

HISTORIC • ILLINOIS

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency • Division of Preservation Services • Vol. 22 • No. 6 • April 2000

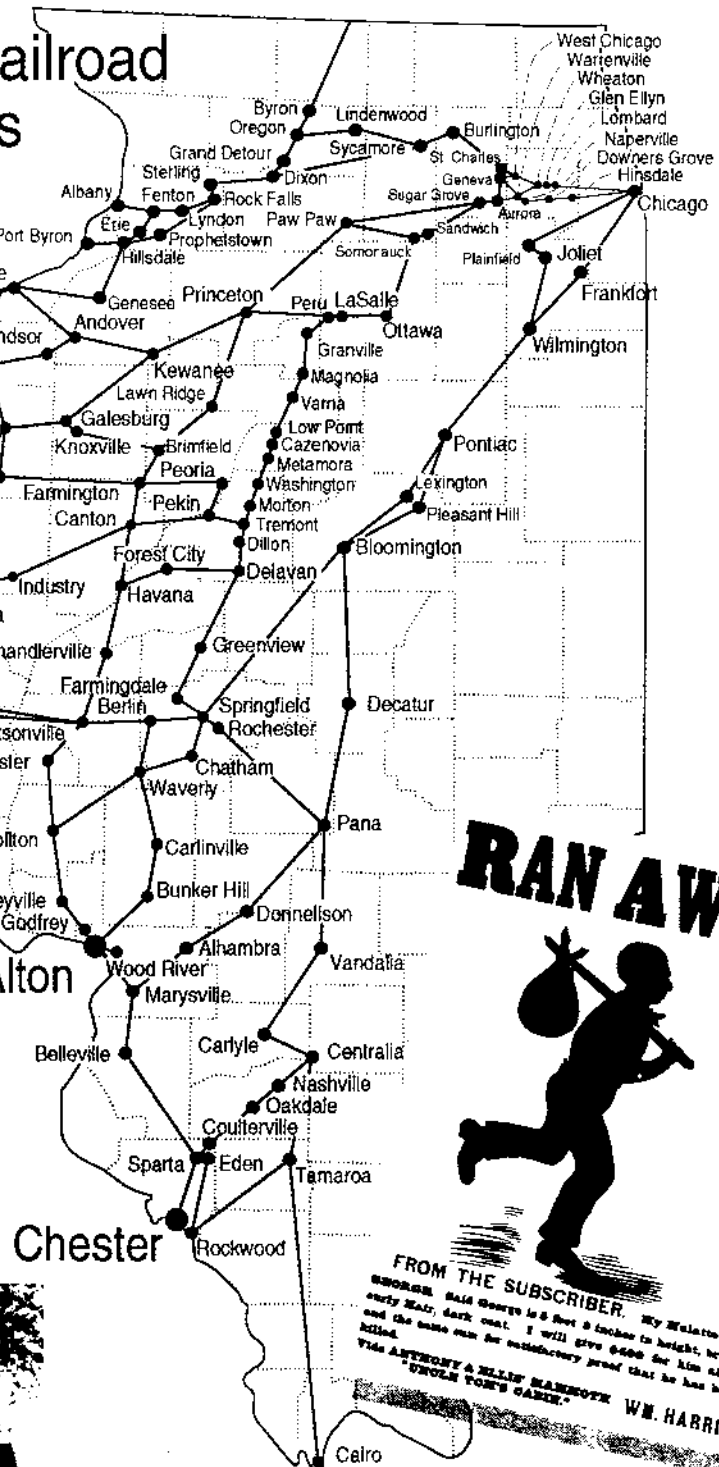
Underground Railroad Routes in Illinois



Quincy

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD IN ILLINOIS SPECIAL ISSUE

The Underground Railroad was the euphemistic title used to describe the routes that slaves traveled to reach freedom in Canada. Sympathizers along the route provided secret and safe haven in their homes. The Richard Eells House in Quincy (pictured above) and the Luther Burge House in Farmington (pictured below) were two stations along routes in Illinois. All routes led north, usually to Chicago, where many slaves then boarded ships to be carried further north. Slave owners often posted broadsides advertising rewards for the return of runaways.
 (Photos courtesy J. Terry Ransom and Illinois State Historical Library)



RAN AWAY!



FROM THE SUBSCRIBER.
 BROWN. SAID HEWES is 5 feet 8 inches in height, brown curly hair, dark coat. I will give \$4000 for him alive and the same sum for satisfactory proof that he has been killed.
 Wm. HARRIS.
 FOR ANTHONY A HELLER MANKOWSKY

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Historic Illinois (ISSN 0164-5293) is published bimonthly by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, 1 Old State Capitol Plaza, Springfield, IL 62701-1507. Cynthia A. Fuener, Editor; Shanta Thoele, Circulation Manager; Evelyn R. Taylor, Chief of Publications.

The publication of *Historic Illinois* has been financed in part with federal funds from the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior nor does the mention of trade names constitute an endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior.

Subscription rates for *Historic Illinois* are \$10 for one year. Price includes six issues of *Historic Illinois*, one number of the Illinois Preservation Series, and the full-color Historic Illinois Calendar. A two-year subscription costs \$17; price includes twelve issues *Historic Illinois*, two numbers of the Illinois Preservation Series, and calendars for two years. For subscription information, write *Historic Illinois*, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, 1 Old State Capitol Plaza, Springfield, IL 62701-1507, or phone 217-524-6045.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Historic Illinois*, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, 1 Old State Capitol Plaza, Springfield, IL 62701-1507.

Historic Illinois news items must be received at least eight weeks prior to publication. Printed by authority of the State of Illinois (1022833-4.5M 4-00). Second-class postage paid at Springfield, Illinois.

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THE ILLINOIS HISTORIC PRESERVATION AGENCY IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER.

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THIS IS A SPECIAL ISSUE

This issue of *Historic Illinois* is slightly different than most. We strive to include a variety of stories about places across the state. But this issue is devoted to one topic—the Underground Railroad in Illinois.

Who worked on the Underground Railroad? Where were the stations? Well, there is little "hard" evidence. On more than one occasion, an applicant to the National Register has claimed that the house being nominated was a "station" on the Underground Railroad. But verifying that claim is sometimes impossible, and the applicant must abandon that claim due to lack of proof.

The authors of the stories in this issue go a long way in explaining why it is so difficult to find information on the Underground Railroad. Terry Ransom outlines the various Underground Railroad routes and describes the danger that fleeing slaves encountered on their "Flight to Freedom"; Gus Lamczyk concentrates on his research in Morgan County; and Ted Hild tells us about abolitionist Elijah Lovejoy and his Princeton home, a National Historic Landmark.

Although this issue is devoted to one topic, it resembles other issues in its geographical breadth. The Underground Railroad is one facet of Illinois history that is shared by cities all over Illinois, including Cairo, Chicago, Quincy, Jacksonville, Princeton, and communities in between.—CAF

BRINGING THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD TO LIGHT

We estimate that there are about five hundred properties in Illinois associated with the Underground Railroad, but we don't know where they all are. In order to develop a system for evaluating them and then figuring out how to treat them, we first need to find them.

