

THESIS

THE UNDER GROUND RAILWAY OF THE
LAKE COUNTRY OF WESTERN NEW YORK

ELBERT COOK WIXOM

1903

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THE UNDER GROUND RAILWAY OF THE LAKE COUNTRY
OF WESTERN NEW YORK

A Thesis

presented by

Elbert Cook Wixom

to

The Faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences

for the Degree of

Bachelor of Arts.

Cornell University

June, 1903.

D.Y.

B i b l i o g r a p h y

- W. H. Siebert: The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom. Macmillan Co., 1898.
- Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, written by himself. Park Publishing Co., Hartford, Conn., 1882.
- James Freeman Clarke: Anti-Slavery Days. R. Worthington, New York: 1884.
- R. C. Smedley: History of the Underground Railroad. Lancaster, Pa. Printed at the office of the Journal: 1883.
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- Wm. F. Peck: Semi-Centennial History of the City of Rochester. Syracuse, N. Y.: D. Mason & Co., publishers, 1884.
- John J. Lalor: Cyclopaedia of Political Science. Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co. 1881.
- Wm. Still: The Underground Railroad. Philadelphia: Porter & Coates, 1872.

P r e f a c e

In writing this thesis it has been my purpose to secure such facts as are ascertainable regarding the work of the Under Ground Railway in the Lake Country of Western New York, and to place them on record before they are forgotten.

Earlier writers have paid such scant attention to the local work of the "railroad" as to make the reading of their works almost profitless for the purpose of this thesis. Of these works W. H. Siebert's "The Underground Railroad" is perhaps the best; it is, however, an investigation of the work of the institution throughout the whole country. The only part of it which has been of any great value in this investigation is a map showing the general direction of all of the routes about which he could learn anything. Those pertaining to New York have been transferred to a larger map, on which, also, are indicated the routes which I have established.

Wm. Still's "Underground Railroad" is merely a collection of interesting anecdotes and thrilling escapes of the fugitives, and, from its very nature, has been of no particular value in these investigations. R. C. Smedley's Underground Railroad is of a general nature; it does not attempt to establish the location of any of the routes, and

has, accordingly, been of but little value to the writer.

In fact, there appears to be no literature, which, in any extended way, deals with the work of the institution in New York state.

Since there is such a dearth of material of the required character, I turned my attention to the few surviving participants in the work of the Under Ground Rail Road in this state, and through correspondence and interviews, I have obtained from them, and the descendants of those not living, the material herewith presented.

The correpondence has been arduous but interesting; the interviews instructive.

For the mechanical work on the map appearing in the appendix, credit is cheerfully given to William Tracy Peck, Cornell '02, and to Walter Edward Stockwell, Cornell '03.

Elbert Cook Wixom.

Ithaca, N. Y.,

May 26, 1903.

THE UNDERGROUND RAILWAY OF THE LAKE COUNTRY OF
WESTERN NEW YORK.

It is generally admitted that no such numbers of fugitives as are known to have fled from their bondage could possibly have escaped had they depended solely upon their own exertions. From the beginning of the anti-slavery agitation about 1830, and especially nearer 1850, a mysterious organization made it a business to receive, forward, conceal, and protect fugitives. To that organization the name of the Under Ground Rail Road was given.

The first efforts towards any systematic organization for the aid and protection of fugitive slaves are found among the Quakers of Pennsylvania. The great number of cases of kidnapping which occurred in this state after the passage of the law of 1793, by their injustice aroused the people to action in behalf of the free blacks; and, their sympathies once enlisted for the colored race, it was but a step to the aid of the fugitive negroes.* From this time, as the number of runaways increased, new agencies were constantly being established, until from the slave states to Canada a perfect chain of stations was arranged, not more than one day's journey apart.† In 1869 S. J. May wrote: "There have always been scattered throughout the slave holding states in-

*Smedley: Underground Railroad, p. 26.
†Lalor's Cyclopaedia, Vol. I. p. 5.

individuals who have abhorred slavery, and have pitied the victims of our American despotism. These persons have known, or have taken pains to find out, others at convenient distances northward from their abodes who sympathized with them in commiserating the slaves. These sympathizers have known or heard of others of like mind still farther north, who again have had acquaintances in the free states that they knew would help the fugitive on his way to liberty. Thus lines of friends were formed from many parts of the South to the very borders of Canada.*

As negroes began to disappear, and their masters found themselves unable to trace them farther than certain towns in Pennsylvania, they said, in bewilderment, "There must be an Under Ground Rail Road somewhere" and this expression became the name by which the whole system was known.† This institution is described by Siebert as being "simply a form of combined defiance of national laws, on the ground that those laws were unjust and oppressive."‡

Although often varied by circumstances, the general method of the work was always the same. In the South, money was generally the motive, and for its sake the managers of the railroad could usually get someone to aid a slave in escaping, and crossing the line. In the North it was an unselfish,

*Recollections of Anti-Slavery Conflict, pp. 96, 97.
†Smedley, Underground Railroad, p. 35.
‡Siebert, Introduction, p. viii.

and sometimes dangerous work of charity.

Fugitives arrived at the first station, ignorant, half-clothed, dirty and hungry. They were fed, and, in order to elude the advertisements sent through the states, disguises were furnished. For women, the large veiled bonnet, and plain attire of the Quakeress proved one of the best costumes. The men received a slip of paper, with a word or two which would be recognized at the next place, and, unless special precaution was necessary, were sent forward on foot. Women and children were often taken in closed carriages, sometimes constructed for the purpose.*

To conduct people over this long line, and to baffle all plans of their pursuers, required quick wit, as well as great courage and coolness. So successful were the conductors in this respect, however, that a discouraged slave-hunter, after a fruitless search once said it was "as easy to find a needle in a haymow, as a negro among the Quakers."§

An example of the most courageous and successful action may be found in the life of Harriet Tubman Davis, now living at Auburn, N. Y., who, when a young girl, made her escape from slavery alone and unassisted. After several years of work in the North, she determined to go back for her family. This trip was safely accomplished, and, followed by others, during her life she had made nineteen journeys,

*Smedley, 64, 138. Jas. R. Cox, Document 5.
§Smedley, p. 148.

never losing a person, and assisting over 300 to Canada.

The Rev. James Freeman Clarke gives the following account of her methods:* "She said she first obtained enough money, then went to Maryland, where she privately collected a party of slaves and then got them ready to start. She satisfied herself that they had enough courage and firmness to run the risks. For if once a negro entered her party there was no falling back. Fully determined herself, she would allow no one to return. She next made arrangements so that they should set out Saturday night, as there would be no opportunity on Sunday for advertising them, so that they had that day's start on their journey North. Then she had places prepared where she could be sure that they would be protected and taken care of; if she had the money to pay for that protection. When she was at the North, she tried to raise funds until she got a certain amount, and then went South to carry out this plan. She always paid some colored man to follow after the person who put up the posters advertising the runaway, and pull them down as fast as they were put up."

When she found the party were closely pursued, she would take them for a time on a train southward bound, as no one seeing a company of negroes going in this direction would for an instant suppose them to be fugitives.

From an examination of the preceding pages, the

*Clarke, Anti-Slavery Days, p. 81.

reader may infer, as is the fact, that the authors from whom references have been made treated that phase of history known as the Under Ground Rail Road from a general, and not from a local, point of view. In fact, there seems to be no local treatment of the New York branch of the "railroad." This lack of literature on the work of the institution in Central and Western New York is probably partly due to the fact that but a comparatively small number of fugitives escaped through this region, and partly because no one writer, in a single book, could take up in detail the work of all the routes and their branches which existed in the various states.

The writer, therefore, has attempted to work out in detail the history of the Under Ground Rail Road in Central and Western New York, and to represent geographically the result of his investigations.

