

Slavery in Early American New Orleans

Directions: Examine the various posters below, selected from a few of the 1804-1821 issues of the *Telegraph et le Commercial Advertiser*, the *Louisiana Advertiser*, and the *Courrier de la Louisiane*. Read the paragraph on the next page and answer the questions.

Runaway Slave.



ON the Night of the 24th July last, ran from a PEROGUE, an Indian Negro, of the Malabar Coast, named **T A L I N G E**,

belonging to Mr. MAUCHOSSE, an inhabitant at the Racourcy, in the county of *Point Coupée*, has long hair, rather curled, in the manner of a Griffie, short in stature, he is supposed to be in town seeking an opportunity to embark for France.—Whoever will deliver him to Mr. PAUL LANUSSE, shall be handsomely rewarded.

August 9.

Public Sale.

On Friday 3d October next, will be sold by the Subscribers, at their Vendue Store, at 10 o'clock in the morning, at two years credit, with good security to the satisfaction of the seller. VIZ:

13 SLAVES

of different sexes, from the succession of the late Mr. Huchet de Kernion. The said Slaves possess the following qualities;—carters, good cooks, washer women &c.

ALSO,

The furniture belonging to the said estate.

N. B. The expenses of the deeds and bounds of security, to be paid by the purchasers.

PATTON & MOSSY,

Auctioneers.

Sept. 4. td

—0000000—

FOR SALE,

At Six Months Credit.

By the subscriber No. 5, in the house of . Ca stilian, Place d'Armes, **FOUR NEGRESSES**, the one named Mary Joseph, aged about 35 years, her daughter, aged about 15 years, a good Cook, Washer and Ironer, her daughter understands something of sewing. An other *Negress* a good Washer, and the other *Negress*, named Rasalee aged 17 years, understands a little of all kinds of work. A young *Mulatto* named Ausset aged 10 years, will make an excellent waiter.

JOSEPH PERIER.

July 29th.

FOR SALE,

A SMART NEGRO about 30 years of age, an American born, an excellent workman at the sail-making business. For terms apply to A. Brown, No. 38, on the Levee.

If the above negro is not sold before Saturday next, 31st inst, he will on that day, be sold at public auction, at 11 o'clock A. M. by Henry Molier & Co. for an endorsed note at 60 days.

August 26. td

TO HIRE,

FOR a few months, 30 to 35 Field Negroes, in families, well disposed and accustomed to the climate. For terms enquire of

F. PHILLIPS, Jun.

August 19. td

Runaway,



A Negro man called **G A S P A R D**, creol, about 24 years old, of a dark complexion.

A generous Reward, and all reasonable expences paid, will be given to the person, or persons, who will lodge said Negro in gaol, or deliver him to C. GIROD, owner.

August 28

37.

FOR SALE—42 acclimated Negroes, amongst which are twenty prime men, 6 first rate women, and 14 smaller young negroes, all warranted to be of good character and never known to runaway, and will be sold together on accommodating terms in suit a purchaser for the entire Lot. Enquire at 34 Gravier street. New-Orleans, February 23-31

By Dutillet & Sagory.

By virtue of an order of the first Judicial District Court of this State, the Syndic of the creditors of Perez and Juliette, insolvent debtors, will cause to be sold at Maspero's coffee house, on Thursday the 30th of August 1821, at 1 o'clock P. M. precisely, to the highest and best bidder without reserve, the following property, surrendered by said insolvents to their creditors:—

A certain portion of land, laid out into a brick yard, situated partly in the Suburb Trémé, and partly in the Suburb St. Roch.

Moreover, seven slaves, three negro men and four negro women, to wit:—

Samedi, about 32 years of age,
Boucaud, about 36 years of age,
Hercule, about 60 years of age,
Hortense, called Sarah, about 15 years of age,
Marie, about 17 years of age,
Venus, about 36 years of age,
Marie, somewhat lunatic, about 40 years of age.

All these slaves may be employed in working in the brick-yard.

T&RMS.—The brick-yard and the seven

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Directions: Read the paragraphs below and answer the questions.

From the time of the Louisiana Purchase until the Civil War, much of Louisiana's economy was built on the labor of enslaved Africans and people of African descent. Masters used the powerful threat of being sold away from one's family, friends, and community to control their slaves. In particular, enslaved people from many southern states dreaded being transported to the New Orleans market. Slavery in Louisiana was particularly brutal: the sugar and cotton plantations were "killing fields" for slaves, where they would often be worked to death within a few years.

The slave market underpinned most of the commerce in Louisiana. Slaves were a store of value: owners could sell someone at any time if they needed quick cash. They also used their human property as collateral in many financial transactions. For example, when gambling, paying debts, or taking out loans, a master could offer a slave instead of cash. Although slave owners were well aware of the pain they were causing their enslaved workers, they explained the necessity for the sales by citing finances or by blaming the slave for misbehaving. Owners wanted to preserve an image of themselves as benevolent masters, shielding themselves from the brutal realities of the system they profited from.

The advertisements shown here were selected from issues of widely read newspapers. Such ads appeared regularly in the papers of the time and must have seemed routine to most readers. They now provide us with a window on the oppressive system perpetuated by slave traders and owners.

This information was drawn from *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* by Walter Johnson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

Questions:

1. Examine the differences between the ads. In what situations were slaves sold?
2. What do you notice about the ads seeking runaways? What factors may have led to someone's decision to run away from an owner?
3. How do these ads hide the realities of slavery? What do they omit?

Glossary of terms used in the advertisements

Runaway Slave (Talinge)

perogue: pirogue, a flat-bottomed boat similar to a canoe, used in the shallow swamps and bayous of Louisiana

Malabar Coast: southwest coast of India

the Racourcy: probably a reference to an ox-bow lake next to the Mississippi, northwest of Baton Rouge that is now called the Old Raccourci River. In French, *raccourci* means “shortcut,” and according to Wikipedia, “the lake was once the main channel of the Mississippi River.”

Griffie: misspelling of griffe, the term used to describe someone of mixed African and Native American heritage

is supposed to: is believed to. (When we use this phrase now, we usually mean “is required to,” as in *He is supposed to wash the dishes tonight.*)

A Smart Negro

terms: the terms of sale, such as price, additional fees, and credit or financing arrangements

inst: short for “instant,” meaning “of this month.” Because this ad is dated August 26, “31st inst” would be August 31.

an endorsed note at 60 days: probably a signed promissory note, due after 60 days

For sale—42 acclimated Negroes

acclimated: accustomed to the climate and conditions in Louisiana. By the early 1800s, the tobacco fields of Virginia and the Carolinas were no longer fertile, and the sugar and cotton plantations of the Deep South states were rapidly expanding, so thousands of enslaved people were forcibly taken from their homes and families in the Upper South and sold in New Orleans. Many people died because of the hardships and mistreatment they suffered during the journey.

Public Sale

the subscribers: the people who paid for this advertisement

good security to the satisfaction of the seller: enough collateral to satisfy the seller that the buyer will be able to pay

carters: people who can drive horse-drawn carts

By Dutillet & Sagory

Syndic: agent or representative