

# What can we learn from New Philadelphia?

Gerald A. McWorter and Kate Williams-McWorter

February 23, 2021 / Illinois College, Jacksonville





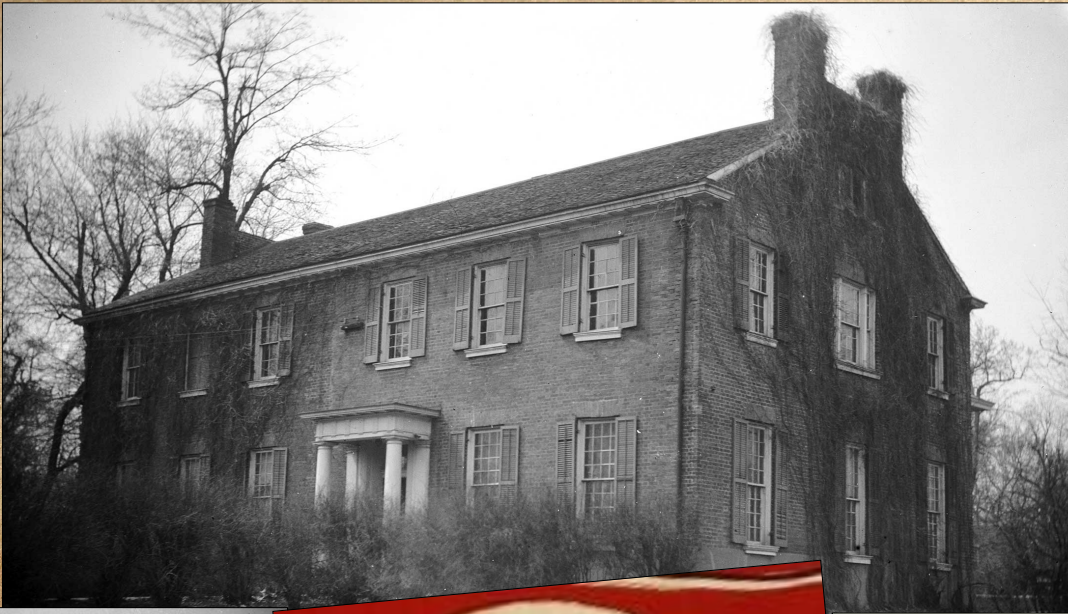
1824: Michael and Jane Huffaker, Woodlawn Farm, J'ville



And the Griegsons ... the Gilletts ... the Talcotts ... the  
Congregationalist “Abolitionist Church” ... and Emily and  
Robert’s 1838 flight from the Clay House



# 1829: Illinois College, Jacksonville, IL



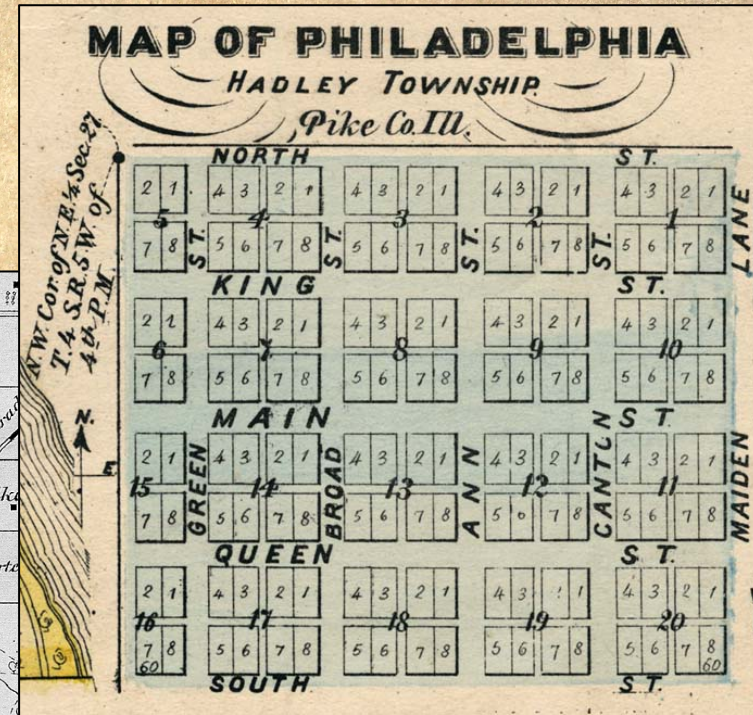
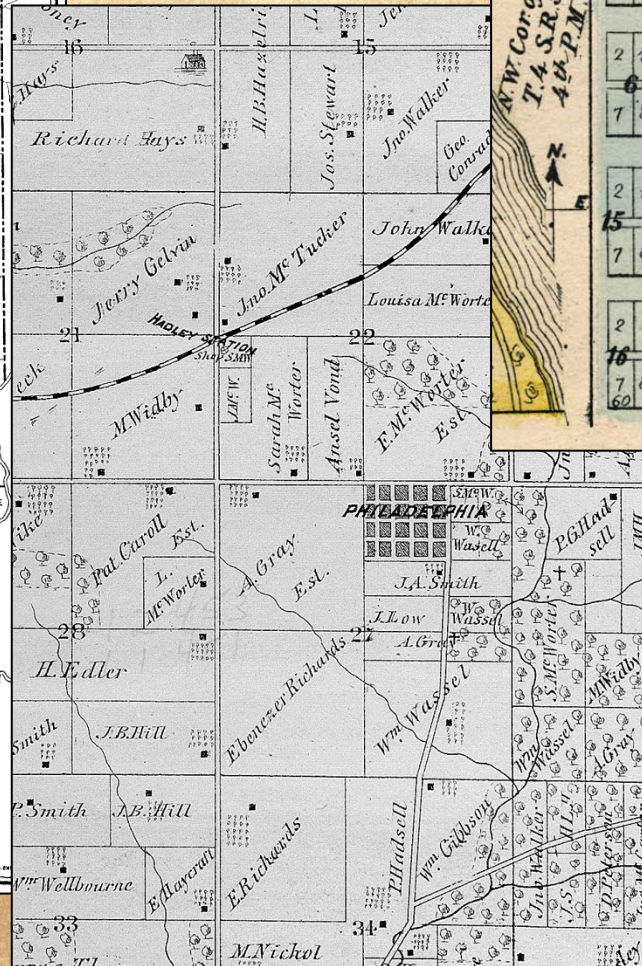
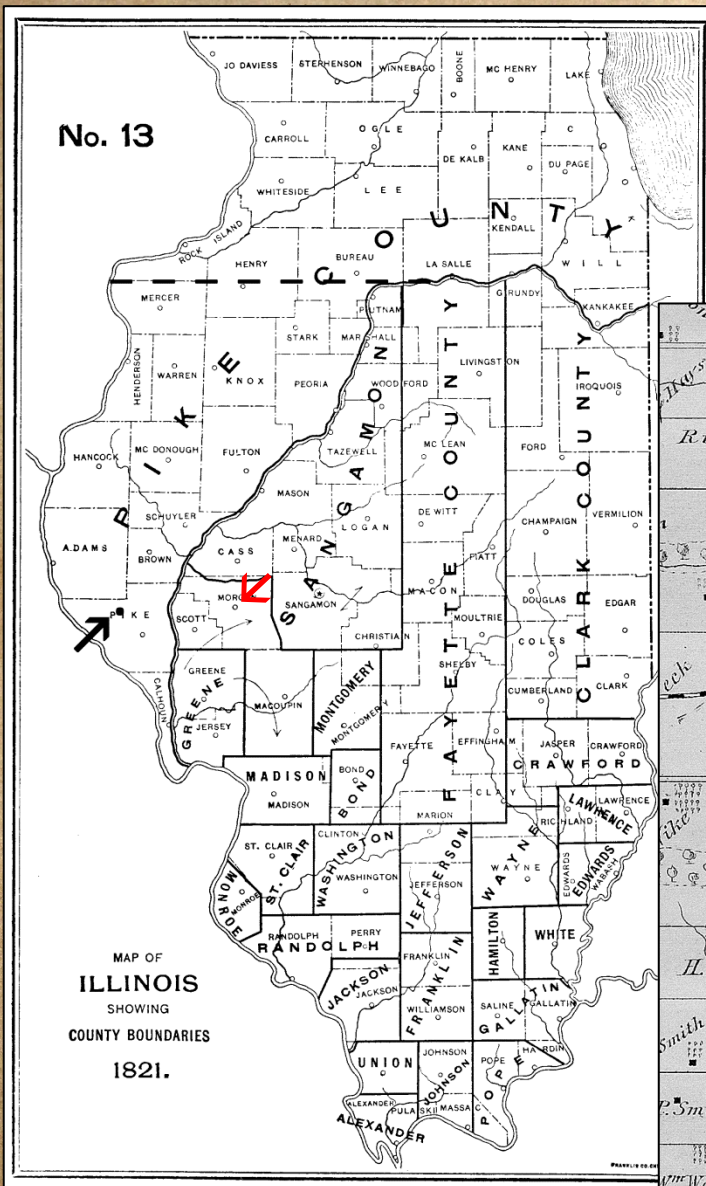
Edward Beecher, first president,  
and his sister Harriet Beecher  
Stowe who visited campus