There are many features of the Under Ground Rail Road that can best be understood by a geographical representation of the system. Such a representation it has been possible to make by piecing together the scraps of information in regard to various routes and parts of routes gathered from the letters and reminiscences of a number of Abolitionists and Friends or their descendents. The more or less limited area in which each agent operated was the field within which he was not only willing, but usually anxious, to confine his knowledge of underground activities. Ignorance of one's accomplices beyond a few adjoining stations was naturally felt to be a

safeguard. The local character of the information resulting from such precautions places the investigator under the necessity of patiently studying his materials for what may be called the cumulative evidence in regard to the geography of the system. It is because the evidence gathered has been cumulative and to a considerable degree corroborative that a general map can be prepared. But a map thus constructed cannot, of course, be considered complete, for it cannot be supposed that after the lapse of a generation representatives of all the lines and branches could be discovered. Nevertheless, however much the map may fall short of showing the system in its completeness, it will be found to help the reader materially in his attempt to realize the extent and importance of this movement.

Perhaps the most important route in New York state was known as the Albany route. Frederick Douglass, who was familiar with this route during the period of his residence in Rochester, describes it as starting at Baltimore, running thence through Wilmington, Philadelphia, New York, Albany, Syracuse and Rochester to St. Catharines, Canada.* The little hamlet of Farmington, Ontario county, where there was a settlement of Friends, was on this route.

The so-called station at Syracuse was kept by Bishop J. W. Loguen, who made arrangements for the care of the fugitives while in Syracuse, and also for their transporta-

*Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, p. 329.

tion to other points toward Canada. Some of them were sent northward through Fulton to Oswego and thence to Canada; in one instance, at least, a slave girl belonging to a southern family named Davenport, which at the time was in Syracuse, was taken to the home of Gerritt Smith at Peterboro, Madison Co., thence in Mr. Smith's carriage to Mexico, thence to Port Ontario, and thence to Canada. This slave girl, disguised in one of his son's clothes, was taken from Syracuse by Mr. Nathaniel Miller to his home in Skaneateles, and thence Mr. Miller took her to Peterboro, losing on the journey a valuable horse by overdriving.*

Mr. Alexander G. Miller, a son of Nathaniel, was a participant in the Jerry rescue. The plan of the rescue was for a number of carriages, each drawn by a white horse, to be stationed near the court house. Each carriage, with one exception, was to have in it a negro and a white man, and, after the rescue, all were to drive off in differing directions. One of these carriages was driven by Mr. Miller.‡

Other fugitives were taken from Syracuse to Skaneateles, where there was a community of Friends and a considerable number of Abolitionists; of the latter Nathaniel Miller and Alfred Wilkinson were the most prominent. Among the Friends who sympathized strongly with the fugitives, and contributed towards the necessary expenses involved, were

*From A. G. Miller, Auburn. Notes. Document 1.
 ‡From John D. Barrow, Skaneateles. Document 2.

Obadiah Thorne, Elias Thorne, Caleb W. Allis, and James Cannings Fuller, the last of whom was the Station Agent.*

The experiences of Harry Grimes and two other fugitives who had many thrilling adventures in their escape from slavery, are related in Still's Underground Railroad.†

Grimes, after reaching central New York, was employed by Lewis Cleveland, but soon after went to work for Obadiah Thorne, for whom he worked for a number of years.‡ He was frugal and industrious and thus accumulated \$2,000 or \$3,000, with which he bought a small farm near Skaneateles. His wife sent him a little blue ribbon, which she told him to wear and always think of her; but, at the close of the war when he sent for her, he found that she had married a "yellow nigger." Harry at once purchased pistols and started South to shoot him, but upon reaching New York, he relented and returned to Skaneateles. Soon after he sold his farm and went to Philadelphia to live.

In Mr. Fuller's house at Skaneateles there was a blind cellar in which the fugitives were secreted at night. "On one occasion," says Miss Mary Florence Gregory,** a great grand-daughter of James Cannings Fuller, "a negro and his wife were driven by my grandfather to Rochester. The man was dressed as a coachman. His wife wore the Quaker costume, including bonnet, borrowed from my great grand-mother, and sat

*Document 2: J. D. Barrow.

†Still, pp. 422-27.

‡Letter from Martha G. Thorne, Skaneateles. Document 3.

**Document 4. Letter from Miss Mary Florence Gregory, Skaneateles.

on the back seat in as stately a manner as could be assumed, while her husband drove her to prospective freedom. On another occasion James Cannings Fuller went South to purchase a slave family. After doing so he could find no transportation for them, all coaches refusing to take them, which necessitated the purchase of stage coach, horses, and all. In Skaneateles at this time, there was sufficient feeling against the anti-slavery movement to cause great indignation upon the occasions of the visits of Frederick Douglass to my great grandfather."

Other fleeing slaves were taken from Skaneateles down Skaneateles Creek to Skaneateles Junction, from there through Elbridge, Jordan, Baldwinsville and Fulton to Oswego, and thence across Lake Ontario to Canada and freedom.*

Still others were sent from Skaneateles to Auburn, where, during the summer, they were hidden in the Theological Seminary. Among those in Auburn who sympathized with the fleeing slaves, who cared for them, who assisted them in a pecuniary manner, and who carried them on to other sympathizers, were Abijah Fitch, John R. Hopkins, Andrew H. King, the Rev. Mr. Austin, a Universalist minister, Dr. Van Epps, Luther Barnes, James R. Cox, and Rev. L. D. Mansfield.§ It was the general custom for the one who sent the fugitive on to the North to give them, as a credential, a slip of paper on which were written some letters or words which also indicated from whom they came.

*From Jas. R. Cox. Notes. Document 5.
§ibid.

From Auburn some of the fugitives were sent northward through Port Byron, Weedsport and Ira, to Fairhaven, and thence to Canada.* Others were sent westward from Auburn to Cayuga, where they crossed the lake on the famous Cayuga Bridge, thence to Farmington above mentioned, thence to Rochester and Charlotte. At Port Byron, Billings B. Clapp, Archibald Green, and Nathan Marble, were deeply interested in the Under Ground Rail Road movement. From 1832 to the time of the war 500 passed through Auburn. Still other fugitives were sent from Auburn to Sherwood, where there was a community of Friends, thence to Perry City, crossing Cayuga Lake, possibly at Kings Ferry, but more probably at Ludlowville, since at this time Wm. Carman, a Friend, ran a ferry from Ludlowville to "Frog Point" or Trumansburg Point.†

From Perry City they were taken to Seneca Lake, usually to North Hector, where they were rowed across the lake and taken up ^{to} Starkey, through which place the Seneca Lake Route passed.

The persons engaged in the transportation of fugitives at Perry City were Humphry Tripp and Joshua Mekeel. Elnathan Wixom, Thomas Carman, Wm. Mekeel, and John Potter, all but the last of whom were Friends, rendered financial aid.

At Sherwood the station was kept by Slocum Howland; the last fugitives came through in 1843, and consisted of a man, his wife, and four children, the youngest of whom was an infant and was carried on a bag slung over its father's

*From Jas. R. Cox; Document 5.

†Letter from Chas. Tripp, Perry City: Document 6.

shoulder. They lived here in Sherwood for two years in one of Mr. Howland's tenant houses, feeling safe; they were greatly disturbed, however, by being recognized by a Southern lady visiting in the vicinity, - so much so that they fled to Canada. There they suffered so greatly that they returned to Sherwood, where they lived the remainder of their lives.*

This route, running from Auburn through Sherwood and Perry City to Starkey, was evidently merely a branch between the lines to the east and west, and was only used by those who had been informed that spies were watching at Cayuga Bridge or Auburn, on the route to the east, or at Canandaigua, if on the route to the west.‡

"The slaves and negroes made use of an institution called the "Grapevine Telegraph" by which they conveyed news from one vicinity to another, so that the colored people in this state along the line of the expected flight knew about how many and at what time the fugitives would be along. Accordingly those on the line of the route would be on the lookout for spies, and if any were discovered, the fugitives were immediately taken from that route, and were frequently taken to some community of Friends where they were cared for, and sent on their way."¶

At Weedsport, George Cramer and Manning Henderson cared for the fugitives, and at Ira Nehemiah Hoyt performed

*Letter from Emily Howland, Sherwood : Document 7.
 †Letter from Chas. Tripp: Document 6
 ‡Ibid

a similar duty.

At Farmington, it is probable that the Laphams, a large family of Friends, were instrumental in assisting the fugitives to freedom.

