S7. Identify historical sources of information. Include a bibliography.

In the future, the first stop for researchers looking into the history of the Old Slave House will be the upcoming Slaves, Salt, Sex & Mr. Crenshaw: The Real Story of America’s Reverse Underground R.R. by Jon Musgrave due out in the fall of 2004 by IllinoisHistory.com. This 464-plus page book takes a detailed comprehensive look at the role of history of the site and the people, both black and white, associated with it. Musgrave is one of the three local researchers who began studying the site’s history at the time of its closing in 1996.

Site specific works

Jon Musgrave. 2004. Slaves, Salt, Sex & Mr. Crenshaw: The Real Story of America’s Reverse Underground R.R. Marion, Ill.: IllinoisHistory.com. The title comes from a state consultant’s report in the late 1950s that declared the house didn’t have the dignity to be a state historic site, and that it was nothing but a morbid tale of “slaves, salt, sex & Mr. Crenshaw.”


Richard M. Phillips. May-June 1972. “This is the house that salt built.” Ilinwek. This was the first article on the site since the “Romance” article of 1937 where the author attempted any original research into the house.


[Bonnie Sisk and Lyle Sisk]. [n.d., c.1941]. The Old Slave House. Privately published. Tourist booklet distributed at the site. The first booklet mostly followed Hubbs’ 1937 article. Around 1949, the Sisks updated the booklet and included information on Robert “Uncle Bob” Wilson, the man who claimed to have worked as a stud slave on the site. George M. Sisk, Jr., edited down the booklet to fit a tri-fold 8.5” x 11” brochure in the 1960s. Little was changed though, except the date of construction was changed to begin in 1834. The Sisks never used a copyright date. The various editions can be dated only by subtracting the age of the house as given in the text to determine an approximate year of publication.

Barbara Burr Hubbs & John G. Mulcaster. November, 1937. “The Romance of the Old Slave House.” Illinois Journal of Commerce, 11-14. Mulcaster died before finishing his research into the site during the 1930s and Hubbs took over compiling it into an article. This is the first major article on the house and the earliest one known to have existed prior to the rediscovery of the “lost story” noted below.

Clarence Bonnell. Winter 1921. “The Lore of the Illinois Ozarks.” Transactions of the Illinois State Academy of Science. Springfield, Ill.: Ill. State Academy of Science. 14:1. 56-57. This is the “lost story” of the house and the legends surrounding it prior to its development as a tourist attraction. Though written in 1920, it reflects the stories as they existed at the time when Bonnell first arrived in the region in 1903. At the time of publication he worked as the assistant principal and science teacher at Harrisburg High School. He also wrote about the Old Slave House in his Illinois Ozarks published in 1946 in which he mentions the stories he first heard some four decades earlier.

Crenshaw’s Kidnappings/Slave Trading

1820s indictment

Preston W. Davis v. John Crenshaw. Gallatin County, Illinois, Circuit Court. Oct. 27, 1829. “Gallatin County Circuit Court Case Files.” Illinois Regional Archives Depository, Carbondale. This civil case over debts provides the only evidence for Crenshaw’s first kidnapping indictment from the mid 1820s. Crenshaw counter-sued Davis claiming the latter still owed him and John Forrester
money for his share of the defense fees from when the three were charged with kidnapping. The outcome of the kidnapping case is not known, but likely was dropped as most such cases were. The victims’ names have not been found.

Frank Granger and 15 others - 1827


Tipton County (Tenn.) Deed Book A. 118-119. This deed for 3,200 acres of land along the Mississippi River immediately below Randolph provides a date to Crenshaw’s visit to Tennessee when he likely took down Frank Granger and the others.

Lucinda - 1828


Ben

John Crenshaw v. William Grundy. 1829-1834. Union County Circuit Court case files. Kentucky State Archives. It’s not certain if this case represents evidence of a kidnapping or Crenshaw’s use of slave labor. Basically Crenshaw sued Grundy after the latter’s ferry sank in the Ohio River drowning Ben, a slave claimed by Crenshaw.

Maria Adams and her family - 1842


Henry Eddy, Benjamin Edwards, Ninian Edwards, George Leviston, and A. G. S. Wight. December 8, 1846. Letters to Gov. Thomas Ford. “Charles Adams and others pardon.” Executive Clemency Files, Illinois State Archives. These men successfully convinced Gov. Ford to pardon the Adams men so they could participate in a planned rescue of their family. Letters clearly identify Crenshaw as the kidnapper and that the family had been taken to Texas and sold into slavery.


Thomas H. Leavell. 1840s. Probate records. Gallatin County Circuit Clerk’s Office. Leavell’s widely scattered probate records includes entries for Charles Adams, known simply as “Crenshaws Charles.”


