

PANNEBAKKER FAMILIE NIEWS



Pannabecker

NEWSLETTER OF THE PANNEBAKKER FAMILIE ASSOCIATION

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Pannabecker Retirement

Willard J (Will) Pannabecker PhD has announced his retirement on May 13 after nearly 13 years of service to St. Edward's University. He currently serves as a staff psychologist and provides valuable insight to the team at the Health & Counseling Center. He served for more than 11 years as Director of the Counseling Center and the Health Center. He was instrumental in providing leadership in the integration of the Counseling and Health Centers into the new Health & Counseling Center.

Will's career in psychology has spanned more than 40 years and included serving about 20,000 individuals, couples and families. He also provided supervision for more than 100 trainees and interns in their preparation for a career as a psychologist, and has served as an Oral Examiner of licensure candidates in Texas for about 15 years. In 1990, he established an American Psychological Association (APA) accredited predoctoral internship in clinical psychology at Philhaven, a Pennsylvania Mennonite psychiatric hospital. The internship was only the second internship accredited by APA that incorporated spiritual and religious aspects into the training of psychologists.

In retirement Will plans to devote more time to family--wife, 6 children, and 11 grandchildren, tending his yard, and doing some limited consultation in mental health service delivery. "Grateful" is the word he uses to describe his appreciation for the opportunity to participate and serve within the St. Edward's University community.

Pennypacker Mills Guides Historians To A Train Wreck * Washington Slept There In 1777. An 1877 Family Reunion Ended In Death On The Tracks.

September 14, 1998 by HAL MARCOVITZ, The Morning Call

When the Pennypacker family gathered for a reunion at the family's ancestral home Oct. 4, 1877, more than 1,500 members found their way to the sprawling mill and farm near Schwenksville, coming even from Arkansas and Kansas. Indeed, one of the Pennypackers attending was Samuel Whitaker Pennypacker, who would become governor of Pennsylvania.

The future governor elected not to take the train home when the reunion ended that evening. That decision was wise. While the reunion was intended to be a gala celebration of an American family, it was instead marred by tragedy. A train carrying 130 revelers home from the reunion crashed when the tracks below gave way in a mudslide. Eight people died in the wreck, including three members of the train crew and five Pennypackers.

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"Everyone knew someone who was on that train," says Carl Klase, assistant administrator of Pennypacker Mills. "Everyone was affected in one way or another." Pennypacker Mills in Skippack Township is a Montgomery County-owned museum, preserved in its turn-of-the-century grandeur to reflect the lifestyle of Gov. Pennypacker.

The first Pennypacker to live in America was Heinrich Pannebacker, a surveyor from Holland who arrived in 1699. He married Eve Umstat, and the couple settled in the Germantown section of Philadelphia, raising eight children.

The family spread across the country. Somewhere along the way, the name was Americanized to Pennypacker. In 1747, one of Heinrich's sons, Peter, would buy the mill near Schwenksville from Hans Hite, who built the place in 1720. From that point on, Pennypackers would live on the property until 1981, when the family sold it to Montgomery County.

George Washington slept there. He used it as his headquarters before and after the Battle of Germantown on Oct. 4, 1777. Oct. 4, 1877, was picked for the reunion because it was the 100th anniversary. Residing in the house at the time of the reunion was the family of Josiah Hunsicker, who was descended from the Pennypackers through a female ancestor.

Pennypackers would become leaders in farming, law and business. But it was the Civil War that established the Pennypackers as a family of esteem. Galusha Pennypacker and Benjamin Prentiss (related to the Pennypackers through marriage) would become major generals in the Union Army, ranking just below Ulysses S. Grant. Galusha Pennypacker, who won the Medal of Honor, managed to attain the rank of general at age 22.

Other Pennypackers of note were Elijah Pennypacker, an abolitionist, and Henry Jefferson Samuels, the auditor general of Virginia. Nearly 150 Pennypackers served on both sides of the Civil War. Many attended the reunion. According to Klase, reunion plans had been in the works for months. Abolitionist Elijah Pennypacker was president of the reunion committee. Galusha Pennypacker, still in the Army, was named master of ceremonies.

Samuel Pennypacker, the future governor, was appointed to give a speech on family history. Luther Vanderslice, a family member and noted bandleader of the day, wrote the "Pennypacker Reunion March" for the occasion and brought his band along to play it.