If you are aware of such a place, we would like to know about it. Please drop us a line telling us the name of the place, where it is, whether there are any features remaining from the pre-Civil War era, and how you know that the property is associated with the Underground Railroad, along with any other information you can fit onto a single page.

The information we collect from you will be added to our database so that we can make informed decisions about the Underground Railroad resources in Illinois. Please send your information to:

Theodore W. Hild
Preservation Services Division
Illinois Historic Preservation Agency
1 Old State Capitol Plaza
Springfield, IL 62701-1507

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
 STATE OF ILLINOIS, } ss. } To all to whom these Presents may come—GREETING:
 Madison County,

Know Ye, That *Nancy Loua Loney*, wife of *Wm. Loney*, a person of Color, about *twenty* years of age, five feet *three & 1/2* inches high, *Melatto* complexion, has two small pills on each side of her forehead, daughter of *Clayton & Dacey Richardson* has exhibited, presented and filed, in the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of the County and State aforesaid, a **CERTIFICATE**, duly authenticated, of **FREEDOM**, as such person of Color.

Now, therefore, I, **WM. TYLER BROWN**, Clerk of the Circuit Court of Madison County, State of Illinois, **CERTIFY**, That said *Nancy Loua Loney* is a **FREE PERSON OF COLOR**, a resident or citizen of the State of Illinois, and entitled to be respected accordingly, in Person and Property, at all times and places, in the due prosecution of her Lawful concerns.

In Testimony whereof, I have, to these Presents, signed my name, and affixed the Seal of said Court, at Edwardsville, this *28th* day of *November* in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty *four*.

Wm. Tyler Brown Clerk.

Blacks could apply for certificates of freedom like the one shown here, but the documents did little or nothing to guarantee their rights. (Photo courtesy Illinois State Historical Library)

Illinois entered the Union as a free state, but it was hardly sympathetic to blacks. Slavery had existed in Illinois at least since 1720, when French traders brought Africans to work in the salt and lead mines. The practice of slavery continued unencumbered until the formation of the Northwest Territory made the issue of whether or not the territory should allow slavery a primary concern. In 1784 the U.S. Congress formed a committee to study the issue under the direction of Thomas Jefferson, who proposed that slavery be allowed until 1800. Slaveholders found his proposal alarming. It was not until 1787 that an acceptable proposal was adopted, when Nathan Dane drafted Article 6 to his proposal to prohibit slavery. (Dane's proposal later played an important

role in the ratification of the first Illinois Constitution in 1818.)

Article 6 was controversial. Some interpreted it to mean that slavery could not exist in Illinois and feared that the government would deprive them of slaves without compensation, so they left the territory. Other white slaveholders in Illinois joined their counterparts from Indiana in devising a way to circumvent Article 6. Their answer, the "indentured servitude" system, effectively barred slaves from gaining freedom. In this hybrid slavery system, most slaveholders entered into legally binding contracts with their black servants for only meager considerations—food, shelter, and clothing. Servants had little opportunity to earn money towards a future life of freedom, because the contracts

obligated male servants to work for their masters until the age of thirty-five, females until age twenty-eight. They could be disciplined, leased, or sold at the whim of their masters.

Though identified geographically as a northern state, Illinois was not entirely "northern," or antislavery, in its thinking. Most of the state's population at the time consisted of southern migrants. They came from Virginia and the Carolinas through Kentucky, and they brought southern views on slavery with them. When discussions of statehood began, Illinoisans were divided on the slavery issue. Nathan Dane's Article 6 served as the model for the compromise needed on the slavery issue. Illinois' first constitution, adopted in December 1818, allowed slavery to continue where it already existed. It also included exemptions. Slaves could be used at the salt mines near Shawneetown, and the male offspring of indentured servants would remain enslaved until the age of twenty-one, females until age eighteen. Section 1 of the Article stated that, "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall hereafter be introduced into this state . . . unless such person shall enter into such indenture while in a state of perfect freedom." So much for Illinois entering the Union as a free state.

Within three months of the adoption of Illinois' first constitution, the state adopted the first of its infamous "Black Laws." Designed to discourage the migration of free blacks to Illinois, the Black Laws effectively deprived blacks of their most basic rights by requiring them to produce "certificates of freedom" and to register with the county clerk of the county where they resided. Blacks could not serve in the militia, they could not post bail if arrested, and they could not engage in an assembly of more than three persons.

The laws also reflect the strong sentiment that the black race was inherently subordinate to the white race. Even Abraham Lincoln shared this general sentiment at the fourth Lincoln-Douglas debates in Charleston, when he said, "I will say that I am not, nor ever have been in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races, that I am not nor ever

have been in favor of making voters or jurors of Negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people; and I say in addition to this that there is a physical difference between the White and Black races which I believe will forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality. And inasmuch as they cannot so live, while they do remain together there must be the position of superior and inferior, and I as much as any other man am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the White race."

Those who could not produce their freedom papers were considered runaway slaves. Any white person had the right—indeed the duty—to turn alleged runaways into the local justice of the peace. Violators might be held for as much as a year, during which time he or she could be hired out to local whites.

The Black Laws all but guaranteed that passage through Illinois was not the answer for slaves searching for freedom. To find freedom, blacks needed to continue moving northward, beyond Illinois. The Underground Railroad was just one of the many routes they traveled.

Perhaps the first civil rights movement in the country, the Underground Railroad marked the first time that blacks and whites worked together in the name of equality. For blacks, in particular, it was a time of great empowerment, despite the harsh treatment that they received after entering the free states. Early histories of the Underground Railroad tended to focus on the contribution of whites, but more recent studies highlight the involvement of blacks.

The Underground Railroad in Illinois was by necessity a secret and elastic organization. Its "tracks" might vanish overnight and a new route might originate, all in an attempt to make passage safe for subsequent travelers. It operated in direct violation of state and federal laws. But despite the dangers, more than three hundred Illinoisans are believed to have assisted escaped slaves along the road to freedom. The vast majority of "passengers" through Illinois had fled from Missouri and Kentucky, although some came from as far away as Virginia.


FOR SALE.

A Likely Negro Girl,
16 years of age.

*For further particulars, enquire at
this Office.*

Kaskaskia Dec 17, 1826. 21-8t

PUBLIC NOTICE.



This day was committed to the custody of the Sheriff of Randolph county, State of Illinois, as Runaway, a Negro Man who calls himself

Martin Barker,

about forty-three years of age, about five feet nine inches high, a scar over his right eye, and also one on his right leg above his ankle, his make and his appearance active; he states that he once belonged to Lewis Barker, of Pope county near the Rock-in-Cave but that he is now free. If any person has any legal claim to him, they are requested to exhibit the same and pay all charges, according to law.

ANTHONY DUFOUR, D. Sheriff
For P. O. J. V. OWEN, S. R. C.

