

SLAVE OWNERS IN 1790,1800, etc. IN PENNSYLVANIA

BY Dr. Mary Belle Lontz
2007

326
L862

Bart Twp:

John McCluer 1
John Smith 1
Eliz. Ramsey 1
James Wilson 1
John Richards 1

Caernarvon Twp.

John Evins 5
Joshua Evins 6
David Jenkins 4
Wm. Willson 3
Henry Sherk 1
Adam Zell 1
Nathan Evans 1
Wm. Evans 1
David Old 2
James Old 4

Donegal Twp:

Bartram Galbreath 1
John Baily 5
James Anderson 2
David Cook 2

Dunmore Twp:

James Moore 2
Wm. Bigham 2
Wm. Ritchie 2
James Bigham 1
Wm. McIntire 7
Arch'd. Anerom 2
Thos. Neill 2
James Morrison 4
Hugh McIntire 2
Robt. Maxwell 4
John Evans 4
James Maxwell 1
Wm. Steel 1

Earl Twp:

Andrew Yund 1
Nathan Ellmaker 2
Gabriel Davis 2
Widow Evans 2
Jacob Weidler 1
Jacob Glasser, Jr. 1
James Martin 4
James Thompson 1
Philip Wise 1
Robt. Wallis 4
Adam Stork 1

Hempfield Twp.

Widow Moore 2
Robt. Spear 2

Lampeter Twp:

John Rorrer 1

Lancaster
borough:

Mathias Slough 2
Adam Reigart 1
Thos. Edwards 4
Jasper Yeates 1
Jos. Simons 2
Fred'k. Kuhn 1
Paul Zantzinger 2
Jacob Bailey 1
Jacob Krug 1
John Bausman 2
Mich. Musser 2
Fred'k. Anspach 2
Fred'k. Weidley 1
Gerhart Buback 1
John Miller 1
John Joade 1
Robt. Reed 1
James Jacks 1
Wm. Montgomery 1
Josiah Lockhart 1
Peter Hoofnagle 1
Jos. Hubley 2
James Ross 1
John Jordan 1
John Graff 1
Chas. Hamilton 1
John Hubley 1
Geo. Tush 1
Jacob Reigar 2
James Cunningham 1
Alex. Scott 3
Leckey Murray 2
John Matson 1
Samuel Boyd 3
Geo. Ross 3
John Okeley 2

Lanc. Twp:

Andrew Groff 1

Leacock Twp:

Andrew Bear 2
Adam Woods 1
Robt. Hamilton 3
James Ramsey 2
Adam Lightner 1
Jos. Rutter 1
Wm. Crawford 1
David Watson 3
And. Caldwell 2
Daniel Huston 1
Wm. Porter 1

Little Britain Twp:

Vincent Stubbs 1
Oliver Caldwell 1
Wm. Porter 6
DAvid Braden 2
James Arbuckle 2
Alex. Ewing 1
Wid. Frazier 1
Geo. McCullough 3
Maj. I. Scott 4
Wm. Gibson 4
John Evans 4
Wid. Ewing 2
David Montgomery 2
James Patterson 3
Stephen Long 1
Robt. McClellan 1
Alex. Scott 2
Thos. Patterson 1
Robt. Johnston 1

Martick Twp:

Widen Beavens 5
James Clark 3
John Boyd 1

Maytown:

James Bayley 2
Richard Kays 1
John Whitehill 1
Samuel Cook 3
James Cook 2
John Haldeman 1
Brice Clark 2
John Whitehill 3
John Watson 1
Wm. Clingan 3
Mich. Nicholas 2

Rapho Twp:

Samuel Jacobs 2
Hugh Peden 2
Benj. Mills 1
Widow Litle 2
James Corran 1
Sam'l. Patterson 1
John Hays 1
Wid. Patterson 1

Sadsbury Twp:

John Bailey 1
Nathan Thompson 2
Jos. Walker 2
Robt. Williams 1
Wm. Quay 1
John Johnston 2
Geo. Leach 1
James Nobel 1

1790 Lancaster Co. Pa. Salisbury Twp.

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John Whitehill 1	Leonard Ellmaker 1	Arch.. Henderson Jr. 1
Matthew Henderson 3	Geo. Leach 1	Arch. Henderson 1
James Henderson 1	James Kennedy 1	John Hopkins 1
Isaac Atlee 1	James McCally 3	Arch. McCurdy 4
James Hamilton 2	Peter Bines 1	James Anderson 2
Abigail Culbertson 1	John Osher 1	Wm. Richardson 1
Samuel Lasey 1	Geo. Thompson 1	Thos. Slemans 2
John Midleton 1	Wm. Boyd 2	Jas. Henderson 1
Peter Somers 1	Isaac McCammon 1	John Frisben 1
Henry Overley 1	John Armer 1	
David Whitehill 1	Robt. Smith 3	
Daniel Buckley 1	Wm. Hamilton 1	

