

THE ORIGINS OF NEGRO CRAFTSMANSHIP IN COLONIAL AMERICA

America in the year 1783 was at peace. The war of independence had been fought, and the new republic had severed its last vestigeal political ties with Great Britain. Although the final treaty had not yet been ratified, virtually normal intercourse between the states was again possible. Scores of European tourists, tempted by business and curiosity, journeyed to the western hemisphere, hoping to see as much as their time and finances would permit. From New York harbor, where he had resided during the British occupation, Dr. Johann D. Schoepf, a German physician, set out for the interior of the continent. Travelling southward, he observed with scientific discernment the resources, industries, customs and people of each individual commonwealth. In his journal, after reaching South Carolina, Schoepf noted that the "gentlemen in the country have among their negroes as the Russian nobility among the serfs, the most necessary handicrafts-men, cobblers, tailors, carpenters, smiths, and the like whose work they command at the smallest possible price or for nothing almost. There is hardly any trade or craft which has not been learned and is not carried on by negroes. . ."¹

To understand the factors leading to the employment of Negroes as artisans in the year 1783, or in the present day as well, it is necessary to understand the historical background of the subject. Their training in the mechanic arts was not something originated in the American colonies. Negro craftsmanship, one may safely assume, had its inception somewhere on the continent of Africa. According to one writer, black men were the first to fashion bone and

¹ Johann D. Schoepf, *Travels in the Confederation, 1783-1784* (Philadelphia, 1911), edited by Alfred J. Morrison, vol. II, p. 221; also reprinted in "Travellers' Impressions of Slavery in America from 1750 to 1800," *Journal of Negro History, Documents*, vol. I, October 1916, p. 496.

ivory, and to engage in iron, wood and gold working. Perhaps five thousand years ago Negroid peoples helped build the pyramids of Egypt, while cotton was woven in the Sudan as far back as the eleventh century. The Kukas, on Lake Tchad, and the sixteenth century inhabitants of Timbuctoo were well acquainted with weaving, tanning, and tool-making. Modern ethnologists, studying "our contemporary ancestors," have also discovered evidences of primitive workmanship carried on in areas untouched by the white man's civilization. "It remains an indisputable fact," P. G. LePage asserts, "that the decorative character manifested in the handicrafts of the black races of Africa is of surpassing character. . . . The native hand derives the maximum of expression from the few elements afforded by the soil."²

Although during the earliest days of British settlement in America craftsmanship remained crudely developed, farsighted individuals soon recognized the vital role performed by artificers. Thomas Dudley, the second Governor of Massachusetts, urged further training in the crafts, considering that to be the most important education next to morals.³ Nevertheless, the development of an extensive system of home industries required a large supply of fairly dexterous workers, and in most provinces an acute shortage of skilled workers existed. Laborers who did have some knowledge of the crafts were alert in exploiting this situation. The remuneration demanded by artisans gradually became so costly that even some rather prosperous men hesitated be-

² George S. Schuyler, "Craftsmen in the Blue Grass," *Crisis*, vol. XLVII, May 1940, p. 158; Giles B. Jackson and D. Webster Davis, *The Industrial History of the Negro Race in the United States* (Richmond, 1908), p. 13; W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Negro American Artisan* (Atlanta, 1912), pp. 25-6; P. G. LePage, "Arts and Crafts of the Negro," *International Studio*, Vol. LXXVIII, March 1924, pp. 477-8.

