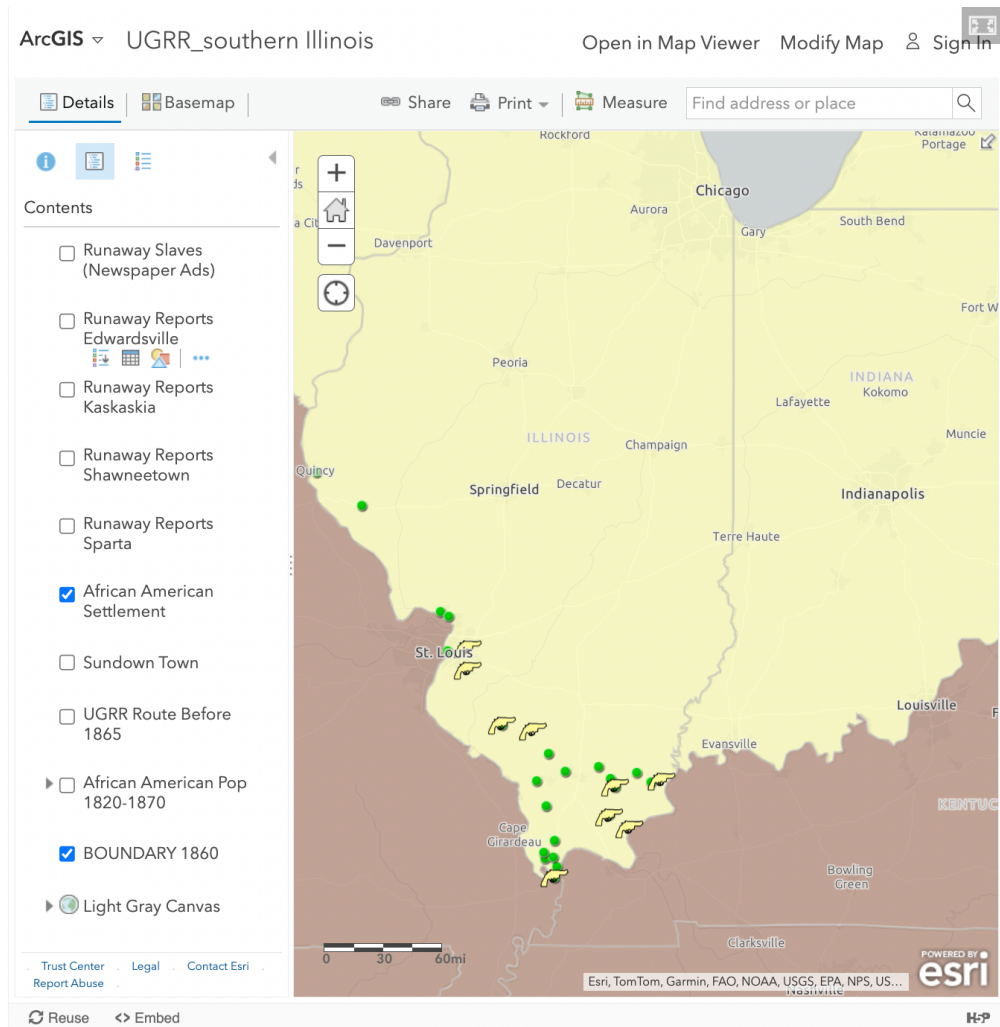


# Free Black Communities in Antebellum Southern Illinois



*Underground Railroad in Southern Illinois circa 1850 [GIS Map], Educating with Evidence*

## Introduction:

Examine the map at the top of this page. What do you notice about the pattern of violence (pistol icons) and Free Black Communities (dots)? What might it mean? Why?

This Geographic Information Systems (GIS) map is part of a larger unit on the Underground Railroad in the US and (more specifically) southern Illinois. It shows a tremendous amount of violence in this region circa 1850, but who were the victims? Analyze the provided primary sources to address the essential questions listed below:

## Essential Questions:

- How safe was it for Free African Americans, Freedom Seekers, and Abolitionists in antebellum southern Illinois?
- Given this level of safety, where were Free African American communities located in southern Illinois circa 1850 and why?

## Free Black Communities in Antebellum Southern Illinois

### Your Task:

Analyze each primary source and complete the graphic organizer provided to identify specific evidence when answering the essential questions listed on the first page.

Source 1: "Child-Stealing at The North" *Vermont Phoenix* (Brattleboro, VT) May 18, 1849 (<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn98060050/1849-05-18/ed-1/seq-2/>)

**CHILD-STEALING AT THE NORTH.**—Four free colored children of 18, 17, 9 and 5 years of age—the first two girls and the last boys—were kidnapped and carried off from Gallatin county, Illinois, evening of 5th ult. The father, whose name is Benj. W. Fauver, was tied while the children were taken away by a regularly organized kidnapping gang.—*Boston Courier*.

The above will rouse the indignation of every reader. Yet he who shows the least indignation towards the *system* of slavery is set down as a "fanatic," though that system exhibits one endless panorama of children torn from their parents, wives from their husbands, the babe from its mother's breast, and the aged patriarch from the friends of his youth. Is not a little indignation allowable towards such frightful wrong?

