

# SLAVE GIRL BEECHER "SOLD FOR FREEDOM" IN 1860 DIES

Mrs. Rose Ward Hunt, Known as "Pinkey," Succumbs Here at Age of 77.

Revealed Her Identity Only Recently at Request of Dr. Stanley Durkee.

Mrs. Rose Ward Hunt, 77 years old, who, after shunning publicity for more than a half century, in May, 1927, admitted that she was the tiny slave girl called "Pinkey," who in 1860 was "sold for freedom," by Henry Ward Beecher, in the pulpit of the Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, died at her residence, 411 Florida avenue, Thursday night after a short illness.

On May 15, 1927, as the guest of Dr. J. Stanley Durkee, she sat on the same Plymouth Church rostrum, where now more than 68 years ago her freedom was pledged by the enthusiastic congregation which subscribed \$1,100, or \$200 more than the purchase price which had been set. A sketch of her remarkable life furnished a dramatic feature of the celebration of the eightieth anniversary of the founding of the church on the occasion mentioned.

Friendship for Dr. Durkee, under whom she was a student while he was president of Howard University here, caused Mrs. Hunt to throw aside the cloak of secrecy with which she had shielded her identity, it was stated.

#### Confides to Him.

She confided to Dr. Durkee that she was the mysterious "Pinkey," whose name was a by-word of Civil War days. After he had accepted the call to the Plymouth Church Dr. Durkee, looking forward to the church's celebration of its eightieth anniversary, persuaded Mrs. Hunt to let him make known her identity for the anniversary occasion.

Mrs. Hunt up to that time had kept her identity so veiled in secrecy that neighbors who had known her during the 35 years she had resided at 411 Florida avenue knew nothing of her historical background.

Mrs. Hunt's real name was Sally Maria Diggs and she was born in Port Tobacco, Charles County, Md. She was separated at the age of 7 from her mother by the latter's sale as a slave. Soon afterward she and her grandmother were sold to a trader in Baltimore. The grandmother, however, had saved enough money to buy her own freedom and to lease "Pinkey."

Learning of the reputation gained by Henry Ward Beecher as a champion for the freedom of the negroes, the grandmother reached him through a friend and prevailed upon him to aid her in securing "Pinkey's" freedom.

#### Visits Girl's Owner.

Mr. Beecher then visited the girl's owner, who set a price upon her head of \$900. Beecher then began to prepare his famous address, which resulted in the \$1,100 being raised. "Pinkey," trembling with fright, sat on the rostrum while Beecher's eloquence caused women to become hysterical and men to toss money into the collection plates.

Following the signing of the bill of sale, the girl was taken to live with the family of John Falkner Blake, who had executed the sale, in Alexandria. The child was then given the name of Rose Ward, after Rose Terry, the author, and Henry Ward Beecher. She treasured up to the time of her death the bill of sale which gave her freedom.

So, on Sunday, May 15, 1927, at the



MRS. ROSE WARD HUNT.

celebration, Mrs. Hunt sat on the rostrum, not as a slave girl, but as an honored guest of the occasion.

Mrs. Hunt was married 45 years ago. After her graduation from Howard University she taught at Annapolis, Md. Henry Ward Beecher kept in touch with Mrs. Hunt for many years, and when he delivered an address here during President Cleveland's administration sent her tickets and she attended.

Mrs. Hunt is survived by her husband, James E. Hunt, and a daughter, Miss Eva Hunt.

Funeral services will be conducted in St. Luke's Episcopal Church Monday afternoon at 1 o'clock. Interment will be in Harmony Cemetery.