

# COMMUNITY

**“ ‘Uncle Henry’ is a remarkable man. He is now over seventy years of age, but travels much, and preaches from northern Illinois, to St. Louis, in the principal cities on the railroads.”**

Elder Isaac N. Vanmeter speaking of Henry Smith, 1872

Despite stringent Black Laws and slavery's presence in Illinois, free African Americans created communities throughout the state. Many free African Americans lived in established cities. Others created new settlements, like Equal Rights, Brooklyn, Miller Grove and New Philadelphia.

Plat map of New Philadelphia



Old State Capitol State Historic Site in Springfield

One of the latter group was Free Frank McWorter. McWorter was born a slave but was able to earn some money. In 1817, he purchased his wife Lucy's freedom and two years later bought his own. He entered Illinois with his wife and their freeborn children in 1830 and settled on land he had purchased in Pike County, where he established New Philadelphia.

Downtown Springfield

View of Galena

Obituary of Henry Smith

**Death of an Aged Negro.**  
 Old Preacher Henry, as he has been familiarly known here for many years, died at his home about six miles south of Warren, on Tuesday last, the 20th, after an illness of twenty days from tick-ups.  
 Henry Smith has always claimed that he was born in Virginia, and in the same year that General Jackson was, of whom and General Washington he was a great worshiper. General Jackson was born March 16, 1767, consequently at the time of the death Preacher Henry must have been One Hundred and Eight years old. Henry, when a young man, so he has often related, was a servant to General Washington, and that when Washington liberated his slaves, he was among the number. He has always been a quiet, unassuming and devotional man, going about his little patch of ground during the week and preaching the gospel on the Sabbath, according to the belief of the Regular Baptists.  
 These facts we learn from the neighbors of Henry. While we know that he was a very old man, had we known that he was 108 years old, we should have endeavored to collect many interesting facts from him. That he was very old is evident, from the fact that his youngest great-grandchildren have grown up to manhood.  
 Old Preacher Henry's body, bowed down with age, and his hair white as the driven snow with the frosts of one hundred and eight winters, is to-day laid in the grave, and his soul has departed to the God that gave it. We would all live better lives did we follow his example. Peace to his ashes.  
 — Warren Sentinel.

Another community of free African Americans was Miller Grove. Established in 1844 in Pope County, the residents were former slaves from Tennessee. The community was named for the Miller family who had been freed by their former owners.

“Equal Rights School” also used as “New Hope Church”; in Equal Rights

“Providence Baptist Church” near Lena is one of the locations where Henry Smith preached

In Jo Daviess County, Henry Smith – “Uncle Henry,” as he also was known – was the pastor of Galena's Colored Union Baptist Church until it closed in the late 1850s. Smith and several former parishioners moved to nearby Rush Township and established the town of Equal Rights. Smith was a popular minister to both African American and white congregations in the area, including nearby New Hope and Providence Churches. By 1880, Equal Rights boasted 30 residents.

**“They defined with tolerable distinctness in what they did consider all men created equal – equal in certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. This they said, and this they meant.”**

Abraham Lincoln, 1858

Watch the “Community” video.



At Miller Grove archeological site in Shawnee National Forest



# A NETWORK TO FREEDOM

***“At Knoxville was hindered all the next day endeavoring to get relief for five colored persons who were that day imprisoned because they could not produce full evidence that they were free.”***

