




## St. Charles & The Underground Railroad

Although it was believed that St. Charles had several properties connected with the Underground Railroad, the topic had not ever been fully explored. It was not until the discovery of a property located at 606 Cedar St. that is currently being investigated through various scientific resources, that all the pieces started to come together.

Documents from the Kane County Anti-Slavery Society show that St. Charles had several founding members of that organization. Many of those members were the founding fathers of St. Charles. Preliminary research leads us to believe that St. Charles potentially has over 20 properties that have been identified as Underground Railroad stops or at least their original owners were members of the Kane County Anti-Slavery Society. This combined history makes St. Charles significant in the history of the Underground railroad. In light of this history The Mansion will serve as not only as a Nationally recognized Museum, but a national clearinghouse for Underground Railroad information. The plan is to develop a campus of properties throughout downtown



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## *The Farnsworth Mansion Underground Railroad & Civil War Museum*

*Rebuilding a Part of Our  
Great History*



FARNSWORTH MANSION  
FOUNDATION



## *The History of the Farnsworth Mansion*

The Farnsworth Mansion was built in 1860 by General John F. Farnsworth, who was a U.S. Congressman, well known abolitionist and close confidante of President Abraham Lincoln. Farnsworth formed the 8th Illinois Cavalry in 1861. This regiment went on to participate in most of the major battles of the Civil War including being the regiment that fired the first shot at Gettysburg.

It is believed that the Farnsworth Mansion served as an Underground Railroad stop due to Farnsworth's active role as an abolitionist and the number of other St. Charles residents who were members of the Kane County Anti-Slavery Society.

In 1907 it became Mount St. Mary's Academy and continued to be used as part of a school until 1992. The property was then sold and against great opposition the mansion was dismantled in 1993 to make way for a new residential development. The pieces were stored at another location until 1999.

In October of 1999 the St. Charles Historic Preservation Commission received the stone façade, and in January of 2000, received the interior trim that was salvaged. It was then decided that the Mansion must be rebuilt.

## *What Is The Farnsworth Mansion Foundation?*

The Farnsworth Mansion Foundation is a not-for-profit organization formed to oversee the rebuilding of the Farnsworth Mansion. The organization is made up of volunteers who strongly believe this project is important to the Community.

## *What Are The Goals Of The Farnsworth Mansion Foundation?*

The goals of the Farnsworth Mansion Foundation are :

- ❖ To heighten awareness and support for the project
- ❖ To provide education on the history of the Underground Railroad and Civil War as it pertains to St. Charles, Kane County, Illinois and the Nation.
- ❖ To raise funds for the project
- ❖ To oversee the project to its completion
- ❖ To oversee the operations of the Underground Railroad & Civil War Museum

## *The Farnsworth Mansion Underground Railroad & Civil War Museum*

In February of 2000, The St. Charles City Council gave approval to rebuild the Mansion on the south end of Langum Park located on Rt. 25. This site was once know as Camp Kane. This was a Civil War training camp for the 8th Illinois Cavalry formed by General Farnsworth, who owned the property at the time. Once the Mansion is completed it will be used as an Underground Railroad & Civil War Museum.

In 2009 a partnership was formed between The Foundation and The African Scientific Research Institute (ASRI). ASRI is affiliated with the University of Illinois in Chicago. This partnership will provide additional resources for funding and other assistance.

Construction costs are currently estimated at \$2,000,000.00, and it is our hope that work can begin in 2010. This project will be funded by grants and private donations. Your assistance is greatly appreciated. Although cash contributions are extremely appreciated, we would also welcome and invite donations of labor and material in an effort to reduce the cost of construction.