³ Augustine Jones, *The Life and Work of Thomas Dudley, the Second Governor of Massachusetts* (Boston, 1899), p. 370.

fore employing new workmen.⁴ To the Lords of Trade Robert Livingston wrote in 1701 that the only barriers obstructing the production of naval stores in New York were the "want of people, and the high wages of the labourer."⁵ "Artificers are so scarce at present," a resident of South Carolina observed, "that all sorts of work is very dear; Taylors, Shoemakers, Smiths &c. would be particularly acceptable. . . . A skilful carpenter is not ashamed to demand 30s per Day besides his Diet, and the common Wages of Workmen is 20s. . . . When a Workman has but 10s per Day, he thinks he labours for almost nothing, tho' he has his maintenance besides."⁶ Conditions eventually reached the stage where entire communities advertised for certain tradesmen. The *Boston Gazette* of November 6, 1758, carried a notice that "The Trade of a Currier is very much wanted in Middletown, the Metropolis of Connecticut";⁷ in 1764 a New Jersey real estate agent announced that the county of Burlington urgently needed men skilled as shoemakers, tailors and wheelwrights.⁸ Beginning with 1775 the shortage was further accelerated by the demands of military necessity,⁹ and remained critical for some time even after the Revolution. As late as 1792 Virginia still

⁴ John White, *The Planter's Plea* (London, 1630), reprinted in *Old South Leaflets*, vol. VII, p. 78; J. P. Purry, et al., *A Description of the Province of South Carolina, Drawn up at Charles Town, in September 1731*, in Peter Force, ed., *Tracts and Other Papers* (Washington, D. C., 1836-46), vol. II, No. XI, p. 14; Letter from the Governor and Company of Connecticut to the Board of Trade, October, 1732, "The Talcott Papers," *Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society* (Hartford, 1892), vol. IV, p. 263; Works Project Administration, Federal Writers' Program, *New Hampshire* (Boston, 1938), p. 37.

⁵ Letter from R. Livingston to the Lords of Trade, May 13, 1701, in E. B. O'Callaghan, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York* (Albany, 1856-87), vol. IV, p. 875.

⁶ Purry, *Description of South Carolina*, p. 7.

⁷ Charles F. Dow, *Every Day Life in the Massachusetts Bay Colony* (Boston, 1935), p. 128.

⁸ *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, February 23, 1764.

⁹ H. R. McIlwaine, ed., *Official Letters of the Governors of the State of Virginia* (Richmond, 1926-29), vol. II, p. 406; vol. III, p. 442.

offered a five-year exemption from all taxes, except the duty on land, to any artisan or mechanic who would move to that state.¹⁰

Probably the one factor which most contributed to the shortage of artisans was the vastness of territory in the New World. Fertile land was available at such reasonable rates that no one would long be content working for another. After having labored for several years at their individual trades, most workers could afford to purchase a small farm and retire to rural life. Land in Pennsylvania, for example, was to be had for "a very small matter," especially when compared with the price in England. This gave the American independence and bargaining powers unsurpassed in any other region of the world.¹¹ The colonial employer would either pay dearly or, without warning, lose his entire staff of ambitious employees. Master craftsmen vainly sought to import European laborers, but the consequences were often as disastrous. Actually there was no guarantee that the immigrant was really a skilled artisan. Instances of misrepresentation led to the passage of acts permitting the courts to halt the wages of individuals securing contracts under false pretenses.¹²

¹⁰ B. W. Leigh and W. W. Hening, eds., *The Revised Code of the Laws of Virginia* (Richmond, 1819), vol. I, p. 66.

¹¹ Benjamin Franklin, *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind, Peopling of Countries, etc.* (Boston, 1755), p. 4; Letter from Governor William Franklin to the Earl of Hillsborough, June 14, 1768, in *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts* (Boston, 1904), vol. VI, p. 360; Albert C. Meyers, ed., *Narratives of Early Pennsylvania, West New Jersey and Delaware, 1630-1707* (New York, 1912), p. 328; Bartholomew R. Carroll, ed., *Historical Collections of South Carolina* (New York, 1846), vol. I, p. 377; Percy W. Bidwell and John J. Falconer, *History of Agriculture in the Northern United States, 1620-1860* (Washington, 1925), p. 33; Victor S. Clark, *History of Manufactures in the United States* (New York, 1929), vol. I, p. 157; J. G. Johnson, "Notes on Manufacturing in Ante-Bellum Georgia," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, vol. XVI, September 1932, p. 215.