Reverend Samuel G. Wright, 1842

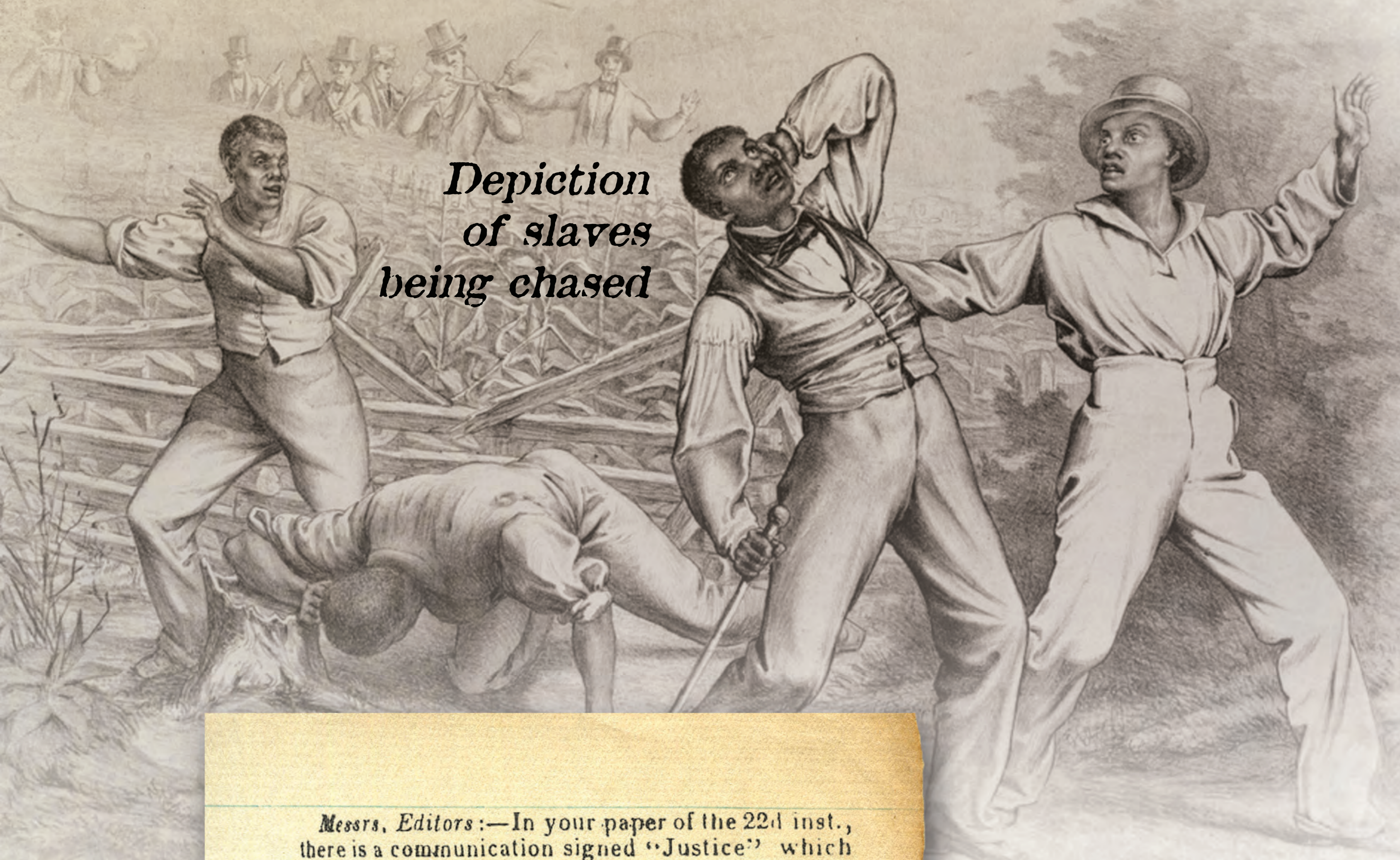


Depiction of the Underground Railroad

The Illinois Underground Railroad was a makeshift method for helping fugitive slaves. As many as 300 people at perhaps 500 locations throughout Illinois assisted fugitive slaves in their attempts to reach freedom. Some towns became hubs of the Underground Railroad.

