Newspapers by ancestry
https://www.newspapers.com/image/571010481/

Downloaded on Aug 9, 2026

SLAVERY IN ST. LOUIS—ITS DECLINE IN TEN YEARS

A gang of fifty-one negroes, mostly females, left a slave-yard on Sixth street yesterday, bound South. They were all in a healthy condition, and were collected from various counties of the State. The event prompted some inquiry into the progress of slavery in this city and county, and we find that as a local institution it is growing comparatively "small by degress and beautifully less." Our readers will remember the table of taxable property in this county, which we published on Tuesday morning. It gave the aggregate number of slaves for 1859 at 3,616, valued at $1,038,920. The number is a small increase on last year's return, but considering the depot that is made of this city for the sale of negroes, who in their transit from the interior to the South, are concentrated here from time to time, the increase is not at all alarming to the friends of free labor.

To show the matter in its true light, it is only necessary to state that *seven years ago, there were five hundred more slaves in the county of St. Louis than there are to-day.* We find from the statement of taxable property in 1851, that the total number of slaves was 4,110, that year, against 3,616 in 1859. Their value in 1852 was $1,180,698, against the valuation in 1859, of $1,038,920. The number fluctuated more or less in intervening years, as in 1857, when there were nearly five hundred less than in 1851, and in 1854 over one hundred more than in 1853. The main fact, however, is apparent, that Slavery is decreasing surely and rapidly in the city and county. It has none of the elements which impel the great industrial interests—manufactories, mills, stores, buildings, population, and everything else calculated to advance a state or a city, multiply every day; but Slavery flickers and declines. It is practically abolishing itself.

Copyright © 2026 Newspapers.com. All Rights Reserved.

Newspapers by ancestry
https://www.newspapers.com/image/571010481/

Downloaded on Aug 9, 2026

Ten years ago the slave property in St. Louis represented about *one-twentieth of the entire taxable property*, real and personal, of the county. *To-day it represents less than one-ninetieth!* In 1849 there were 3,490 slaves, valued at $1,000,-500, and the total valuation of property at that time was a fraction less than $20,000,000—so that slave property was in the proportion of one to twenty, compared with other property, while this year the aggregate value of real and personal property is over $91,000,000, or as ninety to one. These statistics are taken from figures on file in the records of the county. They may be relied upon as facts to prove the certain absorption of the interests of slave owners in the more reliable and substantial interests which belong to them as manufacturers, merchants, and real estate owners. A few years hence the value of slave property will be a very insignificant item in the millions upon our tax list, and in the ordination of the future it is certain to disappear altogether. The progress of white labor is running out that of the slave, and no human agency can that progress now arrest. There are only two or three slave pens for the exchange and sale of this class of property in the city; whereas a few years ago the signs "negroes for sale" were met with in almost every block in the business quarters. Slaves were formerly imported into Missouri from Kentucky, Virginia and Tennessee. Now, the tide instead of following its Westward course, flows out towards the Gulf. Instead of shipping negroes into the interior, the dealers are receiving all their supplies from that quarter. These facts cannot be gainsayed—the proofs are within the reach of everybody, and their portents point unmistakeably to the speedy disappearance of the institution from Missouri. It is impossible to retain negroes here when their value is twenty per cent below the price paid in the Gulf States. It is not reasonable to suppose that farmers and others will pay $1,500 for a good field hand when the interest on that sum, added to the expense of keeping, clothing and guarding him will exceed the hire of a white laborer who can accomplish three times the work of the slave.

Copyright © 2026 Newspapers.com. All Rights Reserved.