**James Curry Excerpt #1- The Desire for Freedom**

“From my childhood, the desire for freedom reigned predominant in my breast, and I resolved, if I was ever whipped after I became a man, I would no longer be a slave. When I was a lad, my master's uncle came one day to see him, and as I was passing near them, the old man took hold of me and asked my master if this was one of Lucy's boys. Being told that I was, he said, 'Well, his father was a free man and perhaps when he gets to be a man, he'll be wanting to be free too.' Thinks I to myself, indeed I shall. But if he had asked me if I wanted to be free, I should have answered, 'No, Sir.' Of course, no slave would dare to say, in the presence of a white man, that he wished for freedom. But among themselves, it is their constant theme. No slaves think they were made to be slaves. Let them keep them ever so ignorant, it is impossible to beat it into them that they were made to be slaves. I have heard some of the most ignorant I ever saw, say 'it will not always be so, God *will* bring them to an account.' I used to wonder why it was that our people were kept in slavery. I would look at the birds as they flew over my head or sung their free songs upon the trees, and think it strange, that, of all God's creatures, the poor negro only was held in bondage. I knew there were free states, but I thought the people there did not know how we were treated. I had heard of England, and that *there*, there were no slaves; and I thought if I could only get there and tell my story, there would immediately be something done which would bring freedom to the slave.”

“A deaf and dumb miller, who ground my master's wheat, gave me one time when I went to mill, two nice little pigs, which I fatted on the produce of my little patch of ground. When they were ready, I killed one of them, and presented my master with a nice piece for his family. In a few days, he ordered me to kill the other and salt it down in his barrel. I did so, but cut out a small piece for my own use, not privately for I considered it mine, and carried it to our cabin, where we cooked and ate it at night. The next day, my master gave me a whipping for doing it, and my mother for allowing me to do it. I afterwards bought one, and was fattening it for sale, when, one time, when I was not present, he ordered it put into his pen.”

**James Curry Excerpt #2- Escape Along the Towpath**

James Curry made up his mind in 1837 to escape from his master and run away to freedom.

“I therefore concluded it was wisest to take quietly whatever he choose to inflict, but as the strokes fell upon my back, I firmly resolved that I would no longer be a slave. I would now escape or die in the attempt. They might shoot me down if they chose, but I would not live a slave. The next morning, I decided, that, as my master was preparing for one of his slave driving expeditions to Alabama, I would wait until he was gone; that when he was fairly started on his journey, I would start on mine, he for the south, and I for the north

He started with some friends but unfortunately they were almost caught and he lost his brothers that he traveled with. He continued on his own towards freedom.

“At Alexandria, I crossed the Potomac river, and came to Washington, where I made friends with a colored family, with whom I rested eight days. I then took the Montgomery road, but, wishing to escape Baltimore, I turned off, and it being cloudy, I lost my course, and fell back again upon the Potomac river, and travelled on the tow path of the canal from Friday night until Sunday morning, when I lay down and slept a little, and then, having no place to hide for the day, I determined to go on until I could find a place of safety. I soon saw a man riding towards me on horseback. As he came near, he put his eyes upon me, and I felt sure that he intended to question me. I fell to praying to God to protect me, and so begging and praying fervently, I went forward. When he met me, he stopped his horse, leaned forward and looked at me, and then, without speaking, rode on again. I still fully believe it was at first his intention to question me. I soon entered a colored person's house on the side of the canal, where they gave me breakfast and treated me very kindly. I travelled on through Williamsport and Hagerstown, in Maryland, and, on the 19th day of July, about two hours before day. I crossed the line into Pennsylvania…”