

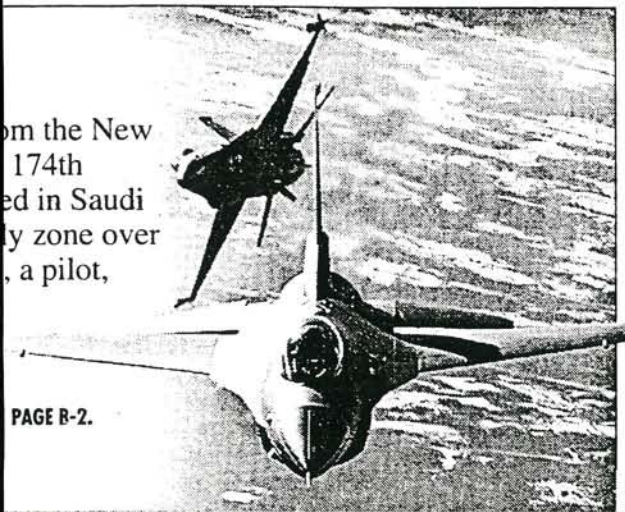
The Post-Standard CAYUGA

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Ad campaign touts four Auburn sites

A \$52,500 effort to draw out-of-town tourists focuses on city's historical places.

By David Tobin
Staff writer

There's a lot to see in Auburn. And at least four historic sites in the city are of such stature, they could interest visitors from almost anywhere in the world. So why not link them in a promotional package?

Auburn's Historic Sites commission was created last year for just that purpose. Now the commission has launched a multifaceted ad campaign that organizers hope will bring tourists here and keep them here longer.

Titled "Dreams, Discovery & Design," the campaign attempts to raise the profile of four sites:

the homes of Harriet Tubman and William Seward, Theodore Case's Research Lab at the Cayuga Museum and the Tiffany-designed glass and mosaic interior at Willard Memorial Chapel.

A maroon and white bumper sticker, soon to be released, will trumpet the Web site address of the Historic Sites commission: www.tourauburnny.com

Laura Coburn of Auburn created the brochure, the ad and the Web site that promote the four sites.

The campaign is paid for with a \$52,500 advertising fund, a significant amount, said Meg Vanek, director of the Cayuga County Office of Tourism.

"We now have a nice pot of money to work with," Vanek

said. "One site alone may not be enough to bring tourists to the area, but when you put them together, visitors are more likely to come and more likely stay overnight. Visitors who stay overnight spend three times as much as people who don't. We're also looking for people further afield than just next door, and we're doing some national advertising."

All four sites hold considerable historical significance.

Tubman led hundreds of slaves North on the Underground Railroad, earning her the distinction as "the Moses of her people." She served as a spy, scout and nurse during the Civil War, and afterward was encouraged by William Seward to settle in Auburn, where she started a home

for aged blacks.

Seward served as President Lincoln's secretary of state and was responsible for the purchase of Alaska.

Theodore Case discovered the technique for putting sound on film. Case's partnership with William Fox led to the creation of Fox Movietone News.

And the Willard sisters, who lived at the Willard Case mansion, now the Cayuga Museum, commissioned Louis Comfort Tiffany and the Tiffany Glass and Decorating Co. to design the interior of the Willard Memorial Chapel, erected in memory of their parents. The chapel is the only complete religious example of a Tiffany interior.

A little more than half the promotional money — \$25,000

— came from Auburn. A New York state Council of the Arts grant brought in \$23,000, and the state's I Love New York group kicked in \$4,555. Advertising is scheduled for Yankee Traveler and Country Home, both nationally distributed magazines, as well as The Hartford Courant, Buffalo News and Toronto Star, among other publications. The commission also plans to put some of the money toward Auburn's Living History Players — high school students who act the roles of Tubman, Seward and their associates.

"Now the players go to historic sites for special events," Vanek said. "We'd like to expand the program so they could be at sites most of the year. Sort of like Colonial Williamsburg."