¹² Philip A. Bruce, *Economic History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century* (New York, 1896), vol. II, p. 413; *A Complete Revisal of all the Acts of Assembly of the Province of North Carolina* (Newbern, 1773), p. 79. The

Despite these obstacles it was still apparent that the services of artisans were needed. The only solution was to find a new source of industrial labor, and Negro slaves, who had long been used for agricultural purposes, seemed to provide the necessary solution. The use of slaves as mechanics would solve two prime difficulties—the costliness of labor, and the rapid turnover in manpower. As one economic historian insists, employers “would have gone to the moon, if necessary, for labor,”¹³ and here, in their own backyards, was an unending supply.

The movement to train the Negro in the handicrafts did not have universal support in the American colonies. The white artisan, fearing slave competition, was naturally opposed to such a program. Among the planter class there were some who felt that craftsmanship did nothing more than replace the stock which it consumed, and therefore was less productive than agriculture. To this group it seemed unwise to use the available store of workers at any but the most profitable forms of employment.¹⁴ Many in the South also doubted the Negro’s ability to engage in trades requiring a fair degree of skill. Perhaps typical of his section, Colonel George Mason believed that slavery discouraged the arts and manufactures, for it prevented the importation of white laborers “who really enrich and

labor of indentures was frequently unproductive. Governor Dobbs, of North Carolina, complained that foreign laborers barely worked one-third of what they were accustomed to in Europe, and received rather high wages for this half-hearted endeavor. In New York the owner of a glass factory went into bankruptcy simply because his expensively imported help deserted him at an inopportune moment. Even Benjamin Franklin maintained that a good many idle and drunk of another country may be enticed away, “but those only disappoint their employers.” Stella H. Southerland, *Population Distribution in Colonial America* (New York, 1936), p. 216; E. B. O’Callaghan, *Documentary History of the State of New York* (Albany, 1849-51), vol. I, p. 499; Benjamin Franklin, *Works*, ed. by John Bigelow (New York, 1905), vol. III, p. 101.

¹³ Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill, 1944), p. 20.

¹⁴ Alexander Hamilton, *Works*, ed. by John C. Hamilton (New York, 1851), vol. III, p. 219; Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, ed. by Edwin Cannan (New York, 1937), pp. 631-33.

strengthen a country.”¹⁵ Still others pointed to the actual costliness of slave labor. Purchasing the services of an indenture was often the more frugal method, since he was usually an artisan in his own right, and could begin working immediately, without the expense of a long period of instruction. In 1741 it was estimated that the initial cost of a Negro, about thirty pounds, would pay the passage fare, provide tools and other equipment, and defray the cost of maintaining a white laborer for an entire year.¹⁶ Writing from England, Adam Smith emphasized that the work done by slaves, “though it appears to cost only their maintenance, is in the end the dearest of any. A person who can acquire no property,” he declared, “can have no other interest but to eat as much, and to labour as little as possible.”¹⁷

Among other things, employers also considered the effects of mechanical training on the Negro as a slave. Above all, they were interested in preserving the social order. Some realized all too well that a little learning could be a dangerous thing, for the modicum of education which the slave received while mastering the essentials of a craft might make him resentful of his status, and complicate further subjugation. Frequently, industrialization, and the contacts accruing from it, did cause a good deal of rebel-

¹⁵ George Livermore, *The Opinions of the Founders of the Republic on Negroes as Slaves, Citizens and Soldiers* (Boston, 1863), p. 566. For similar statements concerning the non-productivity of slave labor, consult: Thomas Jefferson, *Writings*, ed. by H. A. Washington (New York, 1863), vol. VIII, p. 386; Letter from William Byrd to Lord Egmont, July 12, 1736, *American Historical Review, Documents*, vol. 1, October, 1895, p. 89; Lorenzo D. Turner, “Anti-Slavery Sentiment in American Literature,” *Journal of Negro History*, vol. XIV, October, 1929, p. 386.

