

## **Black Leaders Along the Underground Railroad in Illinois**

- Grade Level: 6-12
- Estimated Time: 1-2 class periods
- Topic: Underground Railroad
- Subtopic: Black Leaders

This lesson addresses the following disciplinary concepts and topics from the [Illinois Learning Standards for English and Language Arts](#) and [Illinois Learning Standards for Social Science](#):

- English/Language Arts
  - Reading Informational Text
  - Vocabulary Interpretation and Use
  - Written Expression
- Social Science
  - Inquiry Skills
    - Recognize Perspectives and Articulate Identities
    - Evaluating Sources and Planning Inquiries
    - Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action
  - Disciplinary Concepts
    - Civics
      - Participation and Deliberation: Applying Civic Virtues and Democratic Principles
    - Geography
      - Human-Environment Interaction: Place, Regions, and Culture
    - History
      - Change, Continuity, and Context
      - Perspectives
      - Historical Sources and Evidence
      - Causation and Argumentation

### Essential Questions

- What makes someone a leader?
- Who were some notable Black leaders along the Underground Railroad in Illinois?
- Why are the stories of these notable Black leaders significant?

### Objectives

- Identify qualities and characteristics leaders possess.
- Examine and analyze primary and secondary sources describing the stories of several Black leaders along the Underground Railroad in Illinois
- Compare Black leaders of the past with leaders in the present.

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## Introduction

- Display the following prompt as students walk in and/or read it at the beginning of the class period.
  - *Think of leaders in your life. A family member who leads your household, a captain on a sports team, a supervisor at your job, etc.*
  - *What makes someone a leader? What qualities or traits do they possess?*
  - *How can you tell someone is a leader?*
- Allow students 5-10 minutes to respond to the prompt.
- After students have responded, ask a few students to share their experiences with the class.
  - *Students may highlight traits such as someone who takes charge, a person who listens to others as well as someone who is listened to by others, someone with a large amount of knowledge and experience, someone who shows courage and perseverance in the face of adversity, someone who has a knack for motivating others to act, someone who puts the needs of others ahead of their own, etc.*
- Once a few students have shared their responses, transition into the next portion of the lesson and let students know that today's lesson will be about leaders. The lesson will examine several Black leaders along the Underground Railroad in Illinois and the significant support they provided individuals in their communities.
- Review Essential Questions and Objectives together as a class.

## Sharing Stories of Black Leaders Activity

- Distribute and review the instructions on the worksheet **Sharing Stories of Black Leaders Along the Underground Railroad in Illinois**.
- Distribute one of the Black Leader reading resources to each student.
  - If students have technology access, you may share the resources with students digitally.
- Allow students adequate time to read about their assigned leader individually.
- Group students together with other students who studied the same leader.
- Allow groups five minutes to discuss their reading and responses together.
- While other students listen and take notes, have each group take turns presenting their leader to the class using their written responses.

## Conclusion

- As a summary discussion, review the final question together and ask for student responses:
  - *Think of a leader you're familiar with. It could be a family member, a captain on a sports team, a supervisor at your job, a notable leader in US History, a current leader in our society, etc. What leadership qualities and characteristics do they possess?*
  - *What similarities do they share with the Black leaders we studied today? Respond in complete sentences and cite specific examples.*

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Extensions Beyond the Lesson

- Have students explore Underground Railroad Black Leaders from or near their communities. Using local museums, libraries, and archives, students can research their local Underground Railroad history and present their findings.
- Explore resources available through the [National Park Service's Network to Freedom](#), including the [Interactive Map](#) showing sites and stories that are part of the network. Identify Illinois towns where the Underground Railroad passed through and pathways through other states.
- Subscribe to [Looking for Lincoln podcasts](#) to learn more about Black leaders along the Underground Railroad in Illinois.
- Check out the traveling exhibit, *Journey to Freedom Illinois' Underground Railroad*, in a community near you! Visit the [www.IllinoisUGRR.org](http://www.IllinoisUGRR.org) for more information.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Sharing Stories of Black Leaders Along the Underground Railroad in Illinois**

