



0. Platt's Journey to Slavery in Louisiana - Story Preface

1. Slave Pens in Washington

2. Platt's Journey to Slavery in Louisiana

3. Life as a Louisiana Slave

4. Life as the Slave of John Tibbeats

5. Life as a Slave of Edwin Epps

6. The Beating of Patsey, the Slave

7. Platt Meets Bass

8. Bass Helps Platt (Solomon Northup)

9. A Plan for Freedom

10. Solomon Northup Goes Home

11. Not-Guilty Verdicts at Trial

Not long before Solomon Northup was thrown into a Washington City slave pen, Alexander Merrill and Joseph Russell plied him with food and drink. It was the last such meal Northup had for a dozen years. Even his name was changed, against his will. Unknown to Northup, his journey into slavery was beginning with the scene depicted in this image. Still shot online, courtesy Fox Searchlight. Click on it for a better view.

From the slave pens of Washington, Solomon (whose slave name was "Platt") was taken to a slave pen in Richmond. It was managed (Simon says) by a Mr. Goodin, another slave-trader.

The real name of the dealer-in-slaves was likely William Goodwin (who owned a pen at Broad and Union Streets in Shockoe Bottom). From this Virginia town, Northup and the other Burch-purchased slaves boarded a ship called Orleans.

Bound for the Louisiana city of New Orleans, the vessel (carrying people and tobacco) was a "superior coppered and copper fastened brig" (according to an April 16, 1841 article published in the *Richmond Whig*). En route, the *Orleans* passengers suffered a tragedy when an outbreak of smallpox sickened several and ended the life of at least one person.

Those who didn't get sick on the ship became ill in New Orleans, including Solomon (who nearly died). The illness made him blind for three days and pock-marked his face (a disfigurement which seemed to be permanent).

Aboard ship, John Manning (an Englishman serving as a sailor on the *Orleans*) befriended Solomon. He was stunned to hear the true story of Northup's betrayal and promised to send a letter (which Solomon would write) after arriving in New Orleans.

Manning made good on his word. Solomon's letter to Henry B. Northup (of Sandy Hill, New York) reached its intended destination. All Henry knew, however, was that Solomon was on the brig and had reached New Orleans. By the time Henry received the letter, no one in the North knew Solomon's exact location.

No one would know for another twelve years. Instead, a different fate lay ahead of the man now-known as "Platt."

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Platt-s-Journey-to-Slavery-in-Louisiana-12-Years-a-Slave)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Platt-s-Journey-to-Slavery-in-Louisiana-12-Years-a-Slave>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Platt-s-Journey-to-Slavery-in-Louisiana-12-Years-a-Slave)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Platt-s-Journey-to-Slavery-in-Louisiana-12-Years-a-Slave>

Why Did Slave Owners Change the Names of Slaves?

When Solomon Northup was sold into slavery, he was called “Platt,” not Solomon Northup. He had a “slave” first name and no last name (unless he was given the last name of his “owner”).

Why did slavers and/or slave-owners change the names of enslaved persons under their control?

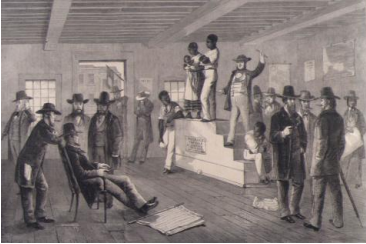
How do you think Solomon Northup reacted to his slave-name "Platt?"

Why Were Kidnapped People Placed into Slave Pens?

Why did people who bought and sold slaves refer to slave-holding places as "pens?"

What does the use of that word, in that context, tell you about how people viewed slaves?

Media Stream



Selling Slaves in Richmond

Image online, courtesy Library of Congress.

PD

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Selling-Slaves-in-Richmond>

Manifest of the Brig Orleans - Solomon Northup

Solomon Northup—a free black referred to as "Plat Hamilton"—is listed as "slave," on a ship's manifest, after Northup was kidnapped and sold by two men pretending to be his benefactors.

How do we know this? Because the ship's manifest survives.

"Plat Hamilton" is listed as slave number 33 on the manifest of the Brig *Orleans*. This particular manifest applies to the *Orleans*, and its "cargo," when the vessel sailed from Richmond to New Orleans in April of 1841.

According to the manifest, "Plat" was 26 years old at the time. His height was 5 feet 7 inches, and his complexion was "yellow."

Because America had outlawed importing new slaves, as of the 1st of January in 1808, the *Orleans'* list of slaves also includes this sworn statement:

We do solemnly swear, to the best of our knowledge and belief, that the abovementioned Slaves were not imported or brought into the United States from and after the first day of January, one thousand eight hundred and eight [1808] and that under the laws of the State they are held to service or labor. So help us God.

The document was signed on April 27, 1841. That date helps us to track when Solomon left Virginia for Louisiana on his journey into slavery.

Before the *Orleans* could leave Richmond, the Collector's Office had to give its permission that the slaves could be transported South. Thomas Nelson, the Collector in Richmond, gave his approval once the ship's captain swore to the accuracy of the manifest: William Wickham, Master of the Brig *Orleans*, having sworn to the above Manifest, consisting of Forty One Slaves and delivered a duplicate thereof, according to law, permission is hereby granted to the said Brig *Orleans* to proceed with the above described Slaves to the Port of New Orleans, as her aforesaid Port of destination.

Given under my hand, at Richmond, this 27th day of April, 1841.

Thomas Nelson

Most of the slaves were shipped by George W. Barnes. The rest were shipped by James Burch.

Among the slaves shipped by Burch were:

- Solomon Northup (called "Plat Hamilton");
- Eliza (whose slave name was "Drady Cooper"); and
- Eliza's daughter Emily.

The manifest tells us that in April of 1841, Eliza was 22 years old and her daughter was 7. By this time, Eliza's son had already been separated from his mother and half-sister and sold to another slave owner.

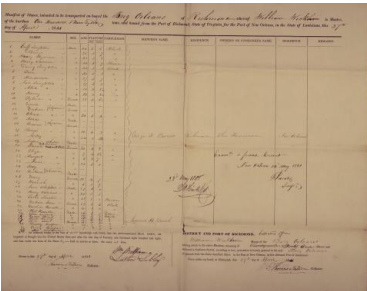
Click on the image for a much-larger view.

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Manifest-of-the-Brig-Orleans-Solomon-Northup>



Platt's Journey to Slavery in Louisiana

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Platt-s-Journey-to-Slavery-in-Louisiana>