

NEGROES AND INDENTURED WORKERS, 1784-85

Mark Bird's 1770 Berks County Assessment reported twelve Negroes. Of these, four ~~are~~ <sup>by name, and</sup> known and three worked at Hopewell Furnace in 1784.

Precisely what happened to Bird's black ~~labor~~ house servants and labor at Hopewell, Birdsboro and Falls of Delaware is unknown\*

Three Negroes and <sup>Six</sup> ~~five~~ (Irish?) indentured men have Hopewell accounts in the sole surviving Bird Journal of 1784-85( SM 41MR). All are credited for work performed and charged for purchases, mainly clothing.

NEGRO ROBIN,(p 50) "saved" over nine Pounds, nearly \$24, between January 1784 and August 1785. As expected, he, the other black workers and the indentured group paid for neither food nor shelter.(Free white workers paid a shilling a day, about .13 for board.) He bought tobacco monthly, "paid" 8/6 and 10/6 for ~~two~~ two pairs of new shoes and 3/6 for mending a pair. He also bought new stockings at 3/6 and had two pair ~~of~~ "footed" at 1/6, nine pence a pair for this repair. He paid Bird's housekeeper, Mary Paine, <sup>2 shillings a pair</sup> for "tailoring" four pair of woolen ~~trousers~~ trousers, two pairs of linen ones at 1/6 and for making four shirts at 1/6.

He also bought 1 1/4 yd of cloth, hardly sufficient for the above clothing.

Precisely what Robin did is not hinted, probably labor <sup>at</sup> at the furnace, on the farm, or ANY assigned work. His Work and Wages credit for an unstated period 17.15.4, over \$45, provided the "savings" mentioned above.

NEGRO CRUISE,(p 51) "owed" Mark Bird nearly 20 L for the year after January 1784, but this "debt" is through an unexplained book charge of 42L. His "wages" for 10 months and 20 days at 25 shillings a month( about \$3.25 and his board) earned him over 22L. ( A free white worker earned from 35 to 100 shillings a month.) That Cruise was a teamster is known only through a General Charge paying for two collars for his team. He used tobacco, "paid" for four pairs of new shoes and twice had pairs resoled. He bought stockings and had

two pair "footed". Seemingly, well clothed, he "paid" Tailor John McCormick

\* One girl was involved in a John Bishop lawsuit against Bird and became ~~him~~

WM Hayes property

BIRD'S 1780 SLAVE HOLDINGS HIGHEST IN BERKS COUNTY

Writing from Documents at the Reading Court House, Judge Paul Schaffer published "Slavery in Berks County" in the July 1941 Historical Review of Berks County.

Pennsylvania "freed" its blacks by law in 1780. This <sup>Act</sup> required a listing. Naturally, the 1780 concentration of <sup>Berks County</sup> Negroes was at ironworks with Mark Bird owning eighteen. John Patton, Bird's step-father, worked 14 blacks at Berkshire Furnace, the former Wm Bird furnace in western Berks County. George Ege at Charming Forge used ten and Leshar at Oley Forge fifteen. None of these Bird Negroes can be positively identified with the three at Hopewell Furnace in 1784, already discussed. However, Maria of this 1780 list MAY be MORIAH of 1784.

The Negroes at ironworks were:

Bird	Patton	Ege	Leshar
10 Males 28-90	7 Men	5 Men	3 Men
4 Women	3 Women	2 Women	3 Women
3 Boys	2 Boys	2 Boys	5 Boys
1 Girl*	2 Girls	1 Girl	4 Girls

NONE of these Negroes were FREE according to the Pennsylvania Act of 1780; only those born after No. 1, 1780 became free.

Whether any of the Bird workers in the above list (except two) had been the property of William Bird is unknown. At William Bird's death in 1763 he owned ten blacks; eight men and two women. Of the men, only two were listed "at the furnace" and none at the forges. (This eliminated <sup>S</sup> Cuff, the skilled forgerman) York, 90 years old in 1780, had been "ill" in the 1762 list. Maria <sup>(MORIAH?)</sup> was the other potential slave once owned by Mark's father. Tom, owned by Patton in

1780, was probably Wm Bird's Tom of 1763.

