

# THE WHITE SLAVES OF NEW ORLEANS



*Photographs of emancipated children were sold to raise money for the education of freed slaves in New Orleans. The children featured in this photograph drew attention to the fact that slavery was not solely a matter of color. If a child's mother was a slave, then he or she was a slave as well.*

*The following article appeared in Harper's Weekly on January 30, 1864. The short biographies contained in the article offer us a rare (and possibly unique) record of slave children.*

## **TRANSCRIPT OF THE HARPER'S WEEKLY ARTICLE, JANUARY 30, 1864**

To the Editor of Harper's Weekly:

The group of emancipated slaves whose portraits I send you were brought by Colonel Hanks and Mr. Phillip Bacon from New Orleans, where they were set free by General Butler.

Mr. Bacon went to New Orleans with our army, and was for eighteen months employed as Assistant-Superintendent of Freedmen, under the care of Colonel Hanks. He established the first school in Louisiana for emancipated slaves, and these children were among his pupils. He will soon return to Louisiana. [...]

Charles Taylor is eight years old. His complexion is very fair, his hair light and silky. Three out of five boys in any school in New York are darker than he. Yet this white boy, with his mother, as he declares, has been twice sold as a slave. First by his father and "owner," Alexander Wethers, of Lewis County, Virginia, to a slave-trader named Harrison, who sold them to Mr. Thornhill of New Orleans. This man fled at the approach of our army, and his slaves were liberated by General Butler. The boy is decidedly intelligent, and though he has been at school less than a year he reads and writes very well. His mother is a mulatto; she had one daughter sold into Texas before she herself left Virginia, and one son who, she supposes, is with his father in Virginia. These three children, to all appearance of unmixed white race, came to Philadelphia last December, and were taken by their protector, Mr. Bacon, to the St. Lawrence Hotel on Chestnut Street. Within a few hours, Mr. Bacon informed me, he was notified by the landlord that they must therefore be colored persons, and he kept a hotel for white people. From this hospitable establishment the children were taken to the "Continental," where they were received without hesitation.

Augusta Boujey is nine years old. Her mother, who is almost white, was owned by her half-brother, named Solamon, who still retains two of her children.

(Source : <http://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/african-americans-and-emancipation/resources/slave-children-new-orleans-1863>)