

Slave auction catalog from Louisiana, 1855

Introduction

On March 13 and 14, 1855, the firm of J. A. Beard & May placed on the auction block 178 enslaved men, women, and children at the Banks Arcade in New Orleans, Louisiana. They were part of the estate of William M. Lambeth, who had died in 1853. To settle the estate, Judge J. N. Lea had ordered the sale of 127 enslaved people from the Waverly plantation and 51 from the Meredith plantation, both in Avoyelles Parish.

The catalog from this auction includes business aspects of the slave trade but also personalizes the enslaved people by providing details about specific individuals and family relationships. The document stipulates that “the slaves will be sold singly, and when in families, together.” One such family includes:

18. Anthony Moore, about 30 years, fine engineer and field hand.
19. Sarah Moore, 32 years, good field hand; tonsils occasionally inflamed.
20. Infant, 2 months.
21. Anthony, 3 years.
22. Stephen, 5 years.
23. Nace, 9 years.
24. Sophy, 12 years, likely.

Questions for Discussion

Read the introduction and the excerpt and study the document. Then apply your knowledge of American history to answer the following questions:

1. Describe the situation that brought about the sale of enslaved people at the advertised auction?
2. What were potential buyers able to determine about the men, women, and children being sold from the details in the announcement?
3. Describe the financial process and special conditions involved in the sale and purchase of enslaved people at this auction.
4. How did the description of certain people in the auction announcement counter the argument of many slave holders that African Americans were lazy and uneducable?
5. Extra Assignment: Using the information available in the auction announcement, write a one-page essay explaining why slave auctions were known as a “Marketplace in Human Flesh.”

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Excerpt

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SUGAR AND COTTON PLANTATION SLAVES!

IN THE SUCCESSION OF WM. M. LAMBETH, AND FOR A PARTITION.

By J. A. Beard & May----J. A. Beard, Auct.

**TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY,
13th and 14th MARCH, 1855,
AT TWELVE O'CLOCK, ON EACH DAY,**

WILL BE SOLD AT AUCTION, AT BANKS' ARCADE, MAGAZINE STREET, in the city of New Orleans, by and in pursuance of an order of the Hon. J. N. Lea, Judge of the Second District Court of New Orleans, the Slaves comprising the gangs of the WAVERLY and MEREDITH PLANTATIONS, belonging to the succession of William M. Lambeth, deceased.

TERMS.

One-third cash, and the remainder at 12 months' credit, for approved city paper, bearing vendor's lien and mortgage on the Slaves, and eventual interest of 8 per cent. in case of nonpayment at maturity. All sales to be completed within ten days from adjudication, or the Slaves will be re-sold for account and risk of the former purchaser after ten days' advertisement in one city paper, and without further notice or other putting in default

No slave delivered until the terms of sale are complied with, but will be at the risk of the purchasers from adjudication. The slaves will be sold singly, and when in families, together. They can be seen three days previous to sale, on application at the office of the Auctioneers, No. 8 Banks' Arcade.

Acts of sale before T. O. Stark, Notary Public, at the expense of the purchasers.

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Image

J. B. Money

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Printed at the BULLETIN JOB OFFICE, 37 Gravier street.

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"178 Sugar and Cotton Plantation Slaves!" J. A. Beard & May, New Orleans, LA, 1855, p. 1. (Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC09340)