Henry Ward Beecher, preacher,  
lecturer, and one of "Beecher's Bibles" sent to John Brown for the battles for Free Kansas.



# 1831: Frank and Lucy McWorter, Pike County

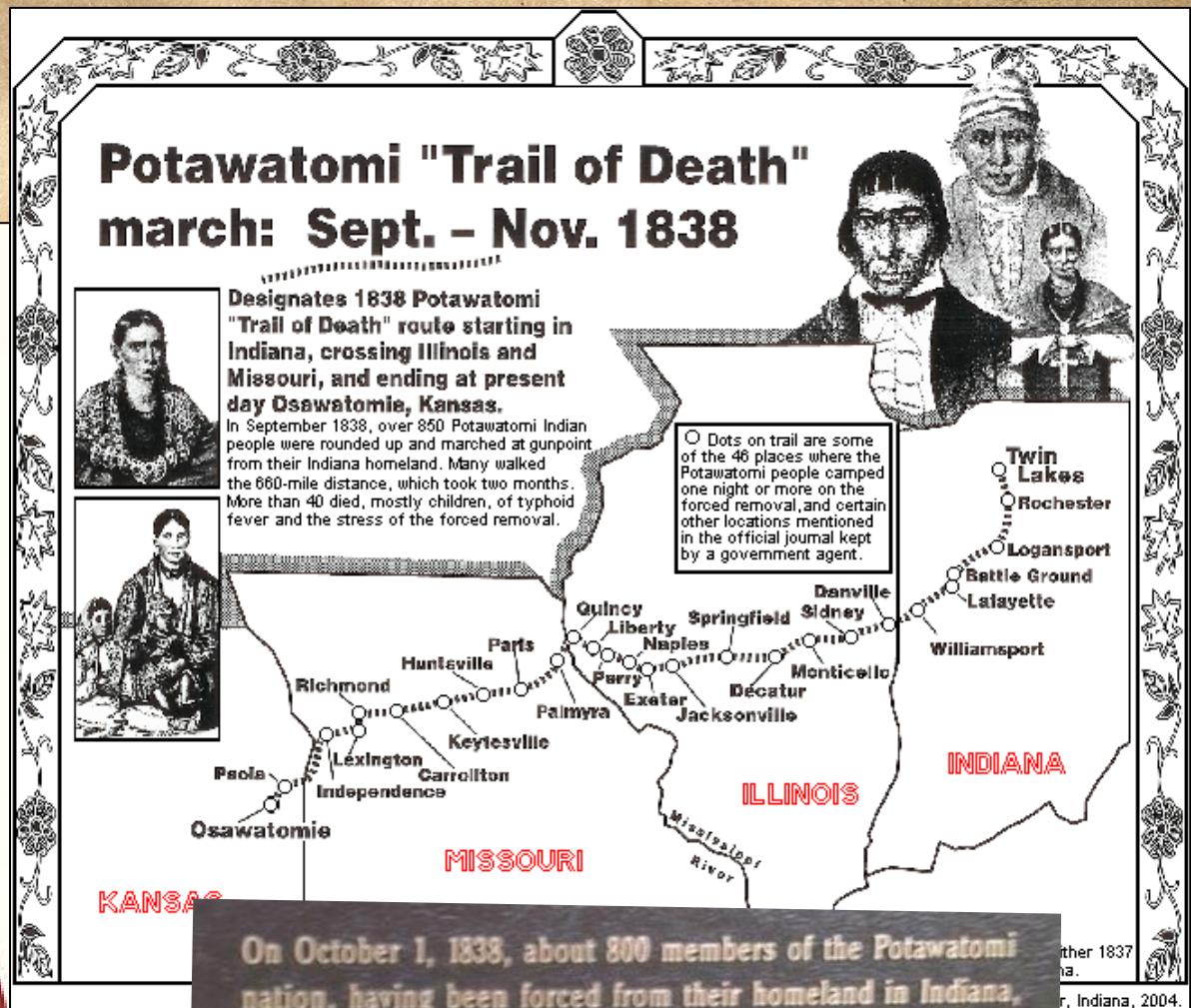




# Context

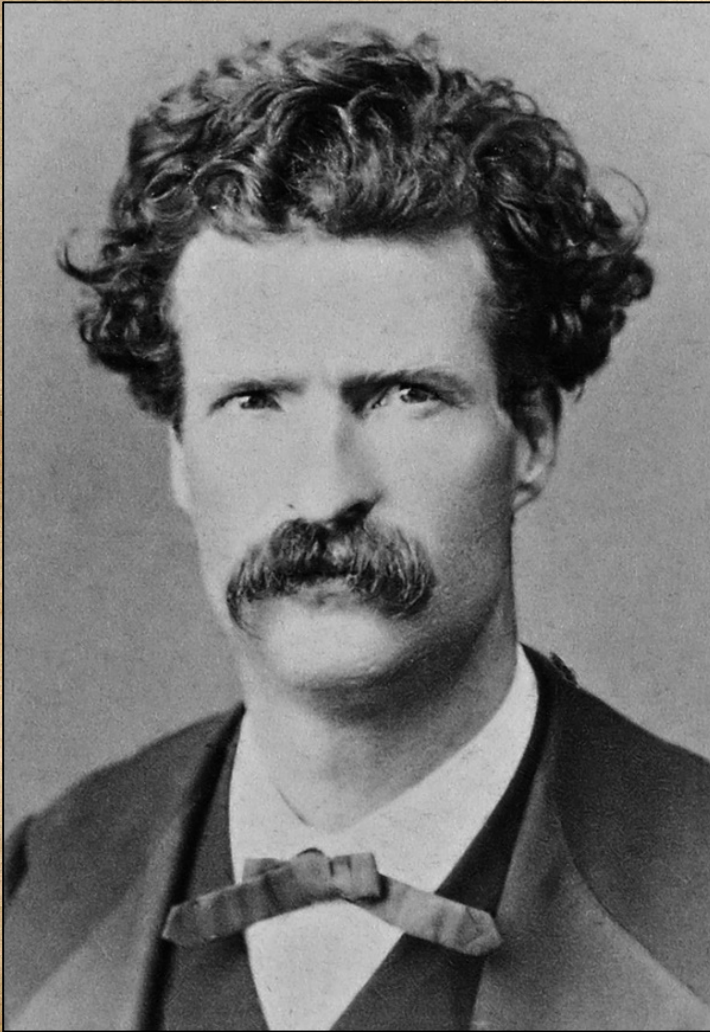


Black Hawk, War Chief of the Sauk  
Fought in the War of 1812 and in 1832

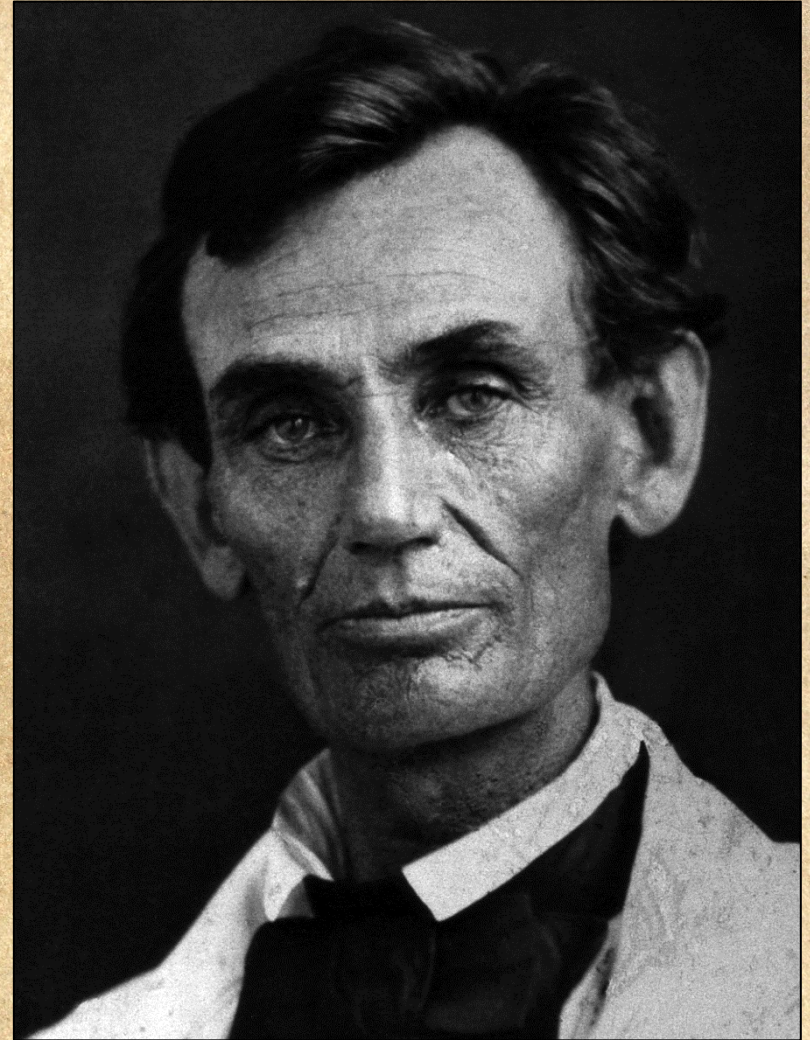




# Forces against slavery



Sam Clemens/Mark Twain  
1835 -1910



Abraham Lincoln  
1809-1865



# Forced Into Glory

*Abraham Lincoln's  
White Dream*

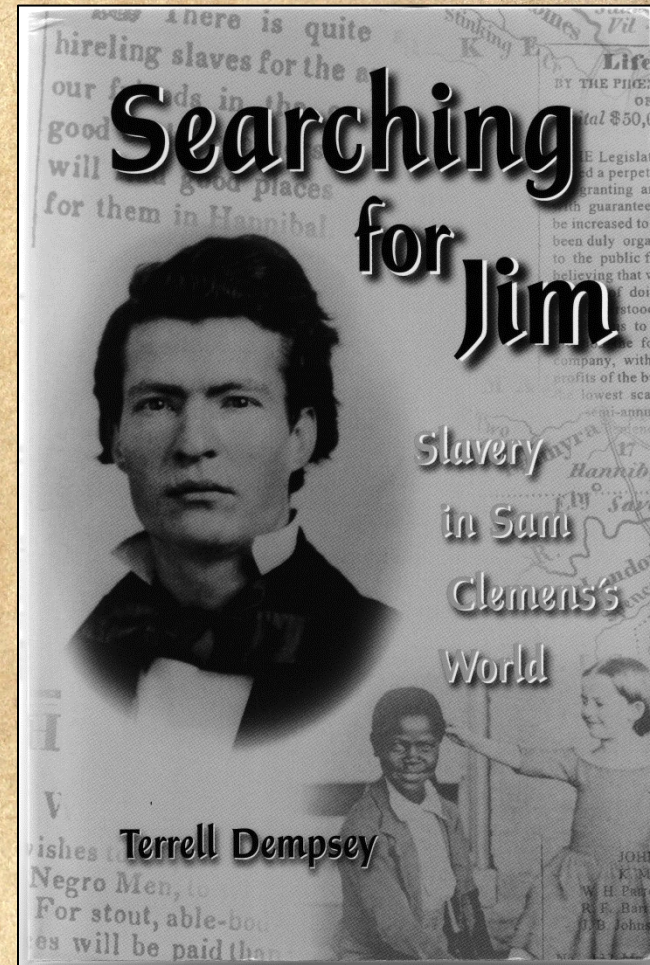
**By Lerone Bennett Jr.**



The moral struggle was more complex than most understand.

In any case, these important white men were not the only important opponents to the evil system of slavery.

