



S6. Describe current educational programs, tours, markers, signs, or plaques at the site. Include text and photographs of markers.

There are no current educational programs or tours now offered at the site.

While there are some interpretive signs still installed at the house, they date from the period of private ownership and would be replaced with better signs that reflect the recent research into the house before the site is reopened. The Sisk family operated the site based on the folklore and rarely provided documentary or source information for their interpretations. The oldest set of signage still in place was installed in 1933 by James Lyle Sisk, an uncle to the last owner. The most recent signage installed by the last owner likely dates to the 1980s and generally focused on identifying the various antique items on display.

Although the future management structure of the site is still fluid with the possibility of a private-public partnership being developed between the agency and a regional non-profit group, it's expected that the future educational program/interpretation would mostly likely contain some or all of the following UGRR related topics:

- John Hart Crenshaw's role in kidnapping free residents of African descent – the Reverse UGRR.
- Kidnappings as a whole throughout the region of southeastern Illinois.
- Use of attics by earlier kidnapers including the Patty Cannon in Maryland and others in D.C.
- Spotlight on 1842 kidnapping victim Mariah Adams and her family. She and husband Charles were once owned by Illinois' territorial governor and third state governor Ninian Edwards.
- Why the Old Slave House was once thought to be a UGRR station, and how that might be.
- The story of Andrew Jackson, a runaway slave who was caught after crossing into Illinois
- Jackson later wrote a book about his escape to freedom. Captured on his second day in Illinois, he found himself taken to the jail in Equality where ironically, he was kept during the same time Abraham Lincoln visited the courthouse on a campaign swing as an elector candidate for William Henry Harrison.
- Tactics of slave catchers in the region.
- Development of nearby maroon communities and their responses to the kidnappings.
- Redwood Point/Grayson – Gallatin-Saline county line in between Equality and Eldorado.
- South America/Pond Settlement/Lakeview – centered on Carrier Mills in Saline Co.
- Fancy Farm/Locust Grove/Skelton Town/Africa – northeast corner of Williamson Co.
- Development of minority clusters in large white communities of Shawneetown and Equality.

The interpretation would also likely include elements the following slavery-related topics:

- The role of slavery at the salt works surrounding Equality.
- The Northwest Ordinance prohibition against slavery versus the reality in Illinois.
- Illinois' system of indentured servitude – slavery with a time limit.
- The effort to legalize slavery in Illinois in 1823-1825 and Crenshaw's role.
- Expansion of slavery in the territories as it related to members of the extended Crenshaw clan.
 - The Missouri Compromise and its Senate sponsor Jesse B. Thomas's relation to Crenshaw's partner Michael Jones. (Jones and Thomas were half-brothers).
 - Crenshaw's son-in-law Charles H. Lanphier's role as Douglas' chief spokesman and confidant in Illinois through his editorship of the *Illinois State Register* in Springfield.
 - The Compromise of 1850 and defense of Stephen A. Douglas by Crenshaw's brother-in-law's future son-in-law Samuel S. Hayes in Chicago.
 - Kansas-Nebraska Act and Crenshaw's brother-in-law Edmund D. Taylor's public stance against Douglas in Springfield and his son-in-law Hayes' stance in Chicago. Taylor held the mortgage on the Old Slave House at this point.
 - Crenshaw's son William T., President Franklin Pierce and his appointment to 'Bloody Kansas' in 1856.
- Use of slaves quasi-legally in Illinois despite constitutional prohibitions.



- Matson case in Coles County in 1846. Use of slave labor on a central Illinois farm.
- 90 days at a time. How Crenshaw and others got around the law concerning leased slaves.
- Servant list (c. 1842-1847) prepared by Crenshaw's niece Mariah who lived in the house. She named the house servants but wrote, "the field hands too numerous to mention."
- Aunt Jemima a/k/a "Old Minny" and Haman. Crenshaw's enslaved house servants.
- Regulators versus Vigilantes, the fight to drive residents of color from the county in 1842.
- Local efforts to escape kidnappings/attacks by emigrating to Haiti in 1823 and Liberia in 1842.
- Residents of color organize: schools, churches and the right to vote with focus on the Rev. Bryant Smith, a neighbor of Crenshaw in 1840 whose presumed sister Mary had her children kidnapped in 1839 and whose brother Marvel was one who took his family to Liberia in 1842.
- Courts Take Aim: Legal efforts to abolish traces of slavery in Illinois.
- Area support for legalization of slavery and other discriminatory laws in the 1850s.
- Robert "Uncle Bob" Wilson and Crenshaw's role in slave breeding in the mid to late 1850s.

Other non-slavery and non-UGRR topics likely interpreted would be as follows:

- Architecture of the house.
- Southeastern Illinois and the Civil War, including nearby raids into Gallatin County.
- Crenshaw's son-in-law Michael Kelly Lawler, a Union general during the Civil War.
- The assassination of Crenshaw's son-in-law John E. Hall in 1856 in an outgrowth of the general Democratic Party split of the mid-50s over the Kansas-Nebraska Act.
- The "ancient colony of horse-thieves, counterfeiters and robbers" based in the region and their actions as a backdrop to the criminal rings organizing kidnappings. Also known more generically as the "outlaws of Cave-in-Rock."
- Church-based anti-slavery efforts in the region and their relationship to the maroon communities including Liberty Church M.E. church in southeastern Franklin County and its relationship to the Africa settlement, the larger Emancipation Baptist movement in old Gallatin County, and the American Missionary Association's efforts at abolitionism in the late 1850s up the dawn of the Civil War.
- Overall history of the salines/salt works.
- The Illinois Internal Improvement Act of 1837 and its relationship to the salt works, the Shawneetown and Equality Railroad (of which Crenshaw received contracts), the construction in 1839-1841 of the Bank of Illinois structure in Shawneetown (Crenshaw served as a director), the state's first commercial bank building and now the shuttered Shawneetown Bank State Historic Site; and other residential construction from that era still standing such as the Henry Eddy House, also on the National Register of Historic Places for its role as a Civil War camp and hospital.
- Fascinating individuals wrapped in the Old Slave House story such as Shawneetown lawyer and occasional Abraham Lincoln law partner Henry Eddy, who also served as Crenshaw's occasional attorney; and Crenshaw's brother-in-law Edmund D. Taylor who became a rich Chicago merchant after starting out in the salt works with Crenshaw. Taylor often held the mortgage on the Old Slave House and Crenshaw's other properties. An associate of Lincoln in Springfield, he also served as an unofficial courier between Lincoln and his generals in the west during the start of the Civil War. He lost 18 store buildings during the Great Chicago Fire and Marshall Field served as one of his pallbearers at his funeral.
- Gallatin County's Civil War generals besides Lawler including Gen. Harrison Wilson whose men captured Jefferson Davis at the end of the war and whose father helped rescue kidnapping victims enslaved in Texas; and John A. McClernand, who kept tattling to Lincoln about Grant's drinking until his superior officer finally sacked him. McClernand had previously secured Crenshaw's last lease of the salt works in 1840. He had also served as the region's Congressman. Later he served as a pallbearer at the funeral of Crenshaw's daughter Margaret Lanphier in Springfield.