CATALOGUE.	
SLAVES FROM THE WAVERLY PLANTATION, TO WIT :	
ONE FAMILY.	
1. Frank Bond, 45 years, good teamster and field hand.	53. Jane Saunders, 37 years, fine field hand, (pregnant.)
2. Eliza, 35 years, choice field hand.	54. Henry, 2 years.
3. Sarah, Infant.	55. Mary Ellen, 6 years.
4. Louisa, 4 years.	56. Minta, 9 years.
5. Harriet, 6 years.	57. Gabriel, 8 years.
6. Mary Jane, 9 years.	58. Martha, 12 years.
7. Washington, 11 years, likely boy.	
ONE FAMILY.	
8. Caroline, 14 years, likely intelligent girl.	59. Tom Coleman, 40, fine field hand, bone black burner. [womb.
9. Margaret, 16 years, choice field hand.	60. Mary Coleman, 37, excellent field hand, (occasional falling of
	61. Daniel, (Tucker,) 12, sprightly boy, (nimble of foot in the dance.)
ONE FAMILY—(Excellent, well disposed & conditioned in every respect.)	
10. Adam, 40 years, No. 1 field hand, fine axeman, sawyer and	
11. Kitty Adam, 34 years, choice field hand. [hewer.	
12. Sophia, 2 years.	
13. Westley, 4 years.	
14. Sidney, 8 years.	
15. Charlotte, 10 years, sprightly girl.	
16. Jefferson, 12 years, smart boy.	
ONE FAMILY.—(No better family.)	
17. Albert, 17 years, field hand and teamster.	62. Wm. Morris, 29, fine teamster, field hand, faithful, good serv't
	63. Cely, (Aley,) 27 yrs., good field hand. [in every respect.
	64. Lucy, 1 year.
	65. Henrietta, 4 years.
	66. Rose, 6 years.
	67. Samuel, 10 years.
ONE FAMILY.	
	68. Jinks, 48 years, splendid plantation blacksmith, (sickly at
	69. Kitty, 45 years, (sickly.) [times.)
	70. Humphrey, 6 years.
	71. Edward, 10 years.
	72. Mary Ann, 12 years, excellent girl, field hand,
ONE FAMILY.	
18. Anthony Moore, about 30 years, fine engineer and field hand.	73. Matilda, 13 years.
19. Sarah Moore, 32 years, good field hand; tonsils occasionally	74. Townsley, 16 years, teamster, No. 1 boy, field hand.
20. Infant, 2 months. [inflamed.	
21. Anthony, 3 years.	
22. Stephen, 5 years.	
23. Nace, 9 years.	
24. Sophy, 12 years, likely.	
ONE FAMILY.	
25. Jack Turner, about 40, splendid teamster and field hand, slight-	75. Phillips, 32 years, excellent vacuum-pan sugar maker,
26. Susan, 35 years, good field hand. [ly affected with gleet.	good cooper, fine field hand, axeman and excellent servant.
27. Infant, 3 months.	76. Doll, 42 years, asthmatic.
28. Bazil, 2 years.	77. Elly, 6 years.
29. Rachel, about 5 years.	78. Roselia, 12 years, fine girl.
30. Spencer, 8 years.	
31. Edy, 10 years, sprightly girl.	
ONE FAMILY.	
32. Joe Davis, about 40 years, first rate teamster, good field hand	79. Abram, 19 years, feeble mind.
and sawyer—No. 1 man.	80. John Henry, 23 years, good field hand and teamster.
33. Cely, about 36 years, assistant plantation cook, (sickly.)	
34. Winfield Scott, about 6 years.	
35. Richard, about 9 years, smart boy.	
ONE FAMILY.	
36. Cornelius, 15 years, teamster, fine field hand.	81. Barbary Ann, 17 years, good field hand—crooked knee.
	82. Virginia, Infant.
ONE FAMILY.	
37. Henry Cozey, 32 years, good cooper. (subject to piler.)	83. Mike, 40 years, field hand—well disposed.
38. Jane Cozey, 32 years, feeble, (pregnant.)	84. Julia Ann, 17 years, stout field hand.
39. Letta, 2 years.	85. Samuel, Infant.
40. Adeline, 4 years, handsome child.	
ONE FAMILY.	
41. Solomon White, 40 years, a No. 1 field hand and fine filterer.	86. Evans, 40 years, teamster, axeman, ostler, fine field hand and
42. Cloe, 42 yrs., good servant and nurse—manager of trash gang.	trusty, excellent house servant.
	87. Militia, 34 years, good cook, (sickly.)
43. Joe B., 24 yrs., fine field hand and axeman, slightly lame from	88. John, 40 years, excellent filterer, striker in blacksmith shop,
[cut on instep.	(ruptured.)
ONE FAMILY.	
44. Milly, 25 years, good field hand.	89. Jacob, 50 years, good driver.
45. Peggy, Infant.	90. Elizabeth, 60 years, plantation seamstress, feeble.
46. Esther, 3 years.	
47. Winny, 8 years, nice girl.	
48. Elizabeth, 10 years, remarkably sprightly girl.	
ONE FAMILY.	
49. Jim Haskins, 40 years, good field hand.	91. Treecy Ann, 14 years, very smart girl, field hand.
50. Jim, 10 years, likely, good boy.	92. Modesty, 17 years, injured slightly in the head.
51. Emily, 12 years, likely, good girl.	93. Isaiah, 22 years, good field hand.
	94. Morgana, 19 years, good field hand.
	95. Infant Child.
	96. Claiborne, 40 years, good field hand.
	97. Mary Simons, 28 years, good field hand.
	98. Sarah, 1 year.
	99. John, 3 years.
52. George, 16 years, field hand.	