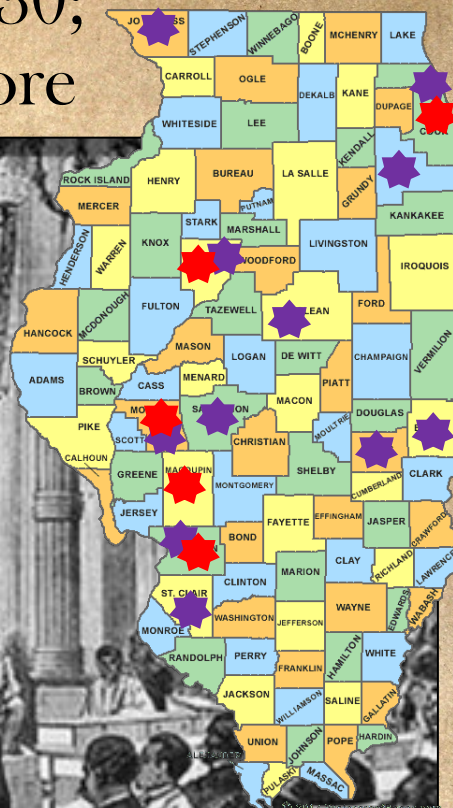
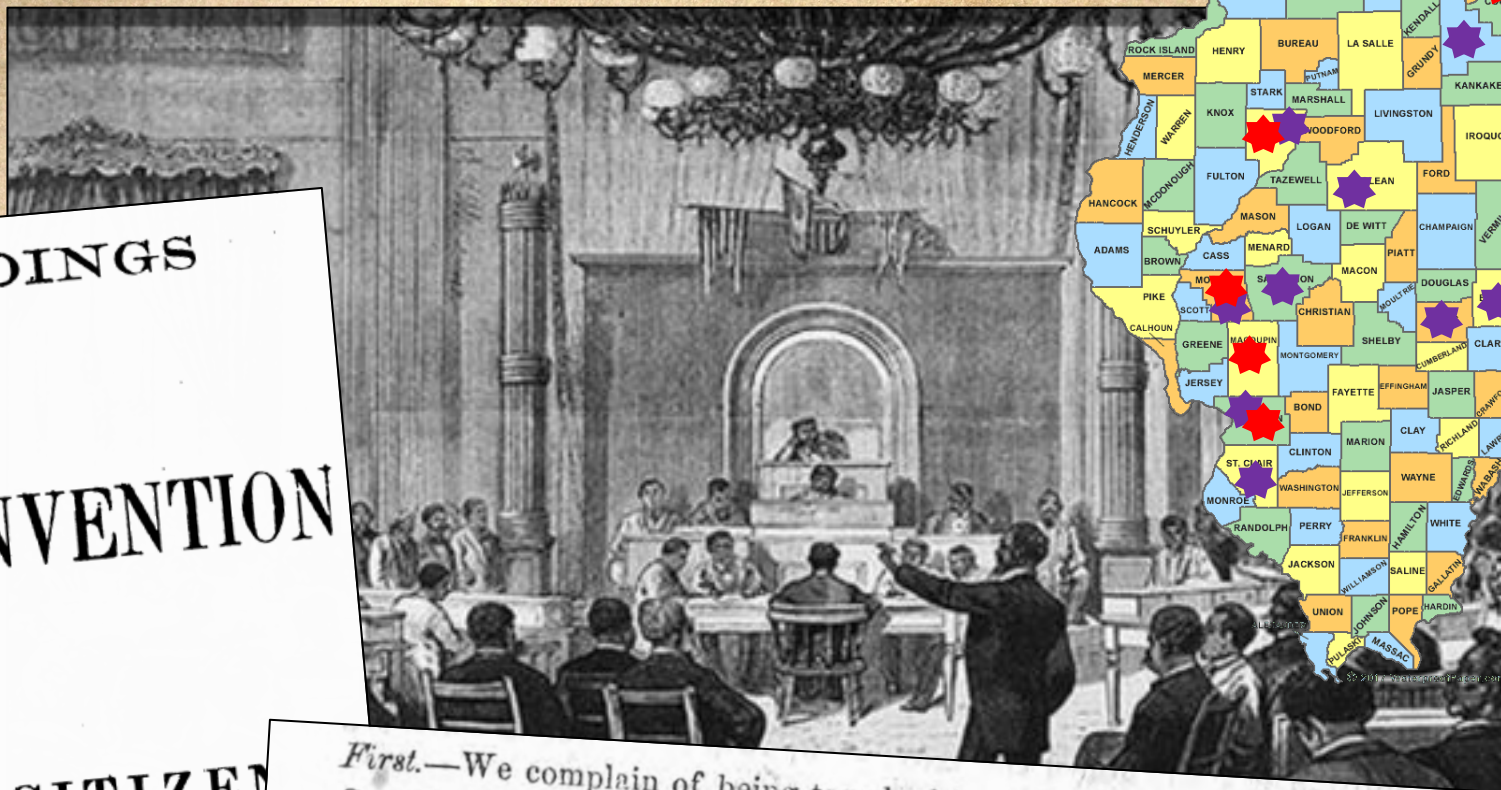
New Philadelphia points to the agency of the African American for freedom and the potential for black-white unity.





Convention movement began in Philadelphia 1830;  
 Illinoisians met in Chicago 1853, Alton 1856, more

**PROCEEDINGS**  
 OF THE  
**STATE CONVENTION**  
 OF  
**COLORED CITIZENS**  
 OF THE  
**STATE OF ILLINOIS,**  
 Held in the City of Alton, Nov. 13th, 14th and 15th, 1856. •



- First.*—We complain of being taxed without the right to vote.  
*Second.*—We are denied the right to testify against a white man before a Court of Justice, thereby denying us all means of access to law to protect ourselves against designing men to impose upon colored men at their will, because we are deprived of the key by which we gain access to the law in the absence of all white man.  
*Third.*—We pay School Taxes without the privilege of sending our children to public Schools.

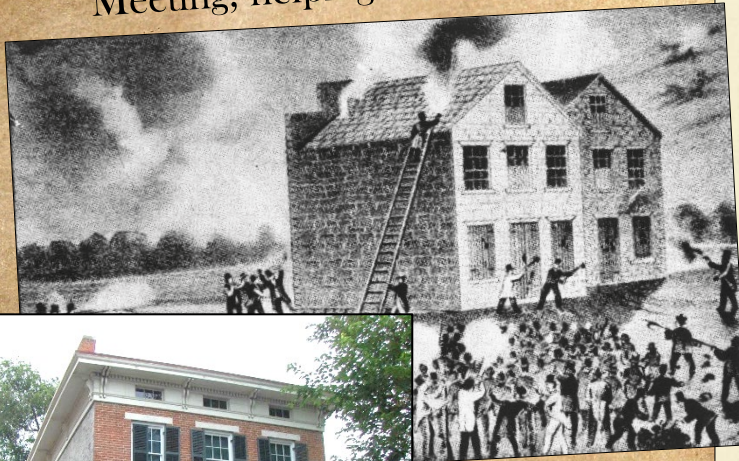
Home counties of Chicago delegates starred purple, Alton starred red.



# Practical abolitionism across West Central Illinois

TO THE LOYAL STUDENTS OF ILLINOIS COLLEGE,  
WHOSE "LOVEJOY PROTEST MEETING" HELD  
NEAR THIS SPOT DID MUCH TO CREATE  
WIDE-SPREAD SENTIMENT AGAINST SLAVERY.  
ERECTED BY THE  
DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS WOMAN'S RELIEF CORPS,  
AUXILIARY TO THE GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC  
JUNE 5, 19

IC students hold Lovejoy Protest  
Meeting, helping rouse the nation.



*Elijah P. Lovejoy*

Rev. ELIJAH PARISH LOVEJOY  
Was born at Albion, Maine, 1802,  
And MURDERED at Alton, Ill. Nov. 7, 1837,  
A MARTYR to LIBERTY.

Quincy: Dr. Eels house the site of  
freedom seeking that went to the  
Supreme Court and electrified the nation.



