



Slave families were routinely split-up at auctions.

Henry Bibb, who was born in 1815, relates what happened at such an event in his book *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, An American Slave, Written by Himself*.

His personal account includes the illustration, depicted above, and includes this descriptive text:

*...Another man was called up whose wife followed him with her infant in her arms, beseeching to be sold with her husband, which proved to be all in vain. After the men were all sold they then sold the women and children.*

*They ordered the first woman to lay down her child and mount the auction block; she refused to give up her little one and clung to it as long as she could, while the cruel lash was applied to her back for disobedience.*

*She pleaded for mercy in the name of God. But the child was torn from the arms of its mother amid the most heart rending-shrieks from the mother and child on the one hand, and bitter oaths and cruel lashes from the tyrants on the other.*

*Finally the poor little child was torn from the mother while she was sacrificed to the highest bidder. In this way the sale was carried on from beginning to end. (Bibb, pages 201-202.)*

This image appears in Bibb's book between pages 201 and 202.

Click on the image for a better view.

Credits:

Image, described above, online courtesy Documenting the American South.

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See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Splitting-up-a-Family-at-a-Slave-Auction-0>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

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