Staats' Lockport City Directory for 1868-69. Lockport: M.C. Richardson, 1868, 42.

The Village at this early day was visited by two slave hunters from Kentucky dressed in the characteristic leggins of green. It was in the Fall of 1823, when there were large bodies of Irishmen still engaged excavating rock though the mountain ridge. Darius Comstock, a Quaker, had a large number in his employ on the section he had under contract, and with his brother Joseph, was extensively known as a defender of the fugitive slave from the clutches of the slave-hunter. The two Kentuckians soon pounced on a person by the name of Joseph Pickard, a barber, and arrested him under a warrant issued by Hiram Gardner, then a Justice of the Peace. The arrest was at once noised abroad, and, "Friend Darius," promptly appeared before the Justice with the alleged slave and Kentuckians. A large crowd of the Canal workmen were also on hand, and filled up the street in front of the office of the Justice. The office was in the second story of a wooden building, located near Brown's hat store, and was entered by a flight of stairs on the outside. While the examination was progressing, the prisoner sprang though an open window and landed among the crowd in the street below. The crowd was so great that he could not get away until the Kentuckians rushed down the outside stairs with drawn pistols, and again seized him. The Kentuckians were collared and dared to shoot by G.W. Rogers and others. After a war of words the prisoner, by consent of all parties, went before the Justice again, who, on carefully hearing the case, discharged him for want of proof that he was the property of the persons claiming him. The Kentuckians, from indications by the crowd, concluded it was safest to leave Lockport. Comstock was heard to say that "the prisoner could never be taken away from Lockport by the slave-hunters." The circumstance is interesting, from the fact that it was the first and, we believe, the only case of the kind that ever occurred in our history.