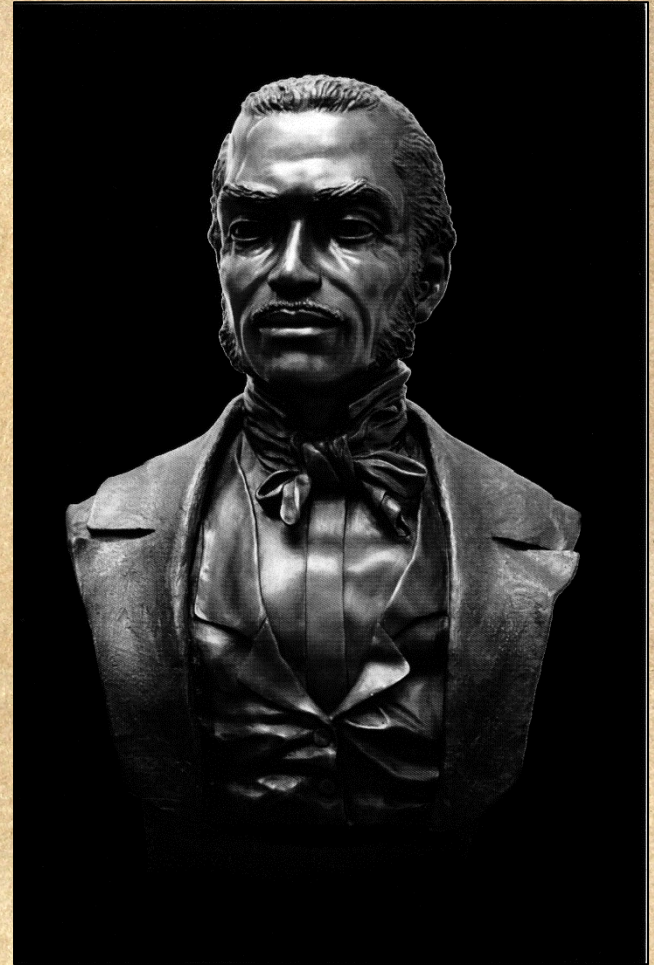


# Founders

## The Founders of New Philadelphia



“Free Lucy” McWorter  
1771-1870



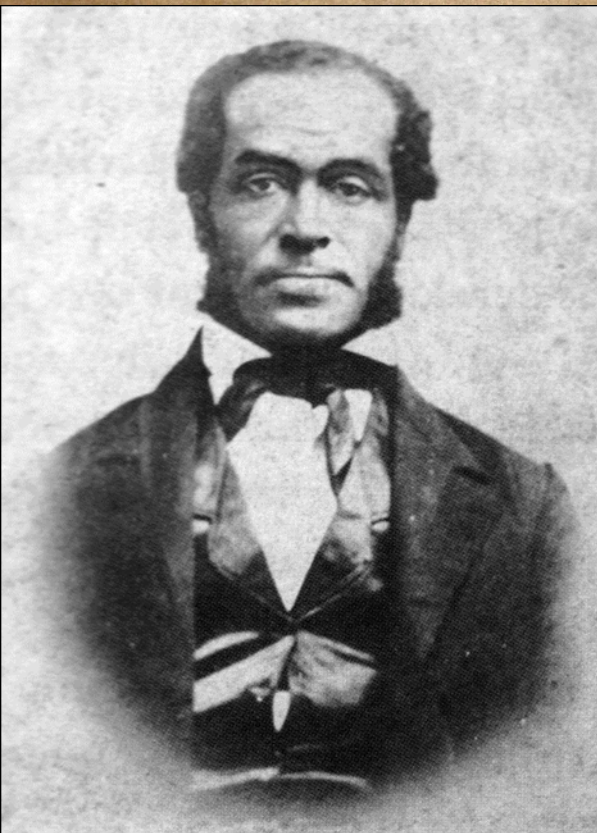
“Free Frank” McWorter  
1777-1854



	Relation	Lifespan	Year freed	Age freed	Years lived free
Frank	father	1777-1854, 77 years	1819	42	35
Lucy	mother	1771-1870, 99 years	1817	46	52
Juda	daughter	1800-1906, 106 years	1850	50	56
Frank Jr.	son	1804-1851, 47 years	1829?	25	22
Sarah (Sally)	daughter	1811-1891, 80 years	1843	32	48
Solomon	son	1815-1879, 64 years	1835	20	44
Squire	son	1817-1855, 38 years	--	born free	38
Commodore	son	1823-1855, 32 years	--	born free	32
Lucy Ann	daughter	1825-1902, 77 years	--	born free	77

# First two generations





Solomon McWorter  
1815-1879



Frances Jane  
Coleman McWorter  
1843-1925

Sardinia, Sep. 1  
Dear Jane  
I again set down to  
you to inform you that  
ever happy to receive your  
two letters, but ver sarrey  
that you had not Received  
letters I have wrote two to  
you sense I saw you, I  
come over a boat, 26, of  
month and I hope you will  
ready to get married so  
I have to leave you a gain  
are the one I truly  
cannot Express my feel  
word you in writing  
I not try; I would like it  
if we could get married on tuesday  
and get home on thursday if  
it would be according to your  
feelings, tuesday is the, 29, of this month  
I believe; any arrangement that  
it mad write to me, I want  
while that our intrust  
It will be a pleasur to  
be you happy; when you  
write again. We had a  
Storm here last Friday

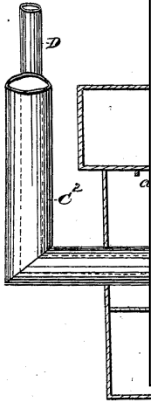
Solomon was not as  
outgoing as his father.  
He was a grown man  
when his father purchased  
his freedom. The years



United States Patent Office.

SOLOMON MCWORTER, OF BARRY, ILLINO  
Letters Patent No. 70,451, dated November 5, 1867.

*S. Mc Worter,*  
*Evaporating Pan,*  
*No. 70,451. Patented Nov. 5. 1867*



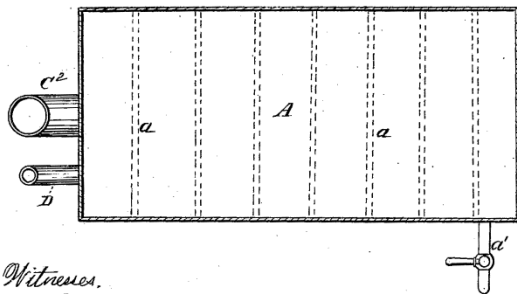
Your cousin Solomon [McWorter] is very busy making molasses from Chinese sugar cane [i.e. sorghum] which he raised on thirteen acres of his land. He makes about a barrel a day which fetches sixteen dollars. It is excellent if made good. So you see we are getting quite independent of the South as to our sweetening." (Shipman Letter Collection,

another draft in about two weeks I can hardly expect my sons and Son-in-law will all escape this time if they must go I shall try to be resigned I do not feel that my children were any more precious than others and this wicked must be put down at all events.  
Yours aff. Mother C S



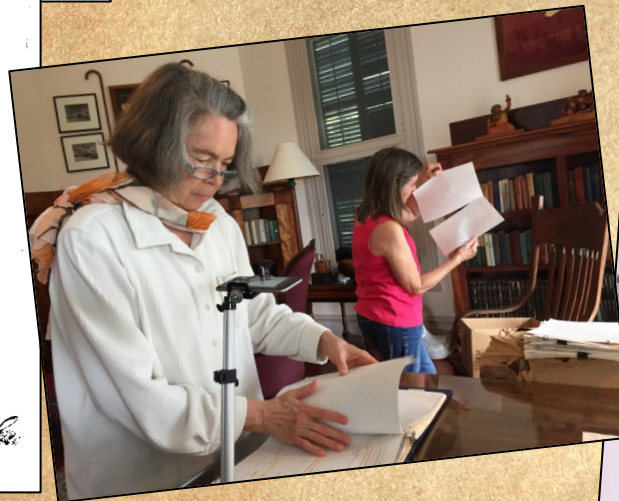
will be so near she can come to see me if I cannot to to see her. Aunt Lucy has been sick but is getting better. She bears her age remarkably well. I suppose she must be nearly a hundred years old if not over. Solomon has an heir a smart little

Fig. 2



Witnesses.  
C. R. Pratt.  
Chas. H. Boyles.

Inventor.  
S. Mc Worter  
By his Atty  
H. R. Randolph.







