

The Mission

PAN AMERICAN CUISINE

Lunch Menu

315-475-7344



MARKING THE WAY TO FREEDOM

THE MISSION RESTAURANT evokes a magical, airy twilight somewhere in Latin America, but buried deep in the basement of the building is a cramped tunnel inscribed with an historic, Central New York magic of its own. This building, built in the 1840's and formerly the Syracuse Wesleyan Methodist Church, was also an important 19th century way-station on the Underground Railroad. The Church members of that time were active in abolitionist activities, publishing, and support for women's rights. Archeological research indicates that the tunnel, with its furnace, long shelf for sitting and resting, and its slight "jog" to prevent detection, was a refuge for fugitive slaves at a time when Syracuse represented the brink of freedom. The clay and dirt wall of this tunnel bore the human touch of those who had passed through this haven: several unique and striking faces, now preserved at the Onondaga Historical Association, were sculpted into the wall by different individuals over the course of several years. Now this bit of subterranean Syracuse history lingers on as part of the magic of the Mission Restaurant.

—Dolores Byrnes