\* This girl became the property of Wm Hayes as the result of a lawsuit ~~by~~ by John Bishop.

5/6( about seventy-one cents) for unstated work and bought material for better clothing from the store. As Cruise had, he paid Mary Paine for making ten pairs of working woolen and linen trousers and four shirts.

That <sup>NEGRO MORIAH</sup> ~~Negro Moriah~~, (p 60) was female was shown by her first store purchase, a petticoat and linen for an apron. She also "bought" two pairs of shoes and a pair of stockings. That she was from Birdsboro or Falls of Delaware is shown by her "earnings" credits, three years at 10 L ( \$26.66) a year. <sup>yet</sup> She was at Hopewell only one and a half years. As ~~for~~ Cruise and Robin, food and shelter were not charges against her. At the account's end, Bird "owed" her 6.12.0, over \$16.

Best Known Bird Negro , but non-Hopewell, was skilled forge hammerman <sup>CUFF</sup> Guff <sup>DIX</sup> Dix. He had the GUFFS to runaway/with an <sup>in 1774</sup> ~~iron collar~~ lock and chain around his ~~neck~~ leg, and again in MAY 1775 with an IRON COLLAR AROUND HIS NECK! (Mont . p 165-7)

His description told he was short, 5'3" and the clothing he wore. While caught at New Castle Del in October and jailed, Cuff escaped from jail! His description this time placed an iron ring in his ear. Seemingly, Mark Bird never recovered this skilled, <sup>BIRDSBORO</sup> forge worker. That Bird provided fairly <sup>a</sup> decently for his Negroes is suggested by medical expenses paid to Dr. Jonathan Potts. During 1772-74, Pott's accounts show that Cuff was inoculated at a cost of 1.9.0 on Jan. 13, 1774, a cost of nearly \$4.00. (Mont p 286-90) ASA NAME, "Cuff" ~~was~~ <sup>meant</sup> a boy born at the African Gold Coast on Friday. (D of Am)

INDENTURED WHITE WORKERS

NOW 2A

Mark Bird bought the unstated time ~~in~~ "in Servitude" of six Irish ~~white~~ men on September 1784 for 14 Pounds 8 shilling ~~x~~ each, about \$38.25. Their names were Joseph Sumerset, Edward and Michael Riley, Patrick Fee and Arthur Money. John Lynch was a ~~x~~ separate purchase for 3L on November 10, 1784. ( p 110) <sup>LLG</sup> ~~But~~ Michael Riley immediately were charged with clothing worth ten Schillings( near \$5), hats, shoes, and stockings. As workers, these men are credited( as the Negroes) with wages varying for unknown reasons from forty to forty-five shillings ( about \$5.32plus) a month. Their skills may have been <sup>a</sup>

factor.

JOSEPH SUMERSET ( p 120) used tobacco moderately, received ~~two pairs of shoes~~ <sup>two pairs of shoes</sup> and stockings, bought nearly two Pounds worth of cloth and paid tailor John McCormick 10/6(over a dollar). A calfskin apron purchase suggests that he handled rough-on-clothing castings, <sup>AND FIG IRON.</sup> His "work and wages" credit was at 45 Shilling a month( about \$5.85) and he worked/for the Hopewell neighbors for 2/ and 3/3, abt .40 a day. On April 19, 1785, the remainder of his "time" in servitude was sold to Wm Hayes for 12.0.5., about \$32. In about ~~x4~~<sup>4</sup> $\frac{1}{2}$  months he had worked out about \$6.25 of his initial cost to Mark Bird, had reclothed himself and received board, costing free white workers a shilling a day(p 10<sup>a</sup>)  
 EDWARD RILEY, <sup>(p 120)</sup> also used tobacco moderately and as all other indentured and black workers, bought no food, hence received room and board. He purchased a second pair of shoes and stockings and soon wore "for good" tailor-made clothing costing 1.18.0 for the cloth and tailoring worth about \$1.36. Mark Bird also sold Riley's unexpired time to Wm Hayes for 12.18.1, ever \$32. In about 5 $\frac{1}{2}$  months, Riley had reclothed himself and <sup>MAY HAVE</sup> worked off about two Pounds, almost \$6 of his servitude.

