertisements: “carpenter” and “sailor” both appeared at least twice, and “cooper” once.²⁹ The trades of the Atlantic world were accordingly made evident through the postings, indicating the value masters placed on the skills of the enslaved.

Perhaps in response to the loss of labor, masters felt it important to spend advertising money on descriptions of the articles of clothing that runaways carried with them, considering such items additional lost property. Twenty-two of the thirty advertisements mentioned the clothing that the enslaved wore or carried off, and many in great detail. For example, Bob took with him “a round great blue jacket, black grey trowsers [sic], a striped blue and white cotton waistcoat, a black and white woollen shirt, a round hat, a pair of seal skin moccasins [sic], &c.”³⁰ Women generally transported similar items as Dinah did in 1786: “a blue and white Ticking Petticoat, a purple and white Callico [sic] short Gown, and an old blue Cloak.”³¹ The significance of attire, including the potential to “self-fashion” and sell articles for profit, will be

²⁷ Bly, “A Prince among Pretending Free Men,” 94.

²⁸ Runaway slave advertisement, *Royal Gazette*, 24 December 1806, in Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes*, 68.

²⁹ Runaway slave advertisement, *Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, 20 May 1783, in Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes*, 32; Runaway slave advertisement, *Nova Scotia Packet and General Advertiser*, 12 October 1785, in Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes*, 42; Runaway slave advertisement, *Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, 20 May 1783, in Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes*, 32; Runaway slave advertisement, *The Nova Scotia Packet and General Advertiser*, 1, no. 62, 6 July 1786; Runaway slave advertisement, *Saint John Gazette*, 15 July 1784, in Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes*, 36.

³⁰ Runaway slave advertisement, *Saint John Gazette*, 11, no. 555, 6 January 1797.

³¹ Runaway slave advertisement, *Nova Scotia Packet and General Advertiser*, 3 August 1786, in Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes*, 48.

examined in greater detail below.³² Overall, the advertisements give us insight into how enslavers considered the value of the absconders and of the things they carried as judged by them.

The advertisements provide insight into the directional and temporal situation of escape through citation of the master's name and mention of cities, warnings, publication details and patterns, as well as fugitive companions. First of all, the advertisements included the master's name and often specified their town of residence at the end of each advertisement. In addition, a few advertisements ventured a supposed direction. For example, Titus Knapp placed an advertisement in the *Saint John Gazette*, noting that his slave Nero from Westmorland, New Brunswick, was "supposed to have come this way."³³ Slaveowners also named the slaves' distant origins, or indicated the dwelling of former masters; in one particularly exemplifying posting, Michael Wallace made it clear that his slave Bill had "mediated an attempt to get on board a ship[...] bound to Newfoundland" and was "a native of South Carolina."³⁴ Such directional hints help illustrate how, as an Atlantic region, the Maritimes were so connected to other parts of North America and also highlight the diverse origins of the migrants in the Maritimes.

This Atlantic influence shined through the advertisements in another situational aspect. Twenty of the thirty ads warned subscribers, most notably "masters of vessels," against sheltering the runaways, threatening prosecution to any offenders. Such a present pattern shapes Maritime slavery around how the society and the economy of the Atlantic made escape opportunities possible and affirms one way in which the Atlantic economy touched the lives of slaves. Additionally, the potential for others to shelter the slaves during their escape indicates a

³² Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes*, 54.

³³ Runaway slave advertisement, *Saint John Gazette*, 11, no. 572, 5 May 1797.

³⁴ Runaway slave advertisement, *Weekly Chronicle*, 15 March 1794, in Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes*, 62.

responsiveness to the notions of liberty that the Revolution disseminated, as well as a concern about the lack of morality about the institution.

Social and economic opportunities were not the only influences upon fugitive slaves. Seasons could also encourage or discourage escape. The date of publication illustrates this temporal trend (see Appendix B, Figure 1). Most slaves ran away in the warmer months. From the findings, it is clear that more slaves ran away in the months of spring (which saw eight advertisements about flights taking place between March and May) and summer (where fourteen advertisements ran for runaways occurring from June and August). Fall accounted for six postings about slaves running away between the months of September to November, whereas winter was the season with the fewest examples — only two advertisements signaled running away taking place between December and February.³⁵ Reinforced by hints of enslaved people's knowledge of regional shipping patterns, as seen above in the case of Bill, seasonal trends in fugitive behavior reveal that enslaved people contemplated when and how to most effectively run away, signaling their broad understanding of the economy and weather patterns. Details regarding the months of flight, therefore, are useful ones to draw upon out of the publication details because they reveal the temporal and seasonal factors that influenced the decision to run away.

Another publication pattern observed among the advertisements was the presence of repeated ads. At least four of the advertisements underwent at least one repeat run in the newspapers in ensuing weeks.³⁶ *The Saint John Gazette* ran as many as six successive weekly

³⁵ Several advertisements were posted in the calendar month following the first date of slave's absence. As such, I phrase these sentences as, for example, "eight advertisements about flights taking place between March and May" because the month for which I counted an advertisement was based on the month of absconsion found in the primary source, as opposed to the month that the advertisement ran. See note accompanying Figure 1 of Appendix B.

³⁶ Twenty-two runaway slave advertisements used in this paper were found exclusively through Harvey Amani Whitfield's edited collection of primary sources, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes* and did not overlap with my independent research. Whitfield does not identify if any of these advertisements were published more than once.

publications of a single advertisement.³⁷ As will be discussed later, these patterns are notable because they indicate the minimum amount of time that the runaways had escaped bondage.

A final noteworthy situational pattern observed in the advertisements is a communal one. Though a clear majority of the advertisements were for fugitives fleeing on their own, a noteworthy 27 percent of the notices sought the capture of two or more runaways (See Appendix B, Table 3). Indeed, 49 percent of the individuals listed in runaway slave advertisements experienced their flight alongside others. Whitfield describes this as “a testament to the importance of family bonds among slaves,” yet multiple ads go beyond familial relations and evince strong friendships, in the cases of those like Joseph Odel and Peter Laurence of Nova Scotia, and Gill and Dick of New Brunswick.³⁸ Whether in regards to locations mentioned, warnings issued, details and patterns published, or companions included in the runaway slave advertisements, the details in the advertisements are useful for highlighting the situational trends of Loyalist slavery in the Maritimes.

CANADIAN HISTORY COMPLICATED

The patterns found regarding the identification, value, and direction of runaway slaves, therefore, are extremely useful for discovering the nature of Loyalist slavery in the Maritimes. In looking at these ads and acknowledging the generalizations that form out of the concluded patterns we justly bring a small but nonetheless present and important aspect of Loyalist life — that is, slavery — to light. These advertisements are significant to study because they contribute

³⁷ Runaway slave advertisement, *The Saint John Gazette*, 11, 572, 5 May 1797.

³⁸ Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes*, 42; Runaway slave advertisement, *Royal Gazette*, 10 July 1792, in Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes*, 61; Runaway slave advertisement, *Royal Gazette*, 15 December 1802, in Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes*, 67.

to a needed holistic, comprehensive understanding of the complicated and unique history of the Maritimes.

Historically, slavery has been absent from “Canada’s national narrative.”³⁹ It is often seen merely as a place a refuge for both white and black Loyalists.⁴⁰ Indeed, while some have lauded white Loyalists as the “founding fathers” of Canada, the bonds that they placed upon other people have been discretely swept aside and forgotten in historical memory.⁴¹ As a result, the verifiable conflict, “racial animosities,” and lack of harmony that existed in the Maritimes deserve acknowledgement.⁴² Runaway slave advertisements are useful to this point because they prove the existence of the institution of slavery and remind us that although the Loyalists were “refugees,” they were also “masters”; they did not only flee the new United States, they forced bonds upon other humans.⁴³ Furthermore, the names of these enslavers were just as marked on runaway slave advertisements as the names of the enslaved. Beyond bearing witness to a moment of an enslaved person’s life, these advertisements simultaneously signified the tangible, personal impact that enslavement and absconsion had on all members of Loyalist Maritime society. Observing the findings in these newspapers, therefore, helps to redefine more accurately Loyalism in British North America and testify to the active practice of enslavement among Loyalists. In this way, the true and complex nature of Loyalist society and slavery is acknowledged.

These ads also bear witness to the practice of re-enslavement. The popular narrative of Canada as a “land of freedom,” and the promulgation of the “heroic story of the free blacks”

³⁹ Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 18.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Jasanoff, *Liberty’s Exiles*, 10.

⁴² Ibid., 174.

⁴³ Ibid., 29; Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 117.

ignores the fact that the institution of slavery in the Maritimes was active, complex, and euphemistic.⁴⁴ Though such claims of freedom are not entirely inaccurate (Shelburne's neighboring free black community, Birchtown, for example, was "one of the largest free black settlements in North America"), black Loyalists often labored as indentured servants "working under conditions that replicated" enslavement.⁴⁵ Furthermore, a proper understanding of freedom for those of African descent in the Maritimes must take into account the fact that "free blacks regularly suffered re-enslavement."⁴⁶ James Cox's warning in an advertisement for his indentured servant Henry Jones, that he "will probably say he is a free man," aligned with this reality.⁴⁷ Regardless of whether or not the word of the master or the bound laborer was determined as true, the mere fact that this advertisement was placed in the trust that Jones' word would be discounted importantly reveals the tenuousness of free status among blacks in British North America. A straightforward analysis of these advertisements is crucial in revealing the nuanced complexities of Loyalist slavery and for challenging previous misconceptions.