In Rochester, Frederick Douglass was the station agent, and was ably assisted by Isaac and Amy Post, who were Friends, Elias and Rhoda De Garmo, Asa and Huldah Anthony, Samuel Porter and Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Burtis.* Mrs. Jessie Post Baulch, a granddaughter of Mrs. Amy Post says in a letter: "I can remember my dear grandmother, saying or telling us, - of a narrow escape she and grandpa had, of taking two men dressed in her clothes down the Lake road (Boulevard now) to Charlotte, Rochester's port, to take the steamer for Canada. Grandma was rather short in stature and her skirts were a little short, but they would run any risk rather than wait. So Grandma put on her bonnets, with a veil thrown over, taking care to put the same on herself. There were marshalls everywhere, and they had only gone two or three miles when they saw one coming on horseback. Grandpa said 'dear me, Amy, what shall we do?' Grandma said, 'just thee be calm, Isaac, and I'll manage somehow, - just drive along.' Grandma then said to the two men on the back seat, 'thee must sit still, now.' Well, on came the man, slowing up, so Grandpa did the same, and when they had said good morning Grandma raised her veil, and before he could say a word, she asked

*Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, p. 329; and Jessie Post Baulch: Document 8.

him if the steamer was in, and if he knew the time of its landing, - they expected friends. The man said 'I think in an hour or so,' and she nudged Grandpa to go on and he did. Grandma said 'thank thee,' and the two on the back seat bowed, and, lowering her veil, they went on. All was still and quiet then all the way. Looking back after a time, the marshall was seen still standing there looking after them. If she had been as nervous as Grandpa was to meet an officer face to face, there would have been trouble all around."

Fugitives were concealed under garden truck, in loads of hay, merchandise, - any way to hide until they could reach the home of some friend.

Many of the fugitives crossed Lake Ontario to Canada from Charlotte, while others were sent westward to Buffalo and Black Rock, crossing the Niagara river into Canada. The Quaker costume was quite generally used by the Post family to disguise the escaping slaves.*

Mrs. Post is authority for the statement that an average of 150 per year is a conservative estimate of the number of slaves escaping to Canada through Rochester.‡

Another route that came to be of importance was the Elmira route. "The Vigilance Com. of Philadelphia defrayed the travelling expenses of many fugitives in send-

*Letter from Mrs. Baulch: Document 8.

‡History of Rochester, W. F. Peck, p. 462.

ing some to New York City, some to Elmira and a few to Canada." * "In 1844 John W. Jones, an escaped slave from Virginia, settled in Elmira, and, together with Mr. Jervis Langdon, a prominent citizen of the town, began to receive fugitives. A few years later the Northern Central railroad was constructed, and supplied a means of travel through Western New York to Niagara Falls." §

These two men were instrumental in securing the passage of the fugitives to Canada. They were frequently sent by rail to Niagara and were always put in the baggage car at an early hour in the morning. ¶

Other of the fugitives were sent from Elmira through Corning, Addison and Hornellsville to Dunkirk and thence to Canada.**

Mr. Daniel Denning, now residing at Big Flats, was, about 1852, living in Corning where he was employed as a mason and builder. At this time he was making some repairs to the Pane foundry, and on going to his work early one morning, he found seventeen men, women, and children in the building. They had railroad tickets from Waverly to Dunkirk, but by some mistake had been put off at Corning. After feeding and clothing them Mr. Denning and his colored friend M. F. Lucas took them to

*Siebert, p. 78.

§Letter from S. Mills Day, Honeoye: Document 9; Siebert, pp. 127-28.

¶Siebert, p. 143; Letter of Mr. Langdon.

**Letter from S. M. Day, Honeoye: Document 9.

Dunkirk, put them on a boat and sent them to Canada. Mr. Denning also frequently carried others from Corning to Addison on their way to Dunkirk.*

Besides Messrs. Denning and Lucas, B. W. Pane, Elic Alcott, Horace G. Phelps, and Jerry Redfield assisted in getting the party of seventeen from Corning to Dunkirk and doubtless also assisted other fugitives.

Others were sent Northward from Elmira through Big Flats, Montour Falls, Watkins, Rock Stream, Eddytown, Starkey and Gorham to Canandaigua. At Big Flats the fugitives were cared for by the Owen brothers, Elijah and George Stevens.†

In Still's Underground Railroad there is a letter dated at Havanna, now Montour Falls, written for an escaped slave in the employ of Hon. Charles Cook, by N. Coryell.‡ Miss Grace Cook, a niece of Charles Cook, says that she is positive that neither her father, Elbert Cook, nor her uncle were engaged in underground activities. The letter written by Mr. N. Coryell, however, would indicate that he was at least a sympathizer with the undertaking. In Watkins, probably the Abbeys and the Barnes lent their assistance to the fugitives.

At least one fugitive wandered from the regular route along the west shore of Seneca Lake, and went to

*Letter from Daniel Denning, Big Flats: Doc. 10.
 †ibid. A. B. Hurd, Document 11.
 ‡Still, pp. 330-31.

Perry City, where he was cared for by Humphry Tripp. From here he was sent to Sherwood, crossing Cayuga Lake, probably on the Trumansburg-Ludlowville ferry.*

At Rock Stream they were assisted by Captain Stephen Hurd, at Eddytown by General Timothy Hurd and at Gorham by Col. Sherman Hurd. Deacon Luther Cleveland, and Deacon Harvey Wickes were also prominent conductors along this line.‡ From Canandaigua the fugitives were sent to Farmington, thence to Rochester and Charlotte.¶

It is possible that this route passed through Penn Yan, the town of Potter, Yates Co., and thence to Canandaigua, as it is known that there was at least one man in the town of Potter, George Wyman, who looked with favor upon the cause of the escaping slave.**

At Naples, N. Y., there was a station kept by Wm. Marks, who carried or sent the fleeing bondman to Allens Hill, where they were taken by George Brown. On one occasion Mr. Marks had two fugitives in his house, where they were to stay until evening. Friends warned him that slave chasers were in town with dogs. Mr. Marks, who was an undertaker, immediately ordered his assistant to curtain the windows of the hearse and drive it around to the door. The negroes were directed to walk into the hearse on planks provided for the purpose, and were then

*Document 6. Chas. Tripp, Perry City.

‡A. B. Hurd, Painted Post; Article in Watkin's Express of Nov. 9, 1902, Watkins, N. Y. Document 11.

¶George Johnson, Document 18.

**W. R. Marks, Canandaigua, Document 12.

taken by Mr. Marks to George Brown at Allens Hill. The planks were carried away, and thrown into the hog yard. Soon after the pursuers were on their track with the dogs; they succeeded in tracing them to Mr. Mark's house but there the scent was lost: the dogs were baffled, and the slaves escaped. *

An escaped slave was working for John Hill of Naples. The slave, who was a magnificent specimen of humanity, was, in company with a number of other men, running a pile driver. A slave catcher appeared on the scene and attempted to take the negro into captivity and back to the bondage of the South. The slave resisted, however, and succeeded in persuading his pursuer that he was in a free community and that he would not return to slavery. W. R. Marks, a son of Wm. Marks, could not say from where the slaves were brought to Naples, nor where they were taken from Allens Hill. §

A letter from S. D. Short of Honeoye says that "Honeoye, Ontario county, was one of the principal stations" but says nothing as to whence they came or whither they were taken. ¶ The implication, however, is that they were taken to Rochester, as he says that "in order to escape detectives in Rochester, fugitives were taken across the city in hearses."

*Letter from W. R. Marks, Canandaigua, Doc. 12.
 §ibid, Doc. 13.
 ¶S. D. Short, Honeoye: Doc. 14.