*Several individuals stood up to help others along the Underground Railroad in Illinois. To further explore these notable Black leaders, let's learn about the stories of several people who greatly supported freedom seekers and their communities.*

*After reading a brief biography of the Black leader assigned to you and your group, you will need to complete two items:*

- Summarize each Black leader's story, highlighting significant achievements and contributions to their communities.*
- What made each individual a leader? What leadership qualities did they possess? Cite specific examples from the readings.*

*Please respond in complete sentences when completing these tasks for your assigned leader*

*Then, each group will use their written responses to take turns introducing their assigned leader to the class. While this occurs, you are expected to take notes on the other leaders presented to the class to learn about these stories together*

**Black Leader #1:** \_\_\_\_\_

- 1.** Summarize their story. Highlight major achievements and contributions to their communities.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2.** What made this individual a leader? What leadership qualities did they possess? Cite specific examples from the reading.



Lesson #4 – Black Leaders Along the Underground Railroad in Illinois

**Black Leader #4:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Summarize their story. Highlight major achievements and contributions to their communities.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What made this individual a leader? What leadership qualities did they possess? Cite specific examples from the reading.

**Black Leader #5:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Summarize their story. Highlight major achievements and contributions to their communities.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What made this individual a leader? What leadership qualities did they possess? Cite specific examples from the reading.

**Black Leader #6:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Summarize their story. Highlight major achievements and contributions to their communities.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What made this individual a leader? What leadership qualities did they possess? Cite specific examples from the reading.

Summary Discussion Question

Think of a leader you're familiar with. It could be a family member, a captain on a sports team, a supervisor at your job, a notable leader from US history, a current leader in our society, etc. Describe the leadership qualities and characteristics they possess.

What similarities do they share with the Black leaders we studied today? Respond in complete sentences and cite specific examples.

## **Black Leader #1 – Jameson Jenkins**

Jameson Jenkins was born in North Carolina around 1810. Presumably upon his arrival in Springfield, Jenkins filed his Certificate of Freedom papers with the Sangamon County Recorder of Deeds, on March 28, 1846. He worked in town as a drayman, or teamster, who transported goods and on occasion, people. Jenkins was an abolitionist while living in Illinois and likely had connections with the Underground Railroad. In January 1850, he is believed to have assisted a small group of freedom seekers to evade capture by local constables during the Springfield "Slave Stampede." Jenkins drove Abraham Lincoln's carriage to the Great Western Depot where Lincoln would depart for the White House in 1861.

### **1810-1850**

Jameson Jenkins was an African American man born in North Carolina around 1810 who moved to Illinois in the mid-1840s with his wife Elizabeth Pelham and daughter Nancy. Not much is known about Jenkins' early life as there are currently no records that indicate whether he was born into enslavement or freedom or why he chose to move to Illinois. However, by 1835 he lived as a freeman in Waco County, North Carolina and soon made his way to Indiana, likely utilizing help from people on the Underground Railroad. It was there that Jenkins met Elizabeth Pelham, whom he would marry.

After spending some time in Indiana, Jenkins and his wife moved to Springfield between 1844 and 1846, which was also around the time they had their daughter, Nancy. In Springfield, Jenkins and his family moved into a two-story house just a few houses down from Abraham Lincoln and soon after, he would begin his career. Jenkins worked as a drayman, or teamster, transporting goods and occasionally people throughout the city of Springfield. One of those people was his neighbor Abraham Lincoln whom he gave a ride to the Great Western Railroad Depot when he was leaving Springfield for the presidency. Jenkins and his family were also members of the Second Presbyterian Church, the Westminster Presbyterian Church today, which was also known as Springfield's abolitionist church.