Kaskaskia Dec 11, 1826. 21-6t

Illinois in 1826 was hardly a free state. This advertisement publicly offers "A Likely Negro Girl" for sale and announces that the sheriff of Randolph County is holding a "Negro Man who calls himself Martin Barker" and invites the owner to "claim" him. (Photo courtesy Illinois State Historical Library)

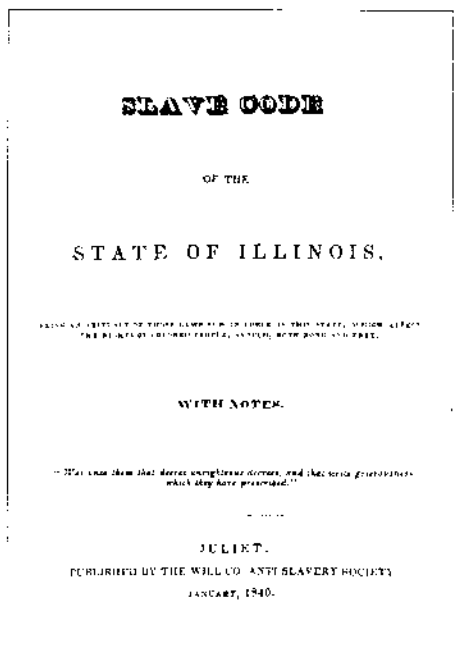
The practice of assisting escaping slaves probably began before Illinois became a state, but the Underground Railroad, as such, scarcely deserved the name until about 1835. It consisted at first as a number of isolated communities and people who saw to it that escaping blacks got food, clothing, and comparative safety until they were ready to travel on to their next destination.

According to tradition, the Underground Railroad got its name when Tice Davids, a runaway slave, escaped from his owner in Kentucky in 1831. Tice was swimming across the Ohio River toward Ripley, Ohio, with his owner pursuing in a boat some distance behind him. The owner saw Tice reach the shore, but could not find him in a search of the town. Tice's owner eventually gave up the hunt and returned home where he allegedly reported that Tice must have gone on an underground road. Trains had recently come into prominence, and people began to say that Tice had escaped on an "underground railroad." The term caught on, and participants subsequently adopted railroad terminology to describe their illegal

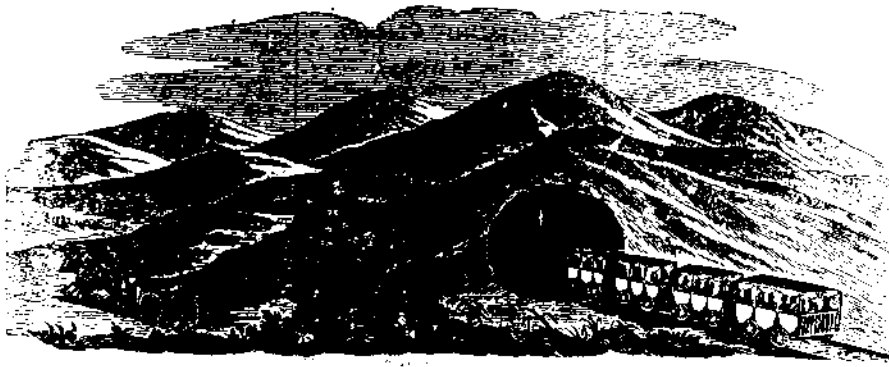
slave-harboring activity.

A "station" was a place at which an escaped slave was fed, given clothing, hidden, and given the opportunity to rest before being guided to the next station. A "conductor" secretly aided escaping blacks from one station to another. An "agent" organized routes, established stations, and secured conductors. Fleeing slaves were called "cargo" or "passengers."

Several cities in Illinois played a big part in the Underground Railroad. Routes generally ran in a northeasterly direction beginning in Cairo and ending in Chicago. Oral histories, court records, and personal accounts indicate that Cairo was a fairly common entry point, which makes sense because it was a busy port city located at the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. George Burroughs, one of the few blacks mentioned in Wilbur Siebert's book, *Underground Railroad: From Slavery to Freedom*, had been sent to Cairo as an agent for the Underground Railroad. When the Illinois Central Railroad expanded its operation from Centralia to Cairo, Burroughs took a job as a porter for the railroad and helped fugitive slaves obtain passage on trains bound for Chicago.



The free state of Illinois legislated Black Laws, which effectively stripped blacks of basic rights and freedoms. This copy of the slave code, published by the Will County Anti-Slavery Society, spells out those inequalities. (Photo courtesy Illinois State Historical Library)



LIBERTY LINE. NEW ARRANGEMENT--NIGHT AND DAY.

The improved and splendid Locomotive, Clark and Lundy, with their trains fitted up in the best style of accommodation for passengers, will run their regular trips during the present season, between the borders of the Pennsylvania Dominion and Libertyville, Upper Canada. Gentlemen and Ladies, who may wish to improve their health or circumstances, by a northern tour, are respectfully invited to give us their patronage.

SEATS FREE, irrespective of color.

Necessary Clothing furnished gratuitously to such as have no other clothing.

"Hide the outcasts—let the oppressed go free."—Bible.
For seats apply at any of the trap doors, or to the conductor of the train.

J. CROSS, Proprietor.

N. B. For the special benefit of Pro-Slavery Police Officers, an extra heavy wagon for Texas, will be furnished, whenever it may be necessary, in which will be forwarded as dead freight, to the "Valley of the Angels," always at the risk of the owners.

Extra Overcoats provided for such of them as are afflicted with protracted chills—phobias.

Abolitionists brazenly advertised their services in sympathetic newspapers. (Photo courtesy Illinois State Historical Library)

On the Illinois Central line, near the town of Tamaroa is the B. G. Roots house. Roots, an educator and an outspoken abolitionist, was instrumental in surveying the Illinois Central line from Centralia to Cairo. The tracks were laid within two hundred yards of the Roots house, which is a well-documented station. Roots employed many free blacks, as well as blacks who had escaped the tyranny of slavery.

Another documented point of entry is Chester, in Randolph County. That area in southern Illinois was heavily populated by "Covenanters," a religious group who readily assisted any blacks who came their way. They provided safety in and around Chester. Connections from Chester eventually led to Decatur and Springfield.

The third well-known entry point was Alton. The largest slave auctions north of New Orleans were held across the river at St. Louis, which meant that a large population of freedom-seeking slaves was close by. Alton contains many notable stations. One of the best known is the "Old Stone House" owned by John Higham and Rev. T. B. Hurlbut, who were friends and associates of abolitionist Elijah Lovejoy. It was at the Old Stone House that the Illinois Anti-Slavery Society was formed in 1837, several months prior to Elijah Lovejoy's untimely death.

Also near Alton were two black communities, Rocky Fork (modern-day Godfrey) and the Wood River Station area. According to oral histories, both communities welcomed their black brethren and provided whatever assistance was needed. From Alton, escapees made their way through various routes to Springfield. The last major entry point was Quincy, an area rich in Underground Railroad history. Among the most prominent of the area's antislavery faction were Dr. Richard Eells, Dr. David Nelson (of the Mission Institute), the Turner family, and Berryman Barnett, a free black.

Court records provide details of Eells's participation in the clandestine black migration. Berryman Barnett arrived at Eells's house with a slave who had recently escaped from a farm near Monticello, Missouri. Eells was arrested and convicted of harboring and aiding the slave and was fined \$400 by Circuit Judge Stephen A. Douglas. Eells appealed his case to the state supreme court, which upheld the lower court. He then appealed his case to the U.S. Supreme Court, but the case was not heard until after Eells's death in 1846. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the decision of the lower courts.