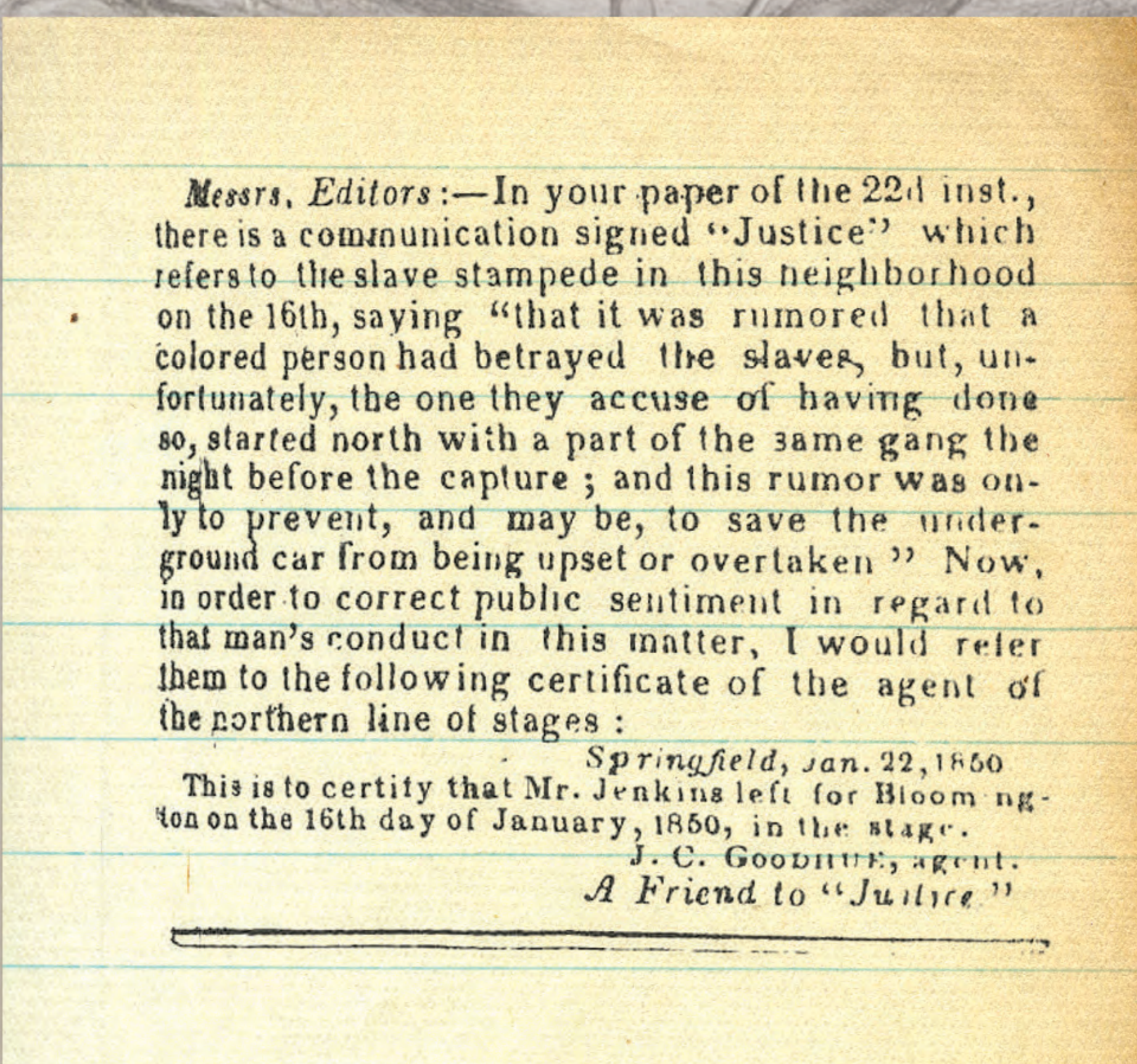


Images from Rocky Fork



Depiction of slaves being chased

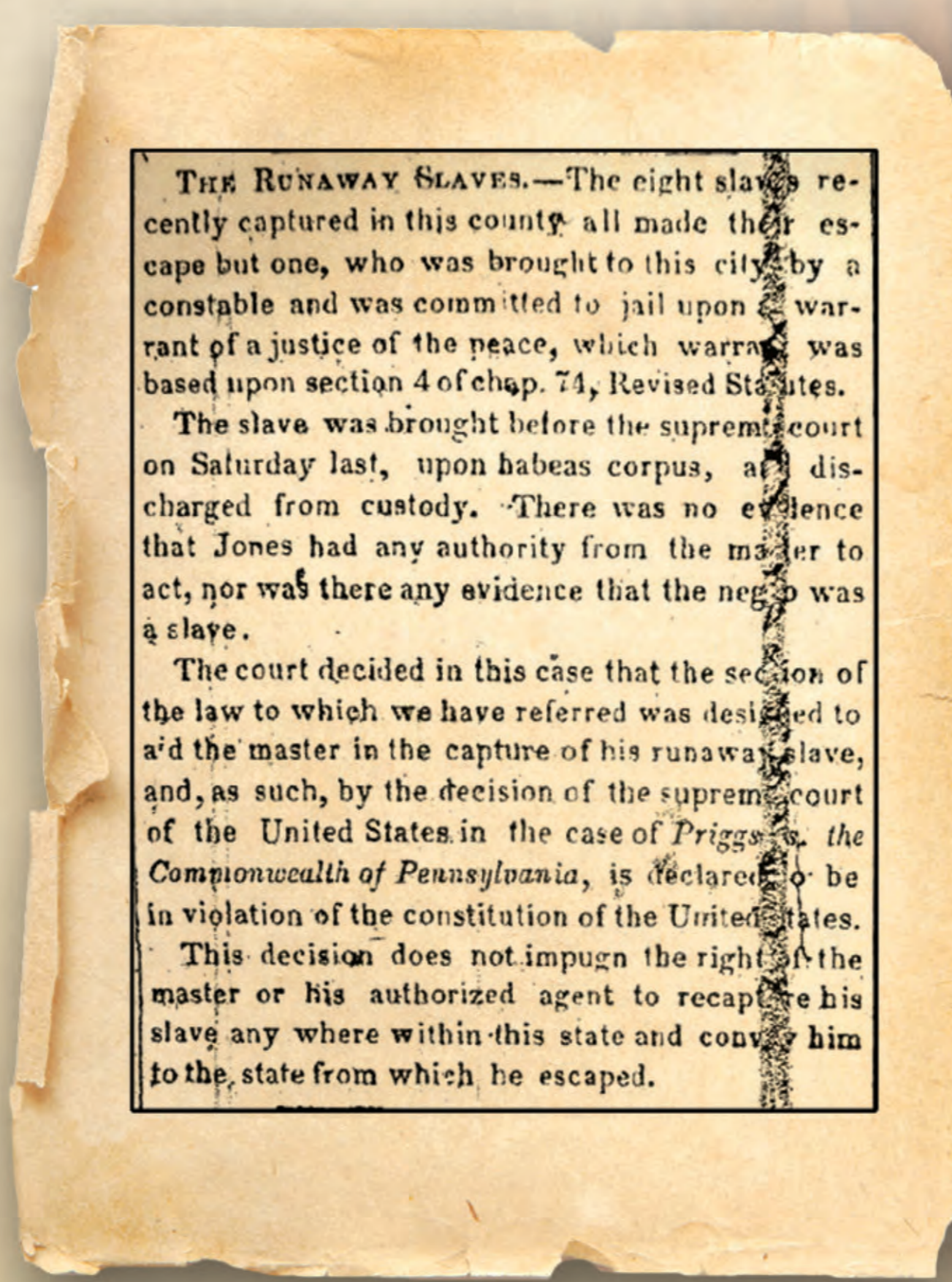
Activities of Underground Railroad sympathizers involved more than helping slaves escape from slave states. Sometimes they aided freedom seekers within Illinois or even rescued kidnapped free African Americans. The Rocky Fork area of Godfrey was one of the first stops in Illinois for slaves escaping from Missouri. Rocky Fork was established by free African American families who bought five adjacent parcels of land, where they built homes and a church.



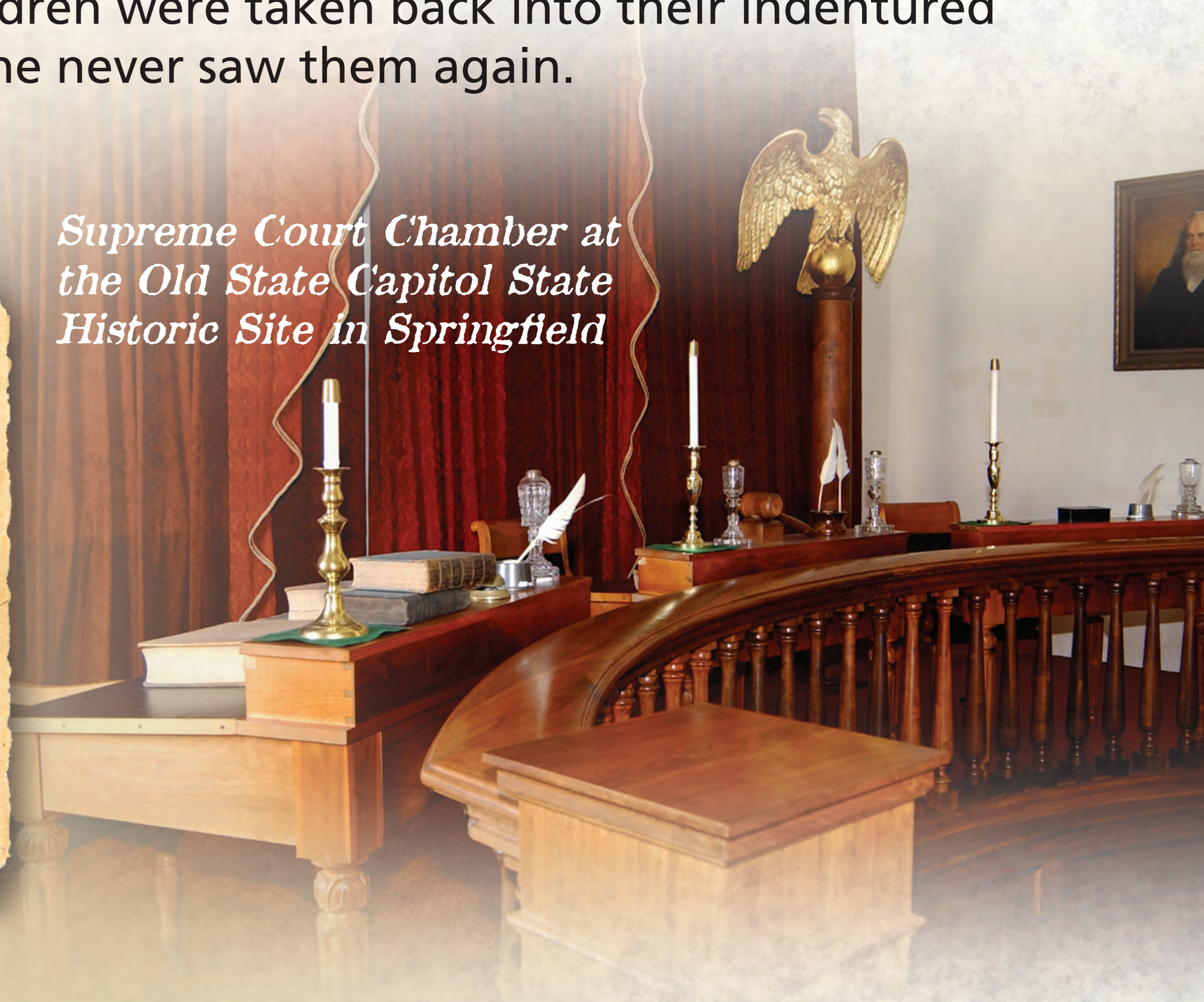
Newspaper articles published about the January 1850 “slave stampede”