In a later letter Mr. Short mentions Wm. Goodell, Gideon Pitts, Dennis Pennell, Samuel Franklyn, Elias S. Gilbert, Hiram Pitts, Ira Justin and Caleb Briggs as being prominent abolitionists and very active in the Underground Rail Road work in Honeoye.*

Mr. Elias S. Gilbert, a former resident of Honeoye, speaks of Harvey Blackmer, who, assisted by another man, carried two slaves who appeared in a political meeting held in Bloomfield, Ontario county, from there to Canada. §

Another route of considerable importance came up from Virginia, passing through Montrose, Pa., and Owego, and thence to Ithaca, where the fugitives were cared for by George Johnson, a colored man, but nevertheless one who has remarkable fluency of expression, and a great knowledge of history. ¶ The fleeing slaves were secreted in the cellar of a building where Jay Wortman's meat market now stands; as many as 14 were hidden here at one time. No particular disguises were used; the fugitives were given a change of clothing, their hair and beards were sometimes cut to change their appearance, and occasionally a beard was started to cover a facial blemish. Three routes led out of Ithaca; one by boat to Cayuga, where they touched the main line; another by land to Ludlowville, where Ben. Joy kept a station, and thence through Sherwood to Auburn;

*Letter from S. D. Short, Document 15.

§Letter from E. S. Gilbert, Document 16.

¶Interview with George Johnson, Ithaca, Doc. 18.

The third was along the west shore of Cayuga Lake; at the Haight Church on the turnpike about three miles out of Ithaca they were cared for by Deacon Haight and Deacon Luce, who sent them on through Trumansburg, Covert, and Farmer, finally arriving at the foot of Cayuga Lake where the main line crossed from east to west. Among the Ithaca people who assisted Mr. Johnson there were Benjamin Halsey, John Murdock, E. T. Tillotson, and Benjamin Johnson.

The importance of this route may be better estimated when it is known that as many as 114 fugitives were received and forwarded by Mr. Johnson.

In the invaluable bibliography of Siebert's book there are references to the following articles in the Batavia "Spirit of the Times": "Local History" by John Kennedy, Batavia;* "The Underground Railroad of 40 Years Ago" by Elijah Hufteten, Le Roy.†

Mr. Kennedy's article proved of no value in this investigation, but in reply to a letter from the writer, he referred to Mr. S. W. Fiske of Morgansville, who sent the writer a copy of "Lights on the Under Ground Rail Road" by Elijah Hufteten. In this article Mr. Hufteten said "The route leading through Genesee county was described in a former article on this subject, but I will say here that

*Notes from Batavia "Spirit of the Times" Feb. 15, 1896: Doc. 15.
 †Same, Feb. 8, 1896. Doc. 17

the route entered from Covington, at which place two or three came together, and the one most used came from Friendship. The LeRoy camp or station was about two and one-half miles northwest of LeRoy village and was reached by a north and south road that is about a mile west of the village.* The former article, in which is the description of the Genesee county route is the article published in the "Spirit of the Times" and describes the route as follows:§ "from Friendship to Covington, thence to Pavilion Center, thence down the south side of the Oatka to a road that led in old times to what was known as Tomlinson's Mill, where route crossed the stream, thence east a short distance to a road leading north to LeRoy where Daniel McDonald was agent, thence west to Morgansville, and by Fisher's Mill, now HorseShoe Lake, thence to the five corners on the town line between Batavia and Elba, and over the town line road just mentioned to some place in the town of Pembroke, thence to Lockport, and thence to Lewiston, where the fugitives crossed the river into Canada." The fugitives, especially the women and children, were carried in Rockaway carriages, which are similar to an ordinary canopy top with the curtains let down.

*The route through Genesee county was changed in

*Lights on the Under Ground Rail Road, by Elijah Hufteten : LeRoy.

§Under Ground Rail Road of 40 Years Ago, by Elijah Hufteten, in "Spirit of the Times" Batavia, Feb. 6, 1896. Doc. 17.

the early part of 1857. In the fall of 1856 two middle aged men were being taken over the town line road that divides Batavia and Elba, when the following circumstance occurred: old people will remember that fifty years ago but very few carriage wheels were secured by nuts as they are now, but were fastened by what were called lynch pins. These pins sometimes worked out and the wheel came off, and this happened while going up the little hill just west of the five corners, and all got out to look for the pin. While the search was in progress a dog came over the fence to cross the road, and seeing the darkeys made for them with a yelp, but he never yelped again. Quick as a flash one of them caught him by the hind legs and, with a powerful swing, struck him down against the road with a force that must have broken every bone in his body, then with another swing sent him over the fence among the weeds. Fear seemed to give the man the strength of a giant. Just as they had found the lynch pin some men who were out cooning came up and inquired if they had seen anything of a dog. Yes, a dog had been along there and they thought he went down the road. The hunters looked at the party curiously and seemed to wonder why anyone should be out so late unless they were cooning, but a day or two later, when the dead dog was found, it dawned upon them that he had been killed on the Underground Railroad. They had valued

the dog highly and were so provoked about it that they reported the route to the officers. This was known as the Covington route, but after the dog episode a new route was needed, and one was located at or near Friendship. This led nearly direct to Holland, Erie county, thence through Elma and Lancaster to Bowmansville about four miles north of Lancaster, where there was a stopping place. Mr. McDonald, who formerly kept the station at LeRoy, had moved here and had charge of this station. From here the fugitives were taken to Lockport, from which place they were passed along over the line.*

Another route, a portion of which has been worked out, had a station at Ashford, Cattaraugus county, in charge of Matthew Weber. From here slaves were sent or carried through Springville, Concord, and Eden Center to Buffalo, where they crossed to Canada. On one occasion a party of fugitives came to Mr. Weber's and was hidden in his hay mow until evening. He then put them in his wagon, covered them with sheep skins, leaving their heads uncovered, but under the wagon seat. In this manner he carried them safely to Buffalo, although some slave pursuers looked with suspicion upon his load and threatened to search it. But Mr. Weber's apparent willingness to have his load searched disarmed them of their suspicion, and they were allowed him and his load of human freight to proceed. Mr.

*Lights on the Under Ground Rail Road, E. Hufteten, LeRoy.

Weber's Presbyterian church brethren must have looked upon his underground activities with great disfavor, for, as a punishment, they ex-communicated him from his church.*

If as a result of these investigations any new material is provided for the use of later students of this very interesting subject, the writer will feel that his work has not been in vain.

*Notes. R. F. Weber, Salamanca, N. Y.: Doc. 19.

Ebert book Nixon.

A p p e n d i x A.

Document No. 1.

Notes from conversation with A. G. Miller,
Auburn.

A Southern family consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Davenport and a child were visiting in Syracuse. They had with them a handsome young slave girl for the child's nurse. One afternoon when the child was in the care of the nurse, she took the child to its mother, saying that she wished to go out. This request was granted and she went to Mr. Nathaniel Miller, the father of A. G. Miller, who took her to his home in Skaneateles, disguised in one of his sons' clothes. Afterward he took her to Gerritt Smith at Peterboro, who kept a well known station. On the journey to Peterboro he lost a fine horse. It was Mr. Smith's custom to take the fugitives in his carriage to Mexico, and from there they were sent to Port Ontario.

At the time of the Jerry Rescue Mr. A. G. Miller was visiting his uncle in Syracuse and was the driver of one of the carriages drawn by white horses.

Mr. Miller remembers seeing, at one time, 16 men, women and children lying on the floor in front of the fire place in his father's house.

Document No. 2

" Letter from John D. Barrow, Skaneateles.

The negroes fleeing from slavery by way of the underground railroad were helped and forwarded from station to station by sympathizers, who hid them or transported them, mostly at night. The most prominent of these sympathizers in Skaneateles were James Cannings Fuller, Nathaniel Miller, Elias and Obadiah Thorne and Alfred Wilkinson.

"Alexander Miller, son of Nathaniel, tells me he once saw sixteen fugitives sleeping on his father's kitchen floor at one time. Fugitives would be kept hidden until a good chance came for forwarding them to the next station. Mr. Miller tells me how a slave girl once came to his home who had left her master and mistress, then on a visit to Syracuse. She was nearly white, with straight hair and was a nurse of a child of the family. After keeping her hidden a few days Mr. Miller, Sr., took her in a buggy and started for Peterboro, the residence of Gerritt Smith, where he left her safely, though it caused him the loss of a favorite and valuable horse.

