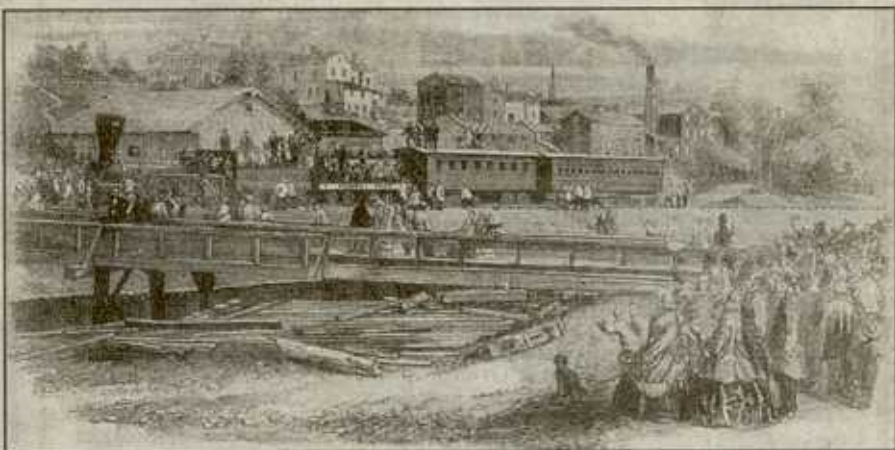


diversity, strength to county



Above, in this illustration, the first train from New York arrives on the Atlantic & Great Western Railroad at Jamestown on Aug. 25, 1860. At left, the Hawley Block in the right foreground stood on the site of the Ballard Tavern, built in 1815. At the corner of Main and Second streets is seen the Chautauque County Bank building of colonial architecture, its second building, which was built in 1833 and burned in 1861.

Sam Smith, a fugitive slave from Virginia who worked for an abolitionist on one of the farms in the town of Busti, met his master face-to-face at the circus. This was a terrifying experience for Smith. He rushed back to Busti to warn the abolitionists and the other runaway slaves. Even the free Negroes rushed from the circus as soon as they had learned what had happened. The fugitive slaves found safety in the swamp on the northside of Jamestown. The free Negroes returned to "Little Africa."

Slave catchers had a reputation of kidnapping free Negroes and selling them into slavery.

Early the next morning three carriage loads of southern slave catchers left Jamestown bound for the town of Busti. It soon turned into a raiding party. They broke into homes looking for fugitive slaves. They showed no mercy or no

respect for the innocent homeowner. The raiders would later cause physical harm.

The raiding party silently approached the William Storum farm. Harrison Williams, a runaway slave, was working in the barnyard. He was seized, shackled and chained within minutes. Storum's daughter, Marinda, ran from the house and tried to stop them. Her clothes were half torn off as she struggled with the slave catchers. Her husband, Lewis Clark, was busy helping another fugitive slave to escape. Williams was thrown into one of the carriages and the raiding party made their escape.

One would wonder if anything good could come out of such a tragic episode, but it did. Even the pro-slavery people were aroused. Did one human being have the right to enslave another human being because of the color of his skin, and still consider themselves Christians? They saw how quickly freedom could be snuffed out.

The Underground Railroad Movement became stronger in the county. Never again in the history of our nation would there be so much diversity in a social movement, and it happened right here in Chautauque County. Teachers, ministers, lawyers, doctors, merchants, farmers — black and white, old and young, rich and poor — all working together on the Underground Railroad for the common cause to aid runaway slaves on their way to freedom.