 Lancaster Co. Pa. 1790 Strasburg Twp:

George Hanmer 1	Isaac Ferree 1	Alexander White 1
John Withes 1	Wm. Reynolds 1	
Mich. Withes 1	James Kenney 1	

 1790 Lancaster Co. Pa. Warwick Twp:

Cyrus Jacobs 5	Samuel Jones 2	James Edison 4
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 1800 Lancaster Co., Pa. Bart Twp:

Henry Kindig 1 slave (No ages so assume he is a slave himself)
 Henry Mourer 1 slave " " " " " " " " "
 James McCredy 1 slave " " " " " " " " "
 John Black, 1 slave (same as above)
 George Hersch (same as above)
 James Gibson 1 (same as above)
 Abner McGrode " " "
 John McClune, (McClure?)
 males 4 under 10: 2(10-16) 1(16-26) 1(26-45) females
 2 under 10: 2(26-45) 1(45-up) 1 slave
 William Ramsey males 2 under 10: 1(10-16) 1(26-45)
 femlaes 1(16-26) 1 slave
 John Res(?) 1 slave
 Edward Antes 1 slave
 Peter Rockey 1 slave
 Adam Gusinger males 1(45-up) 1 slave(?)
 Black Dagger 7 slaves } I again assume these were slaves
 Black Bills 5 slaves { who owned their land but no age
 Black Georges 3 slaves { given

Caernarvon Twp.;

John Patton males 4 under 10) 2(10-16) 1 45-up
 females 1 under 10: 1(10-16) 1(26-45) 3 slaves

Joshua Eavans males 1 45-up 4 slaves
 James Eavens, Sr. male sl(16-26) 1(26-45) 1 45-up
 females 1 45-up 3 slaves

James Eavens, Jr. males 2 under 10: 1(26-45) females
 1 under 10: 1(10-16) 1 (26-45) 2 slaves

Church Twp:

Davis Old males 1(10-16) 1(26-45) females 1 under 10:
1(16-26) 1(26-45) 1 slave

Wm. Eavans males 3 under 10: 1(10-16) 1(26-45) females
1 under 10: 1(10-16) 1(26-45) 1 slave

John Eavans males 1 under 10: 1(10-16) 1(26-45) 1 45-up
females 1(16-26) 3 others 1 slave

Cocalico Twp:

John Komman males 1 under 10: 1(26-45) females 1 under 10:
1(26-45) 2 slaves

Colerain Twp.

PATERSON Bell males 2(16-26) 1 45-up females 2 under 10:
4(16-26) 1 45-up 5 others 1 slave

Conestoga Twp:

Henry Brenneman males 2 under 10: 1(10-16) 2(26-45)
females 2 under 10: 1(26-45) 1 slave

Jacob Haverstock, 3 under 10: 1(26-45) females 2(10-16)
1 45-up) 1 slave

Jacob Parr males 1(10-16) 2(26-45) females 2 under 10:
3(10-16) 2(26-45) 1 slave

Tobias Stemen 1 under 10: 1(10-16) 1(26-45) females
2 under 10) 1(10-16) 1(16-26) 1(26-45) 1 slave

Donegal Twp.

Brice Clark males 2(10-16) 2 45-up females 1 under 10:
1(16-26) 1 45-up 2 slaves

Samuel Cook males 1(10-16) 1(26-45) females 1 45-up 2 slaves

Richard Keys males 1 under 10: 2(10-16) 1(16-26) 1 45-up
females 1(10-16) 2(16-26) 2(26-45) 1 45-up 2 slaves

Bartram Galbreath males 2(16-26) 1(45-up) females 1 under 10:
1(10-16) 1(26-45) 1 slave

John Bayley males 1 under 10: 1(10-16) 2(26-45)
females 1 under 10: 1(10-16) 1(16-26) 2 slaves

James Anderson males 3 under 10: 3(26-45) females 1(10-16)
2(16-26) 1 45-up 2 slaves

Wid Dorcas Buchanan males 1 under 10: 1(10-16) 1(16-26)
females 1(26-45) 1 slave

Drumore Twp: William Reed males 1 45-up females 1(26-45)
1 45-up 1 slave

David Evans males 3 under 10: females 3 under 10: 1(26-45)
2 slaves

James Barns males 2 under 10: 4(10-16) 1(16-26) 4(26-45) 1 45-
females 3(16-26) 2(16-26) 1 slave