### **The "Slave Stampede" of 1850**

While Jenkins led a fairly normal life in Springfield, his potential involvement with the Underground Railroad and the 1850 "Slave Stampede" makes him an important figure in the city's history. This event took place on the evening of January 16, 1850, in which a group of around seven freedom seekers were avoiding capture on their way North to Bloomington, Illinois. Jenkins is believed to have successfully collected the group and hid them before transporting north by rail. At the time of the event, both the Springfield Journal and Register had printed various, confusing, and sometimes contradictory stories about the event. One said that Jenkins had betrayed the freedom seekers and allowed for their capture, while in actuality, he was riding with them on a train north to Bloomington. It is believed that this story and others published after it were one of the main reasons he was able to help the group and return without suspicion.

When Jenkins assisted these formerly enslaved people, he risked everything to make sure that the freedom seekers he helped could attain a life outside of enslavement in the north. As many people in Springfield at the time were against abolition and freeing the enslaved, Jenkins had to be careful in order to keep his livelihood intact. Even with his careful work and efforts, however, five people were captured by the local constable during the stampede under the impression that they were freedom seekers, one being a man named Hempstead Thornton. This would lead to an important case in the Illinois Supreme Court that directly links Jenkins' potential work on the Underground Railroad to the Old State Capitol State Historic Site. As a final note, while we cannot say for sure of Jenkins' involvement with the Underground Railroad in Springfield, his silence on the matter of this event may be telling of his involvement.



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**1851-1873**

Jenkins returned to Springfield and his life after the events of the "Slave Stampede" had concluded, seemingly without anyone learning about his possible involvement. A year later, Jenkins' membership to the Second Presbyterian Church had been revoked, on account of failing to attend Church meetings and for apparent licentiousness, or inappropriate behavior. In returning to his work as a drayman, he drove his neighbor Abraham Lincoln to the Great Western Railroad Depot (today the "Lincoln Depot") to begin his journey to the White House on February 12, 1861. After this, Jenkins made a living later in his life as a courthouse messenger in Springfield.

Jenkins and his family would later leave their home on Eighth Street in 1866. Outside of this, not much more is known about Jenkins near the end of his life, but his connection to the underground railroad in Springfield helps fill in some blanks for its greater historical narrative. Jenkins passed away on February 4, 1873 and is buried with his wife in Oak Ridge Cemetery.

Source: "Jameson Jenkins," *Historic Preservation Division, Illinois Department of Natural Resources*.  
<https://dnrhistoric.illinois.gov/research/digital-dnr/digital-dnr-archive.jameson-jenkins.html>

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**Black Leader #2 – Susan Richardson**

Enslaved as an indentured servant in southern Illinois, Susan "Sukey" Richardson escaped with her children and another woman after hearing that she was about to be whipped. They sought out antislavery activist, William Hayes, the neighbor of Richardson's master, Andrew Borders, for help. He led them to Knox County, but they were captured in a cornfield. Hayes, the Richardsons, and another woman, traveled by foot and boat to Farmington. However, they were all captured and put in a Galesburg jail. A lengthy legal battle took place. Eventually, Richardson and the other woman were freed. However, Richardson's former master, Borders, kidnapped Richardson's children and took them back to his farm. Susan never saw her children again.

Susan then married a free black man, Henry Van Allen. They had three children together, but in the early 1850s, Van Allen disappeared and left Richardson with their three children. Susan then married Thomas Richardson, a widower who had also escaped on the Underground Railroad. She operated an Underground Railroad safe house as a conductor, and helped found the Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church, the oldest African American Church in Knox County.

Despite the many challenges in her life, Susan Richardson persevered and did what she could to help others in her community. Richardson died in 1904 and is buried in Galesburg's Hope Cemetery.

*Source: Friends of Hope Cemetery, "Susan "Aunt Sukey" Richardson gravestone," Traces of Western Illinois' Underground Railroad, <https://timroberts.org/wiugrr/items/show/19>.*

### **Black Leader #3 – George Burroughs**

George Burroughs was born in Canada and chose to leave the safety of Canada to help freedom seekers along the Underground Railroad. In the letter below, George reflects on his involvement with the Underground Railroad, including his time helping freedom seekers while working on the Illinois Central Railroad.

