

Missouri Road Trip

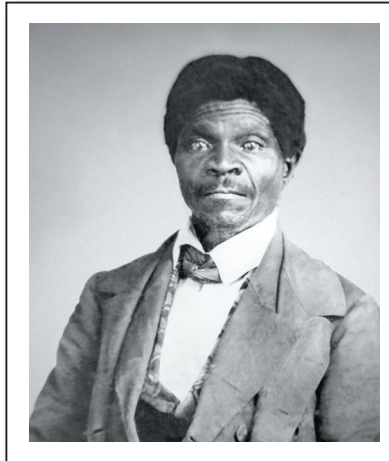
Every Hero Has A Story: Dred Scott

He wasn't a politician or an author, and he didn't command troops in battle or construct billion-dollar theme parks. Dred Scott simply wanted to be free. For that, he was willing to fight and stake his claim among the most important Missourians in history.

Born into slavery in 1790s Virginia, Dred – known to his friends as Sam – spent part of his life in free territories. But in the 1840s, Dred lived in slavery in Missouri under Eliza Emerson, who inherited her husband's property, including slaves, when he died.

In 1846, Dred tried to purchase his freedom, along with that of his wife Harriett and their two daughters. But Eliza Emerson refused, forcing Dred to take legal action.

That legal action began in 1847 at what's now called The Old Courthouse in St. Louis. Although the Scotts lost their 1847 trial, a St. Louis court ruled at an 1850 retrial that Dred and his family were, in fact, free. About two years later, the Missouri Supreme Court reversed that decision, leading Dred to take his case to a U.S. Circuit Court.



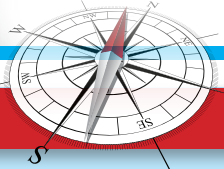
That court upheld the Missouri Supreme Court's ruling, meaning Dred had but one more hope: the United States Supreme Court. In 1857, the nation's high court ruled Dred was not a citizen and had no right to bring a lawsuit to federal court. Hastened by the outcome of this case, the Civil War began four years later.

Dred was freed in January 1858, about three months after the Supreme Court ruling. He died of tuberculosis Sept. 17, 1858, in St. Louis — less than a year after gaining his freedom.

Points of Interest

- ★ Dred Scott is one of many prominent Missourians buried in Calvary Cemetery in St. Louis.
- ★ Dred Scott was inducted into the Hall of Famous Missourians in the Missouri State Capitol in Jefferson City in 2012.
- ★ The Old Courthouse is part of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, a national park. It now serves as the visitor center for the Gateway Arch.
- ★ Learn more about Dred Scott and his wife, Harriet, on The State Historical Society of Missouri's Historic Missourian's site, shs.umsystem.com.
- ★ Many newspapers cover the St. Louis area and its communities, including the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, stltoday.com and the St. Louis American, stlamerican.com.

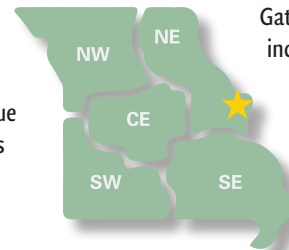
Sources: Hall of Famous Missourians



African Americans did not become citizens of the United States until the ratification of the 14th Amendment (1868), but Scott's bid for freedom remained one of the most important judicial events of the century.

Take A Road Trip to St. Louis!

Today, you can visit The Old Courthouse in downtown St. Louis, where Dred and his fight for freedom are honored through a variety of exhibits and film. Outside The Old Courthouse, a bronze statue immortalizes Dred and Harriet Scott and is just steps from one of the country's most iconic features, the



Gateway Arch. In addition to being the site of hundreds of suits for freedom, including the first two trials of the Dred Scott case, The Old Courthouse also is where St. Louis resident Virginia Minor fought for a woman's right to vote. Today in The Old Courthouse, you may tour the building, visit the restored courtrooms, learn more about our 19th century judicial system and see new history galleries.

The Old Courthouse
11 N. Fourth St., St. Louis
314-655-1600
GatewayArch.com/Experience/Old-Courthouse

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