Comparing runaway slave advertisements of the Maritimes to those of the American colonies complicates the notions that Canada was a venue for liberty and that it was fundamentally distinct from the slaveholding United States. Analyses of the patterns found in the Loyalist newspapers — identification of the runaway, their value, and the situational details — to the same patterns of newspapers from elsewhere places the narratives of enslaved individuals in the Maritimes in conversation with the experiences of those elsewhere. In this way, we can identify the particularities of the lives of the enslaved in the Maritimes. The inclusion of a name

⁴⁴ Ibid., 41; Runaway slave advertisement, *The Nova Scotia Packet and General Advertiser*, 1, no. 78, 19 October 1786.

⁴⁵ Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles*, 172; Ibid., 174.

⁴⁶ Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 13.

⁴⁷ Runaway advertisement, *The Nova Scotia Packet and General Advertiser*, 1, no. 78, 19 October 1786; Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 13.

is detail similar to what masters published in other American colonies. Planters in colonial South Carolina (a colony of origin for many Loyalist settlers) were dependent upon names “more than any other identification,” because, like their Maritime counterparts, they wanted to ensure they were returned their proper human property.⁴⁸ Though a fugitive could use an alias to try to hide their identity, it was clearly of use for masters across North America to furnish fellow newspaper subscribers with the names of their runaway slaves.

More difficult to feign are the physical identifiers in a description of a runaways. The majority of enslaved Maritime fugitives were male, running away on their own, and in their mid-to-late twenties.⁴⁹ Similar descriptions of runaways dominated other regions. In colonial South Carolina, the average runaways were also young single men between eighteen and thirty.⁵⁰ Youth did not only provide absconders with the necessary physical strength for escape, for labor experience also influenced the success of fugitive endeavors. Young men around the age of twenty from the Ohio Valley at the turn of the nineteenth century constituted the majority of runaways as the nature of their work provided them with better knowledge of the area and preparedness for the journey.⁵¹ It is unsurprising therefore, due to their physical ability and geographic and occupational opportunities, that men in the Maritimes and elsewhere were able to abscond on their own, therefore making up the larger percentage of runaway slaves. Indeed, the percentage of advertisements for women fugitives in the Maritimes accordingly is 37 percent; in South Carolina it was close to this amount, at 33 percent (see Appendix A, Table 1).⁵² As these

⁴⁸ Daniel E. Meaders, “South Carolina Fugitives as Viewed Through Local Colonial Newspapers with Emphasis on Runaway Notices 1732-1801,” *The Journal of Negro History*, 60, no. 2 (April 1975): 312, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2717376>.

⁴⁹ Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 10.

⁵⁰ Meaders, “South Carolina Fugitives,” 292.

⁵¹ Robert M. Owens, “Law and Disorder North of the Ohio: Runaways and the Patriarchy of Print Culture, 1793-1815,” *Indiana Magazine of History*, 103, no. 3 (September 2007): 269, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27792818>.

⁵² Meaders, “South Carolina Fugitives,” 292.

patterns show, the average advertisements in Loyalist newspapers provide descriptions that are similar to profiles of runaways from other regions further south. Such identifiers are significant to study because they connect Loyalist Maritime slavery to enslavement elsewhere.

A look into the stated values of the individuals reveals commonalities to more global patterns. The inclusion of a specific reward amount, as the advertisements tended to have, is part of a larger trend that occurred in contemporary New England. As Antonio T. Bly states, it was only in the later years of the eighteenth century in the northern colonies that masters published rewards for returning runaway slaves in with specific amounts.⁵³

In advertisements from the Maritimes, monetary values such as rewards evince the value of the enslaved as do descriptions of the skills they possessed, whether as artisans, domestic help, or sailors. The skills listed in the advertisements clearly reflect the mixed labor economy, tying the nature of Maritime slavery to that of New England and the Middle Colonies.⁵⁴ Focusing on fugitive slave advertisements of Virginia, historian Tom Costa explains how, as among the Loyalists of the Maritimes, holding a skill in this southern colony represented “valuable investments” and in this case, skilled slaves “appear disproportionately in runaway ads.”⁵⁵ What this signifies is that the institution of slavery in the Maritimes had a similar labor basis to other areas of North America, and that the degree to which masters perceived skills as especially valuable follows trends observed beyond the Maritimes.

In addition to the listed skills of slaves, the types of clothes carried by the runaways as they fled from bondage serve as a potential listed source of material value. For the enslaved of the Maritimes and New England alike, extra articles of clothing were extremely valuable “if

⁵³ Bly, “A Prince among Pretending Free Men,” 93.

⁵⁴ Whitfield. *North to Bondage*, 45.

⁵⁵ Tom Costa, “What Can We Learn from a Digital Database of Runaway Slave Advertisements?” *International Social Science Review*, 76, no. 1 (2001): 39, accessed April 23, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41887056>.

passing as free.”⁵⁶ Clothing also represented a unique potential source of income if an absconder decided to sell his or her wardrobe. Documenting such possession was important to enslavers because, as described in the case of runaway advertisements from antebellum Georgia, a slave’s clothing “became his identifier” and also represented an additional loss of a master’s property.⁵⁷ The findings of runaway slave advertisements from Loyalist newspapers show that masters gave a similar authority to the descriptions of the clothing of the runaways. Clearly, clothing held an important position of value in runaway slave advertisements seen in the Maritimes and down the entire continent. With patterns comparable to those published elsewhere in the colonial Americas, it is clear that the reward amount, the noted skills, and the clothes mentioned in the advertisements of newspapers from the Maritimes are useful in understanding what how Loyalist masters valued their slaves.

Lastly, a comparison of these advertisements to others found across North America is also useful because it reveals commonalities in the situational facts of time and direction of each flight. The time of year, the means to escape, the company runaways offered each other, and the publication details were the shared aspects of this pattern, as the advertisements indicate that most individuals who were seeking freedom from the Maritimes absconded in warmer months, in spring and summer. Such a pattern is also seen in New England advertisements, which indicate that most of the running away took place in August.⁵⁸

Slipping away was not always difficult. Sometimes bonded to ship captains and situated in an Atlantic economy, Maritime slaves, particularly men, had great opportunity to escape by

⁵⁶ Bly, “A Prince among Pretending Free Men,” 96.

⁵⁷ Patricia Hunt-Hurst, “‘Round Homespun Coat & Pantaloon of the Same’: Slave Clothing as Reflected in Fugitive Slave Advertisements in Antebellum Georgia,” *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, 83, no. 4 (Winter 1999): 730, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40584195>.

⁵⁸ Bly, “A Prince among Pretending Free Men,” 99.

vessel, which may be one reason for why they and their New England neighbors most frequently disappeared in solitude.⁵⁹ (At the same time, these disappearances were sometimes the works of abductors, who represented a threat to the property of the enslavers and the lives of the enslaved by re-enslaving fugitives for themselves.) Situations where multiple slaves ran away in the Maritimes at the same time did occur, but such instances seldom involved more than two slaves at a time. As a result, the nature of escape contrasted greatly between the Maritimes and Virginia or South Carolina, where slaves tended to escape in groups.⁶⁰ This aspect of the advertisements supports the argument for the role of the Atlantic economy in shaping the experience of the absconders.

Evident among Maritime advertisements, the proliferation of repeat ads suggests that slaves were sometimes absent from their enslavers for at least a week at a time, or indefinitely. In colonial Virginia society, masters often quickly captured their slaves.⁶¹ Maritime slaves, on the other hand, had “expanded opportunities” to successfully escape, due to their access to ships.⁶² In general, analyzing the situational details of the runaway slave advertisements in the Maritimes and comparing the findings to known patterns of other regions is useful to place Loyalist slavery in the greater context of enslavement across the colonies.

A comparative analysis of these advertisements provides more than an illumination of common patterns and trends. This analogical approach, when applied to other advertisements of British North America, provides us with an opportunity to reevaluate Canada’s unfronted history of slavery. The Loyalists migrated to other parts of the colonial British Atlantic. Significantly, Loyalist migrants also took their enslaved property to Quebec. Marcel Trudel, a

⁵⁹ T.W. Smith, “The Slave in Canada,” *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society*, 10: (1899): 94.

⁶⁰ Bly, “A Prince among Pretending Free Men,” 108.

⁶¹ Costa, “What Can We Learn from a Digital Database of Runaway Slave Advertisements?” 42.

⁶² Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 61.

historian of French Canada, notes that the Loyalist arrival to Quebec starting in 1783 prompted a dramatic increase in the number of black slaves arriving to the colony.⁶³ For example, between 1731-1740, 43 black slaves arrived, but at the height of the migration, 337 came between 1781-1790.⁶⁴ Sometimes, this migration received a nod from publications in local newspapers. For example, a private sale advertisement in the *Quebec Gazette* in 1783 sought to sell a female slave “who came from New-York with the Loyalists.”⁶⁵ North American masters also placed advertisements in Quebec to find slaves who escaped to the province. Ireland escaped from William Gilliland of Willsborough, New York, who posted an advertisement in the *Quebec Gazette*, believing that his slave escaped to Canada.⁶⁶ Advertisements that sought to reach audiences beyond a master’s locale underscore how the enslaved participated in the high degree of migration and movement that occurred throughout North America. Furthermore, comparisons of these advertisements between Quebec and the Maritimes are relevant because they bear witness to the interconnectedness of the area, making the topic of slavery in Canada not an isolated event, but an expansive one.