From Quincy, near the Mississippi River, a route branched out to the east and led to Springfield, with two noteworthy

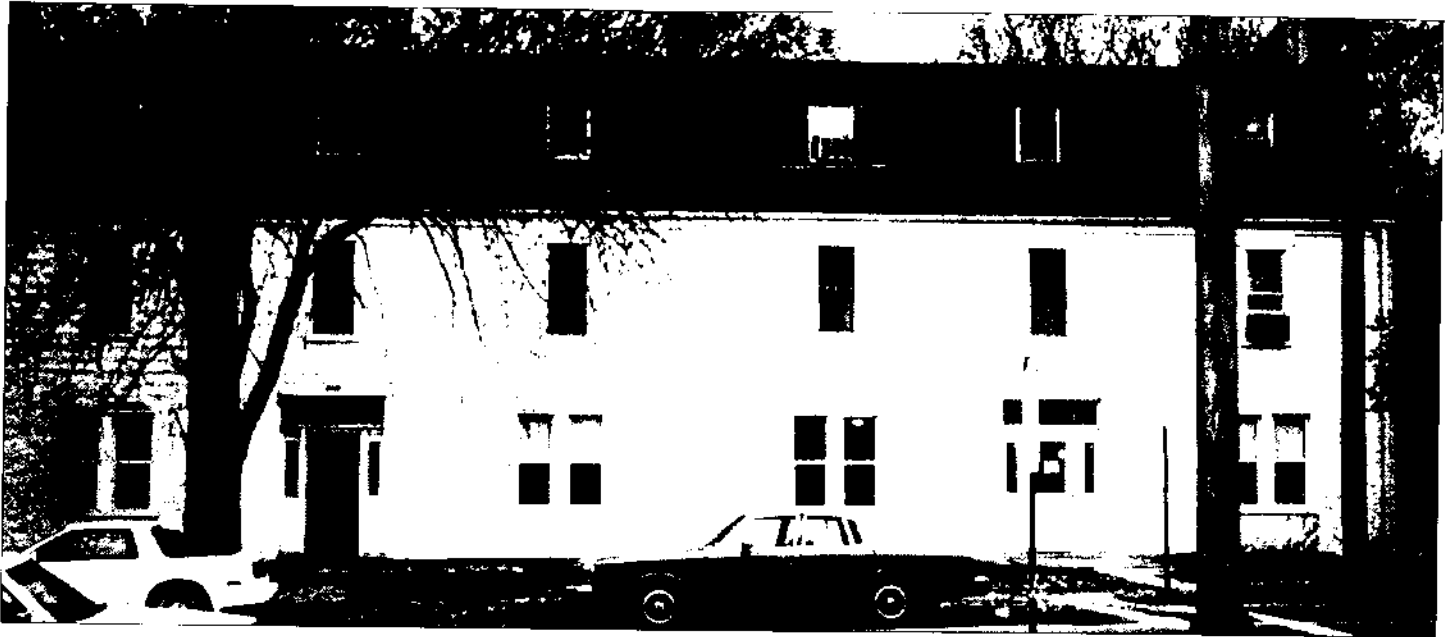
spots in between. One was the now-defunct town of New Philadelphia, founded, laid out, and platted in 1836 by Frank McWhorter, a former slave who was born in South Carolina. The town was integrated, and folklore claims that some of its residents assisted blacks on their journey north. Frank McWhorter's story takes on heroic proportions. He not only bought his own freedom, he also purchased freedom for sixteen other family members—quite an accomplishment for a person who could neither read nor write.

Jacksonville was another important stop on the Quincy route. Edward Beecher, the first president of Illinois College and brother of Harriet Beecher Stowe (the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*), harbored deep antislavery sentiments. A number of Illinois College faculty members were also active in the antislavery movement, including David Smith, Jonathan Baldwin Turner, and Dr. Julian Sturtevant. Jacksonville was home to several stations. Ben Henderson, a free black who resided there, played an active role in transporting blacks from the Jacksonville area to the Springfield area.

Other Quincy routes fanned out in a northeasterly direction passing through Mendon, Plymouth, Augusta, Carthage, Roseville, Monmouth, Industry, Canton, Farmington, Galesburg, Kewanee, Princeton, Peru, LaSalle, Ottawa, and on to the Chicago area.

Princeton's place on the Underground Railroad is notable. Elijah Lovejoy's brother Owen, a Congregationalist minister who operated a station in Princeton, was an outspoken opponent of slavery. He had a close alliance with Zebina Eastman, Hooper Warren, and Benjamin Lundy, three abolitionists from the Lowell and Hennepin areas who edited and printed the antislavery newspapers *Genius of Universal Emancipation* and *The Genius of Liberty*. Zebina Eastman allegedly acted as a conductor in that area.

Most roads ultimately led to Chicago, the main terminus for the Underground Railroad in Illinois. Most slaves believed that if they reached Chicago, the worst of their journey was over. That was generally true, during the 1840s, 50s, and 60s. The established black community eagerly



The Old Stone House in Alton has been documented as a station on the Underground Railroad. (Photo courtesy J. Terry Ransom)

assisted their brethren, and the city as a whole tended to be somewhat supportive of the plight of the slaves. In many cases Chicagoans openly defied the fugitive slave laws. Many documented cases prove that white citizens aided or rescued blacks who had been captured or were seeking a safe haven.

For the freedom seekers, Chicago marked the near end of their long, dangerous, and arduous quest. Chicago's location at the foot of Lake Michigan provided a direct link to Detroit, Michigan; many steamboat captains were willing to allow blacks on board, either as stowaways or as passengers. Most notable was Captain Black of the steamship *Illinois*, who reportedly carried hundreds of blacks to Detroit. Once in Detroit, it was just a short trip overland to reach the "Promised Land"—Canada.

The story of the Underground Railroad continues to be unearthed. The U.S. Forest Service in cooperation with Southern Illinois University is currently conducting archaeological work on Miller's Grove, a free black farming community in Pope County. The Forest Service has also organized a survey of the Underground Railroad activities within the Shawnee National Forest. There are other sites that need further investigation, such as Africa (Williamson County) and an early black community in or near Paris, Illinois.

The participation of blacks in the

Underground Railroad is largely untold. White citizens who were involved with the antislavery movement and the Underground Railroad are well known, but very little research has been done on the lives of black people, except for those who became prominent. History thus far has depicted blacks largely as recipients of aid and rarely as providers of aid to other slaves. The fact that most blacks at the time were illiterate compounds the problem, because they left very few written

records. The story of their involvement is there, it just has to be found.

J. Terry Ransom

J. Terry Ransom is the civil rights officer for the Illinois Department of Transportation and has been researching the Underground Railroad in Illinois for the past thirteen years. He has participated as a researcher for the National Park Service's Underground Railroad initiative and is a cofounder of the Illinois Underground Railroad Association.



Dr. Richard Eells harbored many fugitive slaves in his Quincy home. (Photo courtesy J. Terry Ransom)

OWEN LOVEJOY ILLINOIS ABOLITIONIST



BUREAU
COUNTY

The Owen Lovejoy Homestead was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1997 for its well-documented role as a station on the Underground Railroad. Lovejoy, an outspoken abolitionist, courageously proclaimed his willingness to assist slaves escaping to Canada.