McWorter family reunion about 1920 in New Philadelphia  
Jane is seated at center, grandchildren below



Her grandchildren, last McWorters born in New Philadelphia: Thelma, Ellen, Bernice, Cordell and Festus





# Seven Ways to Freedom

1. Worked
2. Ran
3. Bought
4. Established a town
5. Helped others run
6. Fought in Civil War AND
7. Lived free



# Seven Ways to Freedom: 1

## 1. Worked and traded, in slavery and as freedmen and women



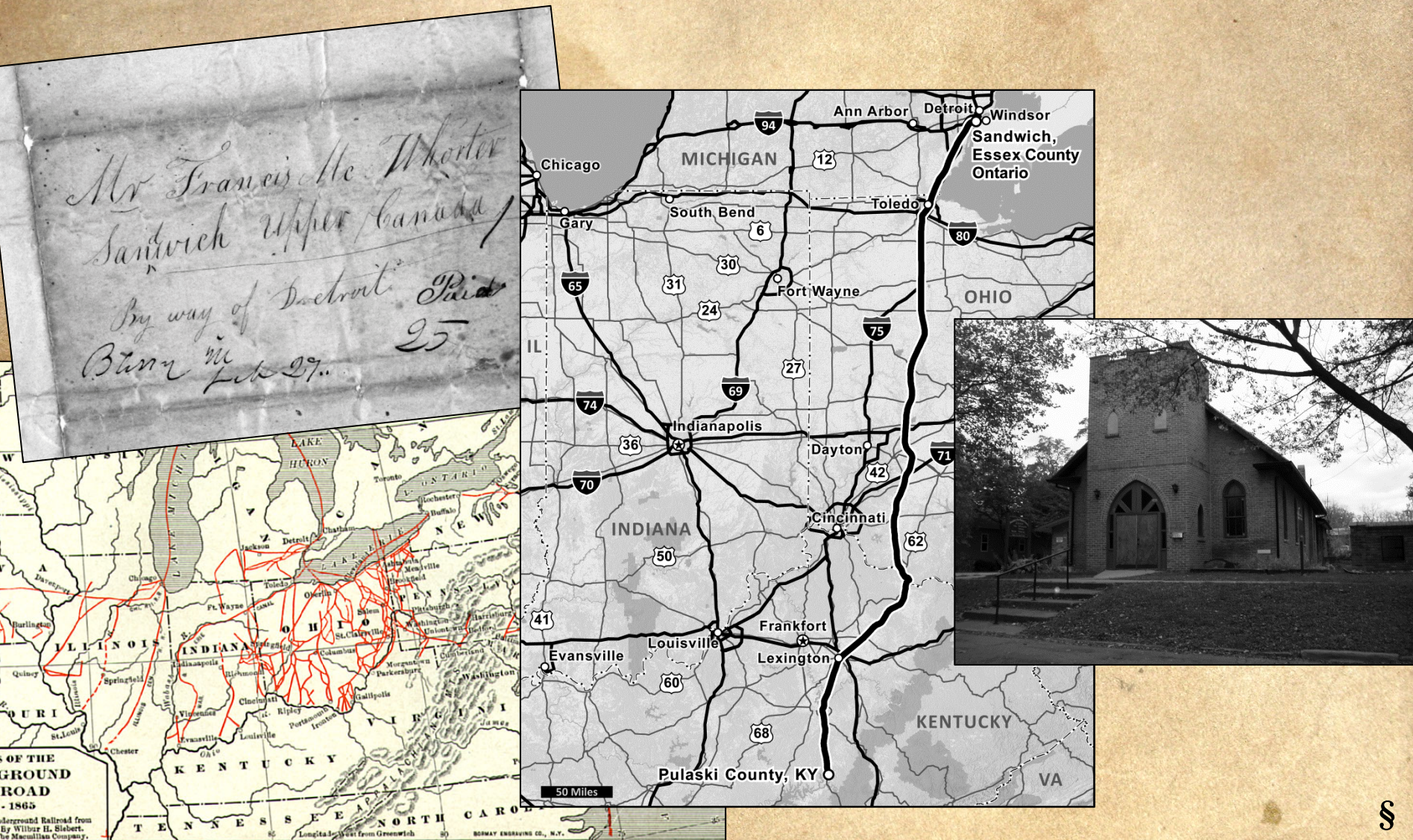
Free Frank McWorter became a successful businessman even while still a slave! Owned land and worked his own salt peter mine





# Seven Ways to Freedom: 2

## 2. Ran as freedom seekers on the Underground Railroad



Firstborn son Frank Jr, settled in Essex County, Canada before returning to Kentucky



# Seven Ways to Freedom: 3

## 3. Purchased family out of bondage

Frank McWorter, either directly or by funds left after he died, purchased 16 family members out of slavery: 3 generations freed from 1817 into 1850s.

McWorter men married Walker women. Walkers purchased themselves out of slavery in Missouri.



