

*A Legacy of Courage:  
Dred Scott & The Quest for Freedom*



**In the Special Exhibit Galleries  
at the Old Courthouse  
March 2007-March 2008**

An exhibit commemorating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Dred Scott Decision will open on March 3, 2007, in St. Louis' Old Courthouse, where the case began. The comprehensive exhibit will contain original documents from the St. Louis Circuit Court, the Missouri Supreme Court, the City of St. Louis, the National Archives, the St. Louis Mercantile Library, the Missouri Historical Society, and our own collection at Jefferson National Expansion Memorial. The exhibit will present the history of the case on three levels: the personal story of the Scotts, the story of the litigation and how the legal system worked, and also within the broad framework of the context of slavery and the ways in which people tried to escape from it during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Dred Scott case is one of the most important and influential events of the immediate pre-Civil War period, although few people know who Dred Scott was, why or how he came to be in court, and what the outcome of his case was. The Dred Scott case ranks with William Lloyd Garrison's newspaper *The Liberator*, Uncle Tom's Cabin and the activities of John Brown in creating an awareness of the ramifications of slavery in its own time, and as a cause of sectional tensions which led to the Civil War. It can also be seen as a symbol of legal resistance to oppression and the struggle for freedom and equality, and as a forerunner of the modern civil rights movement.

The extensive exhibit will include standard displays, special exhibit cases for original, fragile historical documents, and a recreated courtroom environment which will serve as exhibit space and also as a place where reenactments of the Dred Scott case can take place for elementary and high school students. Major sections of the exhibit will cover the Scott family, life in antebellum St. Louis, slavery, the Old Courthouse, the Civil War, and civil rights in America. Artifacts representing all these areas of study will be incorporated into the exhibit. The display will be mounted in the west wing of the Old Courthouse, the portion of the building where the Dred Scott case was originally tried in 1847 and 1850.