Owen Lovejoy (1811-1864), an influential congressional leader from Illinois before and during the Civil War, was prominent in the abolition movement and the Underground Railroad. Lovejoy was a founder of the state Republican party and the national Republican party and archetype and expositor of the burgeoning political movement that gained dominance and provided leadership for the nation through the remainder of the nineteenth century.

Born in Albion in Kennebec County, Maine, the sixth of eight children, Lovejoy was the son of Revolutionary War veteran Daniel Lovejoy. Lovejoy's mother was Elizabeth Gordon Partee, whose parents emigrated from Scotland. The household operated under the influence of New England Puritanism, characterized by a value of education and a rigorous moral code.

Owen Lovejoy enrolled at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine, in 1830, leaving before graduation to help at the family farm after his father died in 1833. In 1836 he enrolled at Bangor Theological Seminary in Bangor, Maine, apparently leaving after one year without a diploma to join his oldest brother, Elijah Parrish Lovejoy, in Alton, Illinois. Driven from St. Louis in 1836 because of his ardent abolitionist views, Elijah migrated across the Mississippi River to Alton, Illinois, following a path that ended in flames and blood, and earning him a place in history as one of the most celebrated martyrs in the causes of antislavery and freedom of the press.

Immediately after Elijah arrived in Alton to begin publication of the *Alton Observer*, his printing press was thrown into the Mississippi. He acquired a second and a third press, which followed the first into the river. While awaiting the arrival of a fourth printing press, Elijah extended

his abolitionist activities by co-founding in the fall of 1837 the Illinois Anti-Slavery Society, a local unit of the American Anti-Slavery Society. When the new press arrived in the early morning hours of November 7, 1837, a group of proslavery Lovejoy opponents, again intent on destroying the printing equipment, encountered a group of Lovejoy supporters equally intent on saving it. The proslavery forces proceeded with an incendiary attack on the warehouse occupied by the press and its defenders. After an exchange of gunfire, the press was once again lost to the Mississippi, while its owner lay dying of wounds. Elijah's brother Owen was at his side.

Owen had joined his brother earlier in the year, just in time to assist him in the organization of the antislavery society. Owen withdrew to New York City, but later that year he returned to Alton to study for the Episcopal ministry and serve

as an agent for the society. He was scheduled to be ordained in 1838, but his ordination never took place, since he refused to sign a pledge that he would not discuss abolition from the pulpit. Despite his lack of ordination he began looking for a church to serve. While at Jacksonville, Illinois, he learned from fellow abolitionist Edward Beecher at Illinois College of a vacancy at the Congregational Church in the Bureau County community of Princeton. He accepted the position at an annual salary of six hundred dollars.

At Princeton he found a transplanted New England community, a ministry at the Hampshire Colony Church, and a home for the rest of his life. In 1843 he married the recently widowed Eunice Denham, who lived with her three daughters on a thirteen-hundred-acre farm. Now known as the Owen Lovejoy Homestead, the house served as Lovejoy's home until his death in 1864. It is most famous as a station on the Underground Railroad.

Princeton, the seat of Bureau County, was settled largely by Congregationalists from Massachusetts. The Congregationalists were at the center of antislavery sentiment in that region of Illinois, and many of them were abolitionists. Already firmly established as an abolitionist, the twenty-seven-year-old Lovejoy was comfortable preaching abolitionism from his pulpit and in other churches. Although he filled other roles as farmer, family man, preacher, and parent, the central activity of his life was abolitionism.

Since the great majority of Illinoisans at that time came from slave states, especially in the southern half of the state, there was not much sympathy for antislavery sentiment. Abolitionists of any stripe were considered fanatics and trouble-makers. It was in this context that Lovejoy lived and worked. Lovejoy became a leader in the state's Liberty Party, and by 1842 he was a member of the party's central committee. In the election of 1846, the same election that sent Abraham Lincoln to the House of Representatives as a Whig, he ran unsuccessfully as the Liberty Party candidate for Congress.

In the early 1850s Lovejoy joined other political leaders agitating for an antislavery fusion party. He was a practical politician

LOVEJOY HOMESTEAD A WELL-DOCUMENTED UNDERGROUND RAILROAD STATION

The Owen Lovejoy home stands just east of the corner of U.S. Route 6 and Illinois Route 26 in Princeton, three quarters of a mile east of the central business district on the edge of town. The house was constructed in 1838, with a north addition built onto the rear shortly afterward. A large east addition was completed in the early 1850s. The exterior appearance of the house remains essentially unchanged after this period.

No other building in Illinois can document its role in the Underground Railroad better than this one. Local histories relate tales of active operations in the county, and Lovejoy is prominently featured in many of them. Lovejoy himself ran advertisements in abolitionist newspapers announcing the use of his services to assist fugitives in their northward escape. He even announced his work on the Underground Railroad from the floor of the United States House of Representatives, thereby enraging his Southern colleagues. Once he was caught red-handed harboring runaways, arrested, and tried for violating fugitive slave laws; a sympathetic judge and jury let him go on a dubious technicality.

Evidence in the house itself provides further proof. Along the top of the main stairway between the first and second floor there is a triangular space between a wall, the floor, and the roof that tradition identifies as a hiding closet, which is roomy enough to accommodate several people comfortably. Presumably, people could remain hidden here while law enforcement agents searched the premises. Today the space can be viewed through a doorway installed in the 1930s to make it visually accessible to tourists and the curious,

but before then it could be entered only through an opening from a bedroom—and few lawmen would have considered it proper to invade a lady's bedroom for any purpose.

Although Owen Lovejoy acquired national fame as an abolitionist, his house in Princeton was probably an Underground Railroad station before he ever moved to town. Eunice was Lovejoy's first wife, but Lovejoy was Eunice's second husband. Eunice had been married to Butler Denham, who moved from Massachusetts to Princeton in 1835. He built the house in 1838 for Eunice and his three daughters, and the hiding closet was included in the original design. Denham may have built the closet for storage or even by accident, since he wasn't necessarily a good housebuilder. However, since the Denhams also had antislavery sentiments, it is easy to suppose that the closet could have been used to store more than off-season clothing. Butler Denham died and Eunice married Owen Lovejoy a year or so after he moved to town. We can assume that their feelings about slavery enhanced their affinity for each other.

Today the home is owned and operated by the City of Princeton as the Owen Lovejoy Homestead. The United States Secretary of the Interior declared the property a National Historic Landmark in 1997 for its role in the Underground Railroad. The house is open to the public on weekends during the summer and by appointment at other times. Interested persons may call 815-879-9151 for additional information.

Theodore W. Hild

and did not feel that a one-idea party could succeed or that a fusion party could satisfy all its members. The nascent Republican Party, already an antislavery party, was willing to accommodate abolitionists. Lovejoy attended a party convention in

Springfield, but those in attendance were uncertain about the new party's policies and membership. At this time Lincoln served on the state central committee, a presence that concerned the abolitionist Republicans who fretted that he did not



The parlor of the Lovejoy Homestead

take a hard enough line on the slavery issue. As a political leader and "the high priest of abolitionism" Lovejoy kept Illinois abolitionists from supporting Lincoln until Lincoln pledged to take a stronger position on slavery. Trusting Lincoln, Owen Lovejoy took it upon himself to serve as liaison between the more radical abolitionists and party moderates, resulting in a more secure party organization and consequent Republican victories at the polls. Lovejoy's efforts pushed the Republican Party closer to a position of abolition and away from one that was merely antislavery.