Photo of a five-generation-enslaved family

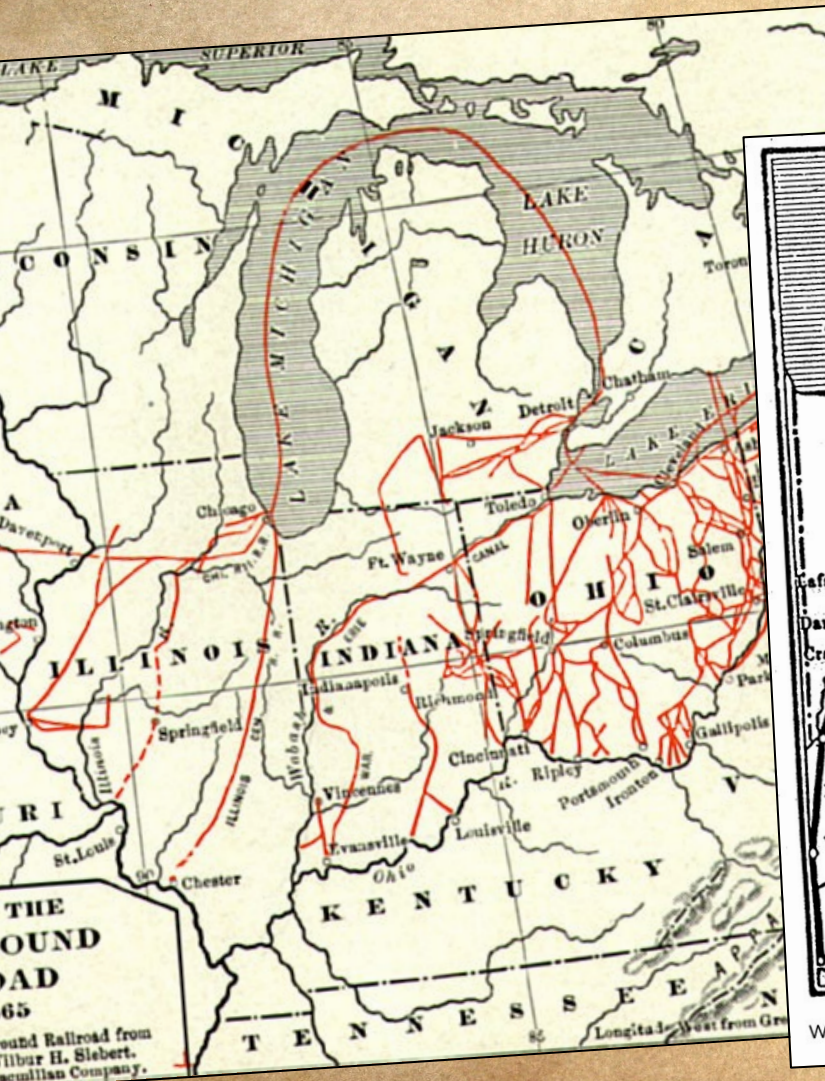






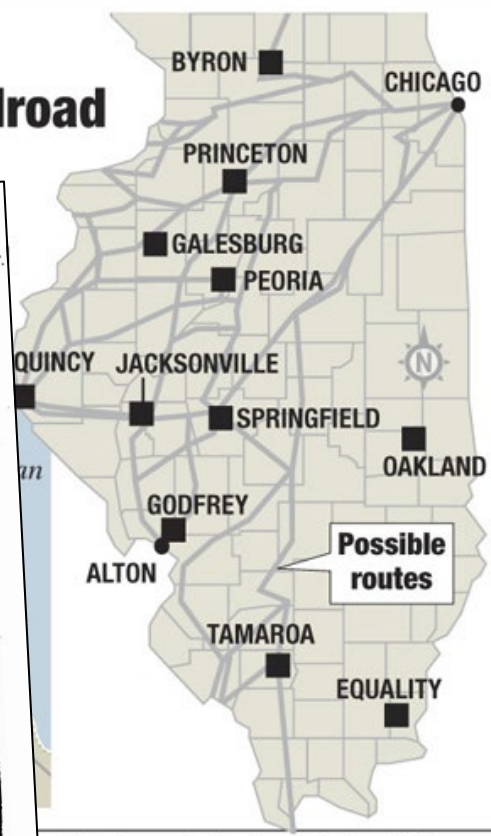
# Seven Ways to Freedom: 5

## 5. Helped others get free ... a station on the Underground Railroad



### Tracking Illinois' Underground Railroad

■ Site recognized by the



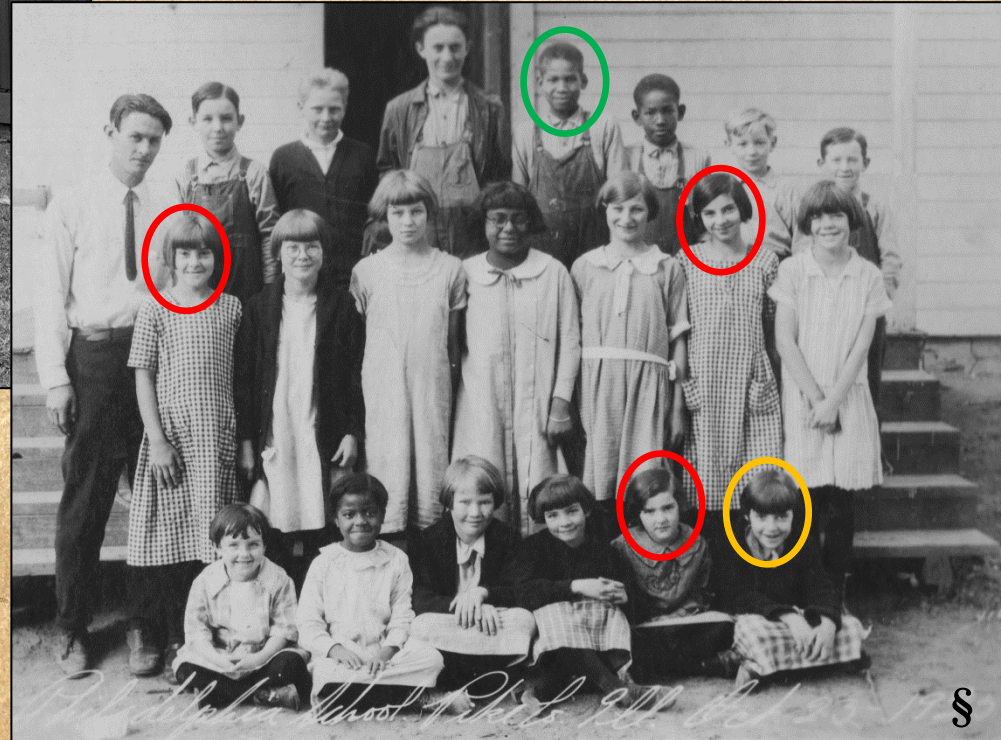
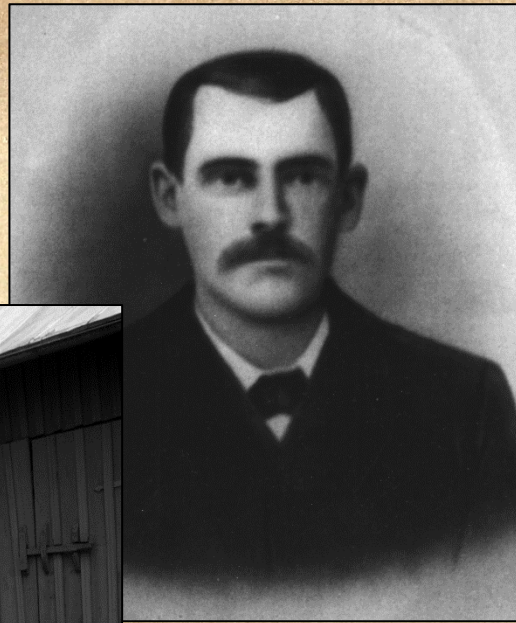
to Freedom, maintained by the National Parks  
ateur Historian James T. Ransom Sr.



Wilbur Siebert's "The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom" 1898



# Eckelberger's Wagon



Seated left to right, Hazel Johnson, Naomi Marley, Edna Stillflew, Ruby Bowen, Pauline Eckelberger, and Marjorie Eckelberger. Middle row left to right, Helen Eckelberger, two unidentified girls, Gladys McWorter, Margaret Gibson, Louise Eckelberger, Mildred Stillflew. Back row left to right, teacher Fay Bennet, Harry Johnson, Paul Burdick, Lloyd Gibson, Festus McWorter, Cordell McWorter, unidentified boy, Wayne Johnson.



BOOK ONE  
Organization  
BARRY Baptist Church  
1829 — 1866

Tantalizing evidence  
of an early meeting of  
Free Will Baptists in  
Pike County

The church agree to send a letter and messengers  
to meet a convention of the sister churches at  
blue river on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday in June next  
to arrange an association  
agree that the clerk write a letter for inspection  
to morrow and that brother Martin Wm  
Freeman and Bro free frank bear it