¹⁶ Benjamin Martyn, *An Account Showing the Progress of the Colony of Georgia in America* (London, 1741), p. 8.

¹⁷ Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, p. 365. In 1763 the Reverend Boucher, a Virginia minister, also asserted that the labor of a free man, “who is regularly hired and paid for the work he does, and only for what he does, is in the end cheaper than the eye service of the slave.” Quoted in John E. Cooke, *Virginia, a History of Her People* (Boston, 1884), p. 367.

liousness. The slave craftsman's access to tools, which might be used in fashioning weapons, made some masters hesitate before consenting to industrial training. A revolt uncovered on the eastern shore of Virginia disclosed the fact that a Negro blacksmith made use of his experience to shape three hundred spears for the intended insurrection. More than a few of the Negroes implicated in the New York "conspiracy" of 1741, which allegedly had as its objective the burning of the city and the murder of its inhabitants, were tradesmen. Many of the preliminary meetings were held at the homes of white artisans, whom the slaves undoubtedly met while at work. "The easier acquisition of knowledge, the greater possibility of association, and the greater confidence and assurance that city life and mechanical and industrial pursuits developed," Aptheker contends, "were widely recognized as dangers associated with the growth of a large urban slave population."¹⁸

On the other hand, the advocates of industrialization produced arguments equally convincing. Those favoring the use of Negroes in the trades pointed to the steady decline in agriculture. As early as 1722 tobacco had fallen in price, and by the end of the colonial period its potentialities became even more reduced.¹⁹ The work of artisans, even if it created only a product equal in value to that which it originally expended, as the planters asserted, still could not be regarded as unproductive. Since manufacturing was more conducive to subdivision and specialization, and since it could be conducted regardless of seasonal fluctuations, it

¹⁸ Sidney G. Fisher, *Men, Women and Manners in Colonial Times* (Philadelphia, 1898), vol. II, p. 309; Herbert Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts* (New York, 1903), pp. 114-15, 211; Daniel Horsemanden, *The New York Conspiracy or a History of the Negro Plot* (New York, 1810), passim.

¹⁹ Robert Beverly, *The History of Virginia* (London, 1722), p. 255; Marcus W. Jernegan, *Laboring and Dependent Classes in Colonial America, 1607-1783* (Chicago, 1931), p. 8; Jernegan, "Slavery and the Beginning of Industrialism in the American Colonies," *American Historical Review*, vol. XXV, January 1920, p. 222.

afforded greater opportunities than agriculture for improvement. Alexander Hamilton, adopting a rather moderate view, considered it extremely probable that an exhaustive analysis of the subject would indicate no inherent superiority in the productivity of one form of industry over the other. "The propriety of the encouragements, which may, in any case be proposed to be given to either," he remarked, "ought to be determined upon considerations irrelative to any comparison of that nature."²⁰

Undeniably the strongest argument in favor of the use of slave craftsmen, aside from reasons of scarcity, centered about the relative stability of the labor force. Slavery was a lifetime status; the owner having once taught his Negro a trade did not have to consider the expiration of the term of indenture, and the natural inconvenience of hiring a new worker. Furthermore, the danger of having a servant make a successful escape from his period of bondage was considerably lessened. An indentured Englishman or Scot, after eluding his master, might easily assimilate into the mass of free workers. The black man, however, by virtue of his color, was always viewed with suspicion when seeking work as a freeman, and consequently was easier to trace. If only for reasons of permanency, slave artisans were to be preferred.

In selecting Negroes for industrial training, the slaveowner had to consider still other complex factors. The economy of the area, the amount of work, the number of Negroes available, and the profit involved, all were important to his decision. Masters were well aware that the value of a slave was directly influenced by his working ability, and that it was economically advantageous to instruct as many as possible in the crafts. At the slave market artisans invariably sold for twice as much as unskilled field hands.²¹

²⁰ Hamilton, *Works*, vol. III, pp. 198-201.