Samuel D. Marshall. April 8, 1842. “Negrophobia.” (Shawneetown) Illinois Republican. 3. This huge editorial by Marshall took up nearly half a page of the newspaper. Not only does it dwell a bit with Crenshaw’s kidnapping trial, it’s focus is on the Regulators that had recently organizes to drive residents of color from the county.


Peter White and three other children – 1847

May 13, 1937. “Bob White, Negro, Began Career Under Wagon Bed.” (Shawneetown, Ill.) The Gallatin Democrat. 5. This particular article provides more evidence in the newspaper editor’s drinking problem than it sheds light on Peter’s life especially since he couldn’t even get the name right in the headline. The article incorporates elements not found in Smith’s writings or at the Old
Slave House that probably came from one of Peter’s children, some of which were still living in the county. However, it mangles the story of Peter with that of his father, making it impossible to determine which story elements go to which individual. However, the use of a hidden compartment under a wagon bed as mentioned in the story, probably has a basis in reality.

Sept. 25, 1941. “Aged Equality Colored Resident Succumbs.” (Shawneetown, Ill.) The Gallatin Democrat. 5. This obituary for Peter’s son James Madison White, recalled the father’s ordeal placing Peter at the Old Slave House. Hilariously, the paper had the story as Crenshaw rescuing Peter from slavery, bringing him to the house and then to Equality where he was given his freedom. The writer had it “bass ackwards” as we might say in Southern Illinois.

James Baldwin. March 24, 1997. Conversation with Gary DeNeal, Jon Musgrave and Ron Nelson while traveling to Barren Co., Kentucky, to research the kidnapping of Lucinda and to view the other John Crenshaw slave house ruins. On this day and in subsequent interviews Baldwin recalled his college professor George W. Smith’s discussions concerning the Old Slave House he often made in Baldwin’s history class in the early 1930s. Though Baldwin never mentioned Peter White, his recollections showed Smith’s interest in the site far more than his self-censorship allowed in his writings as he often wrote about Peter’s kidnapping, but just never who conducted it.

James Lyle Sisk. [n.d., c, 1934]. Interpretive sign on the third floor in the Old Slave House. Equality, Ill. Sisk’s sign stated that Peter and three other Equality children had been kidnapped and held on the third floor of the Old Slave House before being shipped south. The signed challenged disbeliefers to go to Equality and speak with Peter’s surviving children to hear for themselves the story.


George W. Smith. 1912. A History of Southern Illinois: A Narrative Account of its Historical Progress, its People, and its Principal Interests. Chicago, Ill.: Lewis Publishing Co. Smith provides the year as 1844, but also notes that Peter was 10. He didn’t reach that age until 1847.

Prather Case


Henry Eddy to Mary Eddy. Dec. 10-13, 1846. Henry Eddy MSS. Gallatin County (Ill.) Historical Society/Lucille Lawler.


Post Mexican War Kidnappings

May 6, 1937. “Mary Ulmsnider, 92, Died in St. Louis Saturday.” (Shawneetown) The Gallatin Democrat. 1. Ulmsnider is believed to be the source for Mary Eddy Wiederhold’s letter. She’s unidentified in the letter, but internal clues combined with census and marriage records, as well as this obituary, helps strengthen the likelihood that Ulmsnider was the source who had lived in the Old Slave House from 1851 to 1853.

Myra Eddy Wiederhold. April 2, 1936. Letter to Frank E. Stevens. Charles C. Patton Collection. Springfield, Ill. Wiederhold interviewed the oldest resident of Gallatin County in order to find out more on the Old Slave House for Stevens, one of the four original researchers looking into the home’s history in the 1930s. Although unidentified in the letter, the source is believed to have been Mary (Leishtenberger) Scherrer Ulmsnider who was about 90 years of age at this point. The source had moved into the house in 1851 and lived there two years as a young girl. Neighbors had told her of strange noises emanating from the third floor. She told Wiederhold that she and other members of her family had heard noises. Since 1851 was the high point for kidnappings in Gallatin County according to Gen. Wilson, then it’s likely that the noises didn’t come from ghosts as had been explained, but from actual victims. Interestingly, this might be an attempt by Crenshaw to distance himself from the kidnappings. Although he still owned the house, at this point in his life, he was living in Equality. He didn’t move back to Hickory Hill until sometime in 1853 to early 1855.

Runaway slave capturing

Fred Peterson Ragsdale. 1993. The Contract Tree. Chicago: Adams Press. 184. Ragsdale tells the folklore he grew up with concerning Pig Island in the Ohio River near Shawneetown. The story involved Crenshaw’s use of pigs on the island to force runaways near the shore where they could be seen.
Other kidnappings — Southeastern Illinois

Aug. 2, 1823. (Shawneetown) Illinois Gazette. Kidnapping of Jack Butler and family, former slaves to William Henry Harrison. The newspaper reprints the letter from Harrison's son to his father telling of the kidnapping. The 1876 Complete History of Illinois from 1867 to 1873, recounts the rest of the story including its exciting conclusion and rescue.