As demonstrated, we can make valuable comparisons to the Maritimes through an examination of the runaway slave advertisements posted in Quebec. The Loyalist movement out of the United States to parts of British North America can be found in runaway slave advertisements as well. For instance, an advertisement from 1779 noted that an enslaved black man named Ishmaël, living in Montreal with his owner John Turner but originally from Albany, had a “tone of voice peculiar to New-England, where he was born.”⁶⁷ As such, advertisements

⁶³ Marcel Trudel, trans. George Tombs, *Canada’s Forgotten Slaves: Two Centuries of Bondage* (Montréal: Véhicule Press, 2013), 72.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁶⁵ Slave sale advertisement, *Quebec Gazette*, 6 November 1783, in Frank Mackey, *Done with Slavery: The Black Fact in Montreal* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2010), 325.

⁶⁶ Runaway slave advertisement, *Quebec Gazette*, 19 September 1771, in *Ibid.*, 318.

⁶⁷ Runaway slave advertisement, *Quebec Gazette*, 29 July 1779, in *Ibid.*, 322.

for enslaved black runaways were similar in nature to those of the Maritimes, although the presence of escape notices for Indigenous slaves was uniquely present in Quebec. Historian Frank Mackey amassed a collection of the fifty-one published notices in Quebec from 1760–1840.⁶⁸ Though most of these examples were in English and a single one was bilingual, a particular French-language advertisement illustrates the common aspects of many runaway slave advertisements from Quebec to those of the Maritimes.

This notice, published in the *Gazette* in 1792, documented the escape of Jack, an enslaved black man from Quebec.⁶⁹ As observed in advertisements of the Maritimes, slaveholders listed identification details prominently. “A NEGRO NAMED JACK BELONGING to William Grant, Esquire, of Quebec” commanded the attention of the reader to not only the man’s name but also to his master, William Grant.⁷⁰ Grant, a Scottish merchant and seigneur in Quebec, was loyal to the British crown and was a political leader in the colony.⁷¹ Like his slaveholding counterparts in the Maritimes, Grant briefly described Jack’s physical features and biography in terms of age, origin, height, strength, and language skills, reporting that “He is about 30 years old, born in Africa, about 5 feet 8 inches in height, robust, speaks English and French.”⁷² Jack’s age, height, strength, and distant origins were similar to the enslaved of the Maritimes, who were often fit young men. One noteworthy difference was the focus on language; though occasionally included in the advertisements of the Maritimes, this detail occurred much more often in Quebec, where both French and English were common.

⁶⁸ Mackey, *Done with Slavery*, 308.

⁶⁹ Runaway slave advertisement, *Quebec Gazette*, 15 March 1792, in Mackey, *Done with Slavery*, 335.

⁷⁰ “UN NEGRE NOMME JACK APPARTENANT à William Grant, Ecuyer, de Quebec” Ibid.

⁷¹ David Roberts, “GRANT, WILLIAM (1744-1805),” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 5, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed November 12, 2018, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/grant_william_1744_1805_5E.html.

⁷² “Il a environ 30 ans, né en Afrique, d’environ 5 pieds 8 pouces de haut, robuste, parle Anglois et François.” Runaway slave advertisement, *Quebec Gazette*, 15 March 1792, in Mackey, *Done with Slavery*, 335.

Mackey suggests that masters highlighted language skills in fugitive slave advertisements of Quebec as a slave could use different languages “to facilitate... escape,” with “fluency [being] an asset” to the fleeing slave and a potential detriment to the master.⁷³ In other words, specifying the languages of a fugitive slave was less important to masters of the Maritimes. At the same time, other identification details, such as age, physical appearance, and origin, seem to have held equal importance among Maritime and Quebec enslavers.

Hints towards the value of the enslaved can be seen in both Quebecois and Maritime runaway slave advertisements, though in different ways. In the example of Jack, Grant inserts a mention of a reward towards the end of the advertisement in the phrase “Whoever stops the aforementioned Negro and brings him to his master [...] will receive one guinea of reward, and will be reimbursed of all reasonable charges.”⁷⁴ Though similar to other advertisements posted in Quebec (for example, Fortune’s reward was for “EIGHT DOLLARDS” and Elizabeth McNiell offered “SIX DOLLARS” at the end of her reward for the fugitive Cuff) the embedded placement is notably different than in the Maritimes, where the presence of the vibrant Atlantic economy may have encouraged a proportionately greater number of masters to place the reward as the first line of the advertisement as incentive.⁷⁵ Another suggestion of value in the Quebecois ads is the mention of clothes. The clothes he carried with him demonstrates that Jack made sure to prepare accordingly for his cold escape, for it took place in February.⁷⁶ For instance, “He was wearing a winter coat of thick blue cloth lined with white flannel, and a waistcoat of the same

⁷³ Ibid., 309.

⁷⁴ “Quiconque arrêtera le susdit Nègre et l’amenera à son Maître [...] recevra une guinée de recompense, et sera remboursé de tous fraix raisonnables.” Runaway slave advertisement, *Quebec Gazette*, 15 March 1792, in Ibid., 335.

⁷⁵ Runaway slave advertisement, *Quebec Gazette*, 10 August 1780; Runaway slave advertisement, *Quebec Gazette*, 9 June 1785, in Ibid., 328.

⁷⁶ It is important to note that Jack escaped during an unusual time of year. Mackey notes that most flights “took place in the milder months (when the rivers were navigable).” Ibid., 310.

color; large culottes or breeches of thick brown cloth.”⁷⁷ As in the Maritimes, therefore, the runaway slave advertisements of Quebec reveal not only that slaves used the articles of clothing around them to help in their escape, but also that slaveowners considered this disappeared material a loss as well. The patterns of value posted in many advertisements of Quebec and the manner of expressing it closely align to those of the Maritimes, demonstrating that regardless of the language they employed in their advertisements or the location where they resided, Loyalist masters maintained a common vocabulary for their descriptions in runaway slave advertisements. Maritime slavery, therefore, is not an isolated system of bondage. Slaveowners across British North America shared similar practices of enslavement.

Lastly, the inclusion of Jack’s expected direction of flight is a pattern seldom seen in Maritime advertisements. Advertisements of Quebec, on the other hand, were much more liberal in their suppositions. Jack was just one escaping slave in Quebec whose direction was inferred (“It is thought that he will try to escape in the United States, having been seen Friday the 2 from the current at Grondines advancing towards Montreal or St Jean”).⁷⁸ Others include Cloe of Berthier (“She is supposed to have gone off in a canoe with a man...”), Nemo and Cash of Quebec (“The Lad was seen at Sorel[...] And there is reason to believe they are both lurking thereabout”), and Tight and Snow of Quebec (“They were seen crossing the River St Lawrence from the South side to L’Assomption about the first instant, and are supposed to have gone towards the Lake behind Montreal”).⁷⁹ The lack of such details in the Maritimes does not

⁷⁷ “Il portoit une bougrine de drap bleu épais doublé de flanelle blanche, et un Gilet de même couleur; des Grandes Culottes ou braies de grosse étofe brune.” Runaway slave advertisement, *Quebec Gazette*, 15 March 1792, in *Ibid.*, 335.

⁷⁸ “On pense qu’il tâchera de séchaper dans les Etats Unis, ayant été vu Vendredi le 2 du courant aux Grondines cheminant vers Montréal, ou St Jean.” *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Runaway slave advertisement, *Quebec Gazette*, 28 July 1791, in Mackey, *Done with Slavery*, 334; Runaway slave advertisement, *Quebec Gazette*, 4 November 1779, in *Ibid.*, 323; Runaway slave advertisement, *Quebec Gazette*, 9 September 1784, in *Ibid.*, 327.

necessarily demonstrates that masters in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick had significantly less awareness than their Quebec-inhabiting counterparts (although it may), but it does highlight a lack of urgency in disclosing these details to the newspaper's subscribers.⁸⁰

These patterns point to the geographic contrast between the Maritime colonies and Quebec, with the former defined by water boundaries and the latter mainly comprising of land. Enslaved individuals of the Atlantic colonies could escape situations of bondage discreetly (and likely with greater ease than their more inland counterparts in Quebec) because water almost entirely bordered the Maritime colonies. The region's economy made it so that Maritime slaves had frequent opportunities to disappear by ships who travelled along this water boundary.⁸¹ Alternatively, because water had less of an influence on the geographic bounds of Quebec, fugitives likely faced a slower, more arduous, land-based escape. Coupled with their knowledge of the runaway's destination, as discussed above, Quebec slaveowners could therefore employ more confidence in the idea of recapture. Whether in the Maritimes or in Quebec, runaway slave advertisements reveal how the experiences of fugitive slaves in British North America often were different colony to colony.