²¹ Charles S. Johnson, *The Negro in American Civilization* (New York, 1930), p. 10. Shortly after the Revolution, when former loyalists began filing damage claims for the loss of slave property, an East Florida Negro carpenter

However, not every slave was subjectively qualified for such work. The intelligence, age, sex, health and disposition of the Negro played a vital role in the task of selection. Although U. B. Phillips contends that on the larger plantations "some of the weaker Negroes were often assigned to spinning, weaving, sewing, and like occupations in the line of domestic manufactures," in general young, healthy, alert male slaves, who had been "country born," were preferred.²²

Once having been selected for mechanical duties, the Negro was placed under the supervision of an experienced craftsman. Owing to the permanency of slavery and its rigorous discipline, he eventually might develop a fair degree of skill. With such training the slave was capable of attending to most of the mechanical needs of the plantation, and often was hired out to assist the town carpenter or village blacksmith.²³ Generally speaking, colonial manufacturing, and especially the forms practiced in rural districts, was simple enough to be mastered by slave laborers. Shoemaking, for example, required only two parts (an upper and a sole), four processes (cutting, fitting, lasting and bot-toming), and eight tools (a knife, awl, needle, pincers, last,

and cooper were each listed at one hundred pounds; conversely, the claims for field hands from the very same region rarely exceeded fifty pounds. Eugene P. Southall, "Negroes in Florida Prior to the Civil War," *Journal of Negro History*, vol. XIX, January, 1934, pp. 80-81.

²² Negro slaves in colonial America were sometimes classified into two groups—first, the "raw" or "guinea" Negroes, imported from Africa, and second, the "country born," coming either from the West Indies or some other American colony. Generally, the latter slaves were easier to control, and it was from this group that the greatest numbers of tradesmen were developed. A. D. Candler, ed., *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia* (Atlanta, 1904-16), vol. XXV, p. 432; Jernegan, *Laboring and Dependent Classes*, p. 8; John Brickell, *Natural History of North Carolina* (Dublin, Ireland, 1737), p. 272; Ulrich B. Phillips, "The Origin and Growth of the Southern Black Belts," *American Historical Review*, vol. XI, July 1906, p. 803.

²³ Thomas J. Calloway, "The American Negro Artisan," *Cassier's Magazine*, vol. XXV, March 1904, p. 435.

hammer, lapstone, and stirrup).²⁴ Whatever disadvantages slavery may have held, under its system the Negro was taught many trades necessary for earning a living. Those trained as artisans gained manual skills which sometimes became the source of employment after manumission was attained.²⁵

It is interesting to note that while plantation artisans were relied upon to handle elementary tasks, owners frequently did not have confidence in the ability of slaves to perform operations of a more technical nature. Slaves were taught to be coopers, sawyers, carpenters and smiths, wrote the Reverend Hugh Jones in 1724, but for the most part they were "none of the aptest or nicest."²⁶ Many masters, including William Byrd and Colonel Fitzhugh of Virginia, went to great expense to secure the services of foreign artisans, in spite of the availability of Negroes who had been trained for such purposes.²⁷ Nevertheless, what Negro workers may have lacked in adroitness was compensated for by versatility. With division of labor a limited feature in the industries of the time, colonial craftsmen were called upon to practice many diverse occupations. On the eve of the American Revolution virtually every trade known to colonial life was represented by slave laborers.²⁸ Sometimes one mastered the elements of several industrial arts. One

²⁴ Blanche E. Hazard, *The Organization of the Boot and Shoe Industry in Massachusetts Before 1875* (Cambridge, 1921), p. 3.

²⁵ Carl Kelsey, "The Evolution of Negro Labor," *Annals of the American Academy of Political Science*, vol. XXI, January 1903, p. 57; Luther P. Jackson, "Early Strivings of the Negro in Virginia," *Journal of Negro History*, vol. XXV, January 1940, p. 27.