Robert Wallace males 1 under 10: 1(16-26) 1(26-45) 1 45-
females 2(26-45) 2 (45-up) 1 slave

Daniel Morrison 2 males under 10: 2(16-26) 1(26-45)
females 2 under 10: 2(10-16) 3(16-26) 1(26-45) 1 slave

1800 Lancaster Co. Pa. Drumore Twp. P. 49

Robert Steen males 1 under 10: 2(16-26) 3(26-45)
1 45-up. Females 1 under 1); 2(16-26) 1(26-45) 2 slaves

Robert King, Esq. males 1 under 10; 1(10-16) 2(16-26) 1 45-
females 1(10-16) 1 (26-45) 1 45-up 1 slave

William McIntire males 1 under 1); 1(45-up_ females
1 under 10: 1(10-16) 1(16-26) 1(26-45) 3 slaves

James Morrison males 2(10-16) 1(26-45) 2 (45-up. females
2(16-26) 1(45-up 3 slaves

William Calhoon males 1(10-16) 1(26-45) 1 45-up
females 1(10-16) 1 45-up 1 slave

William Reichley males 1(16-26) 1(26-45) 1 45-up
females 1(45-up 2 slaves

James Mone males 1 (10-16) 1(16-26) 1 45-up
females 2 under 10: 1 45-up 2 slaves

Earl Township:

Cyrus Jacobs, males 1 under 1): 1(10-16) 2(16-26)
4(26-45) females 1 under 10: 1(10-16) 1(16-26)
1(26-45) 2 slaves

Earl Township:

Cyrus Jacobs, males 1 under 10: 1(10-16) 2(16-26) 4(26-45)
females 1 under 10: 1(10-16) 1(16-26) 1(26-45) 2 slaves

Elizabeth Twp.:

Robert Coleman , Esq. males 3 under 10: 1(10-16) 7(16-26)
1(26-45) 1 45-up) females 2(10-16) 1 45-up 1 slave

Lampeter Twp;

Edward Hand males 1 under 1); 3(16-26) 1 45-up females
1(10-16) 3(16-26) 2(45-up) 1 slave

James Crawford males 1(10-16) 1(16-26) 1(26-45)
2(45-up) females 1(10-16) 2(16-26) 1(26-45) 1 45-up s slave

Lancaster:

James Ross males 1 45-up) females 1(10-16) 1(16-26)
1 45-up 1 slave

Jasper Yeats, males 1 under 10: 1(45-up) females 1 under 10:
4(16-26) 1 45-up 1 slave

Jacob King males 1 under 10: 2(10-16) 5(16-26) 2(26-45)
2(45-up) females 2(10-16) 2(16-26) 1 45-up 1 slave

Adam Reigart males 1(10-16) 1(16-26) 1 45-up: females
1(16-26) 1 45-up 1 slave

Paul Zantinger males 3 under 10: 1 45-up_ females
1 under 10: 5(16-26) 1 45-up 1 slave

George Ross, Esq. males 3 under 10: 1(16-26) 1 45-up females
3 under 10: 2(16-26) 2(26-45) 2 slaves

Jennet Cunningham males 2(16-26) 1(26-45) females 1 45-up
1 slave

Lancaster:

George Musser males 1 under 10: 3(10-16) 4(16-26)
1(26-45) 1 45-up females 2(10-16) 1(26-45) 1 45-up 1 slave

John Jordan males 1 under 10: 1(10-16) 1 45-up females
1(16-26) 1 45-up 1 slave

Abraham Kindrick males 3 under 10: 1 (16-26) 1(26-45)
females 3 under 10: 2(26-45) 1 45-up 1 slave

Leacock Twp.

William Porter males 1(10-16) 1(26-45) 1 45-up females
1(10-16) 1 45-up) 3 slaves

John Chote males 1(26-45) females 1 under 10;
3(26-45) 1 slave

Joseph Rutter males 2 under 10; 2(16-26) 1 45-up
females 1 under 10: 5(16-26) 1 45-up 1 slave

Wm. McCausland males 1 under 10: 1(10-16) 2(16-26)
1(26-45) females 3 under 10: 1(26-45) 1 slave

Hugh McGunny males 2(16-26) 1(26-45) 2(45-up) females
1(16-26) 1 slave

David Watson males 1 under 10: 3(16-26) 1(45-up)
females 1 under 10: 1(16-26) 1 45-up 2 slaves

Little Britain:

Andrew Porter males 1 under 10: 2(45-up) 2 slaves

Vincent Stubbs males 3 under 10: 1(10-16) 1(16-26)
1(26-45) 1 45-up) females 1 under 10: 1(10-16)
1(16-26) 1 slave

Alexander Scott Males 3 under 10; 1(10-16) 1 45-up) females
2 under 10: 3(10-16) 1(26-45) 1 45-up 1 slave

Aron Black males 3 under 10: 1(10-16) 1(45-up) females
2 under 10: 1(26-45) 1 slave

Thomas Patterson males 1 under 10; 1(10-16) 2(16-26)
1 45-up females 1 under 10 1(10-16) 2(16-26) 2(26-45) 1 slave

James Patterson males 1 under 10: 1(10-16) 1(16-26) 1 45-up
females 2 under 10: 2(10-16) 2(16-26) 1 45-up 1 slave

Michael Beydler males 1(26-45) female 1 under 10:
1(10-16) 1(16-26) 1 slave

Manor Twp.

James Armstrong males 2 under 10: 1(26-45) females
1 under 10: 1(26-45) 1 slave

Martick Twp.

Henry McElroy males 1 under 10: 1 45-up female 5 under 10:
4(10-16) 1 45-up 4 slaves

John Rabsony males 1(10-16) 1(16-26) 1(26-45)
1 45-up female 1 under 10: 1(16-26) 1 45-up 1 slave

Maytown:

Rev. Colon McFarquer males 1(45-up) female 1 (45-up 3 slaves

Widow Dorcas Buchanan males 1 under 10: 1(10-16)
1(16-26) females 1(16-26) 1 45-up 1 slave

Reuben Armstrong 17 slaves

John Hurder 6 slaves

Thomas Morehad 3 males under 10: 2(10-16) 3(16-26)

1(26-45) females 3 under 10: 2(16-26) 1(26-45)

1(45-up) 3 slaves

Widow Robinson males 1(16-26) females 1 under 10: 3(16-26)

1 45-up) 2 slaves

1800 Lancaster Co. Pa. Mt. Joy

James Miller males 1(16-26) 1(26-45) 1(45-up)

females 1 under 10: 1(26-45) 1 (45-up) 1 slave

Samuel Jacobs males 4 under 10: 2(16-26) 4(26-45)

females 1 under 10: 1(26-45) 6 slaves

New Holland:

John Wallace males 1 under 10: 2(16-26) 1(26-45)

females 1 under 10: 2(16-45) 1 slave

John Thomson males 1(10-16) 1(16-26) females

2(16-26) 1(45-up) 1 slave

Rapho Twp.

Peter Peterson males 1 under 10: 1(10-16) 2(26-45)

females 2 under 10: 1(26-45) 1 slave

Henry Grubb males 1(10-16) 1(16-26) 1(26-45) females

1(16-26) 2 slaves

John Hays males 2 under 10: 2(16-26) 1(26-45) 1(45-up)

females 2 under 10: 1(10-16) 2(16-26) 1(45-up) 2 slaves

John Padon males 1 under 10: 3(16-16) females 2(10-16)

3(16-26) 1 45-up) 2 slaves

Arthur Patterson 2 under 10: 2(16-26) 1(26-45) females

1(16-26) 1(26-45) 1 slave

Widow Lytle males 1(26-45) 145-Up) 3 slaves (no females listed)

Sadsbury Twp.

Wid. Bishop females 2 (45-up) 1 slave

Nathan Thomp males 3 under 10: 1(45-up) females

2 under 10: 2(26-45) 1 slave

Sadsbury Twp.:

James Henderson males 1 under 10: 1(10-16) 1(16-26)

1(26-45) females 1 under 10 1 slave

Matthew Henderson males 2 under 10: 1(10-16) 1(26-45) 1 45-up

females 1 under 10: 1(16-26) 1(26-45) 1 45-up) 2 slaves

James Clemson, Esq. males 1 under 10: 2(10-16) 2(16-26)

1 45-up) females 1(16-26) 1 45-up) 1 slave

James Anderson males 1(16-26) 1 45-up) females 2(45-up) 1 slave

John Yeates, males 1 under 10: 2(16-26) 1(26-45) 1 slave

I could not read the females in this.

