

0. WHO WAS CELIA? - Story Preface

1. WHO WAS CELIA?

2. THE MURDER and the COVER-UP

3. TRIAL of CELIA, A SLAVE

4. THE VERDICT AGAINST CELIA

5. CELIA IS EXECUTED



This image, online courtesy the University of Missouri at Kansas City ("Famous Trials" project), is believed to depict Celia, a Slave.

In 1850, Celia (a slave without a last name) was sold to Robert Newsom (a recently widowed farmer and slave owner). Celia was thirteen or fourteen years old at the time of the sale, which took place in Audrain County in the state of Missouri. Newsom was about sixty.

On the way to his farm, located about nine miles south of what would become the town of Fulton—situated in Callaway County, Missouri—Newsom raped Celia for the first time.

He raped her many more times, during many more years, after that.

Celia had two children. At least one, a daughter, was fathered by Robert Newsom. Because of U.S. laws, Newsom's child would also become a slave ... and ... her father's property.

By 1855, Celia had a relationship with George, another slave on Newsom's plantation. When she became pregnant again, Celia wasn't sure about the father. It had to be either George or "the master."

George told Celia he would have nothing to do with her again unless she told Newsom to leave her alone. Taking to heart what George said, Celia had a frank discussion with Newsom on June 23, 1855.

Details about that conversation emerged later, at a trial where Jefferson Jones—one of the witnesses—related what he knew of the facts:

...She[Celia] said the old man [Newsom] had been having ... intercourse with her. That he had told her he was coming down to her cabin that night. She told him not to come, that if he came she would hurt him ... Said that George had told her that he would have nothing to do with her if she did not quit the old man. Said that George had been staying with her.

Newsom, however, was "the master." A slave is not allowed to tell "the master" what he may—or may not—do.

Disregarding Celia's desire to be left alone, Newsom returned to Celia's cabin that night.

It would be the last place Robert Newsom ever went.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/WHO-WAS-CELIA-Celia-A-Slave)

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See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/WHO-WAS-CELIA-Celia-A-Slave)

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Media Stream



Missouri - Map Locator

Map locator, depicting the state of Missouri, by "uploader," online courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Audrain County - Sale of Celia to Newsom

Locator map - depicting Audrain County, Missouri - created by David Benbennick. Online, via Wikimedia Commons.

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Callaway County - Location of the Newsom Farm

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