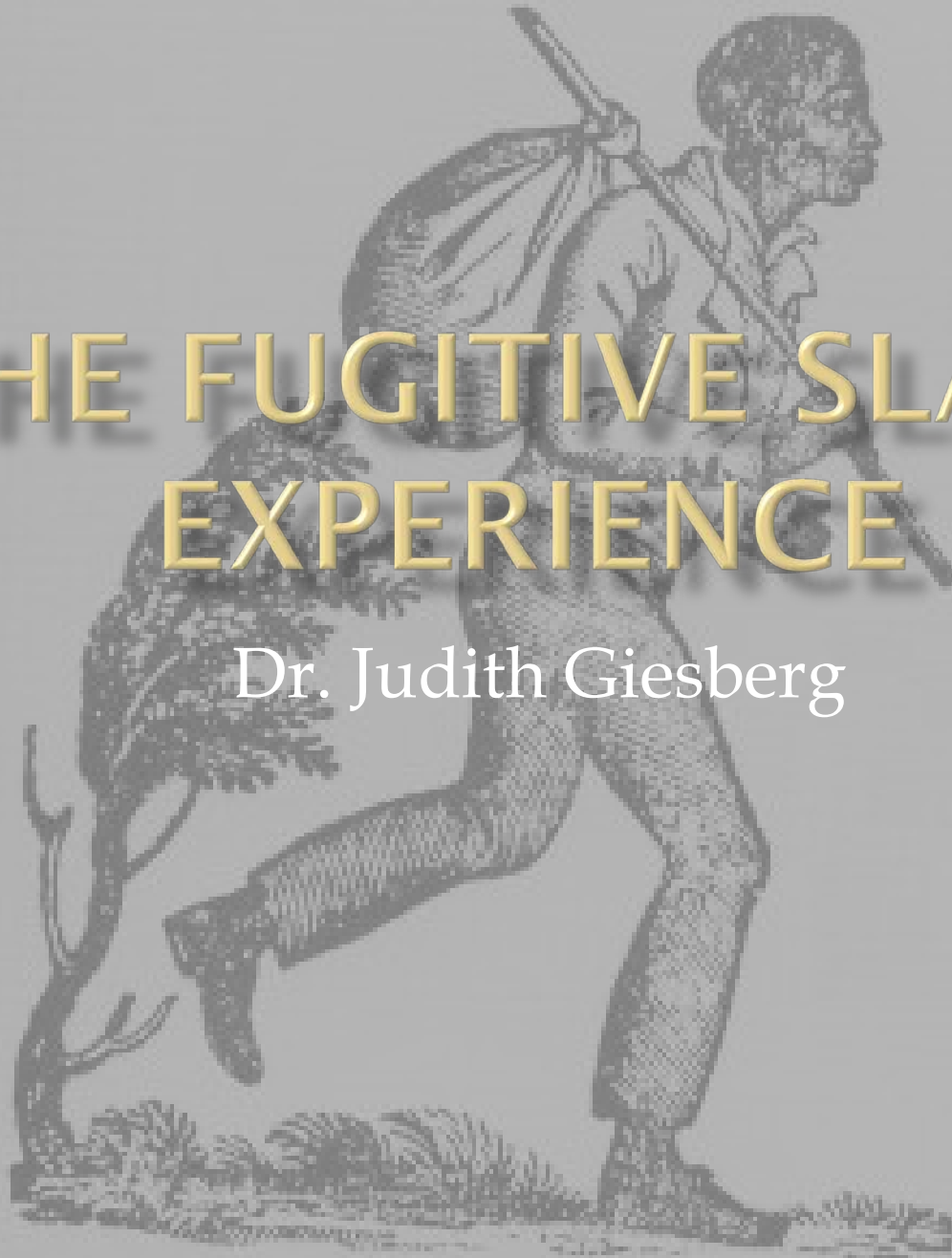


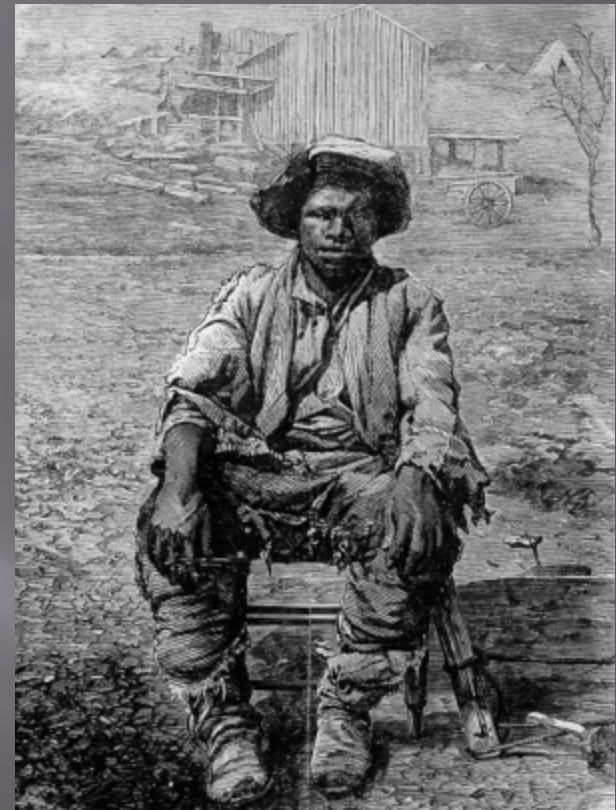
THE FUGITIVE SLAVE EXPERIENCE

Dr. Judith Giesberg





Nat Turner, VA, 1831



Gabriel Prosser, VA, 1800

Underground Railroad or *Underground*



Profile of a fugitive

Table 3
Gender of Runaways by State, Early Period (1790–1816)

	Virginia	North Carolina	Tennessee	South Carolina	Louisiana	Total
Number of females	14	18	29	55	13	129
(percentage)	(15)	(18)	(21)	(23)	(11)	(19)
Number of males	81	82	109	185	109	566
(percentage)	(85)	(82)	(79)	(77)	(89)	(81)
Totals	95	100	138	240	122	695

Table 4
Gender of Runaways by State, Late Period (1838–1860)

	Virginia	North Carolina	Tennessee	South Carolina	Louisiana	Totals
Number of females	17	18	20	89	104	248
(percentage)	(9)	(14)	(12)	(19)	(29)	(19)
Number of males	178	114	148	369	259	1068
(percentage)	(91)	(86)	(88)	(81)	(71)	(81)
Totals	195	132	168	458	363	1316

Profile of a fugitive

Oct. 24, 1855.—W10

Runaway,

ON the night of the 9th Nov. last, a negro man named JIM or ARMSTEAD, aged about 22 years, about five feet ten inches high, very likely, and when spoken to has a pleasing appearance; has whiskers. No particular marks recollected. He wore off when he left a fur cap, brown cloth frock coat, boots, &c.; had with him a variety of clothing, description not recollected, and will most likely dress very well and in newest fashion. He also rode off a large bay horse about 8 year old, a natural pacer, foretop has been cut off and nearly grown out, with a Spanish saddle quilted cover, and no padder saddle bags, &c. I think it