Isaac McCalmond, males 3(10-16) 1(45-up) female 1 under 10;

1(26-45) 1 slave

1800 Lancaster Co. Pa. Salisbury Twp. P. 52
Wm. Boyd, Esq. males 2(10-16) 1(26-45) 1 45-up
females 1(10-16) 1 45-up 1 slave

Archibald Henderson males 1(10-16) 2(16-26) 2(26-45)
1 45-up) females 2(16-26) 1 45-up) 1 slave

Strasburg:

John Ferree, Sr. males 1 under 10: 1(10-16) 2(16-26)
1 45-up) females 1 under 10: 2(26-45) 1 slave

Nathaniel Sample males 4 under 1): 2(10-16) 3(16-26)
1(26-45) 1 45-up) females 1(10-16) 1(16-26)
2(26-45) 1 slave

Michael Withers males 3 under 10: 2(10-16) 2(16-26)
4(26-45) 2(45-up) females 1 under 10: 2(10-16)
2(26-45) 1 45-up 2 slaves

Strasburg:

John Withers males 1(10-16) 3(16-26) 1(26-45)
1 45-up females 2 under 10: 1 45-up 1 slave

1790 Luzerne Co. Pa.

John Hollenbach	Adam Man 1	James Westbrook 2
Stephen Hopkins 1	Guy Maxwell 1	
William Houck 2	Jonathan Newman 1	

1800 Luzerne Co. Pa.

Hanover Twp:

Jacob Rosemands(?) males 1 under 10: 1(10-16) 1 slave
1(16-26) 1 45-up females 1 under 10: 1(10-16)
1(16-26)

Nicholaon:

Jeremiah Spencer males 1(10-16) 2(16-26) 1(26-45) 1 45-up
1 slave.

Plymouth,

Samuel Lucas, males 1(16-26) 1 45-up females 1(10-16)
1 45-up 1 slave

Providence:

Ebenezer Slocum, males 4 under 10: 2(16-26) 3(26-45)
females 1 under 10: 1(16-26) 1(26-45) 1 slave

John Howe, males 1(45-up) females 1(45-up) 1 slave

Tioga Twp. Amos Prentice, males 1(26-45) 1 45-up
females 1(10-16) 1(16-26) 1 45-up 1 slave

Wilkes Barre Twp:

Jonathan Hancock, males 3 under 10: 1(45-up) females
2 under 1); 2(26-45) 1 slave

John Hollenbach males 4(16-26) 1(26-45) females
2(10-16) 1(26-45) 2 slaves



W. Still

THE
UNDERGROUND RAIL ROAD.

A RECORD

OF

FACTS, AUTHENTIC NARRATIVES, LETTERS, &C.,

Narrating the Hardships Hair-breadth Escapes and Death Struggles

OF THE

Slaves in their efforts for Freedom,

AS RELATED

BY THEMSELVES AND OTHERS, OR WITNESSED BY THE AUTHOR;

TOGETHER WITH

SKETCHES OF SOME OF THE LARGEST STOCKHOLDERS, AND
MOST LIBERAL AIDERS AND ADVISERS,
OF THE ROAD.

BY

WILLIAM STILL,

For many years connected with the Anti-Slavery Office in Philadelphia, and Chairman
of the Acting Vigilant Committee of the Philadelphia Branch of
the Underground Rail Road.

Illustrated with 70 fine Engravings by Bensell, Schell and others, and
Portraits from Photographs from Life.

Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant that has escaped from his master unto thee.—Deut. xxiii. 16.

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1872.

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DEDICATION.

TO THE
FRIENDS OF FREEDOM, TO HEROIC FUGITIVES AND THEIR
POSTERITY IN THE UNITED STATES,
THESE MEMORIALS OF THEIR LOVE OF LIBERTY
ARE INSCRIBED
By the AUTHOR.

not man as he suffered physically, but the moral instinct threatened with annihilation. It was sacred to them, this soul so sacred to redeeming love, but too brutalized to find its way to it. Nor merely the slave. Their love embraced, with yet more pitying fervor, the master compelling his spiritual nature into death, and the northern apologist letting his die; and this overmastering love of saving spiritual integrity, was one power that made them and heart-ease hold unfailing friends through the obloquy of those days; the other must be found in the fact mentioned,—that neither resolve nor impulse was their spur, but personal character moving from its depths.

From such a motive-power as this can come no parade of results. The nature that works, proceeds from the necessary laws and forces of its being, and is as simple and unconscious as any other natural law or force. Hence there are no startling epochs to record in my father's history, no supreme efforts; in filling the measure of daily opportunity lay his chief work. I cannot measure it by our ten fingers' counting. I can only show a life unfolding, and, by the essential laws of its growth, embracing the noblest cause of its time. But if action means vivifying public sentiment decaying under insidious poison; if it includes the doing of this amid a storm of odium that would quickly have shattered any soul irresolute for an instant; if it means incessant toil quietly performed, vast sums collected and disbursed, time sacrificed, strength spent; if it means holding up a great iniquity to loathing by a powerful pen, and nailing moral cowardice wherever it showed; if it be risking livelihood by introducing the cause of the slave into every literary work, and by mingling the school-culture of fifty future mothers, year by year, with hatred of the sin; if it means one's life in one's hand, friendships yielded, society defied, and position in it cheerfully renounced; above all, if action means a wealth of goodness overliving all scorns, compelling respect from a community rebuked, fellowship from a Church charged with ungodliness, and acknowledgment of unstained repute from a public eager to blacken with scandal; if to do thus, and bear thus, and live thus, is action, then my father did act to the full purpose of life in the struggle that freed the slave.