## Free Black Communities in Antebellum Southern Illinois

Source 2: "Attempt to Kidnap in Illinois" *Anti-Slavery Bugle* (New-Lisbon, OH) July 29, 1854 (<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83035487/1854-07-29/ed-1/seq-2/>)

---

ATTEMPT TO KIDNAP IN ILLINOIS.—We learn from the Peru (Illinois) *Union City*, that considerable excitement was created in that city upon the arrival of the steamer Garden City, from St. Louis, on Thursday evening, by an attempt to arrest two colored men, who came up on the boat, on their way north. The "property" were provided with *free papers*, but notwithstanding this fact, their pursuers proceeded to arrest them upon a lying pretense that they were *horse thieves*, at the same time alleging that their "free papers" were forgeries. The benevolent design of returning the fugitives to Southern slavery was, however, frustrated by the interference of bystanders, who "pitched into" the kidnapers with a good will. Several pistols shots were fired, blows exchanged, and brickbats brought into requisition. One of the pursuers was struck to the ground by a stone, but no one was seriously injured. The fugitives were triumphantly rescued, entertained at the Hardy House, and the next morning left, *en route* for Chicago. We understand that at Ottawa the kidnapers made a second attempt to seize the travelers, but were prevented by the authorities.

---

## Free Black Communities in Antebellum Southern Illinois

Source 3: "More Illinois Kidnapping" *Anti-Slavery Bugle* (New-Lisbon, OH) July 14, 1860  
(<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83035487/1860-07-14/ed-1/seq-3/>)

**MORE ILLINOIS KIDNAPPING.**

Southern Illinois is about as noted for the operations of slave hunters, as New York city is as the port of slavers, and Richmond as the mart of slave traders. Every few days negroes are seized in Egypt and carried off as slaves, without going through any forms of law in justification of the outrage. On the evening of the first instant three colored men were kidnapped near Clifton by a party of men hunters, and hurried into the cars, and out of the State. They were seized, the Chicago Press states, without a show of authority and without the aid of any official authorized to make arrests, two of them never having been slaves, and not even born in a slave State! The third is also believed to be free by an act of manumission on the part of his master. The gang of kidnapers number some twenty-five men, armed with pistols, and though the stolen men struggled for their freedom, they were soon overpowered, handcuffed, put into a wagon and conveyed to the cars. The people who knew them rallied to their rescue, but were too late. The men were taken to St. Louis, and probably have been sold South ere this.—*Cleveland Leader.*

## Free Black Communities in Antebellum Southern Illinois

Source 4: "The Inquisition in Southern Illinois" *Chicago Press and Tribune (Chicago, IL)*  
April 16, 1860

(<https://www.proquest.com/docview/175088382/E32A8342F5B4AC2PQ/1?accountid=13864&sourcetype=Historical%20Newspapers>)

### The Inquisition in Southern Illinois

---

For some weeks past a small Border Ruffian shore published at Golconda, Pope county, Illinois, has been trying to incite a mob to tar and feather, or otherwise lynch, a minister of the Gospel in said Pope county, named James M. West. The Golconda Herald, which by the way keeps at the head of its columns, "For President of the United States, Stephen A. Douglas," originally charged Mr. West with "circulating incendiary documents" throughout Pope county, and intimating that some of the said documents had been sent across the river to Paducah, KY. The Herald called Mr. West an "imp of Baal," and suggested that a martyr's garment was being manufactured for his use. The following was the first editorial warning given to Mr. West in the columns of that paper of March 9th:

"We have been credibly informed that an Abolition preacher named West has been engaged in circulating incendiary prints throughout tis and adjoining counties and he has even send some over to a gentlemen living in Kentucky. If he has no particular desire to wear the martyr's garment - tar and feather - he had better stop for you will be dealt with roughly, if you don't attend to your proper calling, more closely."

# Free Black Communities in Antebellum Southern Illinois

<p><b>Source Name</b></p> <p><b>Your Claim: According to this Source, Southern Illinois was dangerous for...</b></p> <p><b>Evidence from Source that Supports Your Claim</b></p> <p><b>Why does this Evidence Support Your Claim?</b></p>	<p>Circle One or More:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free African Americans</li> <li>• Enslaved African Americans</li> <li>• White Abolitionists</li> </ul>	<p>Circle One or More:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free African Americans</li> <li>• Enslaved African Americans</li> <li>• White Abolitionists</li> </ul>	<p>Circle One or More:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free African Americans</li> <li>• Enslaved African Americans</li> <li>• White Abolitionists</li> </ul>	<p>Circle One or More:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free African Americans</li> <li>• Enslaved African Americans</li> <li>• White Abolitionists</li> </ul>

Southern Illinois could be dangerous for:

- a) Enslaved African Americans who were traveling there to escape slavery.
- b) All African Americans, whether they were escaping slavery and free.
- c) All African Americans and white abolitionists.