In 1842, indentured servant Susan Richardson, known as “Sukey,” and her children escaped from their Randolph County farm to escape abuse. They went to the nearby farm of William Hayes, a local abolitionist, who assisted in their escape north to Knox County. Sukey and her family were arrested there. Hayes and others worked for their freedom but Sukey’s children were taken back into their indentured positions and she never saw them again.

One of Abraham Lincoln’s neighbors was Underground Railroad conductor Jameson Jenkins, who helped several slaves escape through Springfield in January 1850.



Supreme Court Chamber at the Old State Capitol State Historic Site in Springfield



***“This declared indifference, but as I must think, covert real zeal for the spread of slavery, I can not but hate. I hate it because of the monstrous injustice of slavery itself.”***

Abraham Lincoln, 1854

Watch the “A Network To Freedom” video.



At the Jameson Jenkins Lot, Lincoln Home National Historic Site, in Springfield



# PERSEVERANCE

9

*“Is it possible that men, women, and children are to be doomed to life-long Slavery for the simple act of coming into the State of Illinois? Are we to be forever proscribed, harassed, annoyed, and persecuted this way?”*

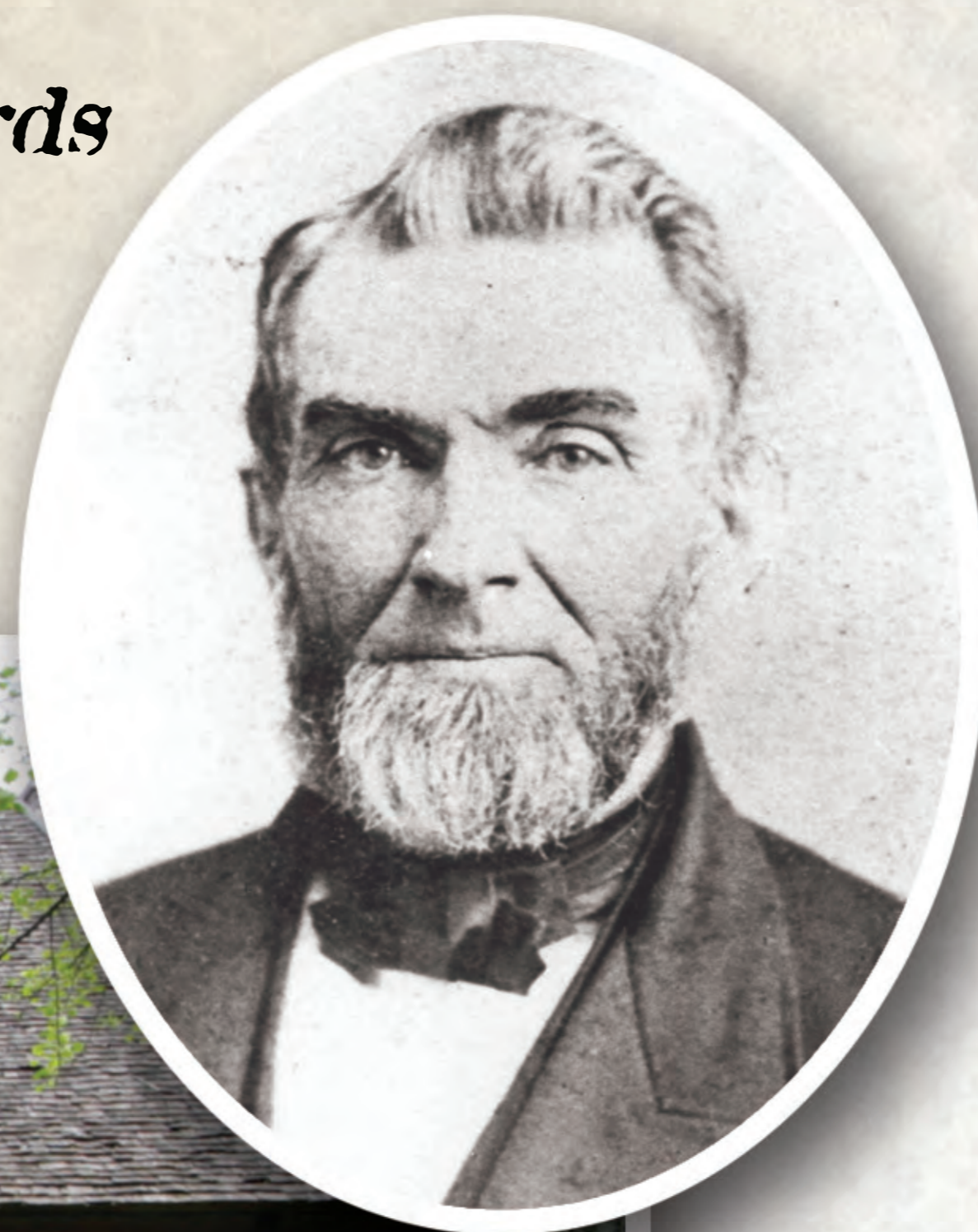
Frederick Douglass, 1853

As time went on, the use of indentured servants proved to be a useful alternative for those who wished to keep servants. Slaves had to “voluntarily” agree to serve their former owners for set periods of time. Some indentures ran for as many as 99 years, and indentures involving young children and even infants were common. Cahokia Courthouse records are full of these indentures.