In 1854 Lovejoy was elected to the House of Representatives in the Illinois General Assembly, where he introduced antislavery resolutions and bills, including a bill to repeal the law disqualifying blacks from giving testimony in courts of law.

In 1856 Lovejoy traveled to Pittsburgh to help create the national Republican Party. In his role as clergyman he opened the meeting with prayer, and as party leader he was the third speaker, following Horace Greeley and Joshua Giddings. That same year he was elected to the United States House of Representatives amidst dissension over his abolitionism and his role in the Underground Railroad.

As a congressman he involved himself in many issues, including the corruption of Democratic President James Buchanan's administration, issues of interest to Western farmers, and especially slavery. In

Congress he gained a national reputation through his congressional and party leadership and his fiery antislavery speeches.

Lovejoy served in Congress from 1855 until his death in December 1864. He became chairman of the Committee on Public Lands, which was an important position for a Western farmer and an important position in regard to the disposal of the public domain and the issue of slavery in the territories. When the election of 1860 put more Republicans in Congress, Lincoln in the White House, and the southern states in rebellion, Lovejoy focused on suppressing the rebels and emancipating the slaves. He stood, as a Radical Republican, staunchly behind a policy of swift and violent defeat of the South. Lovejoy viewed the war first as a method to free the slaves and second as an act necessary to preserve the Union.

As a vociferous and active abolitionist, Owen Lovejoy used his home just outside Princeton to harbor fugitive slaves on their way north. His participation is indisputable since he faced prosecution several times for his role in the Underground Railroad. He was, in fact, quite proud of his opportunities to help slaves flee to freedom and admitted this publicly, not as a boast, but to defy the slave power.

As was not uncommon among Underground Railroad operators, Lovejoy went so far as to advertise his surreptitious occupation in the *Western Citizen*, the principal abolitionist newspaper serving

Illinois. On June 1, 1843, Lovejoy had printed a notice announcing the availability of the "Canada Line of Stages" for "the ladies and gentlemen of color of the South who wish to travel North for the benefit of their condition."

In an 1859 speech in Congress that drew national attention, Lovejoy addressed his role in the Underground Railroad directly with:

A single word as to this charge of Negro stealing. . . . If the object is to ascertain whether I assist fugitive slaves who come to my door and ask it, the matter is easily disposed of. I march right up to the confessional, and say I do.

I recollect the case of a young woman, who came to my house [who had been] sold to a libertine from the South, she being in St. Louis. She escaped, and, in her flight from infamy, and a fate worse than death, she came and implored aid. Was I to refuse it? Was I to betray the wanderer? Was I to detain her, and give her up a prey to the incarnate fiend who had selected her as a victim to offer up on the altar of sensualism?

Sir, I will never do this.

Owen Lovejoy lives at Princeton, Illinois, three quarters of a mile east of the village; and he aids every fugitive that comes to his door and asks it. Proclaim it then upon the housetops. Write it on every leaf that trembles in the forest, make it blaze from the sun at high noon. . . . I bid you defiance in the name of my God!

Other incidents demonstrate Lovejoy's bold commitment to the Underground Railroad and the lengths to which he would go to help fugitives. He found himself in court more than once defending his antislavery behavior, the most celebrated being the "Agnes-Nancy case." The Bureau County grand jury indicted Lovejoy in May 1843 on charges involving harboring two slave women, Agnes in March 1842, and Nancy in February 1843. He was charged with "keeping in his house, feeding, clothing and comforting the said Nancy" and "harboring, feeding, clothing one said Agnes, a slave." When he came to trial in October 1843 he was represented by James Collins, a noted abolitionist attorney from Chicago. Lovejoy participated in his own defense.



A closet that once opened only to a bedroom is now visible through a small door near the stairs. The closet is large enough to accommodate several people, and it's believed that Owen and Eunice Lovejoy hid escaping slaves there.

The week-long trial filled the courtroom every day. Most of the testimony went against Lovejoy, but the jury acquitted him after Judge John D. Caton in his charge to the jury stated that since the two women fled their masters while they were in Illinois, and since slavery was not permitted in Illinois, then the two were free the minute they stepped into Illinois. Although the county court ruled the same way in a similar case in Quincy, Illinois, the state supreme court overturned the local decision. Apparently, this action had no effect on the outcome of Lovejoy's case.

Another time, in the spring of 1849, Lovejoy used his house to hide a fugitive whose would-be captors were in hot pursuit. John Buckner had fled bondage in Missouri and was staying with Enos Matson (one of Lovejoy's abolitionist neighbors) when two white men spotted him and took him into town a prisoner. While waiting for a warrant for Buckner's arrest, a scuffle erupted with antislavery sympathizers who succeeded in giving Buckner an opportunity to run to Lovejoy's home. A proslavery crowd that followed encountered a defiant Lovejoy, who with assembled friends, denied them access to the fugitive. During the ensuing stand-off, which involved much shouting, shoving, and threatening at the front gate, Buckner made his way to freedom out the back.

These and other documented cases verify that the Lovejoy Homestead served as a station on the Underground Railroad, but

the extent and frequency of Lovejoy's involvement with fugitives cannot be known because of the clandestine nature of Underground Railroad operations. Whatever his role in the Underground Railroad, Lovejoy did not hide his activities. His reputation as a "conductor" was widespread throughout Illinois, Congress,

and even the South. Among the Underground Railroad operators in Illinois, Lovejoy was perhaps the best known. It was well known in Illinois before the Civil War effectively ended slavery that Lovejoy was "in charge" at Princeton and that fugitives passing through Princeton from slavery to freedom were riding "the Lovejoy Line."

By 1863 Lovejoy's health began to fail as chronic kidney and liver failure, diagnosed later as Bright's disease, kept him bedridden for periods of time. In between these attacks, however, he traveled through parts of the North promoting the antislavery cause and the war effort. On such a mission to Brooklyn, New York, he was finally confined to bed until his death on March 25, 1864.

Theodore W. Hild
Chief of Staff
Preservation Services Division

Ted Hild researched and wrote the National Historic Landmark nomination for the Owen Lovejoy House, which received landmark status in 1997.

CAMPBELL CENTER OFFERS PRESERVATION COURSES

Campbell Center for Historic Preservation Studies in Mount Carroll has announced its 2000 schedule, which offers a program of mid-career training for professionals in the fields of historic preservation, collection care, and conservation.

Campbell Center is one of the few schools in the country devoted solely to offering conservation and preservation courses. Most of the center's courses are several days in duration, with an emphasis on hands-on instruction. This year, professionals will teach a total of forty-two preservation-related workshops scheduled from May to October.

Scholarships are available for some courses. Information on eligibility and application procedures is included in the 2000 Course Catalogue. Course fees range from \$240 to \$1,500 and include accommodations and two meals a day for classes that run more than one day. Application and financial assistance deadlines vary, depending on the class.