Cairo, Ills.

Jan 6<sup>th</sup>, 1896.

*Dear Sir: I was born in Canada about the year of 1832, about 15 miles east of Hameltin (sic) Ont. My Father Served in The War of 1812 in the Britchis (sic) Serests in Canada. In 1852 we organized (sic) a Small Society by the name of "True Bands" it was organized (sic) to feed and clothe fugitives who expaped (sic) over the Underground railroad. Rev. Geo. W. Clark was president in 1857. I arrived in Chicago I meet a friend of Mine from Canada, Robert Celeny. I was acquainted with (him) in Canada he (who) proposed to me to take an agency for the Under Ground railroad. There he carried me to the Office and we taken (sic) our rout(e)s he he took the Rock Island rout(e) and I taken (sic) the Cairo rout(e) I was put a board of a sleeper as car porter, a Gario Sleepers arrive in Cairo in The morning My experience in trying to persuade a slave to flee for his freedom. I told him that I would carrie (sic) him through to Chicago he said he could not go with me because Chicago and Canada was at war he said that his master read the papers from Chicago every morning and read the papers to him saying They were killing every body in Chicago I tried (sic) to tell him that Chicago was in the state of Ills Canada was a British dominion There fore his master was reading him a lot of lies. My next going a board of a New Orleans Steamboat found several Slaves going up the river I got in a conversation with another he seemed to be quite intelligent and appreciated freedom I told him my business he said he was a coachman going to Louisville with his master he said he was willing to go but he had one Sister and she was in New Orleans he could not go and leave her behind his name was Charlie Gardner I always remembered his name I found it to be a dangerous exper(i)ment as I went to the passanger (sic) Depot I was told by the station agent that I had better keep close that my business had been given away and that there was a mob and they would mob me I secreted myself in a box in the porters room I heard the mob searching for me Swearing that They would murder me. I found that some of the Negroes were tre(ch)erous one could not put any trust in Them I left Cairo and arrived at The St Louis Junction There I was afraid to go to the Hotel, The had telegraph there for me I went down to The freight depot stood in the dark. I found a path leading through the parries (sic) as I went in Some Thing ran before me I ran though the grass to see what kind of amal (sic) it was when I got close up to it in the dark it spoke and then I knew it was a woman she asked me If I was a colored man I told her I was she said you wont betray me she said I had saw (sic) you standing by The freight house and thought you were a white man and when you started down the path I though you had seen me I told her to follow me and be quick I took her to the porter room. There was in The room a box for carring (sic) extra bedding between 4 feet high I told her to get in the box and covered her up with quilts I stepped on the flatform (i.e. platform) The conductor asked me why I did not go and get some supper I told him I did not want any supper I was watching The Sleeper he said I am glad of it because There was always a runaway Negres(s) around Then he asked me had I saw (sic) an negres(s) around I told him I had not I felt very proud for what I had done I had one to report for what I had done when I got in Chicago I arrived in Chicago in the Morning about Nine O clock when all had left The Train I watch(ed) my Opportunity (sic) I went to the box and told My Human animal (sic) to come out I gave her water and comb and brush she told me she had been out hiding about three weeks right where I found her I found she was quite a young girl between 7 and 8 years light complexion and very pretty she was dressed so horribly I did not know go to get her up in town at the Depot There was standing two officers waiting to see what I had on board and looking for runaway slaves I showed them to the girl and told her They were her enemys (sic) and were there to take her I asked her if she ever Swore any she said She never Swore in her life I told her now I am going to take you out I said you must be*

Journey to Freedom Illinois' Underground Railroad

[www.IllinoisUGRR.org](http://www.IllinoisUGRR.org) [www.lookingforlincoln.org](http://www.lookingforlincoln.org)