"Alexander Miller was a witness to the Jerry rescue. Owing to the reputation of Syracuse as an abolition stronghold, and its opposition to the fugitive slave law,

the Federal authorities had seemingly intended to make an example there, to prove that the law could be executed. Mr. Miller was in Syracuse on the day of arrest, visiting his uncle Abner Bates. His uncle had asked him to stay over night, as there was work for him to do. He saw Jerry carried to the Court House, in the custody of four United States marshalls, who were holding him down on a truck. A determination was made for a rescue, and a plan adopted after it to mislead the authorities. There were to be a number of buggies, each with a white horse, and two inmates, one white and one black. After the rescue these buggies were to drive fast in different directions from the city. Miller in his buggy waiting near the Court House saw all that could be seen outside. A large mob had collected to storm the Court House, which was situated on the bank of the canal. There was a pile of timbers or heavy planks near by, and one stick was seized by some of the more vigorous of the mob, and used as a battering ram against the door of the Court House. Admittance was speedily obtained, and the mob soon filled the house. There was terror among the officials, and there was nothing for them but flight. This was accomplished from every available window, and as some of them stood over the canal, Miller saw some of the marshalls go into the water. However, no

lives were lost, though one marshall had his arm broken. But Jerry was rescued and got safely to Canada.

"It was presumed that the buggies or some of them were hotly pursued by the officers of the law, but Jerry was not in any of them. It was another colored man every time. Miller thinks he was pursued, but he had a good horse and knew the roads and their turns well, and was soon put of the way of pursuers.

John D. Barrow."

Document No. 3.

Letter from Martha G. Thorne, Skaneateles, daughter
of Obadiah Thorne.

"Harry Grimes did not come to our house first, but to Luther Cleveland's, then to father's. After the war he sent for his children, who came to our house and stayed until they found employment. His wife told him to wear a little blue ribbon which she sent him, and to always think of her; but when the war was over, he found she had married a "yellow nigger." He accordingly bought pistols and started south to shoot him, but his wrath cooled by the time he got to New York. He never got over that blow,—he had talked about her so much during those years, and had gone through so much, that when he came back from New York he seemed like an old man. Harry was industrious and thrifty and thus saved enough to buy a nice place, costing from \$2,000 to \$3,000. The place was a small farm in Skaneateles, and he bought it at the close of the war, thus having it all ready to take his wife Susie home; but when he found that she was married, he sold it, and finally went to Philadelphia to live."

Document No. 4.

Extracts from a Letter from Miss Mary Florence Gregory of Skaneateles, great granddaughter of James Cannings Fuller.

"At his (James Cannings Fuller) house in Skaneateles, was a station for the 'railroad.' The slaves were secreted in an underground cellar and at night driven to Rochester, which was the next station. Different disguises were used as necessity demanded. On one occasion, a negro and his wife were driven by my grandfather to Rochester. The man was dressed as a coachman. His wife wore the Quaker costume, including bonnet, borrowed from my great grandmother, and sat in the back seat in as stately a manner as could be assumed, while her husband drove her to prospective freedom. On another occasion James Cannings Fuller went south to purchase a slave family. After doing so he could find no transportation to take them, all coaches refusing to take them, which necessitated the purchase of stage coach, horses, and all. In Skaneateles at the time there was sufficient feeling against the anti-slavery movement to cause great indignation upon the occasional visits from Frederick Douglass to my great grandfather."

Document No. 5.

Notes upon an interview with James

R. Cox, Auburn, N. Y.

The fugitives that came to Auburn were, during the summer time, hidden in the Theological Seminary.

Among those in Auburn who assisted in the work were Abijah Fitch, John R. Hopkins, Andrew H. King, the Rev. Mr. Austin, Rev. L. D. Mansfield, a Universalist minister, Dr. Van Epps, Luther Barnes, Jas. R. Cox and, at Port Byron, there were Billings B. Clapp, Archibald Green, and Nathan Marble. At Weedsport there were George Cramer and Manning Henderson. At Ira there was Nehemiah Hoyt.

Some of the fugitives were sent northward from Auburn through Port Byron, Weedsport, and Ira, to Fairhaven. Others were sent westward through Farmington to Rochester.

Fugitives were sent from Skaneateles through Skaneateles Junction, Elbridge, Jordan and Baldwinsville and Fulton to Oswego. From 1832 to the time of the war at least 500 passed through Auburn. They were usually given a slip of paper on which were the initials of the one who sent them, or some peculiar sign to indicate from whence they came. Occasionally they were given a word.

Document No. 6.

Letter from Charles Tripp, Perry
City.

Perry City, N. Y.,
May 4, 1903.

Dear Cousin:

Yours in regard to the Under Ground Rail Road received and I will reply at once as far as I am able.

This vicinity was not upon one of the main lines of the Under Ground Rail Road, but a sort of cross branch between lines running east and west of us and was only used, so far as my knowledge extends, by those who had been informed that spies were watching for them at Cayuga Bridge or Auburn, if they were upon the route east of here, or at Canandaigua, if upon the west route, when they would be transferred from the one to the other route by the way of our neighborhood.

So far as I can remember there never was but one slave that passed through here on the way from the west to the east and he left the Elmira, Canandaigua and Williamsport Rail Road at Watkins and came here and was helped on to Sherwood, or that vicinity. The same slave afterwards returned to Virginia and brought his mother away, leaving her in Watkins with colored people while he came here and on to Sherwood and stayed there until those in

pursuit concluded that he and his mother were in Canada. All the other slaves within my knowledge came here from Sherwood or vicinity and were taken to Seneca Lake and rowed across, then up to Starkey and so on towards Canada.

I do not remember of ever seeing any runaway slave disguised, but I do remember of two men, one of whom was a slave from one of the Washington plantations, that was the most intelligent slave I ever saw and for whom a reward of \$1,500.00 was offered for his return dead or alive. They arrived here sometime Friday night, and were very much frightened, as they ran a narrow chance of capture, if I remember right, at Auburn. Saturday they kept very secluded, but Sunday their friends convinced them that seclusion was unnecessary in this neighborhood, so they ventured out some and I distinctly remember of their sharpening their ~~disk~~ knives in father's shop and hearing them remark that they should if captured sell their lives as dearly as possible, and never be returned to slavery in the flesh. Monday morning when I awoke the slaves and father were gone. He took them to Seneca Lake and if I am not mistaken procured a row boat of your grand-uncle Henry Carman and before daylight landed them on the other side, and in a few days we received a line from them saying they had arrived in Canada. These were the last slaves that passed through here. The persons engaged in the

transportation of runaway slaves at this place so far as I know were Joshua Mekeel and my father. Elnathan Wixom, Thomas Carman, John A. Potter, Wm. Mekeel and Aaron Mekeel, and perhaps some others rendered financial aid as most or all that passed through here travelled by public conveyance until near the Canada line, except in passing from Auburn or Cayuga Bridge to Starkey.

Probably not more than six slaves were thus assisted during my remembrance, as slavery was abolished when I was quite young; but at an earlier day undoubtedly more had been helped, but I cannot tell who would know any more about it, for those that would be a generation or more older than I am are nearly or entirely gone.

As I remember the way information was received as to their safe arrival in Canada was for them to take an addressed envelope (as none of them could write), but the address would be of some person in sympathy with the operators of the Under Ground Rail Road but who had not helped in any manner in the escape of the fugitive who bore it, so that in case of capture of the fugitive and this envelope was found upon him it could easily be proved that the addressed had in no way been instrumental in his running away; this envelope would be mailed when the fugitive arrived in Canada and in due time would be received and thus the information given of his safe arrival. I

do not know as any of this will be of any benefit to you but it is the best I can do.

Yours etc.,

Charles Tripp.

P. S.-Of course you understand that the colored people both north and south understood that the "Quakers" were opposed to slavery and always stood ready to assist them in their escape from bondage and that the colored people had what was termed the "Grapevine Telegraph" by which they conveyed news from one vicinity to another, so that the colored people in this state along the line of expected flight knew about how many and at what time they would be along and were on the watch for spies and if any were discovered the fugitives were immediately taken from that route and were frequently sent to some Friends' settlement, where they were cared for and helped on their way. Also that the fugitives well knew that it was extremely dangerous to undertake to cross Niagara River by any of the public routes, but must leave the public modes of travel and get across by boat in the night, usually.