²⁶ Hugh Jones, *The Present State of Virginia* (London, 1724), p. 36, Sabin's Reprints, 1865.

²⁷ W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Negro Artisan* (Atlanta, 1902), p. 13.

²⁸ Raymond B. Pinchbeck, *The Virginia Negro Artisan and Tradesman* (Richmond, 1926), p. 31; Helen A. Tucker, "Negro Craftsmen in New York," *Southern Workman*, vol. XXXVI, November, 1907, p. 615. Jernegan, working with issues of the *South Carolina Gazette* of 1732 to 1776, uncovered references to slaves engaged in at least twenty-eight different trades. Jernegan, "Slavery and Industrialism," *Am. Hist. Rev.*, XXV, 230.

Negro combined iron-working with shoemaking, while another was capable of executing the business of founder, stone mason and miller.²⁹ A Virginia newspaper mentioned a slave who was an "extraordinary sawyer, a tolerable good carpenter and currier, pretends to make shoes and is a good sailor."³⁰ A twenty-six year old Maryland Negro, by trade a blacksmith, was capable of reading and writing, though imperfectly, driving a carriage, shaving and dressing hair, and performing the duties of a cobbling shoemaker. Jean, an Annapolis Negro, could work as a carpenter, bricklayer, gardener or driver, and sometimes pretended to be a Methodist preacher.³¹ Another slave was a weaver by trade and an expert musician as well. A carpenter owned by the Lloyd family of New York also worked as a sawyer and blacksmith, and was able to hew wood.³² Many were simply described as "fit for any business," but innumerable others were listed specifically as barbers, brewers, bricklayers, cabinet makers, carpenters, caulkers, coopers, cordwainers, cork cutters, distillers, glovers, goldsmiths, iron workers, jewelers, locksmiths, painters, pipe makers, shipwrights, silversmiths, tanners and upholsterers.³³

²⁹ *The Pennsylvania Journal and the Weekly Advertiser*, February 5, 1722, reprinted in William A. Whitehead, et al., eds., *Archives of the State of New Jersey*, 1st series (Newark, 1880-), vol. XXVIII, p. 48; *The Virginia Gazette*, April 31, 1774, extract in Ulrich B. Phillips, ed., *Plantation and Frontier Documents* (Cleveland, 1910), vol. II, p. 83.

³⁰ *The Virginia Gazette*, April 16, 1767.

³¹ "Eighteenth Century Slaves as Advertised by Their Masters," *Journal of Negro History, Documents*, vol. I, April 1916, pp. 179, 203.

³² W. H. Browne, ed., *Archives of Maryland* (Baltimore, 1883-), vol. XXVIII, p. 43; Elizabeth Donnan, ed., *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America* (Washington, 1930-35), vol. IV, p. 32; "Papers of the Lloyd Family of Lloyd's Neck, New York," *Collections of the New York Historical Society* (New York, 1926-27), vol. I, pp. 261, 560.

³³ Pinchbeck, *Virginia Negro Artisan*, p. 38; Whitehead, ed., *New Jersey Archives*, vol. XX, p. 263; *The Independent (Boston) Chronicle and the Universal Advertiser*, January 16, 1777; Clark, *History of Manufactures*, vol. I, p. 167; Adelaide L. Fries, ed., *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* (Raleigh, 1922-26), vol. III, p. 1322; Thomas J. Wertenbaker, *The Old South: The Founding of American Civilization* (New York, 1942), p. 232; Harry B.