*Map identifying the old Northwest Territory*

*Ninian W. Edwards*

*Cahokia Courthouse State Historic Site in Cahokia*

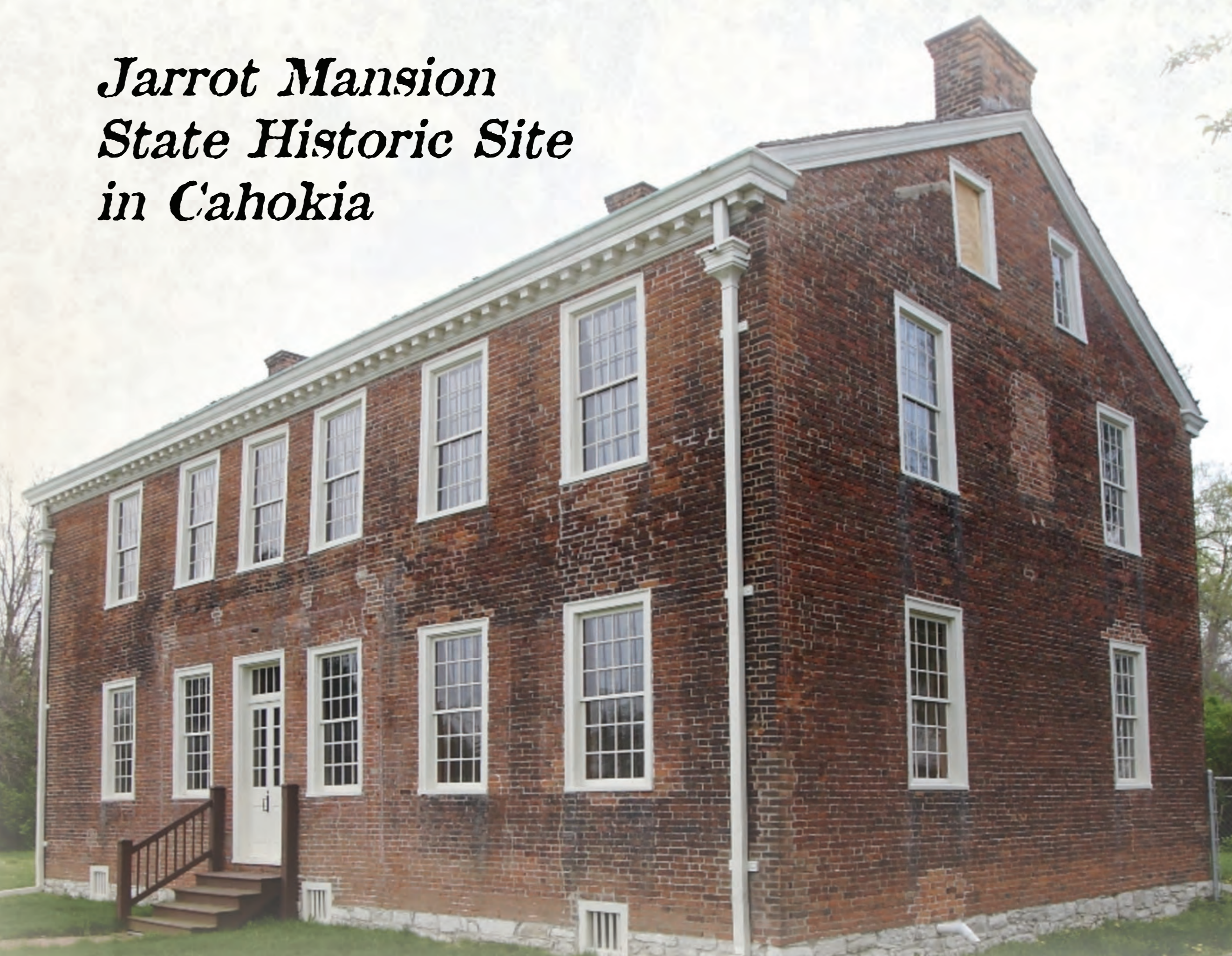


Indentures were not limited to French descendants or to southern Illinois. In 1835, Abraham Lincoln’s brother-in-law, Ninian W. Edwards (son of Illinois’ third governor), entered into an indenture agreement with an 11-year-old girl named Hepsey.

In 1845, the Illinois Supreme Court case of Jarrot v. Jarrot abolished slavery and its various forms of indentured servitude in Illinois. The 1848 Illinois Constitution then formally declared “there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the state.”

The 1845 case involved Joseph Peter Jarrot. He had belonged to Nicholas Jarrot, a French-born businessman who owned 10 to 12 slaves when he died in 1820. In 1843, Joseph Jarrot sued his owner’s widow for back wages, arguing that he was not a slave. The state Supreme Court eventually ruled that anyone born after the 1787 passage of the Northwest Ordinance, which prohibited slavery, had been born free.

*Jarrot Mansion State Historic Site in Cahokia*



*Supreme Court Chamber at the Old State Capitol State Historic Site in Springfield*



*“It was that which gave promise that in due time the weights should be lifted from the shoulders of all men, and that all should have an equal chance. This is the sentiment embodied in that Declaration of Independence.”*

Abraham Lincoln, 1861

Watch the “Perseverance” video.