Those two slaves that I previously mentioned were so hotly pursued in Auburn that they were rushed into one of the banks there, where they were kept for several days before it was safe for them to be brought on here.

C. T.

Document No. 7.

Sherwood, N. Y.,

Feb. 8th, 1903.

Elbert C. Wixom,

Ithaca, N. Y.

Dear Sir;-

Your letter of the 5th is received.

I cannot give the details that you require for your thesis, which, permit me to say, I am glad you are going to write. There is certainly no episode of our national life fraught with more thrilling interest than the escapes of the poor bondmen from their bondage.

My father, Slocum Howland, kept a station. I do not know how many he may have sheltered. The last who came here were a man and his wife and four children from Maryland, in 1843. The youngest child was an infant and was carried in a bag slung on its father's shoulder. They set up their home in one of my father's tenant houses and lived here two years feeling safe; but a lady from the South came to visit a friend living here, and seeing the man recognized him at once. She promised not to betray them to their master, but they were so fearful of being captured and returned to slavery that they fled to Canada. There they suffered so much that they returned to the

home they had left here and remained the rest of their lives, although the passage of the fugitive slave law in 1850 renewed their disquietude. They bought their little home, and were respected useful members of the community. A family of their grandchildren still lives in the home they left.

Respectfully,

Emily Howland.

Document No. 8.

Extract from Letter from Jessie Post Baulch,
Rochester, granddaughter of Isaac
and Amy Post.

"Of those who were known to assist the fugitives
were:

Isaac and Amy Post

Asa and Huldah Anthony

Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Burtis

and

Samuel Porter.

*An uncle of mine helped three men to escape
by putting Quaker clothes on them, sending them first to
some little town near, then to Black Rock, where they
crossed into Canada. A few months afterward my uncle
had to go to Niagara Falls, where he saw one of the fugi-
tives driving a carriage, but on the Canada side. He
never ventured across the river."

Document No. 9.

Honeoye, N. Y.,
May 8, 1903.

Mr. E. C. Wixom,

Dear Sir;-

Your letter of May 4th asking for information concerning the "Underground Railroad" as it was called in this part of the state, is received.

Among the stations on the lines in Western New York were Elmira, Corning, Hornellsville. From these and other villages in the southern tier of counties the lines ran northward to Lake Ontario.

One efficient friend and helper of the fugitive slave was Mr. Jervis Langdon of Elmira. Another was Mr. Marks, an undertaker of Naples. It is told of him that once two fugitive slaves sought his aid and protection. They were hotly pursued by owner and officers. Mr. Marks temporarily concealed them in his house. He directed his assistant to hitch horses to the hearse, quickly curtained its glass sides, bundled the fugitives into it, and sent them on their way toward Canada and the north star. The pursuers searched his house from top to bottom, but their expected prey had escaped.

S. Mills Day.

Document No. 10.

Letter from Daniel Denning, Big Flats.

Big Flats, N. Y., Dec. 8, '02.

Mr. E. C. Wixom,

Ithaca, N. Y.

Dear Sir;-

Yours date of Dec. 2 received and contents duly noted.

About the year 1852 I as a mason and builder was living in Corning and making some repairs to the Pane foundry. I went to the building early one morning and in an inner room I found 17 men, women and children all huddled together. I asked them what they were doing there. A man stepped forward and showed me their railroad tickets stamped I think from Waverly to Dunkirk. By some misunderstanding they had been put off at Corning. I told them to stay where they were and I would see what I could do for them. I went and found my old friend M. F. Lucas, colored, now deceased. We took them to my house, where we fed them, in the meantime notifying our white friends B. W. Pane, Elic Alcott, Horace G. Phelps, Jerry Redfield and others, who took them in charge and clothed and fed them and sent Mr. Lucas and myself by the morning train on to Dunkirk to prepare the way and secure them passage

from there by boat to the Canada shore, which passage had to be smuggled, or supposedly so, on certain boats whose captains were supposed to know nothing that was going on. They arrived at Dunkirk about midnight and the night boat was waiting. With the help of some of the colored deck hands we got them aboard and down in the hold without attracting attention. I then returned by the morning train to my work and Mr. Lucas stayed aboard the boat with them. They arrived at the Canada shore all safe and as soon as they got on shore all knelt down and sent up a fervent prayer to God for their safe deliverance. At the same time just on the other shore at Dunkirk, by the morning train, arrived their masters, but they were too late.

There are other instances where I have driven my horse at night from Corning to Addison, helping those who were being passed on from one point to another, through Elmira, Corning, to Addison, Hornellsville and Dunkirk. This was one of the main lines of the Underground Railroad. Then they used to travel from Elmira to Watkins, Geneva, and so on that way. There were intermediate stations, such as Big Flats. The Owens Bros., Elijah Stevens and George Stevens were great friends of the escaping slaves who came their way, and assisted them in every way they could.

Respectfully yours,
Daniel Denning.

Document No. 11.

Article from the Watkins Express

-In another column will be found an interesting communication from Mr. A. B. Hurd of Painted Post concerning the underground railway, so called, of early days in this part of the state. Mr. Hurd was the eldest son of the late Stephen Hurd of Rock Stream, whose love of justice and hatred of oppression were so intense that he never hesitated at any risk in aiding a black bondman on his starlighted flight to liberty. Captain Hurd died about the year 1855. During the next score of years Mr. A. B. Hurd was a resident of Watkins. Subsequently his home has been at Painted Post. The EXPRESS would be more than pleased with any further contributions from Mr. Hurd upon this subject, which is really of great historical interest, but rapidly fading from the minds of men.—(Watkins Express, Nov. 9, 1902.)

A STORY OF JIM BROWN, THE LION-HEARTED
FUGITIVE SLAVE

Editor Watkins Express—Dear Sir;—An article in the dear old Express of recent date reminds me of events and incidents that mark the times and the years from 1825 to 1850 and later, also of the people then living upon the line of the underground railroad between Newtown (now

Elmira), on the south, and extending north along Seneca Lake and passing through Watkins, Rock Stream, Eddytown and other points to Canandaigua on the north; thence to Canada, which was at that time the objective point and land of promise to the hunted and fleeing slave; and also of the noble and humane men and women through whose assistance and encouragement the worn and weary fugitives were sent forward on their journey to Canada and freedom. Those references brought vividly to my recollection many of the scenes and experiences of my early childhood, and also those of later years.

Your request for any information in reference to the old route of the underground line, its stations, the men who kept them, and the neighbors who aided in the work, has induced me to give a few of the incidents and the names of some of the people that took part in that grand and noble work. . . . As the years passed occasional fugitives were brought in in the night time to my father's house. There they were kept secreted, no one except members of the family seeing them or knowing of their presence. They were kept hidden during the day, and the following night father would take them to some station farther north. Among those that were prominent in assisting in their escape I recall the names of Deacon Luther Cleveland, Deacon Harvey Wickes, Deacon David Abbey, Dr.

Can. Ms. 693 +
1600 Rd. Ms. 693 +

44

Enos Barnes, and last but not least, Captain Stephen Hurd. General Timothy Hurd of Eddytown kept and assisted many, as also did Col. Sherman Hurd of Gorham, N. Y. ..