RESISTANCE

Although institutional and geographic contrasts differentiate the experiences of the bonded in separate regions, enslaved individuals held commonalities to one another. One aspect that runaway slaves of the Maritimes shared with others bonded in North America was a spirit of resistance to enslavement. The topic of resistance is a complex one that has evolved over time in the discipline of history. As Kenneth S. Greenberg writes in "Slave Resistance," early-to-mid-

⁸⁰ Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 80-81.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 61.

century historians of North American slavery such as Ulrich B. Phillips and Stanley M. Elkins define resistance as rebellion, citing few instances of such events and thus interpreting the behaviors of enslaved individuals as passive.⁸² In a chapter of *Slavery in the Americas*, Douglas R. Egerton highlights how slaves across the British colonies had varied motivations and means of resisting enslavement, but he confines his discussion on the subject of resistance to large-scale events like insurrections and rebellions.⁸³ Other scholars nuance and challenge this view. In *Weapons of the Weak*, James C. Scott examines examples of day-to-day resistance among peasants in Malaysia, suggesting that there is a “realm of resistance that is more shadowy and individual” than collective rebellion.⁸⁴ His attention to “a constant process of testing and renegotiation” between peasants and landlords is an idea transferrable to the situations between the enslaved blacks of the Maritimes and their enslavers.⁸⁵ Significantly, Scott focuses on “intentions rather than consequences, recognizing that many acts of resistance may fail to achieve their intended result,” which creates a space for us to acknowledge the moments of rebellion in the Maritimes that were quiet or quashed.⁸⁶ We can consider the actions of runaway slaves of the Maritimes as a form of everyday resistance in light of the understanding put forth by Scott. Historians have continued in a similar vein, describing resistance in broad, everyday terms to include acts such as damaging property or slowing the pace of labor. Such an angle is also more conducive to acknowledging the resistance of women in slavery, who were seldom leaders of insurrections.⁸⁷ Catherine Adams and Elizabeth H. Pleck echo this notion in writing of

⁸² Kenneth S. Greenberg, “Slave Resistance,” *Understanding and Teaching American Slavery*, edited by Bethany Jay and Cynthia Lynn Lyerly, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2016), 135.

⁸³ Douglas R. Egerton, “Slave Resistance,” *The Oxford Handbook of Slavery in the Americas*, edited by Robert L. Pacquette and Mark M. Smith, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 447-461.

⁸⁴ James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 265.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 255.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 290.

⁸⁷ Greenburg, “Slave Resistance,” 137.

enslaved women in colonial New England, arguing that the enslaved defined and achieved freedom by various means.⁸⁸ With experiences that often overlapped with those of colonial New England, the enslaved individuals of the Maritimes can often be understood in this context as well. Overall, the idea of resistance has become much broader, incorporating not just major rebellions but also daily acts that demonstrated a desire to be free.

The act of running away fits well within this understanding of resistance. Innately and undisputedly, these documents reveal that enslaved people physically and geographically removed themselves, if only temporarily, from bondage. Historian Antonio Bly states that the enslaved often “protested with their feet,” and Whitfield describes runaway slaves “rejecting the terms of their bondage” by escaping or by contesting their enslavement through legal confrontations.⁸⁹ Caution must be taken, however, in interpreting runaway advertisements. Coming from the pens and presses of Loyalist masters, fugitive slave advertisements have their limitations. In regard to resistance, these documents generally did not indicate specific motivations for flight. Questions arise as to the whether the enslaved were running away primarily in protest of their state of bondage or for external reasons instead, such as the desire to see family members. Most likely, multiple factors contributed to absconsion. As such, it is prudent to view these publications as limited or one-dimensional, to critically understand that the direct testimony of the enslaved is missing, and to avoid finite declarations of the motivations for running away.

Though it is wise to refrain from stating the absolute reasons an enslaved person had for running away, analyzing patterns can be a helpful process for conjecturing and understanding possible motives when the written record does not directly reflect the perspectives of those

⁸⁸ Catherine Adams & Elizabeth H. Pleck, *Love of Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 22.

⁸⁹ Bly, “A Prince Among Pretending Free Men,” 110; Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 80, 9-10.

running away. Such a practice is useful for interpreting runaway slave advertisements, as in some cases, albeit outright motivations for flight might not present, patterns of resistance come through rather clearly in some of the advertisements. For example, described as a “daring liar,” and having a “artful, gloomy, and malevolent look,” Prince, of Maugerville, New Brunswick, had attempted to abscond twice prior the publication of the advertisement.⁹⁰ Historian Antonio Bly argues that brooding, downcast looks such as Prince’s represented a slave’s “sass” and “served as a cover for other designs.”⁹¹ Prince’s master, John Agnew, likely advertised his slave’s crafty expression in an attempt to project his disapproval of Prince’s behavior and to credit the unruliness of his slave to “sassiness.” Prince did not passively accept his bonded status, and while we do not know his specific motivations for escape, his craftiness, tenacity and courage signal an enduring resistance to bondage. From the same newspaper issue as the advertisement for Prince, a different fugitive slave announcement could be explained by a host of reasons, such as the common desire of the enslaved to attain “liberty for themselves and their families,” or at a minimum, to avoid separation from each other.⁹² Whitfield argues that the latter of these motivations was the case of this particular advertisement, which sought to recover an indentured servant named Dick Hopewell, his enslaved pregnant wife Statia, and their two small children.⁹³ The threat of sale and separation from family, which was tragically actualized for Statia following the publication of the advertisement, not only reveals a possible motivation for running away, but also accentuates the risks the bound were willing to take in order to stay together as a family. The enslaved ran away for a number of factors, and although fugitive slave

⁹⁰ Runaway slave advertisement for Prince, *The Saint John Gazette*, 7, no. 320, 29 June 1792.

⁹¹ Antonio Bly, “Pretty, Sassy, Cool,” *The New England Quarterly*, 89, no. 3, September 2016, 475.

⁹² Adams and Pleck, *Love of Freedom*, 49.

⁹³ Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 81; Runaway slave advertisement for Statia and her family, *The Saint John Gazette*, 7, no. 320, 29 June 1792.

advertisements do not often directly reveal these reasons, they provide context that can be used to infer the motivations for their resistance.

These two examples of flight, as well as the other findings from the Maritimes, can be appropriately considered acts of resistance in conjunction with the literature written by historians on the subject. For want of a direct testimony, the interpretation of resistance through runaway slave advertisements remains a complicated topic. At the same time, the works of scholars to broaden the notion of resistance as something that includes day-to-day opposition to enslavement allows us to consider the persistent spirits of the enslaved. Every advertisement in these newspapers offers a small but brutally honest glimpse into this resistance, and while precise motivations for running away may not always be clear, these advertisements nonetheless serve to highlight the action and courage of runaway slaves from the Loyalist Maritimes as well as acknowledge their situational disadvantages and impediments towards freedom.

CONCLUSION

When Shelburne readers scanned the pages of their *Gazette*, they likely noticed nothing out of the ordinary when they read Abel Michener's advertisement for James.⁹⁴ The identification, value, and situational details included in the notice would have been familiar elements to subscribers of any Loyalist newspaper. Far from being nonexistent or obscure, runaway slave advertisements were very much present in the newspapers of the Maritimes colonies. They are useful today in confronting unchallenged aspects of Canada's history, such as the presence of slavery and the fragility of freedom. Distinct notions of liberty between Canada and the United States is further complicated when advertisements of the Maritimes compare to

⁹⁴ Runaway slave advertisement, *The Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, 22 May 1781, in Harvey Amani Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes: A History in Documents* (Peterborough, Broadview Press, 2018), 30.

those from other parts of North America, and an analysis of advertisements from the Maritime colonies and Quebec reveal the reality of widespread slavery within what is now Canada. The common thread of resistance that these advertisements demonstrate acknowledges the courage of fugitive slaves. At the same time, specific motivations for a runaway's flight remain a mystery, shrouded by the perspectives of their masters.

As these Loyalists moved north into the Maritimes, bringing with them their slaves and printing presses, runaway slave advertisements bear witness to the particularities of the institution that developed in the region. These advertisements reveal the personal situations of enslaved people as well as indicate specific details of the nature of slavery in the Maritimes. Additionally, they suggest a more complex understanding of the region, and they bear witness to the methods by which individuals resisted enslavement. Though penned and published by their enslavers, the lines of "Runaway!" and "Reward" testify to the actions taken on by enslaved individuals. Such documents offer an extremely valuable glimpse into an under-studied topic, highlighting the complexities of slavery in the Maritimes and underscoring the moments where traditional understanding of the region contradicts the complex reality of what occurred, where historical memory ought to be complicated. The existence as well as the nature of enslavement is apparent, recognizing an aspect of the region's foundational history. If not more importantly, these advertisements can also be used to properly reflect the personal realities of slavery in the region. Examining runaway slave advertisements from Loyalist newspapers of the Maritimes is therefore important, because by doing so, we acknowledge the specific stories of the courageous individuals who rejected the notion of bondage.

APPENDIX A

COLLECTION OF RUNAWAY SLAVE ADVERTISEMENTS FROM LOYALIST NEWSPAPERS OF THE MARITIME PROVINCES

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A NOTE ON SOURCES

Research for this paper is based around findings from a number of Loyalist newspapers from the Maritime colonies of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and St John's Island (present-day Prince Edward Island). Of the former, Halifax-based *The Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle* offered nine findings from issues dating from September 1, 1772 to March 15, 1794. Additionally, *The Nova-Scotia Packet and General Advertiser* of Shelburne had three runaway slave advertisements in the issues spanning October 12, 1785 to August 3, 1786. Shelburne is a settlement that carries a particular gravity to this topic, as it was where a probable majority of Loyalists and their slaves originally settled.⁹⁵

For the province of New Brunswick, *The Saint John Gazette* held seven runaway slave advertisements out of the issues searched from July 15, 1784 (initially under the title *The Royal St. John's Gazette & Nova Scotia Intelligencer*) to May 5, 1797.⁹⁶ Whitfield reckons anywhere from 789 to 1,184 enslaved persons were in the Saint John area, an average of 170 more than were in Shelburne, and for this reason, advertisements of *The Saint John Gazette* are significant testimonies to the existence of the institution in New Brunswick and in the Maritimes as a whole.⁹⁷ *The Royal Gazette* of New Brunswick was another important publication, which

⁹⁵ Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 10.

