

# TEACHER'S GUIDE

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### MISSION 2: "Flight to Freedom"

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#### **"Negro Stealing" Kentucky Newspaper Editorial (1847)**

*As this article shows, slaveholders in Kentucky felt threatened by free blacks who were not subject to the same tight supervision as enslaved African Americans. In particular, whites feared that free blacks would conspire with northern abolitionists to encourage slaves to escape from or rebel against their owners. In 1850, Kentucky passed a new state Constitution which discouraged slave owners from freeing slaves by requiring all newly free slaves to be transported out of state at the owner's expense.*

Notwithstanding the number of servants that have been inveigled from their owners in this community, there seems to be an unaccountable neglect on the subject. All agree that we have abolitionists among us, who probably encourage our Negroes to abscond; yet there is no proper effort to detect them, not to arrest the real actors in this nefarious system of robbery; for in point of property or private rights [sic], they might as well steal our horses or any thing else....One thing is certain, we have too many free Negroes among us, who have constant Intercourse with our servants, and with both sides of the River. These interlopers are most likely to be the immediate instrument of those detestable incendiaries, who like their master, the Devil, are always zealous in mischief.

Those Negroes ought to be removed by law, if convenient, but at all events to be removed and kept away. If they are legally free, let them enjoy freedom among their benevolent friends; the free states are wide enough to accommodate them, and they are not wanted in this community. Other states have laws against the intrusion of free Negroes, and if our laws are not sufficiently explicit to protect our property, let us have them improved without delay.

The loss of our servants is a serious inconvenience, and to have them contaminated and stolen away, is an outrage not to be endured with impunity. From the tone of feeling in this vicinity, something must and will be done very soon on this subject. WATCH!

Source: *Licking Valley Register*, October 22, 1847, p. 3.