

The Crosswhite Case

Adam and Sarah Crosswhite and their children escaped from slavery and the Kentucky farm of Francis Giltner in August 1843. They settled in Marshall, Michigan.

In January 1847, people from Kentucky came to Marshall and attempted to return the Crosswhite family to Kentucky and slavery. The Crosswhites, their friends and other people from Marshall resisted the Kentuckians.

The Kentuckians tried to have the Crosswhites held under the United States Fugitive Slave Act of 1793. Mr. Crosswhite and another man filed charges of assault and trespass against the people from Kentucky. While the local courts sorted out the legal matters, the Crosswhites escaped to Canada.

The next summer, the Kentuckians filed charges in the U.S. Circuit Court in Detroit against some of the Marshall people who had helped the Crosswhites. The case is called Giltner v Gorham et al. A jury decided that the Marshall people had violated the 1793 Fugitive Slave Act. The court ordered the Marshall people to pay the Kentuckians \$1,926.