most likely that he has attempted to make his way for Nashville, Tenn., or New Orleans. He has a mother in Nashville, said to be free, the wife of a man by the name of Wilson Davis, and was raised in that place and has many acquaintances there: he has lived for the last few years in New Orleans, and was a short time since brought to Alabama by Wm. T. Gamble, who conveyed him to me. I have but little doubt that he will make for one of the places mentioned, and will give a reasonable reward to any person who will apprehend and commit him to jail, or give me such information as will lead to the recovery of said negro and horse.

GEO. W. LANE.

Athena, Ala. Dec. 19.—W31.

The Louisville Journal will publish the above once a week for three weeks, and charge this office.

Mrs. Burrell's Academy.

Profile of a fugitive

Table 5
Countenance of Slaves as Described in Runaway Advertisements

Description	Early Period, 1790–1816		Late Period, 1838–1860	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Intelligent/Artful	81	12	142	11
Friendly/Polite	81	12	131	10
Cunning	52	8	51	4
Looks Down/Slow Speech	46	7	108	8
Active	46	7	79	6
Bold	27	4	34	3
Surly	20	3	37	3
Nervous	17	2	39	3

Source: Computed from RSDB; since some slaves were listed in more than one category, totals are not included.

Families and fugitives

\$300 REWARD.

RANAWAY from the subscribers, near Middleburg, Loudon Co., Va., on the night of Dec. 24, 1855, a man named *Barney Grigsby*, about 25 years old, yellow color, black whiskers, about five feet 9 or 10 inches high, and weighs about 180 lbs.

