Connecticut Runaway Sale Advertisements
Advertisements offering rewards for runaway slaves were a common feature in colonial Connecticut newspapers. Beyond documenting African Americans' attempts to gain freedom, these ads offer intriguing clues to the everyday life and characteristics of enslaved people during this time period. The detailed descriptions of the slaves' clothing and physical features (included by the slave holder so his readers could easily identify the escaped slaves) evoke powerful although incomplete images of these early black residents of Connecticut colony.

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Ishmael Runaway Advertisement
Courtesy, America's Historical Newspapers, an Archive of Americana collection, published by Readex, a division of NewsBank, in cooperation with the American Antiquarian Society

Ran-away on Tuesday Morning

the 21st Instant. a Negro Man called Jorden, about 2 Years of Age, born at Lyme, in Connecticut, about 5 Feet 9 Inches high, a well built Fellow and remarkably Strong, good at all Manner of Labour, and is a prime Sailor, has a kind of Scar about his Mouth like the Small pox, has a small Mouth, a flat Nose, inclining to one Side; took with him a grey Coat, one white and one strip'd Jacket, two pair Trowsers, one pair blue cloth Breeches, white Thread, and grey worsted Stockings, speaks good English, and is very talkative, speaks much of his being a Free Man, and will endeavor to pass for such, having got a false Pass. —Whoever takes up the said Negro and brings him to Roger Gibson, in New-London, or secures him in any of his Majesty's Goals, so that his said Master may have him again, shall have FIVE POUNDS Lawful Money Reward.

N. B. 'Tis almost certain, that he intends to go off in some Vessel, therefore all Masters of Vessels are hereby forwarned not to Harbour him as they will be prosecuted to the utmost Rigour of the Law.
Bilhah Runaway Advertisement
Courtesy, America's Historical Newspapers, an Archive of Americana collection, published by Readex, a division of NewsBank, in cooperation with the American Antiquarian Society
New Haven, March 13, 1764.

R U Naway last Night, from Ralph Isaacs, a lusty Negro Man: He had on when he went away, a Coat trim’d with Green, and white Lace, brown Cloth Breeches, Check’d Woollen Shirt, took with him a blue Cloth Coat, with a red Cape, a white Shirt, with a wide Collar and Riffbands, talks bad English, and broken French. Whoever will take up said Negro, and send him, or secure him so that his Master may have him again, shall be well rewarded.

Ralph Isaacs Runaway Advertisement
Courtesy, America’s Historical Newspapers, an Archive of Americana collection, published by Readex, a division of NewsBank, in cooperation with the American Antiquarian Society
October 9th, 1764.

RAN AWAY from Groton, Connecticut, a Spanish Moletatto Slave named PHAROAH, about 5 Feet 10 Inches high, well set, wore short Hair (but may have cut it off) considerably Talkative in appearance, artful and pleasant in his Manners and Behaviour, plays on a Violin, & had one with him, when he went away had on a Stone grey Bearskin Coat, a Strip'd Flannel Waistcoat without Sleeves, cloth coloured Breeches, Stockings uncertain, as he carried a Variety with him in a Bag with other Clothing, with Buckles in his Shoes. Whoever takes and secures said Slave so that the Owner may have him again, shall receive FIVE DOLLARS Reward with necessary Charges paid,

by JOHN MUMFORD, of Colchester.

N. B. All Masters of Vessels and Others are forbid harbouring or carrying off said Slave, as they shall answer it at their Peril.