Church minutes for May 4, 1833: "The church agree to send a letter and messengers to meet a convention of the sister churches at Blue River on the 2nd Saturday in June next to arrange an association" and "Agree that the clerk write a letter for inspection tomorrow and that Brother Martin, William Freeman, and Brother Free Frank bear it."



# Seven Ways to Freedom: 6

## 6. Took up arms as Union soldiers in the Civil War



Vond, William

BATTLE UNIT NAME: 13th Regiment, United S  
SIDE: Union  
COMPANY: F  
SOLDIER'S RANK IN: Private

McWorter, Squire

BATTLE UNIT NAME: 38th Regiment, United States Colored Infantry  
SIDE: Union  
COMPANY: G  
SOLDIER'S RANK IN: Private  
SOLDIER'S RANK OUT: Corporal  
ALTERNATE NAME: Squire/McWeters  
FILM NUMBER: M589 ROLL 59

Clark, Thomas

BATTLE UNIT NAME: 38th Regiment, United  
SIDE: Union  
COMPANY: F  
SOLDIER'S RANK IN: Private  
SOLDIER'S RANK OUT: Private  
ALTERNATE NAME: M589 ROLL 17  
FILM NUMBER: C-53

Clark, Simeon

BATTLE UNIT NAME: 38th Regiment, United S  
SIDE: Union  
COMPANY: F  
SOLDIER'S RANK IN: Private  
SOLDIER'S RANK OUT: Private  
ALTERNATE NAME: M589 ROLL 17  
FILM NUMBER: C-53

and  
also  
Martin  
Kimbro





# Seven Ways to Freedom: 7

7. Lived free, on their own land, with guns, 20 miles from slavery





# New Philadelphia has earned historical recognition



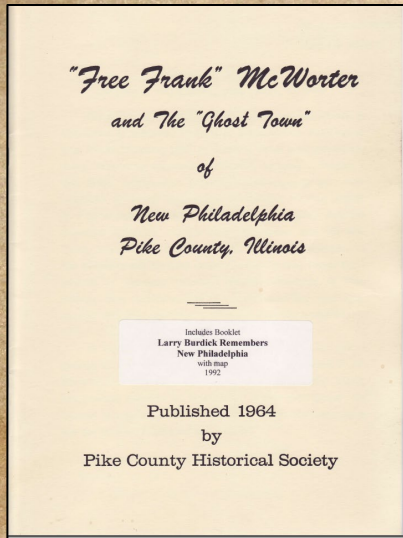
THE TOWN SITE  
**NEW PHILADELPHIA**  
FOUNDED  
**1836**  
BY  
**FREE FRANK MCWORTER**  
IS LISTED IN THE  
**NATIONAL REGISTER  
OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
BY THE UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
AUGUST 11, 2005