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"178 Sugar and Cotton Plantation Slaves!" J. A. Beard & May, New Orleans, LA, 1855, p. 2. (Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC09340)

CATALOGUE OF WAVERLY PLANTATION SLAVES CONTINUED.		
ONE FAMILY.		
100. John, 42 years, asthmatic.	112. Jane Rebecca, Infant.	
101. Nat, 7 years.	113. Susan, 2 years.	
102. Aaron, 10 years.	114. Jim, 4 years.	
103. John, 12 years, smart, likely boy.	115. Henry, 12 years.	

104. Sandy, 14 years, field boy.	116. Theophilus, 15 years, field hand.	
105. Jacob Turner, 34 years, sickly.	117. Cy, 22 years, field hand and teamster.	
106. Bob, 20 years, good field hand.	ONE FAMILY.	
ONE FAMILY.		
107. Godfrey, 60 years, stock minder.	118. Bill Buck, 28 years, carriage driver, clarifier pan-man, good	
108. Rose, 55 years, good cook.	119. Ann, 18 years, field hand. [handy servant.	
109. Godfrey Jim, 16 years, good field hand and teamster.	120. Charles, 1 year.	
ONE FAMILY.		
110. Harry, 45 yrs., driver, (afflicted with palpitation of the heart.)	121. Joe Turner, 45 years, field hand.	
111. Edaline, 38 years, good cook, ironer and washer.	122. Aleck Brown, 32 years, field hand and clarifier.	
	123. Tom Buster, 25 years, field hand and teamster.	
	124. Bradley, 30 years, good field hand and assistant engineer.	
	125. Ned Dorsey, 35 years, fine field hand and axeman.	
	126. Polly, 70 years.	
	127. Ellen, 70 years.	
... ..		
SLAVES from the MEREDITH PLANTATION, to wit :		
ONE FAMILY.		
1 James Toney 35, good field hand and sugar maker.	25 Lizzy 22, cook, (sickly.)	
2 Anna 28.	26 Willis 25, field hand, fine boy.	
3 Anthony 9.	ONE FAMILY.	
4 Hetty 7.	27 Henry 23, good field hand and waggoner.	
5 Noel 4.	28 Dinah 22, excellent field hand.	
ONE FAMILY.		
6 Nancy 35, good seamstress, house servant, nurse and cook.	ONE FAMILY.	
7 Catherine 10, back slightly injured.	29 Big Cully, about 50, stock minder.	
8 Dicey 5.	30 Phillis, about 10.	
9 Alice 3.	ONE FAMILY.	
10 William Edward, Infant.	31 Little Cully, about 18, fine field hand and waggoner.	
ONE FAMILY.		
12 Hannah or Anna 18.	32 Lucy, about 16.	
13 Kit 14, good field hand.	33 Letty, about 13.	
14 Emma 12, sprightly girl.	34 Gracy, about 12.	
ONE FAMILY.		
15 Isaac 58, Blacksmith.	35 Stephen 35, good field hand, teamster, basket and collar maker.	
16 Lucy 55.	36 Dick 35, fine field hand and teamster.	
ONE FAMILY.		
17 Prince 19, good field hand and waggoner.	37 Peter 30, good	
18 Patsey 14, " " "	38 Augustus 45, fine field hand and fireman.	
19 Jesse 12, " " "	39 Sam Forest 35, good field hand and driver.	
ONE FAMILY.		
20 Caroline 30, first rate field hand and plantation cook.	40 Spencer 13.	
21 Daniel 12.	41 Charles 30, good field hand.	
22 Becky Jane 9.	42 Ephraim 40, excellent field hand and teamster.	
ONE FAMILY.		
23 Ezekiel 50, field hand, rough carpenter, (slightly rheumatic.)	43 Big Phillis 30, field hand.	
24 Dicey 48, plantation cook.	44 Little Jim 30, field hand and engineer.	
	45 Elizabeth 34, good field hand.	
	46 Solomon 35, a No. 1 field hand.	
	47 Little Ben 18, good field hand and waggoner.	
	48 John Moore 50, ox driver, (back injured, sometimes affected	
	49 Daphne 28, good field hand. [by it.)	
ONE FAMILY.		
50 Johnson 60, field hand.	ONE FAMILY.	
51 Henny 10		

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"178 Sugar and Cotton Plantation Slaves!" J. A. Beard & May, New Orleans, LA, 1855, p. 3. (Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC09340)