⁹⁶ The *Saint John Gazette* and the *Royal Gazette* were both newspapers that split from *The Royal New Brunswick Gazette and General Advertiser*, which ran from 1784-1785 out of Parrrtown, Nova Scotia during this time (Prior to this, the paper was in Saint John from 1783-1784 under the name of *The Royal St. John's Gazette & Nova Scotia Intelligencer*. The *Saint John Gazette* was privately published by printer John Ryan, being called *The Royal New Brunswick Gazette and Weekly Advertiser* in 1785 before it adopted the name *The Saint John Gazette and the Weekly Advertiser* from 1786-1799. From 1799-1803, it was called *The Saint John Gazette and General Advertiser*, and from 1803 to its end in 1807, it was called *The Saint John Gazette*. For a timeline graphic of this information, see "The Royal Gazette (Fredericton, New Brunswick : 1814)." *UNB Libraries*, <https://media.lib.unb.ca/microforms/pubHist/889.pdf>.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 119-120.

published eleven runaway slave advertisements in issues from March 7, 1786 until July 9, 1816.⁹⁸

North of the colonies of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia lay St. John's Island. It is necessary to mention that though St. John's Island (Prince Edward Island) was unique to the other colonies in that it legally recognized slavery, research through *The Royal Gazette and Miscellany of the Island of Saint John* did not result in any runaway slave advertisements of its forty-one issues from July 15, 1791 to June 12, 1794.⁹⁹ Slavery is indeed known to have existed on the island, and slave-owning families such as the Haszards perpetuated the practice.¹⁰⁰ The dearth of runaway slave advertisements from this province, therefore, likely has to do with the reality that, as an island, slaves were geographically poorly-positioned to escape. Altogether, research for this paper amassed a total of thirty advertisements for runaway slaves, collected from microfilm reels, digital archives, and a collection of primary source documents (see Appendix A, Table 1).¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Resulting from the split (see Footnote 91), *The Royal Gazette* became the official government gazette for the province of New Brunswick. From 1785-1802 it was called *The Royal Gazette and New Brunswick Advertiser*. Between 1802 and 1807 it was called *The Royal Gazette*. It was then called *The Royal Gazette and New Brunswick Advertiser* between 1808-1814 before resuming the title *The Royal Gazette* in 1814-1815. It became *The New Brunswick Royal Gazette* 1815-1828 when the paper was moved to Fredericton. From 1828-1977 it was known again as *The Royal Gazette*. Since 1977, the paper has had an English/French title as *The Royal Gazette/La Gazette Royale* and continues to run today out of Fredericton.

⁹⁹ Winks, *The Blacks in Canada*, 45.

¹⁰⁰ T.W. Smith, "The Slave in Canada," *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society*, 10: (1899): 69.

¹⁰¹ Harvey Amani Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes: A History in Documents* (Peterborough, Broadview Press, 2018).

Table 1
Newspapers Researched and Findings

Newspapers Researched	Place of Publication	Findings
<i>The Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle</i>	Halifax, NS	9
<i>The Nova-Scotia Packet and General Adviser</i>	Shelburne, NS	3
<i>The Nova-Scotia Royal Gazette</i>	Halifax, NS	0
<i>The Royal American Gazette</i>	Shelburne, NS	0
<i>The Port Roseway Gazetteer & The Shelburne Advertiser</i>	Shelburne, NS	0
<i>The Nova Scotia Chronicle and Weekly Advertiser</i>	Halifax, NS	0
<i>Saint John Gazette</i>	Saint John, NB	7
<i>Royal Gazette</i>	Saint John, NB	11
<i>The Royal Gazette and Miscellany of the Island of Saint John</i>	Charlottetown, PEI	0

Document 1**Runaway Slave Advertisement, Thursday, Nova Scotia, 1772.¹⁰²**

RAN away from her Master JOHN ROCK, on Monday the 18th Day of August last; a Negroe Girl named *Thursday*, about four and a half feet high, broad sett, with a Lump above her Right Eye: Had on when she run away a red Cloth Petticoat, a red Baize Bed Gown, and a red Ribbon about her Head. Whosoever may harbour said Negroe Girl, or encourage her to stay away from her said Master, may depend on being prosecuted according as the Law shall direct. And whosoever may be so kind to take her up and send her home to her said Master, shall be paid all Costs and Charges, together with TWO DOLLARS Reward for their Trouble.

JOHN ROCK.

HALIFAX, Sept. 1st, 1772.

Document 2**Runaway Slave Advertisement, Florimell, Nova Scotia, 1776.¹⁰³**

RAN AWAY,

On Monday the 10th of June last, between the Hours of 9 and 10 at Night, a Negro Women named FLORIMELL, she had on when she went away a red poplin Gown, a blue baize outside Petticoat and a pair Men's Shoes, she commonly wears a Handkerchief round her Head, has Scars in her Face, speaks broken English and is not very black; whoever will apprehend said Runaway and bring Word to the Printer shall have One Guinea Reward and all Charges paid for their Trouble.

HALIFAX, June 18th, 1776.

¹⁰² *Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle* (Halifax), 1 September 1772.

¹⁰³ *The Nova Scotia Gazette and the Weekly Chronicle*, 9 July 1776.

Document 3**Runaway Slave Advertisement, James, Nova Scotia, 1781.¹⁰⁴**

Falmouth 10th May, 1781

This Day RAN AWAY.

From *Abel Michener, Esq.*

A NEGRO Man,

Named JAMES.

ABOUT Five Feet Eight Inches in Heighth, and well made, 23 Years of Age, a thin smooth Face and lively Countenance. Had on when he went away, a Blue homespun Cloth Coat with Blue Baize lining and black horn Buttons, a Striped Flannel Waistcoat and homespun Woolen Breeches, black and white Mil'd. White Stockings and a pair of Moggilians. And had also a light Colour'd homespun GreatCoat. He took with him a Brass Mounted Fuzee. Whoever will apprehend and secure the said Negro in any of His Majesty's [goals] so that his Master may have him again, shall be entitled to Five Pounds Reward and all necessary Charges paid.

Masters of Vessels and others are Caution'd not to Harbour, Conceal or Carry off said Negro.

N.B. If the said JAMES, will return to his Master he shall be forgiven.

¹⁰⁴ *Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, 22 May 1781.

Document 4**Runaway Slave Advertisement, Peter, Nova Scotia, 1783.¹⁰⁵**

HALIFAX, 8th May 1783,

RAN AWAY a smart Well looking Negro BOY named Peter, about Seventeen Years of Age: had on when he went a way a blue jacket, round hat, New Trousers of white Duck, new Shoes, and large plated buckles; he is round faced, speakes broken English, and when spoke to has a remarkable Smile on his Countenance, short and stout made, has been used to the carpenters business, and may attempt to pass for a free Man, this is [to?] warn all Masters of Vessels and Others not to harbor or Carry [off] said Negro as he is the property of the Subscriber; any one that will apprehend the said Negro so that his Master may receive him, Shall receive Eight Dollars Reward from

HUGH KIRKHAM

N.B. If he is stript he has his Country marks on his back in the form of a Square, thus.

Any Person harbouring or Concealing Said Boy will be prosecuted to the utmost rigor of the Law—if he returns of his Own Accord there will be nothing done to him.

Document 5**Runaway Slave Advertisement, Ben, Nova Scotia, 1783.¹⁰⁶**

Two Guineas Reward

ABSCONTED himself on Thursday last from on Board the Transport Ship FRIENDS, a Negro lad named Ben, he is 22 Years of Age, five feet four Inches high, of a remarkable dark complexion Slender made, with a thin face and Large Lips, he has a Sore on one of his little fingers; and took with him three sailors Jackets and may pass for a Sailor. I hereby request all master of Vessels not to Ship him as he is my own property; and I forewarn any Person from harbouring or imploying him, as I shall [prosecute] them, who conceal him from me, and will give the above reward to them who may take him and bring him on board my Ship

John Wilson

Halifax, 12 May 1783.

¹⁰⁵ *Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, 20 May 1783.

¹⁰⁶ *Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, 20 May 1783.

Document 6**Runaway Slave Advertisement, Dick, Nova Scotia, 1783.¹⁰⁷**

RUN away on the 27th inst. A Negro Man, named, Dick, (belonging to Mr. BENJAMIN DOUGLASS, late Ensign in the King's Carolina Rangers) about five feet eight inches high Stout Made, had on when he went away a red coat turn'd up with blue, white Waistcoat and Breeches, Aged about Twenty Seven Years. Whoever will apprehend Said Negro and bring him to Mr. ANDREW THOMSON, of *Halifax*, Merchant Shall be handsomely rewarded.
Nov. 29th, 1783.

Document 7**Runaway Slave Advertisement, Hector, New Brunswick, 1784.¹⁰⁸**

Five Guineas Reward.

RUNAWAY from the subscriber, on Saturday evening the 26th ult. A negro man Slave, named Hector, by trade a cooper, a tall slender fellow, speaks English like the West India negroes, and is very talkative; he came from St. Augustine to this place, via New-York, on December last, had his feet frost bitten on the passage, and has a very lazy gait. Whoever secures and delivers him up to me shall have the above reward.