Invitations were sent. Programs were printed up. Even commemorative plates were cast. Dozens of tables were to be set up on the property for a daylong picnic. The only problem: It rained. "It started raining at 7 a.m. and poured all day," says Klase. "Basically, what you had was a tropical storm." The storm intensified. Klase says 2 inches of rain fell between 4 and 6 p.m. Winds gusted to 34 mph. By late afternoon, the drenched and weary Pennypackers started leaving Schwenksville. A large contingent of the family who lived in Phoenixville, Chester County, made its way to the Schwenksville station. A Philadelphia & Reading Railroad train from Allentown made its way south and showed up for the trip home.

The train consisted of a locomotive, a coal car, two passenger cars and a freight car loaded with milk. All was not right with the train. To save time on the return trip from Allentown, the engineer had decided not to go to a "turn-around," a loop in the tracks that enabled him to uncouple the locomotive and place it in front of the train. Instead, he ran the locomotive in reverse. It was still pulling the cars, but running backward with the coal car in front. The only light at the head of the train was a lantern dangling from the coal car.

The train carrying the Pennypackers left Schwenksville and traveled southwest for 10 miles. At 6:05 p.m., two miles outside Phoenixville, the train hit a washout. Below the tracks, tons of dirt had washed away, creating a chasm 65 feet long and 35 feet deep. The heavy locomotive hit the hole first, crashing through the tracks and tumbling down into the chasm. The two passenger cars were pulled in next, tearing themselves away from the milk car, which stayed on the tracks at the lip of the chasm.

The passenger cars smashed together, their fragile wooden frames fracturing on impact. The boiler in the locomotive exploded, killing the engineer and fireman immediately. The third railroad worker, a brakeman, died the next day.

Miraculously, the two passenger cars did not catch fire. Still, dozens of people were pinned under debris. Window glass had shattered and flew like knives. In addition to the five passenger deaths, 55 people were injured.

Samuel Pennypacker would go on to become governor, serving from 1903 to 1907. He would eventually move to Pennypacker Mills, enlarging the mansion, installing many modern features and establishing the property as one of the grand estates of Montgomery County. He died in 1916.

The Pennypackers lived on. But they would wait nearly 50 years before holding another reunion at Pennypacker Mills.

Membership List

We have had several requests for a list of members. If you would like to be included on a list of members to either be mailed, or to be posted on our upcoming web site, please notify our membership coordinator, Sandie Miller at smil1025@sc.rr.com, or Ron Mitchell at ronboy1@charter.net. We will not include you on the list unless you notify us.

Message From The President

Greetings All.

Hurrah for Global Warming!!! Calendar shows June, furnace runs essentially every night. Wife still uses the electric blanket on the bed almost nightly. Can't believe it. Summer coming soon and we still haven't had spring.

Another gift for Father's Day. Just over 3 inches of rail fell yesterday here. We had no particular problem but the river is up approaching some housing in the area. Strange year!!

We thought we might publish in the n/l the names of members having a birthday in a given month. No years of course. Those interested in seeing their names in the n/l can provide their birth month to any of the officers and we will add a column in the member profile database.

I want to thank each one for renewing your membership. There are still some that are late. We are getting a letter together reminding you of our wishes to keep you current. If you still haven't paid for this calendar year please do so and save us another mailing. If you have decided to call it quits, please let us know that too.

Thanks to all who provided updates to their e addresses and/or phones and mailing addresses. This is the only way we have to have correct data for you.

We still need member input for the newsletter. We would certainly love to receive queries regarding lineages for you. Tell us about your ancestors too. It certainly makes for good reading.

Until next time.

Ron

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Pannebakker Familie Association



The Pannebakker Family Association is an outgrowth of the family reunion held at Pennypacker Mills, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania on July 2-4, 1999. The reunion celebrated the 300th year wedding anniversary of Hendrick Pannebecker and Eve Umstat, in Germantown, Pennsylvania in the year 1699. In the words of the Steering Committee of the reunion, "We hope that the 1999 Pfannebecker-Umstat Reunion will lead to the growth of a family association, which will provide a forum for conversation, collection and preservation of information, and a sense of lasting community among the heirs of this rich cultural heritage."