*At the Cahokia Courthouse State Historic Site in Cahokia*



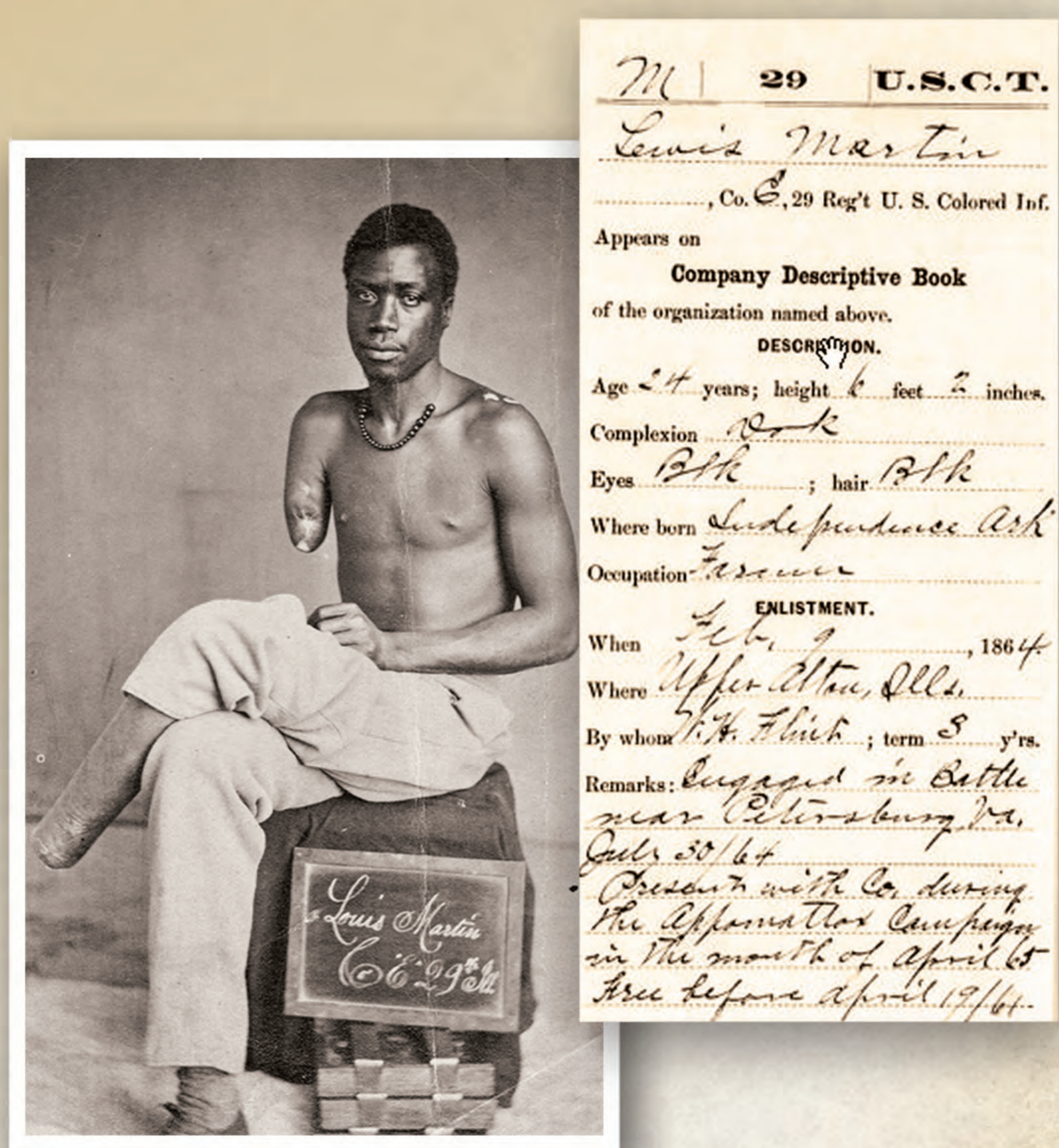
# COURAGEOUSLY TAKING THE STEP

10

*"Hear the voice of one who loves you and desires to see you grow into strength and importance, both in this county and in this country."*

John W.E. Thomas, 1875

Photograph and enlistment record for Lewis Martin, 29th Illinois United States Colored Troops



The 29th Illinois U.S. Colored Infantry, the regiment with the largest number of African American Illinoisans, began enrolling men at Quincy in November 1863. African Americans from the state fought in a variety of other units as well. More than 1,800 Illinois African Americans served during the Civil War.

Downtown Quincy



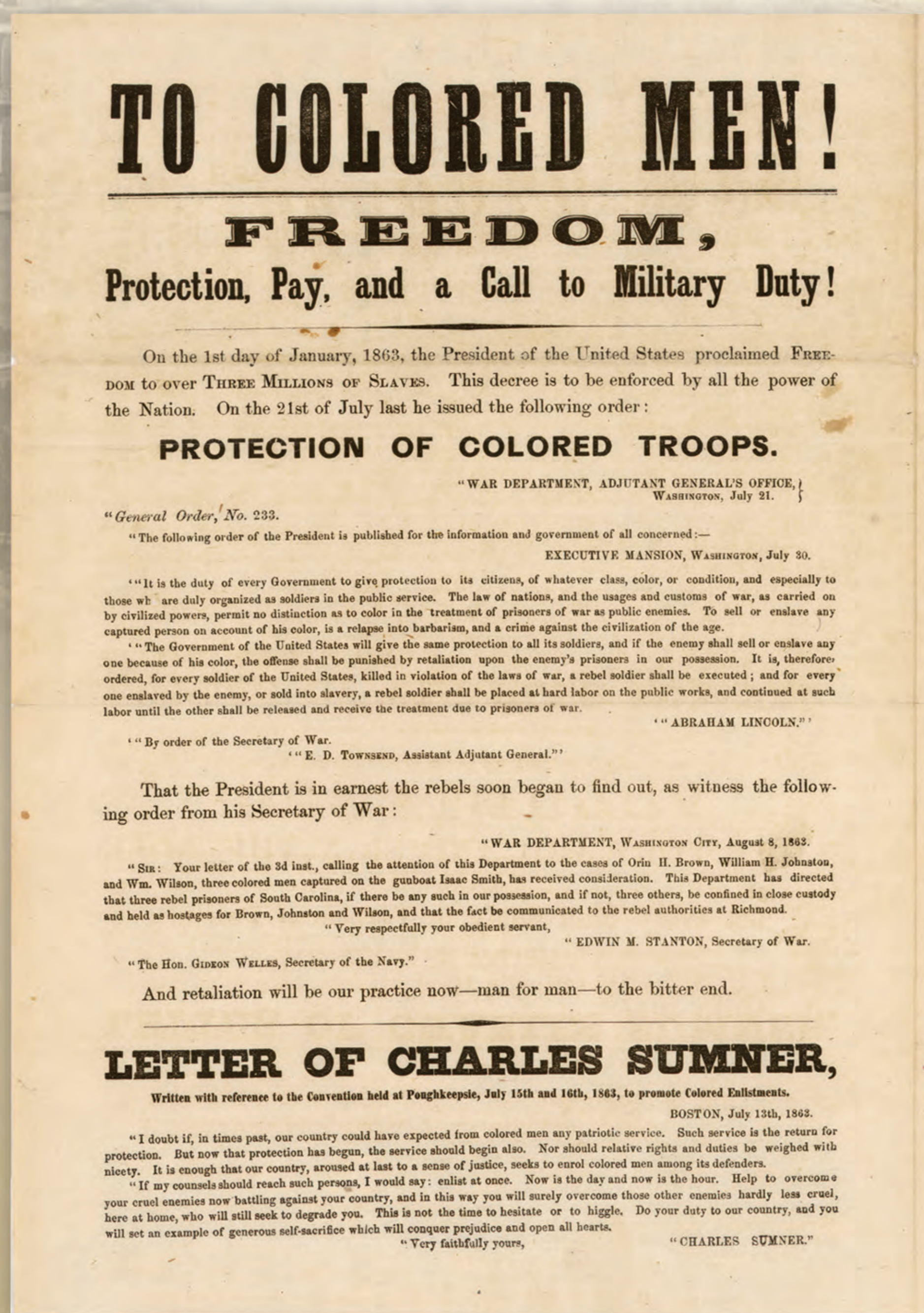
At least one African American served in a white unit and later reached officer rank. Henry Ford Douglas was born a slave in 1831. Douglas escaped, made his way to northern Illinois and became a powerful abolitionist speaker. On July 26, 1862, when it was still illegal for African Americans to enlist in the United States Army, Douglas enlisted as a private and in less than a year later, he was serving as an officer in the 10th Louisiana Regiment of African Descent.