And as I have reason to suspect that he has been carried off by some vessel or other, I hereby offer the like reward to any person who can give information, so as the offender or offenders shall be convicted thereof.

Fred. Wm. Hecht.
Fort Howe, 13th July 1784.

¹⁰⁷ *Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, 9 December 1783.

¹⁰⁸ *The Royal St. John's Gazette & Nova Scotia Intelligencer* (Saint John), 15 July 1784.

Document 8**Runaway Slave Advertisement, Clarinda and Jupiter (an indented servant), Nova Scotia, 1784.¹⁰⁹**

RUN AWAY 8th September

TWO NEGRO—the Property of Mr. Nath Bullern, the One an [indented] Servant, the other a Slave; the Man had on when he went away a [?] Hatt, a blue Coat, about 6 feet high, answered to the name of JUPITER—The woman had on a short red Bays Bedgown, answers to the name Clarinda. Whoever will apprehend the same, and bring to Mr. Robert Spicer, at Fort Needham, near Halifax, shall receive 20 Shillings Reward.

N.B. Whoever takes away the same out of Halifax either by Sea or Land, will be sued for the same.

Document 9**Runaway Slave Advertisement, James, Bet, Frank, and Judy, Nova Scotia, 1785.¹¹⁰**

RUN AWAY from the Subscriber

Four Negroes,

A Man, his Wife, and two Children, [named] *James, Bet, Frank, and Judy*, who all speak good English; the man is a carpenter by trade. WHOEVER apprehends the said negroes, and delivers them to the gaol keeper, or to Capt. John William, in Maiden-lane, shall receive EIGHT DOLLARS Reward, or any person that will give information to said Williams, of said negroes, so that he gets hold of them, shall receive a Reward of FIVE DOLLARS from Said Williams.

SAMUEL ANDREWS

¹⁰⁹ *Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, 12 September 1784.

¹¹⁰ *Nova Scotia Packet and General Advertiser* (Shelburne), 12 October 1785.

Document 10**Runaway Slave Advertisement, Phillis, Nova Scotia, 1785.¹¹¹**

RUN AWAY,
 from Mr. DENOON, a black NEGROE WENCH named PHILLIS, aged about 30
 Years or upwards, has a Stye on one Eye, and a Wart on her Nose, whoever will
 give Information of said Negro so that she may be apprehended shall receive
 ONE GUINEA Reward by applying to the Printer.

HALIFAX, 3d, Octo. 1785.

Document 11**Runaway Slave Advertisement, Ben, New Brunswick, 1786.¹¹²**

Five Dollars Reward

RUN away, a negro man named BEN, about thirty years of age, the property of
 Capt. Jones, had on when he went away a light brown jacket, a plad waistcoat,
 courduroy breeches, white stockings, and a round hat; is about five feet six inches
 high, stout and well set, has very black thick lips. Whoever takes up the said
 negro and delivers him to James Moore near Fredericton, or, secures him that the
 owner may get him again, shall have the above reward, and all reasonable charges
 paid.

¹¹¹ *Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, 18 October 1785.

¹¹² *The Royal Gazette and New Brunswick Advertiser* (Saint John), 7 March 1786.

Document 12**Runaway Slave Advertisement, Isaac, Ben, Flora, Nancy, Lidge, New Brunswick, 1786.¹¹³**

RAN AWAY

FROM the subscriber living at the Nashwakshis, in the county of York, between the 15th and the 21st days of this Instant July [June?], the following bound Negro slaves, viz., ISAAC about 30 years old, born on Long Island near New-York, had on when he went away, a short blue coat, round hat and white trowsers. BEN, about 35 years old, had on a Devonshire Kersey jacket lined with Scotch plad, corduroy breeches, and round hat. FLORA, a wench about 27 years old, much pitted with the small-pox, she had on a white cotton jacket and petticoat. ALSO NANCY about 24 years old, who took with her a Negro child, about four years old called LIDGE. The four last mentioned Negroes were born in Maryland, and lately brought to this country.

All Person are hereby forbid to harbour any of the above Negroes, and all masters of vessels are forbid to take any of them on board their vessel as they shall answer the consequences. A REWARD of TWO GUINEAS, will be paid for each of the men, and SIX DOLLARS for each Negro woman, by Mr. THOMAS JENNINGS, if taken and delivr'd to him at the City of Saint John, at York Point, and if taken any where else and deliver'd to the said JENNINGS, or to the Subscriber in York County, the like reward with all reasonable charges will be paid by the said JENNINGS or the subscriber.

CALEB JONES

24 June 1786.

¹¹³ *Royal Gazette*, 25 July 1786.

Document 13**Runaway Slave Advertisement, Tom, Nova Scotia, 1786.¹¹⁴**

Five Guineas *Reward*.

RUN away on Friday [afternoon] the oth[?] [?], a NEGRO FELLOW, named TOM, of a yellowish complexion, remarkably stout, about twenty-five years of age, very [artful?] and [...?...] a sailor, is an ex[?] [...in the Town; ha...?] [...with? Mr. Boushelid?], in the ship-yard, [...?] [McLean?] and Bogle's ship, now building [...?...] has a scar on his [nose?] and one above his left Eye, pitted by the small-pox, and in knee'd; carried with him one blue-colour'd coat with yellow buttons, one brown ditto white buttons, two short Jackets (one blue and one nankeen) two pair of overalls, (one blue and one gray) one black and one white hat, also a fur cap. He is the property of Capt. James McDonald, of this town. Whoever will bring him to Messrs. McLEAN and BOGLE, shall have the above Reward.

All Masters of vessels or others, are hereby warned not to harbour or carry him off, at their peril.

Document 14**Runaway Slave Advertisement, Dinah, Nova Scotia, 1786.¹¹⁵**

Five Dollars Reward

RUNAWAY from the subscriber, on Saturday, the 22nd Instant, a NEGRO WENCH, named DINAH, about twenty five Years of Age; had on when she went away, a blue and white Ticking Petticoat, a purple and white Callico short Gown, and an old blue Cloak.—Whoever will apprehend and secure said Wench, so that the Owner may have her again, shall receive the above Reward, with reasonable Charges.

ROBERT WILKINS

Shelburne, Mowat Street, July 24, 1786.

Masters of Vessels and Others are hereby forbid to carry off or harbour said Wench, at their Peril.

¹¹⁴ *Nova Scotia Packet*, 6 July 1786.

¹¹⁵ *Nova Scotia Packet*, 3 August 1786.

Document 15**Runaway Slave Advertisement, Sam and Beller, New Brunswick, 1787.¹¹⁶**

RUN-AWAY

IN a BIRCH CANOE, from the subscriber two negro Men and one Wench; who have taken sundry things with them. SAM, being a black and dark Mulatto 17 or 18 years old, midling tall and slim; quick spoken, attempts to play the VIOLIN, has a London brown coloured coat, ticking trousers and other clothes.

BELLER, a sister to SAM, between a black and mulatto, 16 years old, midling tall and slim, is raw bon'd and has a scar between her eye and temple, is slow in her speech, has a black cover'd hat with white lining, and lived formerly with Judge Peters at Saint John.

TONY SMITH, some call him JOE, a free fellow, but hired for a time; he is tall and slim, between a black and mulatto, speaks broken, wears blue or brown coat, ticking trousers, and has other clothes with him.—Two of the above servants were raised in the family. Any person apprehending them or giving information to Mr. EXTRA SCOFIELD, in King Street, St. John, or the subscriber, shall have One GUINEA for each, and if taken out of St. John, reasonable charges paid—if taken out of the province, it is requested that they may be confined in Jail until called for. All masters of vessels and every other person is forwarned not to carry any of the said negroes off or from harbouring or concealing them, as they will answer it at their peril.

THOMAS LESTER

Waterborough, 19th June 1787

Document 16**Runaway Slave Advertisement, London, New Brunswick, 1787.¹¹⁷**

RAN AWAY from the subscriber, the 19th of July last, LONDON, a negro boy, aged 18 years, had on when he went away a light colored coating jacket, osnaburg trowsers, green bay shirt, with white sleeves, and wants the first joint of the second toe of the left foot. Whoever will apprehend the said negro and secure him, so that his master, may get him again, shall have ONE GUINEA Reward; and all masters of vessels and others are hereby forbid to carry him off, or to employ him as a servant or otherwise.

JOSEPH CLARKE

¹¹⁶ *Royal Gazette*, 10 July 1787.

¹¹⁷ *Royal Gazette*, 17 August 1787.

Document 17**Runaway Slave Advertisement, Abraham, New Brunswick, 1787.¹¹⁸**

SIXTEEN DOLLARS REWARD,

AND all reasonable charges will be paid by James Hayt, to any person who will detect and return ABRAHAM, a Run-Away negro boy, about 16 years of age—he had on a short blue jacket, with sleeves lined with white swan skin, a scarlet waistcoat, two rows bright buttons, with a collar, nankeen breeches, thread stockings, new shoes, plated buckles, and [an] all round black hat.—He has a pleasant countenance, is very talkative, tall of his age, but well proportioned, and formerly belonged to Capt. John Hall, of Saint Andrews. JAMES HAYT
September 12th, 1787.

