

Let's call him John. History does not reveal his real name. But the story of what he did is right there in the old Pennsylvania records.

John was an Englishman who wanted to go to America. But he did not have very much money. He could not afford the price of the trip. And so he paid a higher price: his freedom.

He went to the captain of a ship that was soon to sail to America. In exchange for free passage, he agreed to become a servant for a certain length of time. This was a common practice in the 1700s.

When the ship reached America, the captain sold John to a farmer. The price was what the boat trip usually cost—nine pounds. John promised to serve his new master for five years. At the end of that time the farmer would give him some land, some clothes, and some money. Then John could start his own life in this new land.

It seemed a fair arrangement for all three men. The captain bade them good day and returned to his ship. And John and his master set off into the country.

When night came they had gone only half the way to the farmer's home. So they decided to stop at an inn for the night.

In the morning John rose early, for he was hungry. The innkeeper began to prepare him some breakfast.

Now, John was a tall, handsome man. The master, on the other hand, was a very

ordinary-looking fellow. John was well dressed, for a servant. But the master, although he was very wealthy, did not wear the usual fancy clothes. The master was also a very quiet man, while John talked a great deal and was very sure of himself.

And so the innkeeper made a natural mistake. He decided that John was the master and that the farmer was the servant.

At breakfast the innkeeper talked to John of this and that. Then he added that he needed a man to work for him. "Would you be willing to sell your servant who lies asleep upstairs?" he asked.

John quickly hid his surprise. This was a chance not to be missed!

After a little bargaining, he sold his sleeping master for twelve pounds. Then, wasting no time, he climbed into the master's wagon. As he was leaving, he turned to the innkeeper and said, "Your new servant is a good worker, my friend. But I must warn you about one thing: he never tells the truth. Oh, how he rants and raves! He boasts and brags at great length. In fact, I hear that when I'm not around he tells folks that he is a rich farmer. I've heard his yarns so often that I don't even listen anymore. But it's something you'll have to get used to." And then, with a smile and a handshake, he drove away.

History does not record where he went. Nor does it tell what happened when the master woke up, much too late.

CHECK YOUR READING

1. **The servant is called John because his real name**
 - A is hard to say
 - B isn't known today
 - C later became famous

2. **The country John came from was**
 - A England
 - B France
 - C Germany

3. **John became a servant in order to get**
 - A money for food
 - B a boat trip
 - C good clothing

4. **The man to whom the captain sold John was a**
 - A doctor
 - B teacher
 - C farmer

5. **John's master was very**
 - A handsome
 - B wealthy
 - C well dressed

6. **Compared with the master, John was a very**
 - A good writer
 - B slow worker
 - C easy talker

7. **While John was eating breakfast, his master was**
 - A sleeping upstairs
 - B hitching up the wagon
 - C mailing a letter

8. **The innkeeper asked John if he would**
 - A work at the inn
 - B sell his servant
 - C leave at once

9. **The price the innkeeper paid was**
 - A more than the master paid for John
 - B less than the master paid for John
 - C just what the master paid for John

10. **John warned the innkeeper that his new "servant" did not**
 - A work very hard
 - B tell the truth
 - C know how to farm