S. M. C.

WILLIAM WHIPPER.

The locality of Columbia, where Mr. Whipper resided for many years, was, as is well-known, a place of much note as a station on the Underground Rail Road. The firm of Smith and Whipper (lumber merchants), was likewise well-known throughout a wide range of country. Who, indeed, amongst those familiar with the history of public matters connected with the colored people of this country, has not heard of William Whipper? For the last thirty years, as an able business man, it has been very generally admitted, that he hardly had a superior.

Although an unassuming man, deeply engrossed with business—Anti-slavery papers, conventions, and public movements having for their aim the elevation of the colored man, have always commanded Mr. Whipper's interest and patronage. In the more important conventions which have been held amongst the colored people for the last thirty years, perhaps no other colored man has been so often called on to draft resolutions and prepare addresses, as the modest and earnest William Whipper. He has worked effectively in a quiet way, although not as a public speaker. He is self-made, and well read on the subject of the reforms of the day. Having been highly successful in his business, he is now at the age of seventy, in possession of a handsome fortune; the reward of long years of assiduous labor. He is also cashier of the Freedman's Bank, in Philadelphia. For the last few years he has resided at New Brunswick, New Jersey, although his property and business confine him mainly to his native State, Pennsylvania.

Owing to a late affliction in his family, compelling him to devote the most of his time thereto, it has been impossible to obtain from him the material for completing such a sketch as was desired. Prior to this affliction, in answer to our request, he furnished some reminiscences of his labors as conductor of the Underground Rail Road, and at the same time, promised other facts relative to his life, but for the reason assigned, they were not worked up, which is to be regretted.

NEW BRUNSWICK, N. J., December 4, 1871.

MR. WILLIAM STILL, DEAR SIR:—I sincerely regret the absence of statistics that would enable me to furnish you with many events, that would assist you in describing the operations of the Underground Rail Road. I never kept any record of those persons passing through my hands, nor did I ever anticipate that the history of that perilous period would ever be written. I can only refer to the part I took in it from memory, and if I could delineate the actual facts as they occurred they would savor so much of egotism that I should feel ashamed to make them public. I willingly

refer to a few incidents which you may select and use as you may think proper.

You are perfectly cognizant of the fact, that after the decision in York, Pa., of the celebrated Prigg case, Pennsylvania was regarded as free territory, which Canada afterwards proved to be, and that the Susquehanna river was the recognized northern boundary of the slave-holding empire. The borough of Columbia, situated on its eastern bank, in the county of Lancaster, was the great depot where the fugitives from Virginia and Maryland first landed. The long bridge connecting Wrightsville with Columbia, was the only safe outlet by which they could successfully escape their pursuers. When they had crossed this bridge they could look back over its broad silvery stream on its western shore, and say to the slave power: "Thus far shalt thou come, and no farther." Previous to that period, the line of fugitive travel was from Baltimore, by the way of Havre de Grace to Philadelphia; but the difficulty of a safe passage across the river, at that place caused the route to be changed to York, Pa., a distance of fifty-eight miles, the fare being forty dollars, and thence to Columbia, in the dead hour of the night. My house was at the end of the bridge, and as I kept the station, I was frequently called up in the night to take charge of the passengers.

On their arrival they were generally hungry and penniless. I have received hundreds in this condition; fed and sheltered from one to seventeen at a time in a single night. At this point the road forked; some I sent west by boats, to Pittsburgh, and others to you in our cars to Philadelphia, and the incidents of their trials form a portion of the history you have compiled. In a period of three years from 1847 to 1850, I passed hundreds to the land of freedom, while others, induced by high wages, and the feeling that they were safe in Columbia, worked in the lumber and coal yards of that place. I always persuaded them to go to Canada, as I had no faith in their being able to elude the grasp of the slave-hunters. Indeed, the merchants had the confidence of their security and desired them to remain; several of my friends told me that I was injuring the trade of the place by persuading the laborers to leave. Indeed, many of the fugitives themselves looked upon me with jealousy, and expressed their indignation at my efforts to have them removed from peace and plenty to a land that was cold and barren, to starve to death.