At the risk of being thought dull and tedious I cannot refrain from the relation of at least one incident connected with the history of those times. It will introduce to you a character, grand and unique from any point of view. In the winter of 1835, when I was a lad ten years of age, there appeared at my father's house in the early morning of a bleak and stormy day the grandest specimen of a black man that I have ever seen before or since. When I came down to breakfast that morning, by the dim light of the tallow candle and the flickering light of the open fireplace, I beheld sitting in the chimney corner a man black as the raven's wing—a man of noble mien and almost colossal proportions. I halted in crossing the floor and my mother said to me: "Artemus, this is Jim Brown; he is tired and hungry, and has stopped for his breakfast." Jim arose, advanced a step or two and bowing low said: "De Lawd bress you, young masser, I'se glad to see you." Jim was fully six feet six inches tall, and grandly proportioned; straight as an arrow; his head and face were perfect in outline and proportion. Father and the hired man coming in at that time, mother announced breakfast. Father read a portion of scripture

and offered prayer. Surrounding the table, father said grace, to which Jim responded "Amen," "Bress de Lawd." While at breakfast, at father's request Jim told us something of his history and of his flight from servitude. Born and raised with several hundred other negroes on a plantation far down in old Virginia owned by a noted slave holder, politician and duelist, Col. Lee Hampton, who was at that time a representative in Congress, Jim had offended the colonel by too often visiting his wife and boy on a neighboring plantation and not returning until after daylight the next morning, and was also accused of knowing too much. On several occasions the colonel had bound him to the whipping post, and had scourged him with a fiendish cruelty, and had also threatened to kill him, but had on second thought concluded that a live and likely "nigger" was worth a good many more dollars than a dead one, and had therefore wisely refrained from carrying out his blood-thirsty threat. But the colonel soon after, to be rid of Jim, had sold him for a large sum to a slave-trader to be taken with others down the river. Jim knew, as did the other slaves, that being sold down the river meant slavery till death, that every door of hope and every avenue of escape would then be closed, the door locked and the key cast into the bottomless pit. The slave-trader, collecting his chattels, would return in two days and Jim

and offered prayer. Surrounding the table, father said grace, to which Jim responded "Amen," "Bress de Lawd." While at breakfast, at father's request Jim told us something of his history and of his flight from servitude. Born and raised with several hundred other negroes on a plantation far down in old Virginia owned by a noted slave holder, politician and duelist, Col. Lee Hampton, who was at that time a representative in Congress, Jim had offended the colonel by too often visiting his wife and boy on a neighboring plantation and not returning until after daylight the next morning, and was also accused of knowing too much. On several occasions the colonel had bound him to the whipping post, and had scourged him with a fiendish cruelty, and had also threatened to kill him, but had on second thought concluded that a live and likely "nigger" was worth a good many more dollars than a dead one, and had therefore wisely refrained from carrying out his blood-thirsty threat. But the colonel soon after, to be rid of Jim, had sold him for a large sum to a slave-trader to be taken with others down the river. Jim knew, as did the other slaves, that being sold down the river meant slavery till death, that every door of hope and every avenue of escape would then be closed, the door locked and the key cast into the bottomless pit. The slave-trader, collecting his chattels, would return in two days and Jim

would then be manacled to a fellow-slave and also to the chain that held the company, and the long and dreary march down the river would commence. Then Jim arose like the mighty lion-hearted man he was and defied his oppressors, registering before high heaven a most solemn and binding oath never to be taken alive or again submit to the cruel scourgings of his inhuman master. That night he bid his wife and boy a sad and tearful farewell and turned his face and footsteps toward the North, guided by the pole star, that beacon light of the fleeing slave. Jim had been more than five weeks on his toilsome and dangerous journey when he arrived, footsore and worn, at my father's house, travelling by night, sleeping and resting in the woods, in hollow logs, and in caves of the earth during the day. Many times during the journey he came near being captured or killed.

The foregoing narrative is but a fragmentary sketch of his escape from bondage. Many book pages would hardly contain the true story of the heroism and sufferings of the lion-hearted slave Jim Brown. Jim did reach Canada, and within five years he returned and rescued his wife and boy; he also in subsequent years piloted many other slaves to freedom. Some abler pen than mine should write out and give to the world a full and true history of that hero of the ebony skin.

Yours truly,

A. B. Hurd,
Painted Post, N. Y.

Document No. 12.

Canandaigua, N. Y., Dec. 9, '02.

Elbert C. Wixom,
Ithaca, N. Y.

Dear Sir:

Just where the slaves came from to reach Naples I cannot state, but I think a man by the name of David G. Underwood (now deceased) who resided at Middlesex, N. Y., could have told. From Naples they went to the home of George Brown, a farmer who lived at the foot of Allens Hill. He afterwards went west and died there. My father was very active in the cause and assisted many to escape. His name was William Marks and he had a warm personal acquaintance with such men as Gerritt Smith, Frederick Douglass, Bishop Loguen and many others who were prominent in the movement. As a child I saw many of these people. At one time in a single night father housed eighteen men, women and children. A man and wife he took away in his hearse to Allens Hill. They had been gone but a short time when three men in pursuit came after them with their dogs. I presume I knew of fifty such instances, perhaps more, as father was actively engaged in the business long before the war and many came before I can remember. . . . My father no doubt was assisted

by such men as Mr. Pitts, who resides at Honeoye. There were many men residing at Naples who assisted father by contributing money.

Very truly yours

W. R. Marks.

Document No. 13.

Notes on Interview with W. R. Marks,
Canandaigua.

William Marks, the father of W. R. Marks, had in his house two slaves, a man and his wife, who were to remain there until night. But before it was time to leave, word was brought to Mr. Marks that pursuers were in search of the fugitives. Mr. Marks, who was an undertaker, at once ordered his assistant to get his hearse ready, curtaining the glass sides, and to bring it to the door. A plank was also brought and the fugitives were ordered to crawl on the plank into the hearse. Mr. Marks then took charge of the team, and drove the hearse and fugitives to the home of George Brown, a farmer living at the foot of Allens Hill. The plank was carried away and thrown into the hog yard.

Soon afterward the pursuers, with their dogs, arrived at Mr. Marks' house, but there the dogs lost the scent.

George Wyman, who lived in the town of Potter, Yates Co., was deeply interested in the underground activities, but Mr. Marks could not state whether he took an active part in assisting them to escape.

John Hill of Naples had in his employ an escaped slave, who, with other men, were engaged in running a pile

driver. While the fugitive was at work, a slave driver attempted to capture him, but the slave worsted him in a fight, and thus won his freedom.

Document No. 14.

Honeoye, Dec. 8, 1902.

E. C. Wixom,
324 Huestis St.,
Ithaca, N. Y.

Dear Sir:

A little more than a half century ago a branch of the "Underground Railroad" extending north from the "Old Dominion" through Pennsylvania and New York to the Canadian border was engaged in the transportation of the slaves from bondage to freedom. The method of transportation over this line for the fleeing, frightened fugitive was on foot and was attended with delay, distrust and doubt. Under cover of the darkness of night, guided by the north star, they made their way from station to station. Honeoye, Ontario Co., N. Y., was one of the principal stations. Here they met true, loyal, liberty-loving friends, who extended unstinted hospitality, giving them food, clothing and many throwing every safeguard around them for their protection and safety, piloting them on their course to the next station. In order to escape detectives in Rochester (who were much more efficient in duty then than now) fugitives were carried across the city in hearses. Sore footed and sad hearted passengers over

this line were provided with stop-over passes at stations where they were secreted in attics, anterooms and cellars until sufficiently recuperated to resume their journey. This line received the most patronage during the decade and a half from 1840 to 1855, during which time James G. Burny and Gerritt Smith were candidates for president of the "Liberty" or "Abolition" party.

S. D. Short.

Document No. 15.

Honeoye, May 18th, 1903.

E. C. Wixom, Esq.,

Dear Sir:

As to your interrogations in regard to the Underground Rail Road : I cannot answer all of them. The people or many of them residing at Honeoye were intensely anti-slavery or Abolitionist. Among the active ones were Wm. Goodell, Gideon Pitts, Dennis Pennell, Samuel Franklin, Elias S. Gilbert, Hiram Pitts, Ira Justin, Caleb Briggs and others. I cannot say from where the fugitives came, but their objective point was Canada.

Very truly,

S. D. Short.

Document No. 16.

Weeping Water, Neb.,

Dec. 14, 1902.

Elbert C. Wixom,

Dear Sir:

Yours of the 12th inst reached here last evening. If there is anything I can do to assist you in preparing your thesis I will do it with great pleasure.

A mas meeting was called at West Bloomfield, Ontario county, to consider the propriety of forming a political party. While we were deliberating two escaped slaves were brought in, taken to the platform and introduced to the convention. They told their story. They were gentlemen in their dress, manners and language. They were the body servants of two distinguished men of either the senate or cabinet, whose names I have forgotten. A few questions asked and answered by them. A sum of money was raised by the convention to take them to Canada.

