PUNISHMENT for HELPING RUNAWAYS



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Captain Robert Lee, from Norfolk, helped fugitive slaves. He knowingly risked his own freedom to help. This illustration, by C.H. Reed, depicts an engraving from William Still's book, *The Underground Railroad*. Because he was caught helping these fugitives escape, Captain Lee was arrested, tried, convicted and sentenced to the Richmond Penitentiary for 25 years. Image online, courtesy Dickinson College.

Slave owners routinely <u>offered</u> generous rewards for the return of runaways. If they were fortunate, however, runaways were no longer in the slaveholder's state. That, of course, was by choice.

But many freed slaves were not *allowed* to remain in their own state. They had no choice but to leave. If they wanted to stay, they needed special written <u>permission</u>.

Jonathan Walker, a white man, attempted to assist a group of slaves leave not just their state, but the country. He <u>helped them</u> sail to the Bahamas - and freedom - in 1844.

Walker was <u>captured</u> and <u>branded</u> with the letters "SS" (for "slave stealer") <u>on the palm</u> of his hand. The branding took place *in the courtroom*, where a fire had been built for that purpose.

Fined and imprisoned for more than a year, Walker moved to Michigan where he died (near Muskegon) in 1878. Eighty years old at his death, <u>Walker</u> was immortalized by <u>John Greenleaf Whittier</u> in his famous poem, *The Branded Hand*. The most-quoted verse was:

Then lift that manly right hand, bold ploughman of the wave! Its branded palm shall prophesy, "Salvation to the slave!"

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/PUNISHMENT-for-HELPING-RUNAWAYS-Slave-Voices

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/PUNISHMENT-for-HELPING-RUNAWAYS-Slave-Voices

Media Stream



Reward Poster

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress.

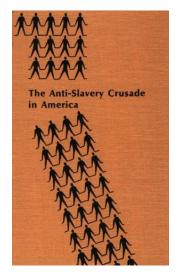
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Certificate of Freedom for Harriet Bolling

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress.

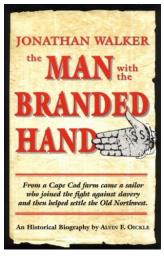
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The Anti-Slavery Crusade in America

Image online, courtesy <u>amazon.com</u> website.

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Jonathan Walker: Man with the Branded Hand - by Alvin F. Oickle

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Walker's Branded Hand

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