Also, his wife *Elizabeth*, rather a delicate woman, very black, and a little under size.

Also, her sister *Emily*, heavier built, with a full face, and very black.

\$50 Reward each, if taken in the State, and \$100, if taken out of the State, and so secured that we can get them again.

They left in a two horse wagon marked *E. C. Brown & Son*. It is probable several others left with them.

**WM. ROGERS,
TOWNSHEND, McVEIGH.**
Middleburg, Loudon Co., Va., Dec. 25, 1855.



Families and fugitives: mothers and children

INFORMATION WANTED

BY A MOTHER CONCERNING HER CHILDREN.

Mrs. Elizabeth Williams, who now resides in Marysville, California, was formerly owned, together with her children, viz: Lydia, William, Allen, and Parker, by one John Petty, who lived about six miles from the town of Woodbury, Franklin County, Tennessee. At that time she was the wife of Sandy Rucker, and was familiarly known as Betsy,—sometimes called Betsy Petty.

About twenty-five years ago, the mother was sold to Mr. Marshal Stroud, by whom, some twelve or fourteen years later, she was, for the second time since purchased by him, taken to Arkansas. She has never seen the above named children since. Any information given concerning them, however, will be very gratefully received by one whose love for her children survives the bitterness and hardships of many long years spent in slavery.

Preachers in the neighborhood of Woodbury, Tennessee, are especially requested to make inquiry, and communicate any information they may deem valuable, either by letter, or through the columns of the "Recorder."

Mar. 10—1m.

U. S. GOVERNMENT

("Information Wanted" Ad, 1866)

Where to go?

Table 1
Location and Possible Destinations of Runaways As Cited in Two
Nashville Newspapers

Destination	<i>Nashville Whig</i> 1812–1816		<i>Republican Banner</i> 1840–1842	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
In vicinity	28	47	21	40
Locations in South	13	22	4	8
North	3	5	13	25
North or other	1	2	3	6
To Nashville	14	24	11	21
Totals	59	100	52	100

Slave owners' self-perceptions

kind, god fearing, humane
decent, compassionate, and
well-meaning

“Did I ever whip you?

No sir.

Did I ever hire you out when
you did not wish to go?

No sir.

When you were sick did I not
prepare a bed in my own
house and put you on it to
nurse you?

Yes sir.”



Slave owners' self-perceptions



After three or four days' inquiry I got him; [Dozier continued] and, being much pleased with him as a servant, and anxious to Keep him for a time, I resolved to pursue Such Course as would break the habit, if possible, and therefore, I only *talked* to him of the impropriety of his conduct, when I [told] him in such language as I am Confident he Perfectly understood—From his manner & his language he seemed to regret what he had done, & promised faithfully that he would not repeat the act—On the very next day, however, without any earthly cause, he absconded again, And after three or four days' inquiry & search I found him—I then joined Punishment to advice, and he again promised, faithfully, that he would do so no more—In six or seven days he repeated the offence, and eluded my search for about a week—when I got him, I had an iron Collar made for him & put a large padlock on it, and in this Condition set him about his business—On the same night which this was done, he eloped again and I resolved to have nothing more to do with him & so notified Mr. Grisham [the owner's husband]—

Slave owners' self-perceptions and conspiracy theory

Drapetomania

noun

An overwhelming urge to run away.

Absconding from service was “as much a disease of the mind as any other species of mental alienation,” 1851



Samuel Cartwright, MD

Conspiracy theory– Spike Lee, CSA, mockumentary, *drapetomania*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7SO2RZz0NKs>

Slave owners' anxiety



“It may be possible that Lewis and Sarah may be both playing agreeable in order to put you off your guard. I am uneasy at not having a word from you. I think that Lewis has plenty of money laid by for his escape. Probably our turkeys have been made to contribute to his purse and maybe the corn crib. It is very important to that matter be thoroughly investigated.”

Cost of runaway problem

STATE OF Kentucky } Wm S Shields and
Borbon COUNTY. } Wm A Lukken Freeholders in
the county of Borbon in the state aforesaid, this day personally appeared before me,
Wm M Baylor an acting Justice of the Peace within and for said county, and
made oath, in the due form of law, that they are well acquainted with a certain negro man slave,
named Red aged about forty years, about five feet 9 inches
high; weighing probably about one hundred, sixty and of black complexion,
Smiley = Which slave has been sold to Jacob Allentharpe by
Smiley a citizen of said county, and with whom they have been intimately acquainted about two
years. That they have known the said slave for several years, and that he has not, within their knowl-
edge, been guilty or convicted of any crimes; but that he has maintained a good moral character, and
is not in the habit of running away to the best of their knowledge and belief.