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*brave and do not be a coward we came out to pass those Men one of them placed his hand on the girl I saw the girl had given up and was afraid to open her mouth I maid (sic) a resolution (sic) at once to save the girl I turned around threwed (sic) his hand off of her and got between him and the girl I asked him what he me(a)nt by insulting That girl and if he done so again I would put a head on him he said I want to hirt that girl I told him that she was my cousin and she had been working out in the country and working for some poor white trash who had cheated her out of her wages and I had went out and brought her home we went on up town and These men followed Went up through a back alley and the men lost us I ten carried her to the fffice we found some of her friends and gave her to them This was my first connection with the underground railroad There is a good many things that I have forgotten I remember of conversing with John Brown in Chicago I served in the 2d U.S. Cavery (sic) Honorable discharged Was a resident of Cairo Ill 1208 Cedar St.*

*George L. Burroughs*

*Source: Letter from George Burroughs sent to Wilbur H. Siebert, January 6, 1896. The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom, Wilbur H. Siebert, MacMillan Company, New York, 1898.*

*A digitized version of the letter, courtesy of Ohio History Connection:*

<https://ohiomemory.org/digital/collection/siebert/id/9310>

## **Black Leader #4 – William Donnegan**

William K. Donnegan is one of the more known Underground Railroad conductors in Springfield. He moved to the city in 1845 and worked as a shoemaker on Adams St. where he even made shoes for Abraham Lincoln. In his house between Eighth and Ninth streets, he hid and assisted freedom seekers for many years. Donnegan was one of the few murdered during the 1908 Race Riot in Springfield when he was lynched outside his home.

### **Life in Springfield**

William K. Donnegan was born in Kentucky around 1832 and later became a prominent African American man who resided in Springfield, Illinois. He moved to Springfield in 1845, and lived between Eighth and Ninth streets on the north side of Jefferson, however, his original home no longer exists. In town, he worked as a shoemaker, or cobbler, with a shop located on the north side of Adams Street between Seventh Street and the Public Square, not too far from the Lincoln-Herndon Law Office. In fact, Abraham Lincoln was one of the customers whom Donnegan made shoes for on at least one occasion. Donnegan did well in his business ventures and lived a good life in Springfield. Outside of his cobbling and other work, he was known to assist freedom seekers on the Underground Railroad in Springfield, using his home as a station.

### **Donnegan as an Underground Railroad Conductor**

Donnegan claimed that when it came to the Underground Railroad, he had helped "scores" of people seeking their freedom by hiding them or helping them escape through Springfield. In 1898, he discussed this work in an interview for Springfield's *The Public Patron*, a magazine from the time. In it, he describes a harrowing event in which he helped a freedom seeker through Springfield around 1858. According to Donnegan, a teenage, female freedom seeker was dropped off at his home and he was tasked with getting her out of town, or at least as far as the next station near the Farmingdale area of Sangamon County. However, the task became increasingly difficult as many problems involving a posse of men trying who were tracking her whereabouts arose during the journey.

Ultimately, Donnegan was able to bring the girl to safety with the assistance of his brother and others. It should be noted that while this story can be true, there is no other known evidence that exists that proves this event took place.

### **Donnegan and the 1908 Springfield Race Riot**

While Donnegan's work on the Underground Railroad would end less than a decade after this event, his history in Springfield does not. Springfield had never truly been kind to African Americans, and even decades after the Civil War and emancipation, many whites were still threatened by their presence in town. Fifty years after Donnegan had claimed to have helped freedom seekers in Springfield, came the Springfield Race Riot of 1908. By this point in time, Donnegan and his third wife, Sarah Ann Bowers, had moved to a home on Edwards Street, across from where the Illinois State Museum resides today. Because Donnegan had become fairly wealthy through his businesses and was married to a white woman, a target was easily placed on his back by the white mobs during the event.

When the riot started on Friday, August 14, Donnegan and his wife were actively seeking assistance from the police and authorities for protection against the mobs; protection that would never come. A white mob had made its way to their residence by the late evening on August 15 and wasted no time in breaking into their home, beating the elderly Donnegan, slitting his throat, and finally hanging him from a tree in the neighboring schoolyard. It was not until the next morning that the police and National Guard found him, still alive, before taking him to St. John's Hospital where he would succumb to his injuries on August 16, 1908.

