

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

Learning Lagniappe: Educator Extras

The Anti-Slavery Alphabet

http://www.mdah.ms.gov/arrec/digital_archives/series/asa

The Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society (PFASS) was founded in 1833 as the sister organization of the American Anti-Slavery Society. The PFASS championed racial and gender equity. Its main tenet was that slavery and prejudice were contrary to Christian law and the Declaration of Independence. An interracial organization, the PFASS lobbied for emancipation, established a school for African Americans, and promoted boycotts of products made by slaves.

The Anti-Slavery Alphabet booklet was created by the PFASS in Pennsylvania in 1846. The little volume targeted young readers, inspiring a new generation of abolitionists. The booklet consists of sixteen pages, which are hand-sewn into the cover and printed on one side with hand-colored letter illustrations. Because it was printed on one side with the illustrations facing each other, the booklet contains blank pages per the layout of the original version. There is also an introductory poem to the society's young readers.

Subjects that can be addressed within this Digital Archive:

Abolition, the slave trade, family, freedom, reading, education, and poetry.

Suggested Classroom Activities:

As a class, research issues related to children and create your own alphabet about the issue or use the letters in your names to create an anti-slavery acronym. Students might also write their own rhyming poems about the issue they've researched.

For more lessons and activities based on the Digital Archives and other collections, visit the Classroom Materials page on our website at

<http://www.mdah.ms.gov/new/learn/classroom-materials/lesson-plans-and-teaching-units/>

Teacher Discussion Guide on Reverse

Teacher Discussion Guide

Use images from the MDAH Digital Archive “The Anti-Slavery Alphabet,” (found at http://www.mdah.ms.gov/arrec/digital_archives/series/asa) to lead your class in analyzing and interpreting the following images in a discussion.

1. Click “Browse Images.” Click on the last image in the first row. Read the poem entitled “To Our Little Readers.”
 - a. What is the purpose of this poem?
 - b. Who do you think is the intended audience? Why?
 - c. What do you think a slave owner’s response would be to child abolitionists?
2. Click on the image of “E” and “F.” Read the verses.
 - a. What does freedom mean to you?
 - b. What is a fugitive? *A person who runs away.*
3. Click on the image of “I” and “J.” Read the verses.
 - a. What is happening to the infant? *The baby is being separated from its mother and sold with food and farm animals.*
 - b. What impact do you think this will have on the infant?
 - c. Why do you think the infant is being sold?
 - d. What is happening to the mother? *She is in jail waiting for her master to come and take her away.*
 - e. How do you think this mother feels?
4. Click on the image of “O” and “P.” Read the verses.
 - a. What is happening to the young man at his home? *He is stolen by white men.*
 - b. How does this relate to the letters “I” and “J?” *They show that families are being separated because of slavery.*
 - c. How would you feel if you were separated from your family?
5. Click on the image of “S” and “T.” Read the verses.
 - a. What products are the slaves producing? *Sugar and tobacco.*
 - b. What are some other crops slaves picked or harvested that you may have heard of? *Cotton.*
 - c. Did slaves only work on farms or did they perform other jobs? *Slaves did many kinds of jobs on farms and in cities, including working as house servants, in shops, in factories, and in other businesses.*
6. Click on the image of “Y” and “Z.” Read the verses. What does it mean to be zealous? *Faithful and sincere.*
7. Why do you think the pamphlet was written for children?
8. How effective do you think this booklet would be to teach children about slavery? Support your answer with 1-2 examples.