Sworn to and subscribed before me, this
day of Augt 1830
Wm M Baylor Wm S Shields
Wm A Lukken

STATE OF Kentucky } Thos P Smith Clerk of the
Borbon COUNTY. } Borbon Court of said County, do hereby
certify, that the foregoing declaration, on oath, made by Wm S Shields and Wm A
Lukken Freeholders of said county, was made and signed before me at Paris
in said county; that said Wm S Shields and Wm A Lukken are well
known and respectable Freeholders of said county, of good character, and they are not the vendors of the
slave above-mentioned in their declaration—And that Wm M Baylor Esq. before
whom said declaration on oath was made, is an acting Justice of the Peace for the county of Borbon
aforesaid, duly authorized to administer on oath.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I, Thos P Smith Clerk,
of the Borbon Court, within and for said county, do hereunto
set my hand, and affix the seal of said court, at my office in Paris
this 7th day of Augt A. D. 1830 and 53rd year
of American Independence.

Thos. P. Smith 1830
Robt. C. Rankins
John Edwards presiding
John Edwards Esq. of the Borbon Court, for
said county, do hereby certify, that Thos P Smith Esq. before whom the foregoing
declaration, on oath, has been made and signed, is the Clerk of said Borbon Court,
over which I preside; and that due notice of the same is and ought to be given to all his official acts as such.
Given under my hand, this 7th day of Augt 1830.
John Edwards

Cost of runaway problem

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA, *Albemarle* COUNTY, to wit:

we *Jed W Brown and William Watson* freeholders in the county aforesaid, do hereby certify and declare that a *male* slave, named *William* aged about *sixteen* years; about *5* feet, *3 1/2* inches in height; of a *yellow* colour; having *no marks* *perceptible*

was purchased from *James R Watson* in the said county; that we have known said slave for several years; and that *he* has not within our knowledge been guilty or convicted of any crimes, but hath a good moral character; and is not in the habit of running away.

Jed W Brown

Wm Watson

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA, *Albemarle* COUNTY, to wit:

I *John R Jones* a Justice of the Peace for the county aforesaid, and as such duly authorised to administer an oath, do hereby certify that

Jed W Brown and William Watson this day appeared before me, and made oath that the foregoing certificate and declaration contained the truth to the best of their knowledge and belief, and acknowledge the same to be their act and deed. And I further certify that the said *Jed W Brown and William Watson* are respectable men, and men of good characters, and are not the vendors of the slave described in the foregoing certificate. Given under my hand this *21st* day of *November* 18*29*

John R Jones

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA, *Albemarle* COUNTY, to wit:

I *Alexander Garrett* a Clerk of the county court of *Albemarle* aforesaid, do certify that *John R Jones*

is a Justice of the Peace, and as such duly authorised to administer an oath for the county aforesaid; and that *Jed W Brown and William Watson* are well known to me to be freeholders of the said county, as appears by the records in my office. In testimony whereof, I hereunto set my hand, and affix the seal of the said court, this *21st* day of *November* 18*29* in the *34th* year of the Commonwealth

Alex Garrett

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA, *Albemarle* COUNTY, to wit:

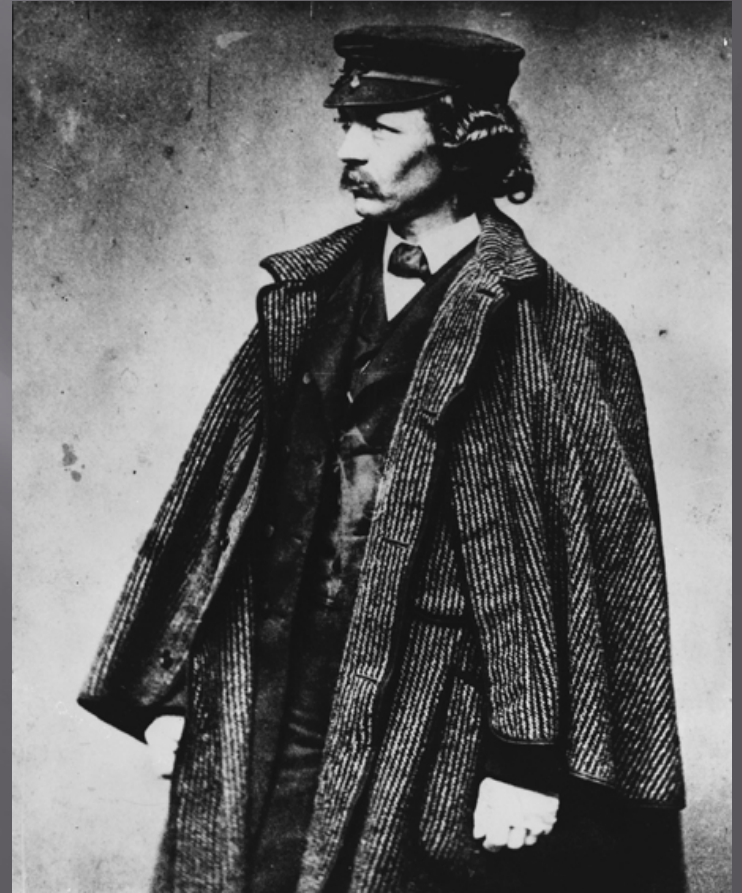
I *Benjamin Harris* presiding Magistrate for the county of *Albemarle* do hereby certify that *Alexander Garrett* whose name is subscribed to the foregoing attestation, is now, and was at the time of subscribing the same, clerk of the said county court of *Albemarle* and that his said attestation is in due form. Given under my hand this *28th* day of *November* 18*29*.

Ben Harris

Frederick Law Olmsted's reflections on runaway problem (1850s)

White southerners
complained of “a disease
– a monomania to which
the negro race is
peculiarly subject”

“throughout the South,
slaves are accustomed to
‘run away.’”



Volume of runaways

4th. Having its spindle in one piece, from bridge-tree to lower beam.

This Mill will run five years without dressing the stones, and is now offered at the following prices:

18 inch, single gear	\$180.
24 140, double gear	\$160.
24 160, 180.	180.
30 180, 210.	210.

The 30 inch mill will grind 40 bushels an hour with proper speed, and the smaller ones in proportion.

SAMUEL H. GILMAN, 31 Natchezst.,
New Orleans.

Dispensary, No. 82 Customhouse street.
NEWLY discovered remedies for the cure of all private diseases, without mercury, blinrance from business, or exposure to friends. Cure guaranteed in all cases, when within the power of remedies. The unparalleled success which has attended these Remedies in all parts of the United States and Europe—in many remarkable cures they have effected, which were pronounced incurable by the most eminent physicians, justifies me in offering them to the confidence of the unfortunate. The following are some of the diseases termed "Private," and of which these Remedies permanently eradicate, namely: Syphilis, Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Strictures, Venereal Discharges, Gleet, Gonorrhea, Nocturnal Emissions, Periodical Affections of Females, however complicated they may be, Diseases of the Back and Loins, Inflammation of the Bladder and Kidneys, Rheumatism, Hydrocele, Cancer, Ulcers, Tumors, and all diseases of the Skin.

Dr. James would also call the attention especially of those who have privately and improperly injured themselves in that secret and solitary habit which ruins the body and mind, unfitting them for either business or society, viz: Constitutional Debility or Impotency. The following are some of the sad and melancholy effects produced by early habits of youth, viz: Weakness of the Back and Limbs, Pain in the Head, Dimness of Vision, Loss of Muscular Power, Palpitation of the Heart, Dyspepsia, Nervousness, Irritability, Symptoms of Consumption, &c. Mentally, the fearful effects on the mind are more to be dreaded—Loss of Memory, Confusion of Ideas, Depression of Spirits, Evil Forebodings, Aversion to Society, Self-Distrust, Love of Solitude, Timidity, &c., are some of the evils produced.

All persons afflicted with any of the above symptoms should not fail to call on Dr. James, and be at once restored to perfect health. Let no false delicacy prevent you, but apply immediately and save yourself from the awful and dreadful consequences of the terrible malady. Weakness of the organs immediately cured and full vigor restored.

My faith in these Remedies is such that I will make a forfeit of \$500 if they do not cure the above diseases in either sex, cheaper, quicker, safer and pleasanter than any other physician in the United States.

Remember 82 Customhouse street is my number. Hours of attendance from 8 o'clock A. M. till 8 o'clock P. M., except Sundays. Persons do not meet going in and out of my Dispensary, as I have ten private and separate rooms reserved.

