

"A Chase After Fugitives,"

Rochester (NY) *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, December 31, 1852

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A chase after Fugitives.

Some days since the *Cincinnati Gazette* noticed a stampede among Kentucky slaves, in which a number succeeded in effecting their escape. Three of them, two men and a woman, got upon the cars of M. L. & L. road, south of West Liberty. On the cars they were met by one Don Piatt, an ex judge of the Hamilton Common Pleas Court. He recognized them as the property of a relative.— He approached them, made himself known to them, told them that his father, who resides near West Liberty, was in want of laborers, and he assured them that if they would stop with him, that he (Don) and his friends would purchase them, and give them their freedom. The fugitives confided in him—left the cars at West Liberty and took up quarters with old Piatt. After they had been there a few days, the arrangement between Don and the fugitives leaked out, and the result was that the friends of the fugitives, who understood the character of the

Piatts, sued out a writ of *habeas Corpus* requiring old man Piatt to bring them before a judge at Bellefontain, and to show by what authority he held them. Piatt not being able to show any authority for detaining them, the negroes were declared to be free to go where they pleased. They were immediately taken in charge by some abolitionists, and started on their way to Canada.— Within two hours after, the Kentucky claimants arrived in hot pursuit of their "property." But they found nobody there to promote their object. The lawyers declined their fees—and the owners of horses declined to hire them. After much difficulty they succeeded in getting under way in the chase; but they had not been long in pursuit before they were met by a young Quaker, who under the pretence of aiding them, led them so far off in the wrong direction, as to put all hope of the question. The fugitives are, doubtless, by this time safe in Canada, whilst the Kentuckians have returned to their homes to meditate upon the advantages and "finality" of the modern fugitive slave law.

We have information in relation to the chase, from gentlemen of Bellefontaine.—
Xenia Torchlight.

Slave Stampedes on the Southern Borderlands

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