

Talking about

SLAVERY

blame	masters	victims	dehumanisation
freedom	resistance	cargo	justice
diaspora	African	goods	trade
equality	European	survival	black
white	slave	enslave	sugar
suffering	death	hunger	remembrance

Questions

- What do the words in the box mean? Do some of them have different meanings when talking about slavery?
- How can we use them to talk about the picture?

Runaway slave Gordon: captured and tortured after joining the Union Army. This photograph appeared in *Harper's Weekly*, July 1863.



in the West Indies from where these slaves came were accustomed to doing most of the agricultural work. But they were certainly not accustomed to the gang labor system practiced at Mesopotamia.

Table 3 considers the significance of origin and color in determining the employment pattern at Mesopotamia. As one might expect, the most privileged workers were the locally born slaves of mixed color; the least privileged slaves were African-born immigrants. But this stereotype does not tell the full story. Between 1762 and 1831, there were forty-six mulattoes and six quadroons—sired by the overseers, craft supervisors, and bookkeepers from the white managerial staff—who lived at Mesopotamia, constituting about 5 percent of the total slave population. Of these, nine were manumitted as children, ten died before age sixteen, and another sixteen were still alive in 1831, leaving sev-

Table 3 The Primary Occupations of 538 Adult Mesopotamian Slaves by Origin and Color, 1762–1831

MESOPOTAMIAN-BORN	JAMAICAN	AFRICAN
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From: Richard S. Dunn's chapter on "Dreadful Idlers" in the Cane Fields: The Slave Labour Pattern on a Jamaican Sugar Estate, 1762-1831' in Barbara L Solow and Stanley Engelmann (eds) *British Capitalism and Caribbean Slavery The Legacy of Eric Williams* (Cambridge University Press), pp. 163-190.

Questions

- How do you feel about Dunn's use of the word 'mulatto' to describe the Mesopotamia slaves?
- How far should historians use the language of the past OR their own time to talk about historical events and processes?
- How do these rules apply to visual materials?

Some elements adapted from International Slavery Museum

RANAWAY,



From the residence of A. King, in St. Charles, on Wednesday night, the 2nd instant, my servant girl, named "ANN." She is a bright copper-colored mulatto, medium height, rather slight form, quite likely, and about 20 years of age.

Reward.

I will pay a reward of \$25 for the arrest of said girl, if taken in St. Charles county, \$50 if taken out of said county, and \$100 if taken out of the State and returned to me or said King, in St. Charles county, or placed in confinement so I obtain possession of her.

CATHARINE E. PITTS.

St. Charles, Mo., August 7th, 1854.

Mulatto

Comes from the Spanish or Portuguese term for 'young mule'. A mule is a hybrid mix of a horse and a donkey. This term is derogatory in its use to depict people of mixed race or people of dual descent, most often of an enslaved Black female and a White man; mixed race women were often more privileged than the enslaved from Africa but still treated as second-class citizens; the term 'mulatto' was commonly used in the 18th century but is now considered derogatory and unacceptable today



Charleston, July 24th, 1769.

TO BE SOLD,

On THURSDAY the third Day of August next,

A CARGO OF

NINETY-FOUR

PRIME, HEALTHY

NEGROES,

CONSISTING OF

Thirty-nine MEN, Fifteen BOYS,

Twenty-four WOMEN, and

Sixteen GIRLS.

JUST ARRIVED,

In the Brigantine DEMBIA, Francis Bare, Master, from SIERRA LEON, by

DAVID & JOHN DEAS.