Consultations strictly private and confidential.
ap16—1m* DR. JAMES, 82 Customhouse street.

BOARDING.

ROOMS AND BOARD. Families desirous of securing apartments for the coming season can be suited by calling at the corner of Magazine and Julia streets, with some of the largest, handsomest and best ventilated rooms in the South. A few gentlemen can be suited with pleasant rooms and board; and also a few day boarders. Terms moderate, and accommodations equal to any in New Orleans.

A lady and gentleman can likewise be accommodated with a handsome suite of rooms, consisting of parlor and bedroom.
ap2—1f

BOARDING.—Two gentlemen and their wives, or two or three single gentlemen, can obtain Board, with handsomely furnished apartments, (where there are no children,) in a highly respectable family, situated one door from Camp street, and within five minutes' walk of the Post Office. Also, a few Day Boarders can be accommodated, on the most reasonable terms. Please address a note to Box H 133, New Orleans Post Office.
F13—1f

MRS. WADE respectfully informs the public that she has repaired her house thoroughly for the reception of Boarders, and she hopes to receive the liberal patronage she heretofore has had owing to her low prices, viz: Single rooms, boarding and lodging, per month, \$30; rooms, with more beds than one, per month, \$80; boarding, without lodging, per month, \$12. Her residence can be found at No. 55 Tchoupitoulas street.
d16 6m

BOARDING.—A few families and single gentlemen can be accommodated with board and lodging, at Mrs. COVINGTON'S, corner of Julia and Baronne streets.
A few transient boarders can be accommodated also. Omnibuses and cars pass every ten minutes. Jai6—1f

BOARDING. The large and elegant house known as the BURMAN VIGNONNE in French street, No. 210—1f



TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS REWARD.—For apprehension and delivery to us of the above boy named JACK, about 25 years old, 5 1/2 feet high, black, a scar on his face. Said boy was sold by John Ermin about 13th October last; he has been for sometime employed as a deck hand on steamboats in Southern trade, having a written privilege to do so.
my1—1m LEWIS SNAPP & CO., 37 Front st.



TWENTY DOLLARS REWARD.—Ran away, on the 30th April, the light quadroon boy SAM, is about 17 years old, with a scar on his neck just below the jawbone, also one on his wrist; had on when he left a soft white low crowned hat, white shirt and linsey pants; may pass for white, and try to get off on some steamboat. The above reward will be paid for his apprehension by
S. H. BURNETT, Camp street,
or JOHN J. BURNETT,
corner of Fourth and Bacchus sts.,
my1—1f



ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS REWARD.—Ran away from the subscriber, living in Port Gibson, Miss., on the 18th of March last, a mulatto slave, aged about 16 years, named HARRY, sometimes called ZIP, a good looking boy and well grown for his age, no scars remembered except a cut on the first toe of the right foot, which causes the toe to turn down; when spoken to is much in the habit of casting his eyes to the ground. I will give \$50 for the apprehension and delivery of said boy to me, in Port Gibson, if taken in the State of Mississippi; and if taken, out of the State, \$100. It is very probable said boy may have a pass or free papers—if so, they are not genuine. He has a fine head of hair, not kinky, but black and wavy. He will perhaps endeavor to make his way to some free State.
SAMUEL MARTIN.
ap29—1m



TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS REWARD.—Ran away from Richland Plantation, near New Canthage, parish of Madison, La., on the 4th inst., the black boy EDWARD, belonging to the estate of Robert Dunbar. The said Edward is about 18 years old, about 4 feet 6 inches tall. The above reward will be paid for his apprehension and lodging in jail, or delivery to the overseer on plantation. Address agent of said estate at Natchez, Miss., or
GEO. CONNELLY, 43 Carondelet street,
ap9—1m New Orleans



REWARD.—One Hundred and Twenty-Five Dollars Reward for the apprehension of the griff boy named DANIEL, aged about 12 years; has weak or inflamed eyes, and thick lips; had on a blue check shirt and cloth pantaloons; left his owner's domicile on Sunday morning, 27th inst. The above reward will be paid for the proof, to conviction, of the party or parties who have the said boy harbored, or twenty-five dollars for his delivery to the subscriber. It is verily believed that the boy has been kidnapped for the purpose of taking him out of the State, as he was purchased from a trader from Mobile. All masters of steamboats are hereby cautioned against taking said boy away, as they will be prosecuted accordingly.
ap28—4c THOMAS FELLOWS, 7 Camp street.



