

PANNEBAKKER FAMILIE NIEWS



NEWSLETTER OF THE PANNEBAKKER FAMILIE ASSOCIATION

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White Horse Farm

White Horse Farm, built around 1770, was the lifetime home of politician and prominent abolitionist Elijah Pennypacker (1802-1888) and a depot on the Underground Railroad. In 1831 Pennypacker was elected to the House of Representatives and lobbied on the passage of bills concerning commerce, education, and transportation. In 1839, Pennypacker decided to end his career order to fully aid the antislavery cause. He became active in various antislavery societies, spoke widely against slavery and became one of most influential leaders of Pennsylvania's abolitionist cause. In 1840 he opened his home as a major stop on the Underground Railroad. Hundreds of fugitive slaves from three different routes, coming from neighboring counties and Delaware, were directed to White Horse Farm. Pennypacker personally transported slaves from his home to Norristown and other points to the north and east.



White Horse Farm is located in Schuylkill Township, Pennsylvania on Whitehorse Road. The property is a private residence and is not open to the public.

No slaves were ever apprehended while in his care. John Greenleaf Whittier, another celebrated abolitionist, said of Pennypacker, "In mind, body, and brave championship of the cause of freedom, he was one of the most remarkable men I ever knew." After slavery ended, Pennypacker attempted to rejoin politics. As a member of the Prohibitionist Party, he unsuccessfully ran as state treasurer of Pennsylvania in 1875 which marked the end of his political career.

Operating the Underground Railroad

The debate in Congress in 1819 and 1820 over whether Missouri should enter the Union as a slave or free state made it clear to the entire nation that the slavery issue was not going to simply evaporate in the American republic. For free blacks, the formation of the national American Colonization Society persuaded them to organize for the abolition of slavery rather than act individually. The Colonization Society wanted federal government funds to pay the costs of settling free blacks in an African colony they founded and called Liberia. The threat to free African Americans that this appeared to represent called for a more organized black response and for more white allies. The era of immediate abolitionism is generally acknowledged to have begun on January 1, 1831, when William Lloyd Garrison first his abolitionist newspaper, *The Liberator*.

The abolitionists were divided over strategy and tactics, but they were very active and very visible. Many of them were part of the organized Underground Railroad that flourished between 1830 and 1861. Not all abolitionists favored aiding fugitive slaves, and some believed that money and energy should go to



Portrait of "conductor" Lewis Hayden
Photograph courtesy of Boston African American NHS, NPS Photo.

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political action. Even those who were not abolitionists might be willing to help when they encountered a fugitive, or they might not. It was very difficult for fugitives to know who could be trusted.

Southerners were outraged that escaping slaves received assistance from so many sources and that they lived and worked in the North and Canada. As a part of the Compromise of 1850, a new Fugitive Slave Act was passed that made it both possible and profitable to hire slave catchers to find and arrest runaways. This was a disaster for the free black communities of the North, especially since the slave catchers often kidnapped legally-free blacks as well as fugitives. But these seizures and kidnappings brought the brutality of slavery into the North and persuaded many more people to assist fugitives. Vigilance Committees acted as contact points for runaways and watched out vigilantly for the rights of northern free blacks. They worked together with local abolition societies, African American churches and a variety of individuals to help fugitives move further on or to find them homes and work. Those who went to Canada in the mid-nineteenth century went primarily to what was then called Canada West, now Ontario.

Early Antislavery

While colonial North America received few slaves compared to other places in the Western Hemisphere, it was deeply involved in the slave trade and the first protests against slavery were efforts to end the slave trade. English reformers took the lead in this and were joined by Americans with varied motives. Some

southerners feared slave revolts if importation continued. Religious societies stressed the moral evil of the trade, and free blacks saw the end of the slave trade as a first step toward general emancipation.

In colonial North America, newly enslaved Africans often ran away in groups of men and women intending to create a new community in a remote area. For these groups, called maroons, their very numbers made them easier to discover, although bands of fugitives, primarily men, continued to live in swamps and mountains and to elude capture throughout the slavery era. Spanish Florida and Mexico were favored destinations for many enslaved in the lower South. The northern states and Canada became goals when they adopted emancipation laws.



The Liberator was started by William Lloyd Garrison as the first abolitionist newspaper in 1831.
Photo courtesy Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division

The American Revolution created more free blacks, both through those who actively supported the Patriot cause and were freed and

those who took the opportunity to work for or leave with the British. The rhetoric of liberty and human rights effected a change in some slaveholders who emancipated their slaves in the years after the Revolution. But these events were more than counterbalanced by the fact that the United States Constitution, adopted in 1787, protected the rights of slaveholders to slave property throughout the union. Some actions by the new American government and the individual states did limit slavery. The Northwest Territory was forbidden to slavery and the northern states enacted gradual emancipation laws. But the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1793 explicitly stated that slaveholders could retrieve their slave "property" from free states and territories. That was to discourage enslaved persons from trying to reach free regions.

Hundreds of slaves fled bondage each year in the decades between the American Revolution and the Civil War. Some stayed in the South, seeking family from whom they had been separated or a temporary refuge from slavery. Other fugitives stayed in southern towns and cities, often with forged "free" papers. Whether they sought free territory or remained in the south, they were primarily aided by other slaves and by free blacks while in the south. In each decade after the Revolution, the assistance of some whites became more apparent. The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) was prominent in the antislavery societies which sprang up after the Revolution, and, for a while, the Baptists and Methodists were antislavery. The early antislavery societies promoted gradual emancipation and they faded from the national scene by the War of 1812. As the free black population grew, their concern for the status of the African American became the center of the antislavery movement.

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Message From The President

Greetings to all. Hope you had a great Christmas and the winter season wasn't too severe for you. Presently there is essentially total snow cover with some places still over a foot. Hopefully soon it will melt and allow the grass to grow.

It is that time again to ask you to pay your dues. The dues year runs from 1 May to 30 April. The amount will remain at \$10.00 per year with free membership to those reaching 80 years old. Don't forget the rate of \$17.00 for a couple. Our account is deposited in the local bank here in Wisconsin so please send your dues to me. Address:

Pannebakker Family Assn., Inc.
N202 County Road B
Kewaunee WI 54216-9520

We are still searching for kind people to send neat stuff to our Newsletter editor for inclusion in our quarterly newsletter. We get very little and are trying to create interest in this regard. It is really hard for the editor to try to compile items of interest for you. Human interest stories about your family would certainly be a great blessing for us.

I think most of us would like to have another reunion before we pass on to Valhalla. We need a volunteer to head up such an undertaking. I sincerely hope someone will step forward and accept this challenge.

I would like to remind you to consider getting your newsletter via e-mail if you have a computer. Postage and printing are the largest of our expenditures and you can help. Thanks to those who have agreed to go the email route.

Thanks,
Ron

Genealogy CD offer

Louis Fackler, a member of the PFA, is offering to send his CD, containing his 5 volume family history, to anyone interested in the families. His direct cost, including postage, is \$10, but he is willing to send it free to the first 10 PFA members who request it. One of the volumes is a very comprehensive genealogy on the Martz/Pennypacker families. If you are interested in obtaining a copy of the CD, please contact Lfackler@aol.com. This offer is good until June 30, 2011.

Officers

President: Ron Mitchell
N202 County Road B
Kewaunee, WI 54216-9520

Vice President: Linda Millerick
751 Monterey Salinas Hwy.
Salinas, CA 93908

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."