

# PANNEBAKKER FAMILIE NIENS



NEWSLETTER OF THE PANNEBAKKER FAMILIE ASSOCIATION

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## Dates In Genealogical Data

It is wise to use caution with dates. Dates are more difficult to recall years after an event, and are more easily written incorrectly than other types of genealogical data. Therefore, one should determine whether the date was recorded at the time of the event or at a later date. Dates of birth in vital records or civil registrations and in church records at baptism are generally accurate because they were usually recorded near the time of the event. Family Bibles are often a source for dates, but may have been written from memory long after the event. When the same ink and handwriting is used for all entries, the dates were probably written at the same time and therefore will be less reliable since the earlier dates were probably recorded well after the event. The publication date of the Bible also provides a clue about when the dates were recorded since they could not have been recorded at any earlier date.

People sometimes reduce their age on marriage, and those listed under "full age" may increase their age in order to marry or to join the armed forces. Census returns are notoriously unreliable for ages or for assuming an approximate death date. Ages over 15 in the 1841 census in the UK are rounded down to the next lower multiple of five years.

Although baptismal dates are often used to approximate birth dates, some families waited years before baptizing children, and adult baptisms are the norm in some religions. Both birth and marriage dates may have been adjusted to cover for pre-wedding pregnancies.



Pope Gregory XIII celebrating the introduction of the Gregorian calendar.

In September 1752, England and her colonies switched from the "old style" Julian calendar to the "new style" Gregorian calendar. The Julian calendar, introduced by Julius Caesar in 46 B.C., had been adding a 29<sup>th</sup> day to February every 4 years, with no exceptions. Compared with the true astronomical

Calendar changes must also be considered.

The French Republican Calendar or French Revolutionary Calendar was a calendar proposed during the French Revolution, and used by the French government for about 12 years from late 1793 to 1805, and for 18 days in 1871 in Paris. Dates in official records at this time use the revolutionary calendar and need "translating" into the Gregorian calendar for calculating ages etc.

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year of 365.2422 days, that was 3 days too many in every 400 years. The result was that the calendar was slowly getting out of step with the natural seasons.

A reform decreed by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582 corrected the error by dropping 3 leap years in every 4 centuries. The new Gregorian calendar was accurate to about 1 day in 3000 years. But Gregory also decided, unwisely, in retrospect, to remove at one stroke all the erroneous 29<sup>ths</sup> of February that had been inserted since A.D. 200. He did this by deleting 10 days from October 1582. In countries that followed the papal decree, October had only 21 days that year.

Here enters the first and worst source of confusion. Not all of Europe was following the Pope in these days. Protestant countries saw no reason to shake up their calendar to that extent, just because the Pope decreed it. And so by the end of 1582, and for a long time afterward, Catholic countries had dates that were 10 days ahead of those in the Protestant countries. The 11<sup>th</sup> of June in England was the 21<sup>st</sup> in France and Spain. And the same difference carried over to America, between the English colonies on the one hand and those of France and Spain on the other. The difference increased to 11 days in 1700, because that was another erroneous Julian leap year.

England finally made the switch in 1752, the last major Protestant country to do so. And of course the English colonies switched at the same time. The only important hold-outs after that were the Greek Orthodox and Russian Orthodox areas of Eastern Europe. Everyone else was at last on the same calendar again, just as they had been before 1582. It is dates between 1582 and 1752 that cause most of the headaches, as different countries switched at different times.

A second difference in the calendars was that, until 1752, the English began their year on March 25<sup>th</sup>. January, February, and most of March belonged to the old year, not the new. That was part of a tradition that went back even before Julius Caesar, to very early calendars that began the year on or about the vernal equinox. March was called the first month, April the second month, and so on to February, which was the twelfth month. The reason February is a strange month, even now, is that it was originally the last month of the year.

A date like 20 February 1711, when it appears in an original document of the times, was two months after 20 December 1711 and two months before 20 April 1712. The same date might sometimes be written 20 February 1711/1712, but not always. It might also be written as 20 12<sup>th</sup> month 1711, or 20 12<sup>th</sup> month 1711/1712. Those are all the same date, exactly 100 years before 20 February 1812. And that particular February had 29 days, because that is how leap years were done in the “old style”.

A modern writer, referring to an old-style date like that, might put it down in any one of three ways: 1711, 1712, or 1711/1712. It is up to the writer to let you know how he is handling dates of that kind, but not all of them do. And thus enters confusion of a far worse degree than the first kind: not just a question of 10 or 11 days, but a question of a whole year. It is also not uncommon to find errors of 2 months, arising out of the difference between the old and new ways of counting months. All this of course applies only to the years before 1752. From that date onward the English and American calendar has been the same as it is now.