TWENTY DOLLARS REWARD. For arresting the slave HENRIETTA, a griffe girl, aged about thirty years; has a mark upon her arm from a burn; walks very quick; was heard of last March, 29th, (hunting for a master; was last on Duplantier street; speaks English alone. The above reward will be paid upon her being lodged in jail, and information left at the lumber yard, Common street, No. 247, or Gasquet street, No. 14, between Canal and Common.
ap1—1f



ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY DOLLARS REWARD.—Ran away on the night of the 19th February, the mulatto girl MARY MACKENDISH, aged about 32 years, of small stature, round face, long hair, and not curled; her upper teeth absent. The above reward will be paid to any person who will lodge her in the city jail, or deliver her at No. 64 Toulouse street, corner of Royal.
S. F. Chalms of steamboats are hereby cautioned not to receive said girl on board, as it is supposed that she will try to go up the river.
ap20—1m



TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS REWARD.—Ran away from the subscribers, the griff boy WILLIAM, a native of the city, pockmarked; aged about 36 years, a well known hack driver, speaks French and English. He is probably lurking about the city. The above reward will be paid to any person lodging him in jail and returning him to us.
H. M. ROBINSON & CO.,
ap24—1f 100 Gravier street.



TWENTY DOLLARS REWARD.—Ran away from the subscribers, the boy TOM. Said boy is black, 5 feet 7 or 8 inches high, has a piece out of one ear, is about 36 years old. The above reward will be paid if he is lodged in any jail in the State; if caught in a free State, I will pay \$500 if he is brought to me in New Orleans.
JOHN ERMON
ap18—1m corner of Camp and Race streets

Cost of runaway problem

Lost labor:

"Absent from 16 Sept 4 Oct 1849	Cost me 10
Absent from 26 Nov to 24 Feby 1850	Cost me 50
Incidental expenses	15
	\$75

Cash book of Basil Kiger

Cost of runaway problem bills submitted to the estate of diseased owner

To cash paid E. Peters 4 days with negro dogs to
apprehend negro Steven a \$5 pr. Day \$20.00

To cash paid E. Peters and M. Ethridge Expenses in
pursuit of negro Steven \$1.50 pr. Day 4 days
cash \$12.00

To cash paid M. Ethridge 4 days with negro dogs --
@\$5 pr day -- \$20.00

Psychological impact of runaways

*"Dwell too much on said imaginary scenes of murder – fear
to sleep – when slumbering often start in dread."*

Frances Bumpass, North Carolina slave owner, 1844.

□ Dear Sir,

St Catherines W C, Nov 11th 1840

□ I now take this opportunity to inform you that I am in a land of liberty, in good health. After I left Winchester I staid in Pennsylvania two years, & there met some of your neighbors who lived in the house opposite you, & they were very glad to see me; from there I moved to this place where I arrived in the month of August 1839.

□ I worked in Erie Penn where I met many of our neighbors from New Town. I there received 26 dollars a month.

□ Since I have been in the Queens dominions I have been well contented, Yes well contented for Sure, man is as God intended he should be. That is, all are born free & equal. This is a wholesome law, not like the Southern laws which puts man made in the image of God, on level with brutes. O, what will become of the people, & where will they stand in the day of Judgment. Would that the 5th verse of the 3d chapter of Malachi were written as with the bar of iron, & the point of a diamond upon every oppressors heart that they might repent of this evil, & let the oppressed go free. I wish you might tell Addison John, & Elias to begin to serve the Lord in their youth, & be prepared for death, which they cannot escape, & if they are prepared all will be well, if not they must according to scripture be lost forever, & if we do not meet in this world I hope we shall meet in a better world when parting shall be no more . . .

□ We have good schools, & all the colored population supplied with schools. My boy Edward who will be six years next January, is now reading, & I intend keeping him at school until he becomes a good scholar.

□ I have enjoyed more pleasure with one month here than in all my life in the land of bondage . . .

□ My wife and self are sitting by a good comfortable fire happy, knowing that there are none to molest [us] or make [us] afraid. God save Queen Victoria, The Lord bless her in this life, & crown her with glory in the world to come is my prayer,

□

Yours With much respect,

□ Most obt, Joseph Taper



All information for this lecture came from John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation*, Oxford University Press, 1999.