Campbell Center, which is located on the campus of the former Shimer College, was founded in 1979. The focus of the fourteen-acre campus is the quadrangle, which is surrounded by Georgian Revival buildings constructed following a 1906 fire that destroyed the original campus. Course participants are housed dormitory-style on campus.

For additional information and the 2000 Course Catalogue, write Mary Wood Lee, Director, Campbell Center for Historic Preservation Studies, 203 East Seminary, Box 66, Mount Carroll, IL 61053, or phone 815-244-1173.

I'VE BEEN WORKING ON THE (UNDERGROUND) RAILROAD

Places in Illinois associated with the Underground Railroad are among the more interesting and significant historic sites in the state, but they are also the most difficult to find and document. Putting together what we learned from others' experiences and what we already knew about surveying historic places, last summer the Preservation Services Division hired Gus Lamczyk, a teacher at Springfield High School and a master's candidate at the University of Illinois Springfield, to put our ideas to the test. Gus spent the summer researching the history of the Underground Railroad in Morgan County as a case study and in July took to the field with a driver and John Power, his intrepid native guide and Jacksonville newspaper publisher, to look for the buildings and places that turned up in the literature search. The following article is Gus's report on how he did it and what happened.

Theodore W. Hild

Even the most adept historical researcher gets stumped occasionally, but researching the Underground Railroad can be a sure-fire way to derail even the heartiest of history detectives. The Underground Railroad is an elusive subject for researchers because it was a covert operation with no written records. No overall plan was ever written explaining how this fugitive transportation system functioned, nor was an explanation offered on the basic method for helping thousands of fugitive slaves reach Canada. Those who did the transporting kept few records of their efforts, and few of the newly freed who successfully made it to their destination left memoirs. The secretive nature of this loose organization meant that little information got recorded in newspapers or in local courtrooms. Generally only failed attempts made it into those two sources, and this happened very seldom.

Aware that information on the Civil War-era is seemingly impossible to find, the intrepid historian learns quickly that he/she must approach the task less conventionally. Researching the Underground Railroad differs greatly from researching less elusive facts. Normally a researcher would begin by searching primary sources, but in the case of the Underground Railroad, those types of documents are less reliable. Those who worked on the Underground Railroad left reminiscences

about their efforts and adventures only after the Civil War--and slavery--had ended. Carefully consider the sources, and judge the memories of the elderly, the self-serving, or those who were very young when these events occurred. Information does exist, but it must be viewed with caution. Like any great movement, there is much romance surrounding the Underground Railroad. Contemporaries of the Underground Railroad may have been tempted to embellish their deeds, or attach themselves to a movement knowing that few could refute their claims. It would be like asking any baby boomer what he or she did during the 1960s. Be they veterans of war or of peace, many are tempted to exaggerate their exploits.

The Underground Railroad researcher can benefit by first acquiring a basic understanding of the Underground

Railroad. There are a number of good general histories of the Underground Railroad, notably *The Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad* by Larry Gara, *The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom* by Wilbur Siebert, and *Underground Railroad Resources in the United States Theme Study* by Marie Tyler-McGraw and Kira R. Badamo.

Wilbur Siebert's work is a major accomplishment of history by correspondence. Published in 1898, it was the culmination of communications with over one thousand individuals. The correspondents included abolitionists and their families and friends, as well as local historians. Through this method Siebert gleaned a vast amount of information that he interpreted into his canon, but his interpretation relies on the need for abolitionists to be the main factor in the Underground Railroad. Larry Gara's book revises the myth of the Underground Railroad. He brings to light the larger role African-Americans played in the movement, and he debunks the abolitionists' romanticized role. Lastly, Marie Tyler-McGraw and Kira R. Badamo provide a concise modern view of how the Underground Railroad existed in the whole of America. This is a short work that contains a wealth of information on the history and historiography of the Underground Railroad.

Once familiarized with the topic, I began the search for sites in Morgan County. A *site* was defined as any building used as a station or one that housed an individual who facilitated Underground Railroad activities. Jacksonville, the Morgan County seat, has a storied reputation for its connection with the Underground Railroad, but separating local folklore from fact was the first hurdle. Folklore is not history, and it says more about the people telling the story than of the topic. The accuracy of oral stories handed down from generation to generation often erodes the subject until



The Asa Talcott House in Jacksonville offered refuge to fleeing slaves. (Photo courtesy J. Terry Ransom)

the substance is all but washed away. The researcher's goal is to find corroborating evidence from other sources that sites existed, momentarily disregarding folklore.

I delved into three printed sources identifying Underground Railroad sites and individuals involved with the Underground Railroad. First was the 1972 Illinois Historic Landmarks Survey (maintained by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency), which lists thousands of properties with historical significance throughout the state. In it, field surveyors compiled data county by county, noting any special significance associated with places. This data was searched to locate any buildings related to the Underground Railroad or abolitionism. The places that met those criteria were noted.

The first house identified in Morgan County was the Hildner House. Built in 1847 by Samuel Adams, the house is at present a residence located on West College in Jacksonville. The second house, built by Rufus Crampton between 1854 and 1856 and known locally as the Octagon House, is located on Park Street. Samuel Adams and Rufus Crampton, therefore, are first on my list for further research.

Consulting the Siebert list was the second part of the search. Wilbur Siebert's *The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom* devotes only about twenty pages to Illinois, taking up very little of the text. While the book yields only a smattering of Underground Railroad activity in Illinois, Appendix E is valuable for research. This appendix contains a state-by-state list of Underground Railroad conductors. These state lists are then sub-listed by county. This list of names is also located on the Internet at <http://www.ugrr.org/ur-names.htm>. Siebert's list mentions three names for Morgan County: Rev. Andrew W. Jackson, Timothy Chamberlain, and Henry M. Miller.

Siebert's typescript research notes were also consulted, and as it turns out, the author's notes contain much more information than the final publication, perhaps as a result of his rigorous demands for corroborative evidence or simply space limitations. (The typescript is available on microfilm at the Illinois State Historical

Library in Springfield.) When researching a county, it is highly recommended that surrounding counties be searched as well. Siebert's research notes contain the actual letters exchanged between him and individuals in Illinois who knew something about the Underground Railroad either through their own participation or the involvement of family members. Correspondents often mentioned something about the previous station or the station in the next county, so a search of the surrounding counties might offer a link to the county under investigation. I rechecked the previously listed sources hoping to find links to others involved. No other names surfaced, so I commenced a search of published indexes on Illinois history housed in the Illinois State Historical Library in Springfield. The Library also possesses several county histories for every county in the state, and I pored over all of those indexes checking for *Underground Railroad*, *abolitionist*, and the names that I had previously gathered.

The county histories provided considerable biographical information about the individuals whose names turned up in my other sources. Then an interesting thing happened: the abstractions of abolitionism and the Underground Railroad began to dissolve into actual people like Henry M. Miller or Timothy Chamberlain. The picture that came into focus indicated that there was no such thing as a "typical" Underground Railroad participant. There were abolitionists, Southern emigrants, members of religious communities, and dedicated yeoman farmers. Involvement cut across social orders. Doctors, lawyers, and merchants cooperated with farmers, laborers, and teamsters. They were outlaws with an ideology. They talked of the love of God one moment, and the willingness to use a revolver the next.