It was a period of great prosperity in our borough, and everything passed on favorably and successfully until the passage of the fugitive slave bill in 1850. At first the law was derided and condemned by our liberty-loving citizens, and the fugitives did not fear its operations because they asserted that they could protect themselves. This fatal dream was of short duration. A prominent man, by the name of Baker, was arrested and taken to Philadelphia, and given up by the commissioner, and afterwards purchased

by our citizens; another, by the name of Smith, was shot dead in one of our lumber yards, because he refused to surrender, and his pursuer permitted to escape without arrest or trial. This produced not only a shock, but a crisis in the affairs of our little borough. It made the stoutest hearts quail before the unjust sovereignty of the law. The white citizens fearing the danger of a successful resistance to the majesty of the law, began to talk of the insecurity of these exiles. The fugitives themselves, whose faith and hope had been buoyed up by the promises held up to them of protection, began to be apprehensive of danger, and talked of leaving, while others, more bold, were ready to set the dangers that surrounded them at defiance, and if necessary, die in the defence of their freedom and the homes they had acquired.

At this juncture private meetings were held by the colored people, and the discussions and resolves bore a peculiar resemblance in sentiment and expression to the patriotic outbursts of the American revolution.

Some were in favor, if again attacked, of killing and slaying all within their reach; of setting their own houses on fire, and then going and burning the town. It was the old spirit which animated the Russians at Moscow, and the blacks of Hayti. At this point my self-interest mingled with my sense of humanity, and I felt that I occupied a more responsible position than I shall ever attain to again. I, therefore, determined to make the most of it. I exhorted them to peace and patience under their present difficulties, and for their own sakes as well as the innocent sufferers, besought them to leave as early as they could. If I had advocated a different course I could have caused the burning of the town. The result of our meeting produced a calm that lasted only for a few days, when it was announced, one evening, that the claimants of a Methodist preacher, by the name of Dorsey, were in the borough, and that it was expected that they would attempt to take him that night.

It was about nine o'clock in the evening when I went to his house, but was refused admittance, until those inside ascertained who I was. There were several men in the house all armed with deadly weapons, awaiting the approach of the intruders. Had they come the whole party would have been massacred. I advised Dorsey to leave, but he very pointedly refused, saying he had been taken up once before alive, but never would be again. The men told him to stand his ground, and they would stand by him and defend him, they had lived together, and would die together. I told them that they knew the strength of the pro-slavery feeling that surrounded them, and that they would be overpowered, and perhaps many lives lost, which might be saved by his changing his place of residence. He said, he had no money, and would rather die with his family, than be killed on the road. I said, how much money do you want to start with, and we will send you more if you need it. Here is one hundred dollars in gold.

"That is not enough." "Will two hundred dollars do?" "Yes." I shall bring it to you to-morrow. I got the money the next morning, and when I came with it, he said, he could not leave unless his family was taken care of. I told him I would furnish his family with provisions for the next six months. Then he said he had two small houses, worth four hundred and seventy-five dollars. My reply was that I will sell them for you, and give the money to your family. He then gave me a power of attorney to do so, and attended to all his affairs. He left the next day, being the Sabbath, and has never returned since, although he has lived in the City of Boston ever since, except about six months in Canada.

I wish to notice this case a little further, as the only one out of many to which I will refer. About the year 1831 or 1832, Mr. Joseph Purvis, a younger brother of Robert Purvis, about nineteen or twenty years of age, was visiting Mr. Stephen Smith, of Columbia, and while there the claimants of Dorsey came and secured him, and had proceeded about two miles with him on the way to Lancaster. Young Purvis heard of it, and his natural and instinctive love of freedom fired up his warm southern blood at the very recital. He was one of nature's noblemen. Fierce, fiery, and impulsive, he was as quick to decide as to perform. He demanded an immediate rescue. Though he was advised of the danger of such an attempt, his spirit and determination made him invincible. He proceeded to a place where some colored men were working. With a firm and determined look, and a herculean shout, he called out to them, "To arms, to arms! boys, we must rescue this man; I shall lead if you will follow." "We will," was the immediate response. And they went and overtook them, and dispersed his claimants. They brought Dorsey back in triumph to Columbia.

He then gave Dorsey his pistol, with the injunction that he should use it and die in defence of his liberty rather than again be taken into bondage. He promised he would. I found him with this pistol on his table, the night I called on him, and I have every reason to believe that the promise gave to Mr. Purvis was one of the chief causes of his obstinacy. The lesson he had taught him had not only become incorporated in his nature, but had become a part of his religion.