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For the genealogical researcher, knowing the days of the week can sometimes be a help in checking doubtful dates and spotting errors. Baptisms, for example, were usually done on Sundays in most churches. James Savage, the leading New England genealogist of the mid-1800's, wrote that he always checked the day of the week on baptisms. If it was a Puritan church, and the day was not Sunday, he knew there was something wrong with the date. Not all churches followed the Sunday rule that rigidly. But if there are two possible readings of a baptism date, and one of them was a Sunday, the Sunday date will usually be correct.

## Obituaries

**Herington, KS** - Tyler Pennypacker, 73, died Saturday, June 22, 2013, at the Salina Regional Medical Center. He was born Oct. 12, 1939, at Wichita, the son of Harry H. and Gaddy Mae (Rogers) Pennypacker.

Mr. Pennypacker was a retired aircraft machinist.

He is survived by his sister Nancy Kern of McPherson, a granddaughter, two great-grandchildren, his daughter-in-law Pearl Pennypacker Zimmermann, sister-in-law Sue Pennypacker.

Preceded in death by his son Dan Pennypacker, his companion Thelma Turley, a brother Billie Pennypacker, brother-in-law Dennis Kern, and his parents.

**Asbury, NJ** – Hattie May Seiwell peacefully departed this life, at age 90, on June 20th following a long illness. A long-time Asbury resident, Hattie was born in Nuremburg, PA. She served in the US Army at Fort Dix following completion of nursing training at Orange Memorial Hospital, in 1945, achieving the rank of 1st Lieutenant. She is a 1964 graduate of Rutgers University and worked as a nursing instructor at Hackensack University Medical Center. Hattie also worked for the Warren County Public Health Department, and was a Medicare Supervisor for the State of New Jersey. Hattie was the Asbury correspondent for the Star-Gazette from 1971-1973. She was an active member of N.O.W., the League of Women Voters, volunteered as a Docent at the State House in Trenton, and served for many years on the board of the Warren County Historical Society's museum in Belvidere. Hattie is survived by her sons Robert Titus and his wife Johannes, Stuart Titus and his wife Patricia, and daughter Catherine Titus Felix and her husband Dan, as well as her grandchildren Denise Layman, Daniel T. Felix IV, Jared Titus, Nathan Titus, and Ian Titus, her brother Burton Seiwell his wife Carol, and sister Catherine Damato.

The officers of the PFA wish to extend our regrets and condolences to the friends and families of the departed.

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## Message From The President

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Well it appears another lap around the sun is about finished. To accomplish an orbit, we maintain a speed of about 63076 miles per hour added to the 1000 miles per hour for the earth's rotation if you are somewhere near the equator. Now we seniors all have a reason to be tired at the end of the day.

I was extremely underwhelmed at all the non-responses received for someone to consider assuming an office in PFA. Even including the presidency. Don't forget your president is now past 79 years old and I am like most of us, not guaranteed immortality. Someone should be willing to grab the reins. Think about it strongly and then contact any one of us listed on the newsletter.

We have 3 new members since writing to you last. We wish to welcome them. I have to admit I am tickled no end at being able to assist in establishing contact between three 3rd cousins whom did not know each other existed. By the way, don't forget to contact your relatives re membership. Would love to have them.

We have discussed this item before and there was never a consensus as to what we should do. Basically, it is a question of publishing among ourselves the membership list. If you have an opinion, please let us know. If you are against it, say so. If you are for it, say so. If you don't care, you can even say that too. I think knowing who the other members are might be helpful in working on your own line.

I really don't have any worldly words of wisdom for you wonderful members beyond hoping you had a Great Thanksgiving. We do have lots to be thankful for. Along that line, I wish everyone a most Merry Christmas. Hoping each will have happiness and peace over the holidays and the years to come.

Thanks and Merry Christmas.

Ron and my dear bride, Carol

## *Pannebakker Familie Association Web Site*

The web site has been changed a bit! Still the same contents, however to access the newsletter section you will need to enter a user name and password. If you would like a user name and password, you must contact Bruce Pennypacker at, [throwcoach@gmail.com](mailto:throwcoach@gmail.com) and the necessary information will be sent to you. Below is the URL for the web site:

<http://www.pannebakkerfamilyassociation.com>

## Officers

**President:** Ron Mitchell  
N202 County Road B  
Kewaunee, WI 54216-9520  
**Vice President:** Linda Millerick  
751 Monterey Salinas Hwy.  
Salinas, CA 93908-8953  
**Secretary:** Marcea P. Kligman  
4170 Summit Way  
Marietta, GA 30066-2346  
**Treasurer:** Bill McNeary  
601 East Cypress Street  
Charleston, MO 63834  
**Membership:** Sandie Miller  
255 Shoreline Drive  
Columbia, SC 29212-8024  
**Newsletter:** Bruce Pennypacker  
201 Shady Brook Drive  
Langhorne, PA 19047  
throwcoach@gmail.com  
(215) 380-1748

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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."