Union soldiers at Fort Lincoln near Washington, DC



A Union soldier and his family

United States Colored Troops recruiting poster



Samuel Dalton was a Civil War veteran who settled in Illinois after the war. Sometime around 1887, he moved to Murphysboro and bought a home. There, Dalton sought membership in the Grand Army of the Republic, a Union veterans' organization, but white members denied him entry. In October 1891, Dalton and others established an African American GAR post. Nine years later, after the whites-only chapter closed, they accepted the white veterans into their post.

View of Cairo



Samuel Dalton house in Murphysboro

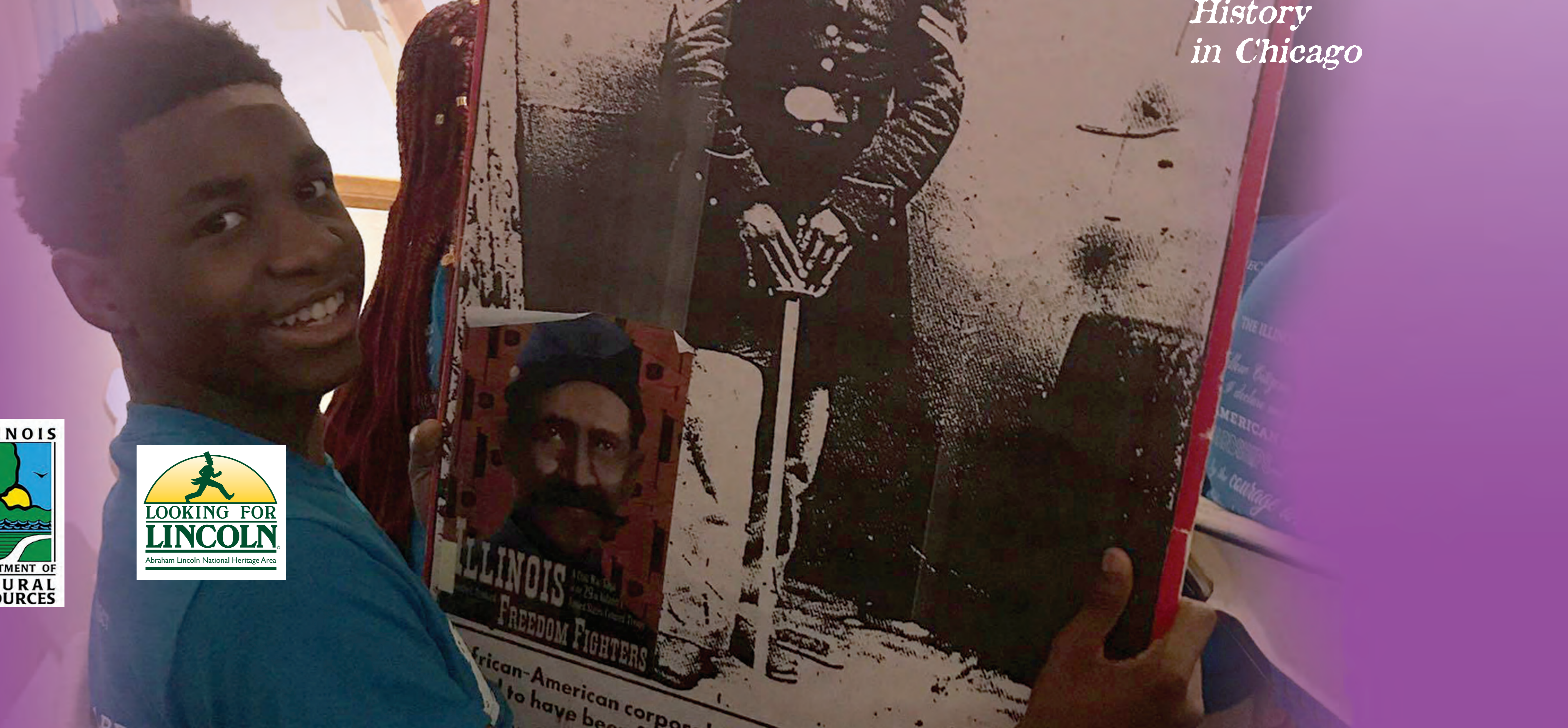
*"You say you will not fight to free negroes. Some of them seem willing to fight for you."*

Abraham Lincoln, 1863

Watch the "Courageously Taking The Step" video.