Document 18**Runaway Slave Advertisement, Keziah, New Brunswick, 1787.¹¹⁹**

RUN-AWAY

FROM the subscriber, on Wednesday evening last the 15th instant, a negro woman named KEZIAH, about five feet high, has the marks of a cut and a burn, I believe, on her right cheek, near her mouth, took with her two calico gowns, the one a white, the other a nankeen ground, the flowers running through it in stripes, also, a dark purple and white calico frisk and petticoat—has different short gowns, among which is a blue and white striped linen, and a white: Also, a white cloth cloak and a black bonnet lined with white, covered with gauze, and lace hooped round the edge.—Whoever will apprehend and take up said negro woman, so that her master may have her again, shall receive a reward of TWO GUINEAS, and all reasonable charges paid.

All Masters of vessels and others are hereby forbid carrying off the said Negro slave, as they will answer for it at their peril.

Aug. 17th THOMAS BEAN.

¹¹⁸ *Saint John Gazette*, 19 October 1787.

¹¹⁹ *Royal Gazette*, 21 August 1787.

Document 19**Runaway Slave Advertisement, Prince, New Brunswick, 1788.¹²⁰**

Three POUNDS REWARD

RUN-AWAY, last night, a negro man named PRINCE, a stout well made fellow, about five feet eight inches high, has a sour down look; had on and took with him, a new blanket coat, a red short jacket, (the laps faced with green,) an old drab coating, a corduroy pair breeches, an old pair coating trowsers, two new check shirts, one new pair of shoes, one pair of half boots, 2 black caps, one dog and the other bear skin, and one white hat.—WHOEVER will secure him in any jail in this province, or bring him to his master near Fredericton, shall have the above rewarad, and all reasonable charges.

May 20th 1788

Benj. Davis

N.B. All Masters of vessels are forbid carrying him off, and all persons from harbouring or employing the above described fellow.

Document 20**Runaway Slave Advertisement, Poll, New Brunswick, 1791.¹²¹**

Four Dollars Reward

RUNAWAY from the subscriber on FRIDAY the 26th instant, a Negro Wench named Poll, about 17 years of age, very much pitted with the small pox.—Whoever takes up said Wench and delivers her to the subscriber shall receive the above reward.

ALEXANDER MORTON

N.B. All Masters of vessels are forbid taking off said WENCH; all persons are forbid harbouring her [as they] may depend upon being prosecuted with the utmost rigour of the Law.

St. John, Aug. 30, 1791.

¹²⁰ *Royal Gazette*, 17 June 1788.

¹²¹ *Saint John Gazette*, 30 September 1791.

Document 21**Runaway Slave Advertisement, Statia and family, New Brunswick, 1792.¹²²**

Three Guineas Reward.

RAN-AWAY

FROM the Subscriber on the night of the 9th instant, an indented servant Man, named

DICK HOPEWELL;

about 5 feet 9 inches high—very active, and supposed to be near 40 years of age.—Had on when he went off a fearnought grey short coat and trowsers with white metal buttons—a new felt hat, &c.

At the same time went off a Negro Woman slave, named

STATIA,

who he claim'd as a Wife, with two small children—a boy about 5 years old, and a girl about 15 months—she is about 30 years of age, and now pregnant.—Had on when she went off a green duffle petticoat, with a baize short gown of the same colour—she is of the mulatto cast, and speaks very fluently.—Whoever will secure said RUN-AWAYS in any gaol of this Province, or the Province of Nova-Scotia, so that their master may recover them, shall be entitled to the above reward.

MASTERS of vessels and others are hereby cautioned not to harbour, conceal, or employ said RUN-AWAYS, as they will be prosecuted to the utmost rigour of the law.

JOSEPH CLARKE.

Maugerville, 14th June, 1792. rm.

¹²² *Saint John Gazette*, 29 June 1792.

Document 22

Runaway Slave Advertisement, Prince, New Brunswick, 1792.¹²³

RANAWAY

FROM the SUBSCRIBER, on the 4th inst. a NEGRO MAN slave named PRINCE.—He carried off with him a new grey cloth coat with short skirts, and a lappelled waistcoat and trowsers of the same, all neatly made, and mounted with metal buttons—also a new [?] coat of a lighter grey, with metal buttons and long skirts—a new fox skin cap with a bushy tail, and a good hat—three good shirts—one of them very stout linen—a pair of good shoes, and a pair of new grey and purple coloured stockings, and a very good blue and black cloth coloured coat, mounted with silk chequered buttons, rather too large for him.

HE is artful, has a gloomy and malevolent look—is a daring liar, and has attempted twice before this to RUNAWAY.

ALL masters of vessels and others are hereby warned against carrying said NEGRO out of the Province, entertaining, harbouring, or employing him in any manner—and whoever takes and secures said NEGRO in any GAOL in this Province, and gives information to *Messrs.* THOMSON & REID, Merchants, *St. John*, or the SUBSCRIBER in *Maugerville*, so that his master can recover him, shall be handsomely REWARDED.

JOHN AGNEW.

Maugerville, 5th May, 1792.

¹²³ *Saint John Gazette*, 29 June 1792.

Document 23**Runaway Slave Advertisement, Joseph Odel and Peter Lawrence, Nova Scotia, 1792.¹²⁴**

DIGBY, 21st June 1792

RUN AWAY, Joseph Odel and Peter Lawrence (Negroes) from their Masters, and left Digby last evening, the first mentioned is about Twenty four year of Age, five feet six Inches high, had on a light brown coat, red waistcoat and thickset breeches, took other cloaths with him, he is a likely young Fellow with remarkable white Teeth.—The other is about five Feet eight Inches high, very Black, had on lightesh coloured Clothes.—Whoever will secure said Negroes so that their Masters may have them again, shall receive TEN DOLLARS Reward, and all reasonable Charges paid.

DANIEL ODEL

PHILLIP EARL

¹²⁴ *Royal Gazette*, 10 July 1792.

Document 24**Runaway Slave Advertisement, Bill/Belfast, Nova Scotia, 1794.¹²⁵**

Twenty Dollars Reward

RAN Away, on Thursday evening, the 18th inst. a Negro Man Servant, the property of the Subscriber, named Belfast; but who commonly goes by the name of Bill.———At the time of the elopement he was in the service of William Forsyth, Esq; and had meditated an attempt to get on board a ship that night which lay in the harbour, bound to Newfoundland; but was frustrated: It is probable, however, he may still endeavor to escape that way, therefore, the masters of all coasters going along shore, or other vessels bound to sea, are hereby forewarned from carrying him off at their peril, as they will be prosecuted, if discovered, with the utmost rigour of the law.

The above reward will be paid to any person or persons who shall apprehend and secure him, so that I may recover him again.

He is a likely, tout-made fellow, of five feet eight or nine inches high, and about 27 years of age; of a mild good countenance and features, smooth black skin, with very white teeth; is a native of South Carolina, speaks good English, and very softly, and has been in this province for ten years.

When he went off, he wore an old Bath-Coating short coat, of a light colour, wore out at the elbows; brown cloth or [duffle?] trowsers, also much wore at the knees; a round hat, an old black silk handkerchief about his neck:—But as he had other cloaths secreted in town, he may have changed his whole apparel.

He will no doubt endeavor to pass for a free man, and possibly by some other name.

MICHAEL WALLACE.

¹²⁵ *Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, 15 March 1794.

Document 25**Runaway Slave Advertisement, Bob, New Brunswick, 1797.¹²⁶**

Three Guineas Reward.

RUN-AWAY from the Subscriber, on the 1st instant, a Negro Man named BOB—five feet, five inches high.—Had on when he went off, a round great blue jacket, black grey trowsers, a striped blue and white cotton waistcoat, a black and white woolen shirt, a round hat, a pair of seal skin mogasins, &c.—Whoever will apprehend said Runaway and deliver him to Mr. THOS. JENNINGS, York-Point, shall be entitled to the above reward.

Masters of Vessels and others are hereby warned not to harbour, conceal or carry off said Runaway, as they will be prosecuted to the utmost rigour of the law.

ROBERT GUTHERIE.

King's County, Jan. 1, 1797.

Document 26**Runaway Slave Advertisement, Nero, New Brunswick, 1797.¹²⁷**

Five Pounds Reward.

RUN-AWAY from his Master at Westmorland, a Negro Man named NERO, about 27 Years of Age—5 Feet 7 or 8 Inches high—supposed to have come this way.—Any Person securing said Runaway so that his Master can get him again, shall be entitled to the above Reward, by applying to the Printer hereof.

TITUS KNAPP.

St. John, May 5, 1797. [4w.]

¹²⁶ *Saint John Gazette*, 6 January 1797.

¹²⁷ *Saint John Gazette*, 5 May 1797.

Document 27**Runaway Slave Advertisement, Gill and Dick, New Brunswick, 1799.¹²⁸**

Five Guineas Reward

RANAWAY on Sunday the 11th instant, two Negro Men named GILL and DICK, the property of the subscribers.—GILL is a dark mulatto, with short wooly hair; is about five feet six inches high; stout made; has square shoulders, bow legs, and walks clumsily.—Had on when he went away a homespun coat, and vest a mixture of black and white, half lapelled; trowsers twilled homespun, a smutty brown, and considerably worn—he also took with him two striped vests, and sundry other articles of clothing.

DICK is a short thick set fellow, about 5 feet 4 inches high; remarkably black; has a scar on his cheek and another on his chin.—He had on and took with him a variety of cloathing—among other articles, a short coat without skirts; the color a mixture of blue with hemlock; nankeen overhails &c.