July 30, 1825. (Shawneetown) Illinois Gazette. 3; and Thomas F. Reed. Aug. 27, 1825. Letter to the editor. (Shawneetown) Illinois Gazette. 3. Possible kidnapping in 1823 or 1824 by William G. Walden, formerly of Carmi, who allegedly sold Moses, a free man, as a slave in New Orleans. The Illinois Gazette discounted the story in a July 30, 1825 report, and reported that Moses had died at Natchez. Thomas F. Reed, writing from New Haven on August 20, countered the Gazette's position and claimed that he personally had seen and conversed with Moses in New Orleans.

June 21, 1828. (Shawneetown) Illinois Gazette. Second runaway or disappearance by Madison George.

1846. People vs. Hiram Green, et al. Pope Co. (III.) Circuit Clerk's Office; and Rose Manuscript. This indictment tells the story of the Sides attack and attempted kidnapping in Pope County that led to the start of the Flathead-Regulator War otherwise known as the Massac County Rebellion.

1855. Court Record 7. Johnson County, Illinois, Circuit Court. 84. Indictment against David Leech, Alfred Leech and James Dye dropped on state attorney's motion after prosecution witness Hedrick Styles failed to show up in court. Victims unknown.


George Flowers. 1882, reprint 1968. History of the English Settlement in Edwards County, Illinois. Chicago. Reprint, Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms. Flower writes of kidnappings in the English settlement. However the published version doesn't mention the ringleader by name. That is only found in his manuscript at the Chicago Historical Society. Flowers also names Crenshaw (through the use of his sobriquet of Granger) as one of the salt makers who led the constitutional convention fight in order to legalize slavery. He also tells of three families' migration to Haiti in order to avoid the kidnappers.

George Flowers. [ca. 1882]. “History of the English Settlement in Edwards County, Illinois.” Chicago Historical Society. Unlike the printed version the manuscript leaves in the name of Judge Prince as the leader of the Indiana kidnappers harassing the Illinois settlements.
Kidnappings in General

Charles L. Blockson. “Escape from Slavery: The Underground Railroad.” National Geographic. 166:1. 27. George Sisk used this article as part of his interpretation to tourists at the Old Slave House. It also includes information on the Patty Cannon gang.

Wm. Kesley; Thomas Shipley; B. Lundy; Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg, John Adams. July 1921. “Reports of the American Convention of Abolition Societies on Negroes and on Slavery, their Appeals to Congress, and their Addresses to the Citizens of the United States [Part 1]” The Journal of Negro History. 6:3. 326-328.


Communities of Color – Africa / Skelton Town / Locust Grove / Fancy Farm


1863. The People vs. Samuel Mitchell. Indictment for Bringing Slave into State. Chancery Records 1839-1864 Box. Circuit Clerk's Office. Williamson Co., Illinois. Part of the evidence suggesting an active Underground Railroad link in northeastern Williamson County in the area of the Africa settlement. Dr. Minton was white.

Chloe McNeill. May 1947. “Africa.” Egyptian Key. McNeill wrote the first article on the free African-American settlement of Africa in northeastern Williamson and southeastern Franklin counties. While some mistakes have been found, it's still a good place to start.

John L. Patton. May 18, 1944. Letter to J. T. Bean. Archie Stewart MSS. Original (or copy) in possession of Archie Stewart. Letter provides recollections of the Skelton Town or Africa settlement in Williamson County and the Redwood Point settlement on the Saline/Gallatin county line as told by someone who lived there. Mr. Stewart has since died and the location of his research collection is unknown.

Nannie Gray Parks, trans. March 14, 1936. “Dr. Samuel Minton Mitchell.” Copied from Mrs. Jane Mitchell Walker's papers. Mitchell Family Vertical File. Williamson County Historical Society. Internal evidence in the article suggests that an unidentified male author who was born in the 1850s and remembered as a boy John A. Logan's speech in downtown Marion in 1861 wrote it. The article itself dates to sometime after Dr. Mitchell's death on July 30, 1895. This article is the earliest account describing Dr. Minton's Cedarhurst as a station on the Underground Railroad. This site is near the rural Locust Grove/Skelton Town/Africa community in northeastern Williamson County.

John Wilbanks and Monte (Johnson) Stotlar. 2000. Yost Family History and their Descendants. Information from a journal written by Kathryn Alice (Yost) Boyd. 1934). Privately published. The Yosts settled at Fancy Farm on the Franklin/Williamson county line in the area of the Africa settlement. Members of the Yost family also lived in Equality and had various business dealings with Crenshaw and other free persons of color.