MICHAEL RILEY <sup>(p 121)</sup> needed only a hat, 4 Sh,(abt .52) when his time was bought by Bird on Sept. 20, 1784. He purchased a pair each of shoes and stockings, bought over 3 yards of linen , paid Mary Paine two Shillings( abt .26) for making ~~wool~~ woolen working trousers by the end of December. These were probably sewn from the near Two Pounds worth of linen and cloth. John Bird bought Michael's for 18. 7.8. Why this transfer was nearly four Pounds/above Riley's cost is ~~unk~~ unknown.

PATRICK FEE( p 119) cost Bird 14.8.0 on September 30, 1784. At the year's end, he received credit for Work and Wages of 5.15.6 for 2 months and 17 days at 45 Shillings a month( about \$6 a month). On arrival, he ~~was~~ "paid" ~~was charged~~ for hat, shoes and stockings. Later, the purchase of a sheepskin <sup>apron</sup> again suggests the handling of rough cast iron or pigs. Other purchases included 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  pounds of tobacco at 20 pence a pound( abt .21), plus another

pair of shoes and stockings. Tailoring by McCormick cost 10/6 and created wearing apparel out of four yards of cloth at 7/6 ( a dollar) a yard, three yards of Oznaburg at 2/, half a yard of linen with thread and buttons costing a Shilling. Both dress and work ~~clothing~~<sup>clothes</sup> were in this sewing charge since Oznabrig is a coarse shirt material. Fee overspent his earnings by five Shillings and his servitude was sold to Wm Hayes for 12.19.0. In money, Fee had earned only 1.9.0 about \$5, toward eventual freedom in the period from September 30, 1784 to April 19, 1785, less than a dollar a month in six and a half months. However, he had reclothed himself and may have learned a trade.

JOHN LINCH (p 110) purchased by indenture from Porter on Nov. 10, 1784. <sup>TIME OF</sup> ~~How~~ long his indenture ~~was~~ can only be calculated from its value, 3 Pounds, against the 14.8 sh of the other Irishmen, approximately one-fifth the time. Likewise, Porter as seller is unknown. (The sole Porter in this Journal is a laborer, John hardly the owner of an indentured man.) Because Linch soon bought a sheepskin apron, it might be assumed that he labored in the cast house handling rough castings and pig iron. Bird paid him 40 L a <sup>year</sup> ~~month~~, <sup>or</sup> ~~in~~ abt 3/6, ~~about~~ \$8 a month, near wages for common labor. He <sup>wore</sup> ~~bought~~ stockings costing 3/4, <sup>and</sup> used tobacco moderately. By year's end he had purchased a tailored coat. The material from the store included 3½ yards of cloth, 2 yards of linen in two price ranges along with thread and buttons. Without tailoring, his coat cost 2.10.5, a cost within a month's wages. Tailoring added eight Shillings, abt a dollar, ~~to the coat's cost.~~ At the Journal's end, Bird seemingly owed Linch 10 Shillings, a half pound, abt 1.33. <sup>- SEEMINGLY</sup> Linch <sup>had</sup> worked out his servitude. If he hadn't, he would have been sold as the other Irishmen were.

ARTHUR MONEY ( p 120) duplicated all the other indentured men in various ways. He cost Bird 14.8.0 on Sept 30, bought <sup>only</sup> at ~~hat~~ so was better outfitted at purchase than most. <sup>He DID NOT USE TOBACCO.</sup> As winter came, he bought shoes and stockings and 2 3/4 yards of linen for abt.90. Mary Paine stiched a pair of woolen trousers for him, <sup>10/6</sup> and John McCormick tailored ~~12xSh,~~ from two kinds of cloth, linen and Oznabrig worth nearly two Pounds, \$5.32. Wm Hayes bot his time for 12.17.9. He earned

5.12.5 for 2 months and 13 days at 45 Shillings, nearly \$15. Mark Bird owed him ~~■~~ ten shillings. He had, as the others, outfitted himself and earned 1.10.3 toward his freedom, over \$4.