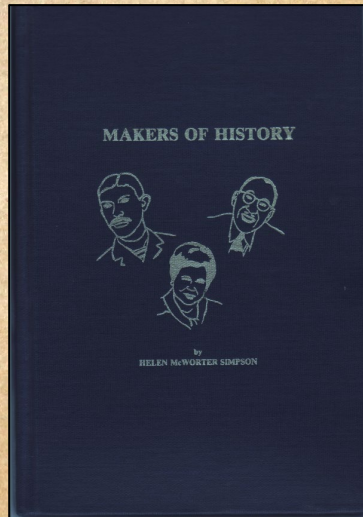
# and stimulated historical imagination



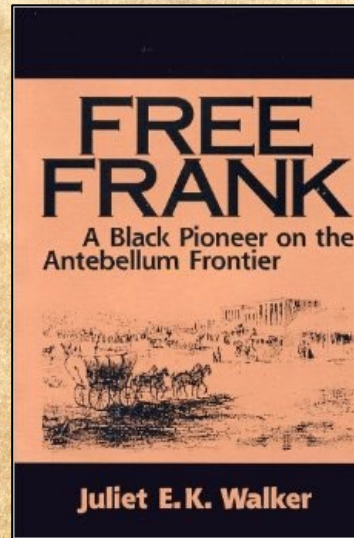
# Literature about New Philadelphia



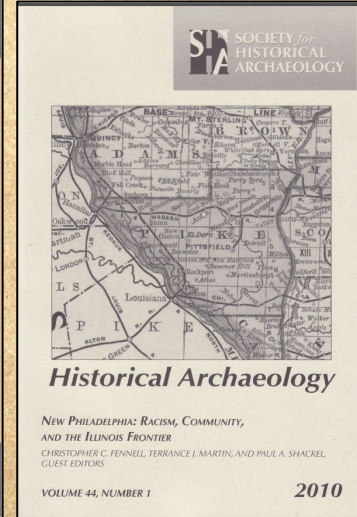
1964



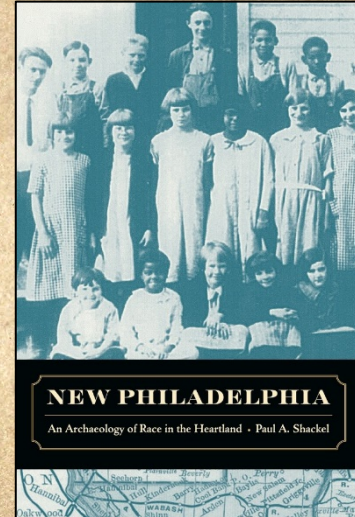
1981



1983



2010

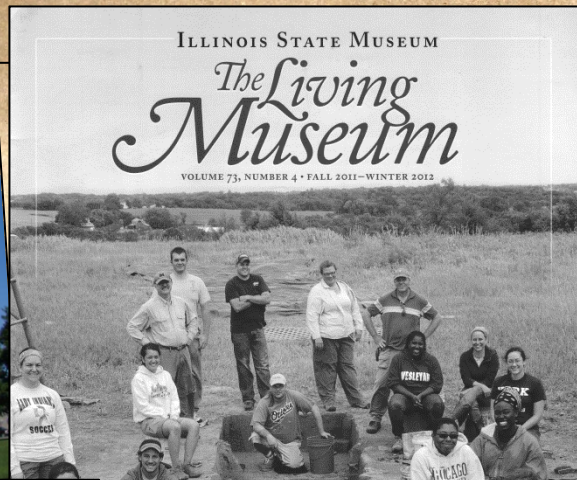


2011

Since the 1830s: local and state media have reported  
on New Philadelphia ...

Next to come: Stories of all the descendants  
of New Philadelphia!





Jones and Demuzio deliver  
**New Philadelphia gets \$125K gr**

# Historic landmark status e

National park advisory panel  
embraces significance

al historic landmark, the second-highest honor given by the federal government next to becoming a national park. "We're one step closer," New Philadel-

oversees the park service. But "once you pass this hurdle, it's more a routine procedure," Bradshaw said. "We can't say we'll absolutely get the designati-

SALES • SERVICE • TV  
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NETWORK 285-1  
Better TV for all.



*Rev. Josias Burt,*  
**No. LI. Canton Conn**

THE  
**African Repository,**  
 AND  
 COLONIAL JOURNAL

VOL. V. MAY, 1829. No. 8.

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The profits arising from this Work, will be devoted to the cause of  
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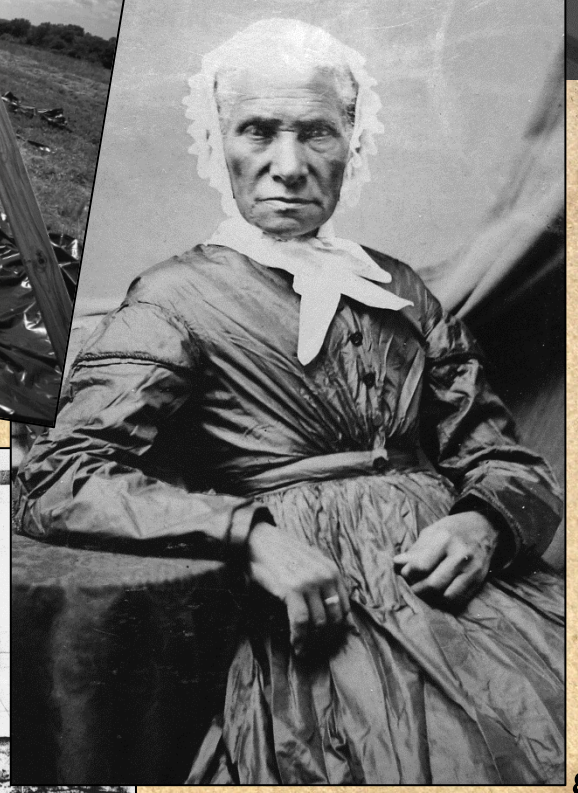
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*Please to send this soon and return it.*



*Octo 16th 1876*  
*P. Bull*  
*from BBL 110 Store Palace*  
*McWister*  
*100 Cherry 16*  
*Swat 100 Mrs B*  
*any where books*  
*to Cythas San Salmo*





# What can we learn from New Philadelphia?

History is our greatest teacher.

Knowledge of self is essential.

Knowledge is often hidden in plain view.

Universal knowledge is only possible  
by examining particular cases.



# COMMUNITY

## New Philadelphia

Frank and Lucy  
McWorter's town grew  
into a community that  
prospered, held together  
by the American tradition  
of neighborliness

People took care of each  
other, strangers were  
always welcome.

## Today

Can we practice this  
tradition and be good  
neighbors to each other?

Strangers or immigrants  
may be here by choice or  
by force. They are not  
always welcome: Can we  
change that?



# FREEDOM

## New Philadelphia

Americans from Africa and Europe lived together in this abolitionist village, guided by a freedom mission.

They helped people escaping from slavery and sent their sons to fight in the Civil War.

They stood for freedom.

## Today

In and beyond the US, terrorism threatens us.

The legacy of slavery lives in white power and fascist militia movements.

Now is the time for every freedom loving person to take a stand and build on the legacy of New Philadelphia.



If New  
Philadelphia  
was possible,  
then the  
future is  
possible!

# New Philadelphia



by Gerald A. McWorter  
and Kate Williams-McWorter  
for the New Philadelphia Association