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After the riot had ended and news of the event was spread, Donnegan's name became known all over the country, and it did not go unnoticed. The riot and his lynching became catalysts for the creation of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) and ultimately led to the fight for civil rights in the decades that followed. While it may be difficult to read or hear about events like lynchings or race riots, they are an important part of our history and these stories need to be told to ensure we learn from our mistakes. William K. Donnegan and his wife Sarah are buried in Oak Ridge Cemetery in Springfield, Illinois.

Source: "William K. Donnegan," *Historic Preservation Division, Illinois Department of Natural Resources*.  
<https://dnrhistoric.illinois.gov/research/digital-dnr/digital-dnr-archive.william-k-donnegan.html>

## **Black Leaders #5 – Henry and Mary Ann King Brown**

Born into enslavement in North Carolina, Brown was also bound with Quakers in Ohio and Indiana, where he purchased his freedom before moving to Illinois. Ordained in the African Methodist Episcopal church, Brown traveled often to visit small congregations. Remembered as a lifelong humanitarian who helped all in need, he used his connections to participate in the Underground Railroad that assisted escaping slaves make their way to freedom. He also took part in the 1853 Illinois Colored Convention. The Rev. Brown led Lincoln's horse in the Springfield funeral procession for the fallen president. After the Civil War he spoke often at public events, recalling the past and celebrating the destruction of slavery.

### **1823-1848**

The Reverend Henry Brown was born into enslavement in Raleigh, North Carolina on April 17, 1823. He remained enslaved until the age of twelve when he moved to Ohio, leaving his family back in North Carolina. His father was Staten Jones and his mother's maiden name was Brown, which Henry Brown took as his assumed last name. Henry was moved to Ohio, then later to Rush County, Indiana where he was to be enslaved at a farm under a Quaker family. It was not until Brown grew into his twenties that he was able to attain his freedom from enslavement and shortly after, he became a minister for the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1846. A year later in 1847, Brown first arrived in Illinois in Paris, and met the woman whom he would marry.

Mary Ann King, an eighteen-year-old widow from Paris, Illinois, first met Brown in that year and the two quickly developed a good relationship from their first meeting. After developing a mutual admiration of each other, they married after only several weeks of knowing each other. After this, Brown would spend the rest of his life in Illinois, living in various towns and cities throughout the state.

### **1848-1865**

Brown first came to Illinois in the late-1840s; however, he did not make the city his home until 1855. In the years he was not living in Springfield, he had moved around from Paris and Galena. By 1855, he and his wife Mary Ann, had settled in Springfield. Together the two had five children, Louella, Nannie, Thomas T, Katie, and Edward. It was in Springfield where Brown made an acquaintance with Abraham Lincoln and even worked with him in a variety of jobs.

In town, he continued his work as a minister for the AME Church while working alongside Lincoln. He also was believed to have been part of the local Underground Railroad in Springfield, but also in Quincy, Illinois. Because of his work both in Springfield and Quincy, Brown likely knew of the other local conductors like William K. Donnegan and William H. Butler who also assisted freedom seekers on the Underground Railroad. Aside from this, Brown also played a role in the 1853 Chicago Colored Convention.

Brown was the only person to represent both Edgar and Coles County during the 1853 Illinois Colored Convention in Chicago as he had been living in Paris at the time. His wife and her parents were also living in Edgar County, so he wanted to be able to represent them. During the convention, Brown served on at least one committee and was recognized as one of the Vice Presidents.

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**1865-1906**

Brown is perhaps most known for his role in Abraham Lincoln's funeral procession in Springfield on May 4, 1865. Brown was a friend and admirer of Lincoln and because of their association, it was fitting that he be the one to lead the family horse, "Old Bob," during the procession. Brown lived out his life in Illinois working as a minister and passed away on September 3, 1906, and was buried at Oak Ridge Cemetery, the same location as his friend Abraham Lincoln.