This variety of individuals is depicted in an article written by Richard Yates, Jr., in July 1885 for the Jacksonville *Daily Journal*, entitled "Rocking the Cradle." The article covered the origins of the Republican Party in Jacksonville, the connections these members had with the abolitionist movement, and their activities in the Underground Railroad. The article was prepared after Yates interviewed people in

the community associated with Underground Railroad activities. The names in that article swelled my list to thirty-five names.

I then looked up the names in *Williams' Jacksonville Directory & Business Mirror for 1860-1861*, the oldest directory available for the city of Jacksonville. It listed in alphabetical order the residents and where they lived. Thus, I was able to learn, for example, that Benjamin Harrison lived on the north side of Marion Street between Church and Rockwell streets. From there the rest was simple. I compared a nineteenth-century street map with a modern street map and plotted today's locations of yesterday's citizens. County maps helped me locate properties that lay beyond the city limits.

I then took to the field to photograph and record any existing buildings on the properties in question. In most cases I found subdivisions where farmsteads stood, ranch houses on the sites of former ancient dwellings, and older homes that had been remodeled extensively. Out of twenty-two sites investigated, only six appeared to be original structures from the mid-nineteenth century.

That was the end of the first phase. The next step, which could not be accomplished in the time allowed, will require detailed and precise investigations into the histories of those six buildings to determine what changes have occurred and whether these are the actual buildings associated with the Underground Railroad.

Searching for the Underground Railroad is at one time both rewarding and frustrating. With the joy of finding a place comes the realization that in many ways the work has just begun. Now the goal is to determine if the "place" proves to be a remnant of the nineteenth-century route to freedom.

August Lamczyk

August Lamczyk works with special needs students at Springfield High School. He is currently working on his master's degree at the University of Illinois at Springfield.

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THE FUTURE OF THE PAST

APPLICATION DEADLINE—National Register of Historic Places—To be placed on the agenda of the September meeting of the Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Council, complete and correct nomination forms for certified local government properties must be received by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency on or before May 5, 2000. For additional information, write Ann V. Swallow, National Register Coordinator, 1 Old State Capitol Plaza, Springfield, IL 62701-1507, or phone 217-785-4512.

BISHOP HILL—The Bishop Hill Arts Council will sponsor **Sundays in the Park**, a series of concerts presented every Sunday in June in the park at Bishop Hill State Historic Site. The program will vary from Sunday to Sunday, providing a variety of musical styles each week from 1 P.M. to 3 P.M. For additional information, write Martha Jane Downey, Site Manager, Bishop Hill State Historic Site, P.O. Box D, Bishop Hill, IL 61419, or phone 309-927-3345.

COLLINSVILLE VICINITY—Bring the children to **Kids Day** at Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site. From 11 A.M. to 4 P.M. on May 7, kids can learn about prehistoric Indians through participation in games, dances, and hands-on activities. For additional information, write Neil Rangen, Site Manager, Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site, Box 681, Collinsville, IL 62234, or phone 618-346-5160.

ELLIS GROVE—Travel to the Pierre Menard Home State Historic Site on May 7 for the **Fete de Jardin—a garden party**. From 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. site interpreters will demonstrate colonial period gardening techniques in the backyard herb garden, and quilts will be on display throughout the home's interior. For additional information, write Roger Wicklein, Site Manager, Pierre Menard Home State Historic Site, 4230 Kaskaskia Road, Ellis Grove, IL 62241, or phone 618-859-3741.

ELLIS GROVE—Attend the **Promenade des Lumières (Candlelight Walk)** from 8:30 P.M. until 10:00 P.M. on June 3 at the Pierre Menard Home State Historic Site. The mansion of Illinois' first lieutenant governor will be bathed in candlelight for the late-evening tours. Listen to period music while enjoying refreshments. For

additional information, write Roger Wicklein, Site Manager, Pierre Menard Home State Historic Site, 4230 Kaskaskia Road, Ellis Grove, IL 62241, or phone 618-859-3741.

PETERSBURG VICINITY—View an array of textiles at the annual **New Salem Fibre Fest**. Quilts, samplers, and coverlets will be displayed throughout the nineteenth-century historic site from 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. on May 20 and 21. Visitors can watch a variety of fiber art demonstrations, including wool knitting and linen spinning, yarn dyeing, bobbin lacemaking, stitching, quilting, and weaving. For additional information, write David Hedrick, Site Manager, Lincoln's New Salem State Historic Site, RR 1, Box 244A, Petersburg, IL 62675, or phone 217-632-4000.

SPRINGFIELD—Enjoy **Saturday Evening Theatre** on May 13 at the Old State Capitol. The thirty to forty-five-minute performance will begin at 7:30 P.M. in the historic Hall of Representatives. A reception will follow, and theatergoers can stroll through the capitol and enjoy light refreshments. The name of the performance will be announced at a later date. For additional information, write Carol Andrews, Site Manager, Old State Capitol State Historic Site, 1 Old State

Capitol Plaza, Springfield, IL 62701-1507, or phone 217-785-7960.

SPRINGFIELD—Gather on May 6 and 7 at the **Illinois Vietnam Veterans Memorial** for a twenty-four-hour vigil to honor the veterans who lost their lives in that war. The ceremony will begin at 11:30 A.M. on May 6 at the monument, which is located at Oak Ridge Cemetery. A Saturday evening ceremony to honor Illinois POWs and MIAs will be held at 6:30 P.M. For additional information, write Nan Wynn, Site Manager, Illinois Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Oak Ridge Cemetery, Springfield, IL 62702, or phone 217-782-2717.

VANDALIA—Gather for the **Grand Levee** at the Vandalia Statehouse State Historic Site from June 16 to 18. The event kicks off with a ham-and-bean dinner, ice-cream social, and candlelight tour of Illinois' oldest statehouse from 5:30 P.M. to 9 P.M. on June 16. On June 17 and 18 enjoy period craft demonstrations, period music, and children's activities from 11 A.M. to 4 P.M. For additional information, write Judy Baumann, Site Manager, Vandalia Statehouse State Historic Site, 315 W. Gallatin, Vandalia, IL 62471, or phone 618-283-1161.

HANDBOOK ON IMPLEMENTING A SURVEY PROGRAM NOW AVAILABLE

Developing a Local Survey Program, a handbook produced by the Illinois Association of Historic Preservation Commissions (IAHPC) and the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, addresses the many concerns about implementing a survey program in your community. The approximately 425-page publication includes a wide range of information that will assist local commissions with organizing a survey, creating a survey form, working with volunteers and consultants, researching historic properties, compiling the final product, and producing materials from the survey results. It contains articles and sample materials from national, state, and local sources as well as a questionnaire completed by communities and consultants who have conducted historic resources surveys. Respondents to the questionnaire have provided accounts of the survey process and insights based upon their experiences.

Developing a Local Survey Program is available to IAHPC members for \$30. The cost for nonmembers is \$35. To purchase the handbook, mail a check or money order to IAHPC, Attn: Terri Malawy, 1 Old State Capitol Plaza, Springfield, IL 62701.



HISTORIC ILLINOIS

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency
1 Old State Capitol Plaza
Springfield, IL 62701-1507

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