Even some women possessed skills far superior to those of the average domestic, excelling in cooking, washing and other forms of household work. Many were spinners and sempstresses; others made soap and starch and dyed clothing.³⁴ One Negro woman was employed as a "fine house servant and mantua maker."³⁵ Offered by a Philadelphia employer was a very likely woman, who could "Card, Spin, Knit and Milk." Many others, however, were described as capable of doing all sorts of household work, which, during this period, was apt to include soap and candle-making, washing, cooking, shearing, spinning, weaving, knitting, tailoring, preserving, ale brewing and a host of different tasks.³⁶

Slaves were not the only colored persons to work at

Yoshpe, ed., "Record of Slave Manumissions in New York During the Colonial and Early National Periods," *Journal of Negro History*, vol. XXV, January 1941, p. 89; Leila Sellers, *Charleston Business on the Eve of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, 1945), p. 94; *New York Mercury*, December 9, 1765; *New York Gazette*, July 6-13, 1730, August 27-September 3, 1733, March 24-31, 1735; *New York Weekly Post-Boy*, April 3, 1749; also newspaper extracts in Alfred C. Prime, ed., *The Arts and Crafts in Philadelphia, Maryland and South Carolina, 1721-1800* (Philadelphia, 1929-32), vol. I, pp. 48, 167; Rita S. Gottesman, ed., "The Arts and Crafts in New York, 1726-1776," *Collections of the New York Historical Society* (New York, 1942), pp. 48, 140, 317, 436; George F. Dow, ed., *The Arts and Crafts in New England 1704-1775* (Topsfield, Mass., 1927), pp. 62, 189, 195, 304; Allen W. Reed, "The Speech of Negroes in Colonial America," *Journal of Negro History*, vol. XXIV, July 1939, p. 257.

³⁴ Donnan, ed., *Documents of Slave Trade*, vol. IV, p. 474; *New York Mercury*, March 1, 1756; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, March 21, 1737, April 21, 1761; Whitehead, *New Jersey Archives*, vol. XX, p. 8; Wertebaker, *Old South*, p. 138; Phillips, ed., *Plant. and Front. Docts.*, vol. II, p. 271; John H. Franklin, *The Free Negro in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill, 1943), p. 143; Helen T. Catterall, ed., *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery and the Negro* (Washington, 1926), vol. I, p. 99; A. C. Prime, *Colonial Craftsmen of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1925), p. 3.

³⁵ Pinchbeck, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

³⁶ "Eighteenth Century Slaves Advertised," *Jour. Negro Hist., Docts.*, vol. I, p. 194; *Independent (Boston) Chronicle*, January 23, 1777; George L. Clark, *A History of Connecticut: Its People and Institutions* (New York, 1914), p. 160; Albert B. Hart, ed., *Commonwealth History of Massachusetts* (New York, 1927-30), vol. II, pp. 396-73, vol. III, pp. 296-7.

these trades. Free Negroes were also attracted to the handicrafts, and some were in a position to support themselves adequately. Apparently a few owned slaves themselves. John Fortuno, a New York Negro cooper, employed a woman servant, Marya, whom he eventually manumitted and later married. A Charleston carpenter, James Miles, also owned a Negro woman, whose runaway slave husband he is reported to have sheltered.³⁷ More often, however, the free Negro's lot was an unhappy one. No longer shielded by the master's protective influence, many found it difficult to compete in an open labor market, and consequently lapsed into a state of semi-slavery. The most common of these intermediary statuses were servitude and apprenticeship. Ostensibly the master only had possession of the services of these individuals, but actually, as in slavery, he could buy, sell or transfer the servant almost at will. The prime distinction lay in the fact that this was a temporary rather than a lifetime condition,³⁸ with the period of service defined by the provisions of the original covenant. Thus, during the colonial period, three classes of Negroes — slave, freeman and servant—labored as tradesmen in America.

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³⁷ Yoshpe, "Record of Slave Manumissions," *Jour. Negro Hist.*, vol. XXVI, p. 82; "18th Cent. Slaves Advertised," *loc. cit.*, p. 170.

³⁸ Edward R. Turner, *The Negro in Pennsylvania* (Washington, 1911), pp. 89-91.