Source: "Henry Brown," *Historic Preservation Division, Illinois Department of Natural Resources*.  
<https://dnrhistoric.illinois.gov/research/digital-dnr/digital-dnr-archive.william-k-donnegan.html>



## **Black Leader #6 – Priscilla “Mother” Baltimore**

Priscilla Baltimore purchased her own freedom and then labored tirelessly for the freedom of others. She was born around 1801 in Bourbon, Kentucky. Her mother was an enslaved woman and her father a white enslaver. As Rev. T. W. Henderson recounted at her funeral in 1882, Baltimore was first sold at the age of eight, then sold a second time, and finally sold to a Methodist missionary who brought her to the St. Louis area. There, Baltimore converted to Methodism and began preaching to enslaved women and men.

After about seven years of laboring in St. Louis, Baltimore had saved enough money to purchase her own freedom from the Methodist preacher. Oral histories tell us that to purchase her mother's freedom, she bought and mortgaged property in St. Louis. While there, she also married Louis Coontz, who died of cholera just three weeks after they wed. She then married John Baltimore, an enslaved man, who went on to help her found the town of Brooklyn, Illinois, after she purchased his freedom as well. In addition to paying for her freedom, Baltimore was required to post a bond of \$500 for a "license to reside in the State of Missouri."

In the late 1820s, accompanied by Baltimore, eleven Black families crossed the Mississippi River. Some were enslaved and some were free, but all sought new opportunities in the nominally free state of Illinois. This group of Black migrants started the town of Brooklyn, Illinois, in 1829. Priscilla and John's home became their place of worship. William Paul Quinn, a traveling A.M.E. minister, visited the town in the 1830s and helped establish what would become known as the Brooklyn A.M.E. Church, the "first African Methodist Church in the West." In the early 1840s, John and Priscilla bought several pieces of land in town, one of which became the site of the church.

Priscilla Baltimore helped make the town of Brooklyn a refuge from enslavement. Though her home "would have been a very small house," without any sort of plumbing and a cistern for rainwater, wrote archeologist Joe Galloy, it was a major site of resistance to slavery. "She understood from firsthand experience," wrote historian Cheryl LaRoche, "the costs of both slavery and freedom." Her abolitionism earned her the sobriquet the Moses of the West.<sup>4</sup> One story particularly exemplifies the dangers residents faced as they stood up to the institution of slavery. A fugitive was sheltering with a Black Brooklynite named William Carper when slavecatchers rode into town. Determined to recapture the runaway, they murdered Carper. Priscilla Baltimore's adopted son, Milton Carper, may have been the child of this martyr to the cause of freedom.

The town of Brooklyn was incorporated in 1873, officially becoming the first "Black town" in America. Meanwhile, Baltimore moved back to St. Louis by the 1870s, pursuing lawsuits to recover real estate she had lost in Brooklyn, working as a domestic, and becoming involved with civic life in the city. After her husband passed away, she lived with her adopted son, Milton, who worked as a laborer.

Baltimore died in 1882, leaving \$2,000 to the A.M.E. Church of St. Louis.<sup>8</sup> Her funeral filled the large St. Paul's A.M.E. Chapel, another congregation Baltimore had helped organize.<sup>9</sup> Even the "stairways were filled with a mass of spectators," reported the St. Louis Globe Democrat. "The outpouring was the largest of its kind ever seen in this vicinity," continued the article, "and was a manifestation of respect to the memory of Mother Baltimore... whose life was replete with well-doing and adventure."<sup>10</sup> She rests in the now free soil of Bellefontaine Cemetery in St. Louis.

Source: Hope McCaffrey, Ed. Kate Masur, "Priscilla Baltimore," *Colored Conventions Project: Bringing 19th-century Black Organizing to Digital Life*. <https://coloredconventions.org/black-illinois-organizing/delegates/priscilla-baltimore/>