At the Dusable Museum of African American History in Chicago



# STAND AGAINST INTIMIDATION

*“The way to right wrongs is to turn the light of truth upon them.”*

Ida B. Wells-Barnett, 1892



Scenes from the 1908 Springfield Race Riot

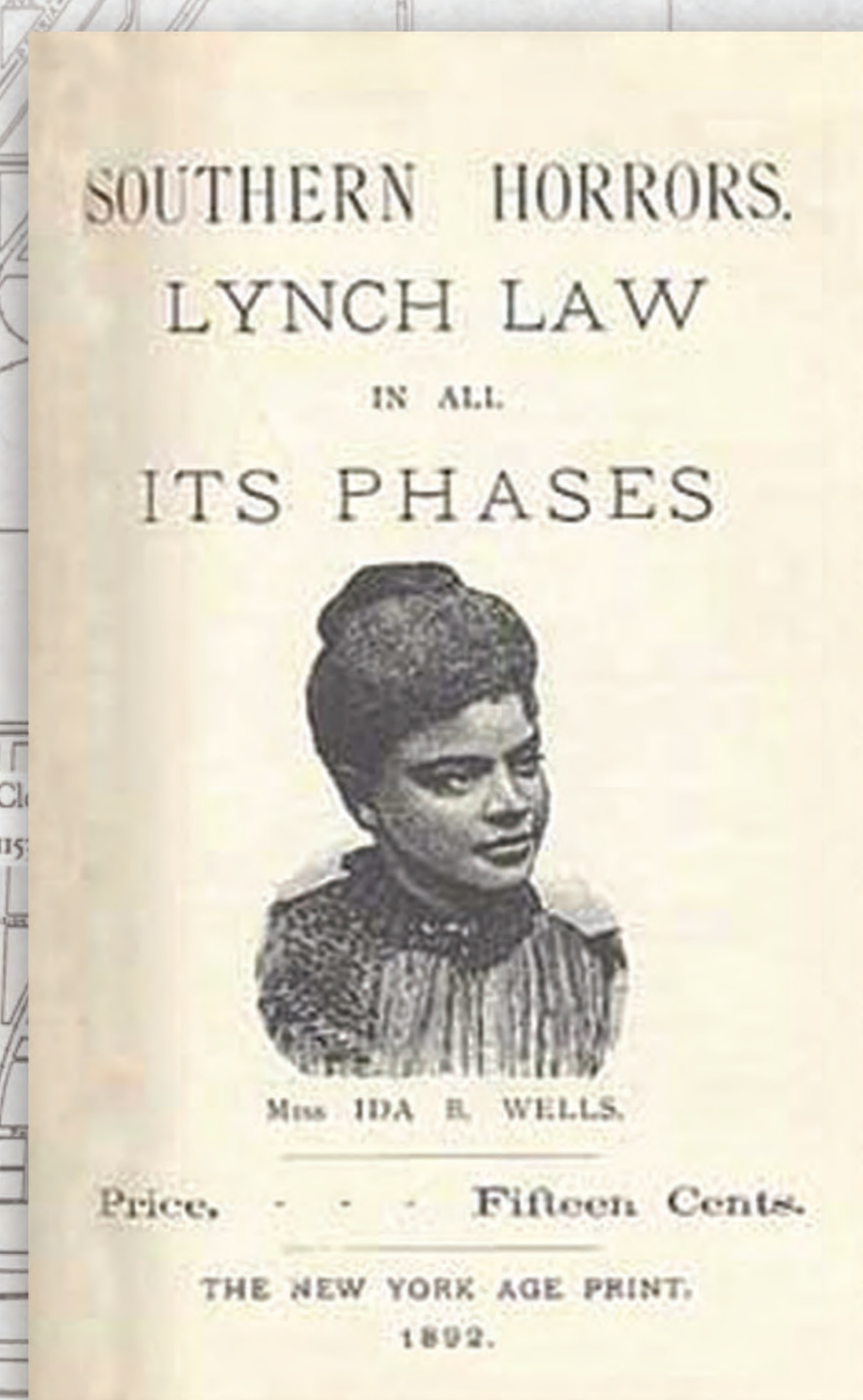
The Great Migration of African Americans into Illinois following the Civil War, and the increased segregation that accompanied it, led to growing tensions between African Americans and whites. Between 1891 and 1914, there were at least 22 racially motivated lynchings in Illinois. Moreover, between 1908 and 1919, three of the nation’s most significant race riots occurred in the state – in Springfield, East St. Louis and Chicago.

William Donnegan, an acquaintance of Abraham Lincoln, was a victim of the 1908 Springfield Race Riot. He came to Springfield in 1845 and worked as a cobbler. He was an Underground Railroad conductor and helped numerous African Americans relocate to the north and find work. During the second day of the Springfield riot, a white mob dragged the elderly Donnegan out of his house, slit his throat and lynched him. Donnegan died the next day.

William Donnegan



Anti lynching pamphlet written by Ida B. Wells-Barnett



Ida B. Wells-Barnett house in Chicago



Ida B. Wells-Barnett

Ida B. Wells-Barnett was a famous anti-lynching activist. Born a slave in 1862, she first spoke out against lynching when three acquaintances were killed in 1892. She then published a pamphlet entitled Southern Horrors: Lynch Laws in All Its Phases. In the mid-1890s, Wells-Barnett moved to Chicago, where she founded the city’s first African American kindergarten and was a founding member of the NAACP.

*“Our progress in degeneracy appears to me to be pretty rapid. As a nation, we began by declaring that ‘all men are created equal.’ We now practically read it ‘all men are created equal, except negroes.’”*

Abraham Lincoln, 1855

Watch the “Stand Against Intimidation” video.



Outside of Ida B. Wells House in Chicago’s Bronzeville



# A PROUD HERITAGE

12

*“We are going back to that beautiful history and it is going to inspire us to greater achievements.”*

Carter G. Woodson, 1921

African Americans faced continued discrimination and violence throughout the late 19th century. In Chicago, African Americans carved out their own commercial, social and political establishments. By 1900, Chicago's South Side boasted more than 30,000 African American inhabitants. A city within a city, this growing African American metropolis, called Bronzeville, enjoyed an unparalleled period of prosperity.

*Scenes from Bronzeville from the 1940's*

Historian Carter G. Woodson stayed at the Wabash Avenue YMCA during his frequent visits to Chicago. The son of former slaves, Woodson was awarded a master's degree from the University of Chicago and was the second African American to receive a doctorate in history from Harvard University.

*Victory Monument honoring African American World War I veterans in Chicago*

In 1915, Woodson participated in a national celebration in Washington, D.C., marking the 50th anniversary of the end of slavery. The occasion included exhibits that highlighted the advancements of African Americans since the end of the Civil War. Woodson created an African American history display for the event and was inspired by the crowds who waited to see the exhibits.

Woodson recognized the importance of documenting and teaching African American history. Upon his return to Chicago, he met with other African American leaders and formed the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. Woodson is known as the “father of African American History.”

*“The struggle of today, is not altogether for today – it is for a vast future also.”*

Abraham Lincoln, 1861

Watch the “A Proud Heritage” video.



*At The Victory Monument in Chicago's Bronzeville*