Two men, both athletes, Harvey Blackmer and one whose name I cannot recall, were to accompany them. These men hired a livery, sleigh and horses, and left. No more was said about it in the convention or the community. When Mr. Blackmer returned I asked him about it. He replied "we landed them safe in Canada." I asked no more

questions. He would not have replied if I had, although we were intimate friends.....

I do not believe there was any such organized Under Ground Rail Road as many suppose. That is a myth. The facts are that slaves got away and were helped in about as many ways as there were individuals to go or men to help them.....

Yours cordially,

Elias S. Gilbert.

Document No. 17.

Notes on Elijah Hufteden's article entitled "The Under
Ground Rail Road of 40 Years Ago" in the
Batavia "Spirit of the Times"

February 6, 1896.

The fugitives were carried in Rockaway carriages,
which were similar to our canopy-tops with curtains let
down.

The route most used began at Friendship, went
thence to Covington, thence to Pavilion Center, thence
down the south side of the Oatka to a road that led in
old times to what was known as Tomlinson's Mill, where it
crossed the stream; thence east a short distance to a road
leading north to LeRoy, where Daniel McDonald kept the
station; thence west to Morgansville, and by Fisher's
Mill, now Horse Shoe Lake; thence to the five corners
on the line between Batavia and Elba, and over the town
line road thus mentioned to some place in the town of
Pembroke; thence to Lockport, and finally to Lewiston,
where they crossed into Canada, going to St. Catharines.

Document No. 18.

Notes on Interview with George Johnson,
Ithaca, N. Y.

The fugitives who passed through Ithaca came up from Virginia through Montrose, Pa., and Owego to Ithaca. During the boating season they were concealed in the hold of the steamers and taken direct to Cayuga, where they joined the main line. Most of them went west over the regular route to Rochester and Charlotte. Occasionally one would go east and reach the lake at Oswego.

During the season when the boats were not running the fugitives were compelled to go overland. Some went on the east side of the lake, -to Ludlowville, where Ben. Joy kept the station, and thence to Sherwood, where they joined a route heretofore described.

Those who followed the west side of the lake, went up the turnpike to the Haight or Abolition Church about two miles northwest of Ithaca. Near here lived Deacon Haight and Deacon Luce, who received and forwarded them. From here they were sent northward along the turnpike through Trumansburg, Covert, and Farmer, finally reaching the north end of the lake, where they joined the main route. Benjamin Halsey, John Murdock, D. F. Tillotson, and Benjamin Johnson were perhaps most prominent among the people of Ithaca and vicinity who assisted in

the escape of the fugitives. So far as possible they were concealed in the cellar of a building standing where Jay Wortman's meat market now is; as many as fourteen were hidden there at one time. If there were any who were sick, or for any reason needed rest, they were sent up to Deacon Haight or Deacon Luce. No particular disguises were used; they were given different and better clothes, given a hair cut if it were needed; beard shaved off if it were a conspicuous feature, or let grow to conceal any facial blemish. As many as 114 were cared for by Mr. Johnson. Those on the Seneca Lake route who passed through Canandaigua were sent on through Farmington, Rochester and Charlotte.

Document. No. 19.

Notes on Conversation with R. F. Weber,
Salamanca, N. Y.

Matthew Weber, my grandfather, for a time lived at Ashford, Cattaraugus county, where he kept a station on the Under Ground Rail Road. From here the fugitives were sent through Springville, Concord, and Eden Center to Buffalo.

On one occasion grandfather carried a party of fugitives to Buffalo, hidden under a load of skins. Slave catchers regarded the load suspiciously, but allowed him to proceed without making a search of the load.

Owing to his participation in the Under Ground work he was excommunicated from the Presbyterian church.

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Albert Cook Wixom.

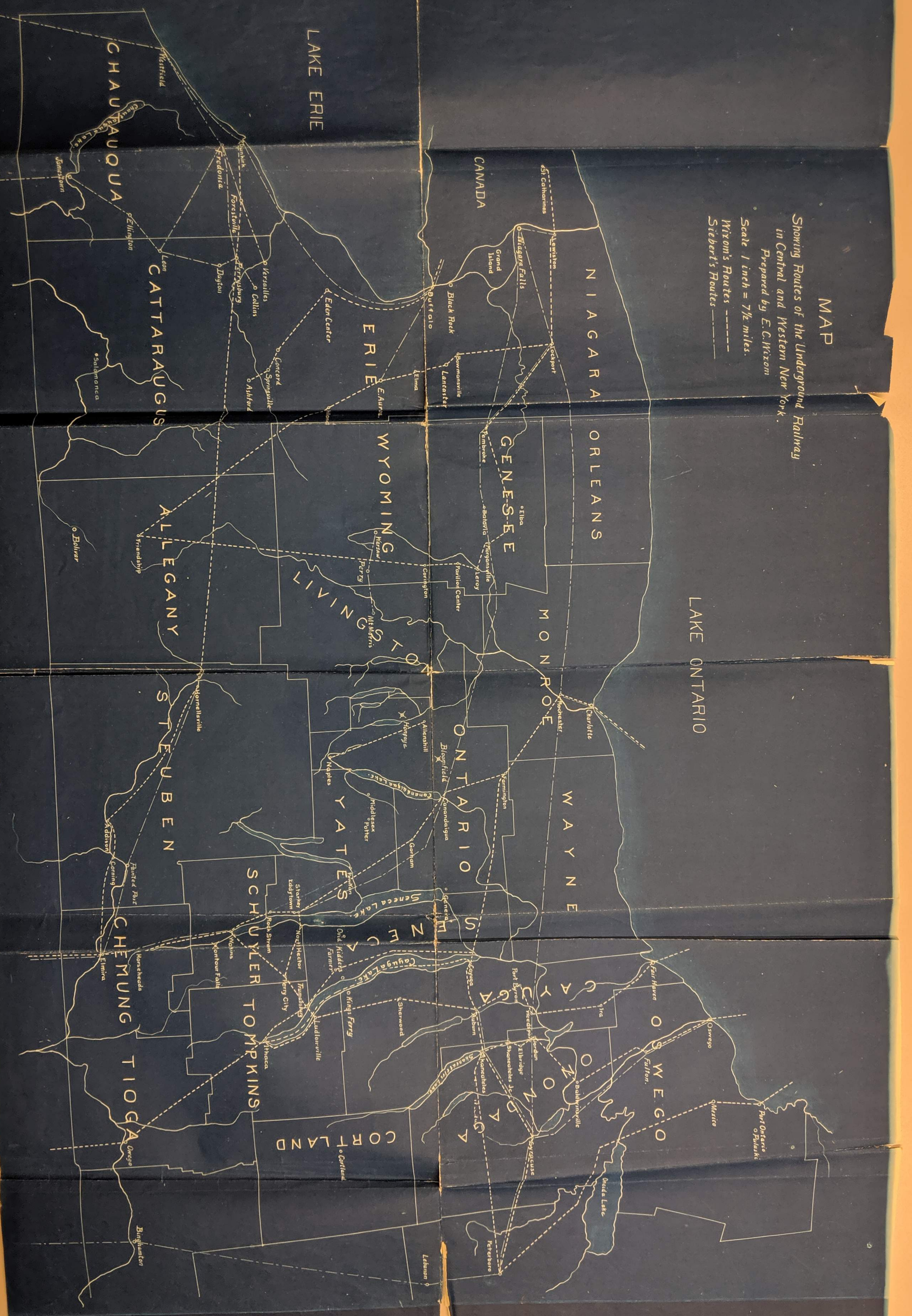
MAP

Showing Routes of the Underground Railway
in Central and Western New York.

Prepared by E. C. Wixom

Scale 1 inch = 7 1/2 miles.

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CHAUTAUQUA

CATTARAUGUS

ERIE

WYOMING

ALLEGANY

STEBEN

SCHUYLER

CHEMUNG

TIOGA

CORTLAND

CANADA

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ONIDA LAKE