Whoever will apprehend and secure the said Runaways so that they may be had, shall be entitled to the above reward, or Three Guineas for either of them separately.

REUBEN WILLIAMS

JAMES PETERS

Gagetown, August [12?], 1799.

Document 28**Runaway Slave Advertisement, Trim and Jimmey, New Brunswick, 1802.¹²⁹**

FONTABELLE, *Westmoreland*, 14th 1802.

ABSCONDED the middle of December last, two able young Negro men belonging to the Subscriber—one named *Trim* and the other *Jimmey*, supposed a Nayo, marked A.R. on the left shoulder, and had a sore on one of his feet near the ankle; both rather of a yellow complexion, and middle sized. Whoever will lodge either of the above negroes in any gaol or work-house in this Island, will be entitled to a Reward of *Five Pounds* for each, or shall prove to conviction any person harbouring or concealing either of them, to a Reward of *Twenty pounds*, from [name not given.]

¹²⁸ *Royal Gazette*, 20 August 1799.

¹²⁹ *Royal Gazette*, 15 December 1802.

Document 29**Runaway Slave Advertisement, Dinah, New Brunswick, 1806.¹³⁰**

CAUTION.

THE Subscriber hereby cautions all persons against attempting in future to seduce from his Service his Female Negro Slave DINAH, (for whom he has a good legal title)—as he is determined to punish by all legal ways and means, every offender of that description.—And that no one may plead ignorance of the person of the Slave in excuse, her informs all concerned, that she is about 26 years of age—4 feet 9 inches high—has a small scar upon her forehead—and lately belonged to Mr. JAMES TAYLOR, of Maugerville.

JOHN RYAN.

Saint John, 19th Nov. 1806

Document 30**Runaway Slave Advertisement, Lidge, New Brunswick, 1816.¹³¹**

Twelve Dollars Reward

RUN AWAY from the Subscriber,

On the night of the 15th June, a Negro Slave, called LIDGE, under five feet high, broad face and very large lips; brought him from Maryland with my family;—he took with him a large CANOE with a Lathe across her; tared on the outside of the head with raw Tar, which looks red—he was seen going down the River[.] Any person that will apprehend him and get the canoe, shall receive the above reward.

CALEB JONES

9th July 1816.

¹³⁰ *Royal Gazette*, 24 December 1806.

¹³¹ *Royal Gazette*, 9 July 1816.

APPENDIX B

DATA FROM FINDINGS

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SEX OF RUNAWAY SLAVES

At least 43 enslaved individuals, both adults and children, were listed by name in 30 runaway slave advertisements. Lidge (see Document 12) and possibly Prince (see Documents 19 and 22) were listed twice; they have each been counted both times under “Instances in Runaway Slave Advertisements,” making a total of 44 reports of personal runaway experiences documented by the 30 advertisements. All notices identify or clearly suggest the sex of the person.

Table 1
Sex of Runaway Slaves, Maritimes, 1776–1816

Sex	Instances in Runaway Slave Advertisements
Female	16 (36%)
Male	28 (64%)

List of Male and Female Runaway Slaves

Female Slaves: Thursday (see Document 1, Appendix A); Florimel (2); Clarinda (8); Bet (9); Judy (9); Phillis (10); Flora (12); Nancy (12); Dinah (14); Beller (15); Keziah (18); Poll (20); Statia (21); Statia’s daughter (21); Dinah (29).

Male Slaves: James (see Document 3, Appendix A); Peter (4); Ben (5); Dick (6); Hector (7); James (9); Frank (9); Ben (11); Isaac (12); Ben (12); Lidge (12); Tom (13); Sam (15); London (16); Abraham (17); Prince (19); Statia’s son (21); Prince (22); Joseph Odel (23); Peter Lawrence (23); Bill/Belfast (24); Bob (25); Nero (26); Gill (27); Dick (27); Trim (28); Jimmey (28); Lidge (30).

AGE OF RUNAWAY SLAVES

While the youngest age recorded was that of a 15-month-old infant, most of the ages ranged from the mid to late twenties to thirty. Though the experiences of the enslaved varied greatly, there are obvious trends as to the common age of those fleeing bondage.

Table 2
Age of Runaway Slaves, Maritimes, 1776–1816

Sex	Runaway slaves with age listed/ total runaway slaves mentioned (% with age listed)	Mean Age	Adult Mean Age (Children under 10 excluded)	Mode Age
Female	10/16 (63%)	22	24	30
Male	16/28 (57%)	22	24	27
All	26/44 (59%)	22	24	30, 27 (each appeared 4 times)

GROUPS OF RUNAWAY SLAVES

Almost three times as many advertisements were placed for slaves who ran away individually, however, the number of individuals listed in runaway slave advertisements who experienced their flight alongside others makes up nearly half of all runaway slaves in the Maritimes. Most of these groups of runaways were pairs, usually fellow slaves, and often male. Occasionally, fugitive slaves took off with indentured servants or free people.

Table 3
Advertisements for Individual vs. Groups of Runaways, Maritimes, 1776–1816

Advertisements listing only one runaway (%)	Advertisements listing more than one runaway (%)	Number of slaves who ran away with others (%)
22 (73%)	8 (27%)	21 (49%)

List of Advertisements Listing More Than One Runaway

Clarinda (See Document 8, Appendix A); James, Bet, Frank, Judy (9); Isaac, Ben, Flora, Nancy, Lidge (12); Sam and Beller (15); Statia and family (21); Joseph Odel and Peter Lawrence (23); Gill and Dick (27); Trim and Jimmey (28).

REWARDS FOR RUNAWAY SLAVES

A common trend among runaway slave advertisements is their inclusion of a reward and the promise that any expenses required to capture the fugitive slave would be paid by the master.

Table 4
Rewards in Runaway Advertisements, Maritimes, 1776–1816

	Reward Specified	“Handsomely Rewarded”	Information Rewarded	No Reward
Number of Advertisements	27	2	1	1

Table 5
“Necessary Charges Paid” in Runaway Advertisements, Maritimes, 1776–1816

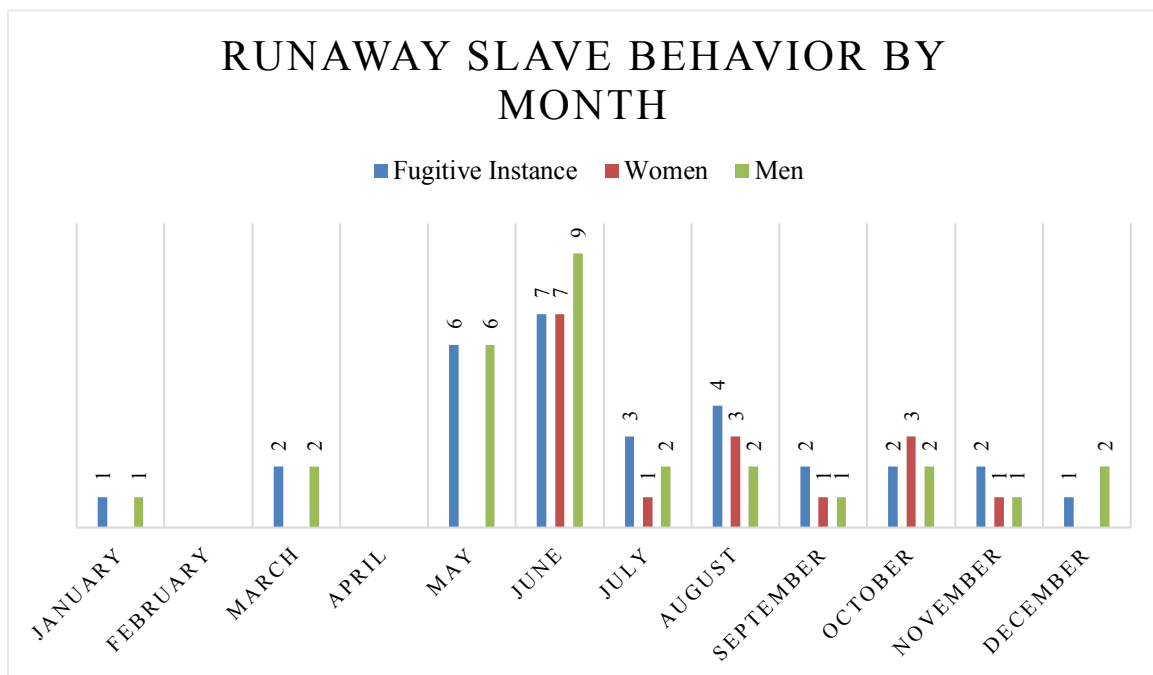
	Charges Paid	Not specified
Number of Advertisements	10	20

FREQUENCY OF ABSCONSIONS BY MONTH

Most of the advertisements were in the warmer months, between May and August. It is interesting to note that no women were recorded as absconding between December and May. Also, only solo flights occurred between November and May. This suggests that it was easier for women and groups to run away in the warmer season.

Please note that “Fugitive Instance” represents the month of absconsion as referred to by a single published advertisement, for both group and solo flights. I have chosen this term in favor of a different term, such as “Publication of Advertisement.” As many advertisements were published up to a week or more after a slave left, they sometimes appeared in a month that was different than when the slave was noted to have run away.

Figure 1
Runaway Slave Behavior by Month with Numbers on Individual Female and Male Fugitive Slaves, Maritimes, 1776–1816



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