Communities of Color – Lakeview / South America / Pond Settlement


Darrel Dexter. 1995. A House Divided: Union County, Illinois, 1818-1865. Anna: Reppert Publications. While a good general county history of Union County three counties to the southwest of Gallatin County, Dexter also went into depth in the history of free residents of color in the county, some of whom had ties to the free settlements in Williamson and Saline counties.

Old Slave House / Reverse U.G.R.R. Station

Communities of Color – Redwood Point / Grayson

Clarence Bonnell, ed. 1947. *Saline County: A Century of History, 1847-1947*. Harrisburg, Ill.: Saline County Historical Society. This centennial history of Saline County included a photograph of the original papers filed by Cornelius Elliott registering his children’s freedom.

Archie Stewart MSS. Copies in Jon Musgrave’s possession. Location of originals unknown since Mr. Stewart’s death a few years ago. Stewart was a descendant of Cornelius Elliott, the founder of Redwood Point on the road between Equality and Eldorado.

Slave and Emancipation Records


John W. Allen, trans., Jon Musgrave, ed. 2004. *Gallatin County, Illinois, Slave and Emancipation Records, 1839-1849*. Marion, Ill.: IllinoisHistory.com. This is a transcription of the second slave registry in Gallatin County. The original has been lost, but Southern Illinois historian John W. Allen had possession of it in the late 1940s and early 1950s when he made his typed transcription now housed in the John Allen MSS in Special Collections/Morris Library on the campus of Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. The data in this book is not included in the online Illinois Servitude and Emancipation Records (1772-1863) database maintained by the Illinois State Archives.

Rebecca Schmook, trans. 1994. *Gallatin County, Illinois, Slave Register 1815-1839*. Privately published. This book is now published by the Saline County Genealogy Society in Harrisburg, Ill. It includes a transcription of the slaves records found in the first slave registry still in the courthouse at Shawneetown that had been found and repaired by D.A.R. historian Lucy Bender in 1934. Although data from the original books has been entered into the online Illinois Servitude and Emancipation Records (1772-1863) database maintained by the Illinois State Archives, this book provides much better information as the database transcriber wasn’t proficient in reading early 19th Century handwriting.

African-Americans in Gallatin County


Equality Town Minutes 1831-1846. John O’Dell Collection. As of 2004, now in possession of the Saline County Genealogy Society. The minutes include vague references to committees of vigilance and to the African-American community in Equality, which made up approximately 10 percent of the population during this time period.


Runaway Slaves in Gallatin County

November 13, 1824. “Mr. Eddy.” (Shawneetown) *Illinois Gazette*. This rarity is a letter to the editor from a runaway slave seeking legal representation while he is still in hiding in the county.


Slavery in Illinois


Gallatin Salines MSS. Illinois State Archives. This collection of documents concerning the government salines in Gallatin County include reports and letters describing the use of slaves at the salines.

N. Dwight Harris. 1904. *The History of Negro Servitude in Illinois and of the Slavery Agitation in that State 1719 – 1864*. Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co. 1904. After 100 years it’s still the best book on slavery inside the state. It also was the first to use the Henry
Eddy papers as source material for slavery in Gallatin County, including references to the note between Crenshaw and Lewis Kuykendall in the 1842 kidnapping of the Adams family.


Underground Railroad in Southern Illinois / Efforts to capture runaway slaves


General Area History


1887. History of Gallatin, Saline, Hamilton, Franklin and Williamson Counties, Illinois. Chicago: Goodspeed Publishing Co. The editor of the Gallatin County portion including a surprising amount of coverage for African-Americans in Gallatin County, or more than once, brought up the issue of kidnappings.

Lucy Bender. [c. 1935]. “A Brief History of Shawneetown, Gallatin County.” TM’s (photocopy). Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield. Article includes cryptic two-sentence description of the Logsdon home, a house she described as a station on the Underground Railroad, but may have been a kidnapping station instead.

Milo Erwin. 1876. Reprint 1976. History of Williamson County, Illinois. Marion, Ill.: Williamson County Historical Society. Erwin writes of an 1857 kidnapping that may be the 1861 kidnapping in the county.


O.J. Page. 1900. History of Massac County. Metropolis, Ill.: Journal-Republican. Despite its title Page included extensive coverage of Pope County’s history as well, though he often made mistakes on dates as he apparently relied on older persons’ recollections rather than contemporary documents.

Crenshaw Family


Ancient Colony


Otto A. Rothert. 1922, Reprint 1996. The Outlaws of Cave-In-Rock: Historical Accounts of the Famous Highwaymen and River Pirates Who Operated in Pioneer Days upon the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers and over the Natchez. Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press.
