

Railroad

From Page S-1

Runaway slaves seeking refuge in Jamestown usually came up through western Pennsylvania, Sugar Grove and Busti where other abolitionists were operating. Upon reaching Jamestown, they traveled "over the hill" to Catherine Harris' house.

Silas Shearman was one of the foremost workers; at one time he brought three here and wanted me to hurry up and get them something to eat and then he said "They will be shipped off." This was done, but I don't know who took them.

Phineas Crossman told Lockwood that Silas Shearman also secreted runaways on his property on the east side of Pine between Third and Fourth streets. Shearman arrived in Jamestown in 1822, a journeyman saddler. Crossman took "as many as five" at one time from the back door of the Shearman home. These he

delivered to the next station in Ellington. Crossman also mentioned the names of financial supporters, "stockholders" in UGRR parlance, who could be counted on for contributions of food and clothing. Alonzo Kent, Lewis Hall and Madison Burnell are prominent among them.

Shearman's home in mid-village was far more visible than the Harris home on Seventh. The village, by most accounts, was generally antislavery, although Gilbert Hazeltine, author of *The Early History of the Town of Ellicott*, noted that his UGRR activity made Silas Shearman "unpopular" among his neighbors. The standard procedure was to solicit funds from the stockholders while runaways were in hiding. One may well imagine from the testimony of Catherine Harris that Silas Shearman was earnest and impatient to move the runaways on. When runaways were pre-

sent in Jamestown, he was a busy man. Besides soliciting for funds, he arranged for transportation to Ellington. Presumably, he carried runaways there himself. His descendants built the successful Shearman Brothers furniture factory.

The City of Jamestown has agreed to the placement of the tableau in Dow Park. The former cemetery's history, and its beautiful large trees, provide the perfect context for what should become a focal point for renewed interest in Jamestown's early history. A fund has been established at the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation for the reception of donations to this project. Tax deductible contribution may be made to the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation (CRCF) Underground Railroad Tableau Fund. CRCF is located at 418 Spring St., Jamestown, N.Y., 14701.

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