DID INDENTURED MEN PAY FOR SELVES?

Mark Bird sold four of these indentured men to Wm Hayes for 50.15.5, one to John Bird( of <sup>probably son of</sup> unknown relation to Mark), <sup>kw</sup> while ~~Linch seemingly~~ not being <sup>seemingly</sup> sold, had/worked out his three Pound cost. Bird had paid 72 Pounds for these men and sold them for 69.2.11. Freedom under these ~~will~~ conditions certainly appeared to be far in the future.

Whether the practice of crediting wages as shown in the Mark Bird Journal was in any way universal, or that time might be earned in this manner is unknown. Normally, a white indentured man or woman was sold for a DEFINITE period of time and had to be clothed and fed by the owner. Mark Bird apparently "KEPT BOOKS" on both his black and white servants. The fact that none of the servants bought rum or whiskey did not prove that they were served alcohol/ as part of their board.

HOPEWELL FURNACE CLOSED

The selling of these indentured men and the many cash payments to over fifty workmen( p 149) strongly suggest that Mark Bird ~~closed~~ quit operating Hopewell Furnace, went out of blast.

INDENTURED IRISHMEN 1784

Costs	E. Riley	M. Riley	Sumeret, Jos	Money Arthur	Fee Patrick	Linch, John
Indenture Cost	14.8.0	14.8.0	14.8.0	14.8.0	14.8.0	3.0.0
<del>INDENTURE COST</del> Wages	5.16.11	No entry	7.6.9	5.12.2	5.12.5	3.10.0
Indenture sold	12.18.1	18.7.8	12.0.5	12.17.9	12.17.9	-
Tailor	10.6	12.0	10.6	10.6	10.6	8.0
<del>INDENTURE</del> Oznabrig	6.0	4.6	6.0	6.0	6.0	-
<del>INDENTURE</del> Cloth	1.10.0	1.13.7 $\frac{1}{2}$	1.10.0	1.10.0	1.10.0	1.15.0
<del>INDENTURE</del>						
Linen	1.0	7.11(2)	1.0	1.0	1.0	4.2
Thread & Buttons	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.0
Tobacco	.10	-	1.8	-	2.6	.10
Aporn	-	-	7.0(calf)	1.0 (sheep)	1.0 (sheep)	3.0 (sheep)
Shoes	19.0 (2)	9.6	9.6	10.6	19.0(2)	19.0(2)
Stockings	8.10(2)	3.4	8.10(2)	8.10(2)	8.10(2)	3.4
Trousers	-	2.0 Woolen	-	-	-	-
Hat	9.0(2)	10.6 (2)	4.0	4.0	4.0	-

HESSIANS AT Hopewell and Birdsboro DURING THE WAR and at Hopewell in 1784. Dale Biever of Boyertown, who wrote up Mark Bird's Cannon production, furnished this list.

TWELVE assigned to Mark Bird of Reading ". Had to be "employed " at Birdsboro or Hopewell:

	SM41 M
Bechtel, John	None of that family name
Clause, John	None
Cost, John Yost	"
Klippert, Jacob	"
Koch, Jacob	"
Miller, John	NO John
Peter, Jacob )Artillery	None of that family name
Ransel Ludwig	"
Seibert, George-Artillery	"
Seitz, Valentine-Artillery	"
Streithoff, Ludwig	"
Zillick, Henry	"

Source of above E. Kipping, Hessian View of America, (Monmouth, N.J., 1971)

Since Mark Bird "paid" his indentured Irish workers and Negroes, any Hessian, IF at Hopewell, would surely have been identified. As seen above, NONE of the twelve assigned to Mark Bird were AT HOPEWELL in 1784-5.

This COMPLETE ABSENCE of Hessian names in 1784-5, <sup>JOURNAL</sup> makes a check in the <sup>U.S.</sup> Census of 1790 unnecessary for Hopewell. BUT ALL OF THESE MAN MAY HAVE WORKED AT BIRDSBORO or at Spring Forge in Amity-Colebrookedale Twp.