



Brooklyn *in the* Civil War



Unit: Slavery

Lesson 2.3: “Pink”

Aim: To examine primary source documents to piece together the story of “Pink.”

Objective: Groups examine an etching of “Pink,” the auctioned slave child “bought” by the Plymouth Church Congregation, as well as her bill of sale.

Materials:

1. “Pink” etching <http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/civilwar/cwdoc013.html>
2. Bill of sale <http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/civilwar/cwdoc015.html>

Procedure:

1. Show the class the etching of Sally Maria Diggs, aka “Pink,” on the overhead. Tell them only that it is an etching of a child in 1860.
2. Place two columns on the board or on chart paper: What I see and What I think.
3. Solicit observations and conjectures from the class and record.
4. Now distribute copies of the bill of sale (original and transcribed) to small groups.
5. Groups are instructed to read, discuss new vocabulary, and summarize the document in a few sentences. More sophisticated groups might try to paraphrase the bill of sale in modern language, e.g.,

To Whom It May Concern:

On February 5, 1860, Reverend Henry Ward Beecher of Brooklyn, New York, presented the case of Sally Maria Diggs, aka “Pink,” to his congregation at Plymouth Church....

6. Were students surprised to learn that the child was a slave? Why or why not? Explain that “Pink” was 1/16th African, and still considered black, although she was “as white as any of the children of Beecher’s church members.” (Livingston, E.A., *President Lincoln’s Third Largest City: Brooklyn and the Civil War*, p. 52, 974.723 L)
7. Mrs. Rose Ward, “Pink,” returned to Plymouth Church 67 years later, married to a prominent Washington attorney. Her life might have been very different if not for

Beecher and his congregation. Ask students to imagine how her life might have been had Beecher not intervened on her behalf.

8. Writing assignment — choose one:

- Imagine you are the slave girl “Pink,” about to be sold away from your grandmother. Write a diary entry about how you feel.
- Imagine you are Beecher presenting “Pink’s” case to his congregation. Write a speech to convince them to give the money needed to buy her freedom.

TRANSCRIPTION OF BILL OF SALE:

To all persons whom it may concern:

Whereas on the fifth day of February in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher of the city of Brooklyn state of New York presented to the congregation of Plymouth church of said city of which congregation he is Pastor the case of Sally Maria Diggs—usually called Pink who was then a slave child offered for sale in the city of Washington District of Columbia and whereas the said Beecher and congregation were desirous that the said slave child should be set free in order that she might not be separated from her Grandmother with whom she had lived up to that date and

Whereas a contribution of money was made by the said congregation on the day above mentioned for the purpose of securing the freedom of the said slave child which money was put into my hands by the said Preacher with instructions to take the manner of servitude or service to me-my Executors Administrators heirs and assigns forever.

In testimony whereof I have hereto set my hand and seal this Eleventh day of February one thousand eight hundred and sixty

Signed sealed and delivered in presence of
Charles Naylor
Thomas Donne

John F. Blake (SEAL)