The history of this brave and noble effort of young Purvis, in rescuing a fellow-being from the jaws of Slavery has been handed down, in Columbia, to a generation that was born since that event has transpired. He always exhibited the same devotion and manly daring in the cause of the flying bondman that inspired his youthful ardor in behalf of freedom. The youngest of a family distinguished for their devotion to freedom, he was without superiors in the trying hour of battle. Like John Brown, he often discarded theories, but was eminently practical. He has passed to another sphere. Peace to his ashes! I honor his name as a hero, and friend of man. I loved him for the noble characteristics of his nature, and above all for his

noble daring in defense of the right. As a friend I admired him, and owe his memory this tribute to departed worth.

At this point a conscientious regard for truth dictates that I should state that my disposition to make a sacrifice for the removal of Dorsey and some other leading spirits was aided by my own desire for *self-preservation*.

I knew that it had been asserted, far down in the slave region, that Smith & Whipper, the negro lumber merchants, were engaged in secreting fugitive slaves. And on two occasions attempts had been made to set fire to their yard for the purpose of punishing them for such illegal acts. And I felt that if a collision took place, we should not only be made to suffer the penalty, but the most valuable property in the village be destroyed, besides a prodigal waste of human life be the consequence. In such an event I felt that I should not only lose all I had ever earned, but peril the hopes and property of others, so that I would have freely given one thousand dollars to have been insured against the consequences of such a riot. I then borrowed fourteen hundred dollars on my own individual account, and assisted many others to go to a land where the virgin soil was not polluted by the foot-prints of a slave.

The colored population of the Borough of Columbia, in 1850, was nine hundred and forty-three, about one-fifth the whole population, and in five years they were reduced to four hundred and eighty-seven by emigration to Canada.

In the summer of 1853, I visited Canada for the purpose of ascertaining the actual condition of many of those I had assisted in reaching a land of freedom; and I was much gratified to find them contented, prosperous, and happy. I was induced by the prospects of the new emigrants to purchase lands on the Sydenham River, with the intention of making it my future home.

In the spring of 1861, when I was preparing to leave, the war broke out, and with its progress I began to realize the prospect of a new civilization, and, therefore, concluded to remain and share the fortunes of my hitherto ill-fated country.

I will say in conclusion that it would have been fortunate for us if Columbia, being a port of entry for flying fugitives, had been also the seat of great capitalists and freedom-loving inhabitants; but such was not the case. There was but little Anti-slavery sentiment among the whites, yet there were many strong and valiant friends among them who contributed freely; the colored population were too poor to render much aid, except in feeding and secreting strangers. I was doing a prosperous business at that time and felt it my duty to contribute liberally out of my earnings. Much as I loved Anti-slavery meetings I did not feel that I could afford to attend them, as my immediate duty was to the flying fugitive.

Now, my friend, I have extended this letter far beyond the limits in-

tended, not with the expectation that it will be published, but for your own private use to select any matter that you might desire to use in your history. I have to regret that I am compelled to refer so often to my own exertions.

I know that I speak within bounds when I say that directly and indirectly from 1847 to 1860, I have contributed from my earnings one thousand dollars annually, and for the five years during the war a like amount to put down the rebellion.

Now the slaves are emancipated, and we are all enfranchised, after struggling for existence, freedom and manhood—I feel thankful for having had the glorious privilege of laboring with others for the redemption of my race from oppression and thralldom; and I would prefer to-day to be penniless in the streets, rather than to have withheld a single hour's labor or a dollar from the sacred cause of liberty, justice, and humanity.

I remain yours in the sacred cause of liberty and equality,

WM. WHIPPER.

ISAAC T. HOPPER.

The distinctive characteristics of this individual were so admirably portrayed in the newspapers and other periodicals published at the time of his death, that we shall make free use of them without hesitation. He was distinguished from his early life by his devotion to the relief of the oppressed colored race. He was an active member of the old Pennsylvania Abolition Society, and labored zealously with Dr. Benjamin Rush, Dr. Rogers, Dr. Wistar, and other distinguished philanthropists of the time. No man at that day, not even eminent judges and advocates, was better acquainted with the intricacies of law questions connected with slavery. His accurate legal knowledge, his natural acuteness, his ready tact in avoiding dangerous corners and slipping through unseen loop-holes, often gave him the victory in cases that seemed hopeless to other minds. In many of these cases, physical courage was needed as much as moral firmness; and he possessed these qualities in a very unusual degree.

Being for many years an inspector of the public prisons, his practical sagacity and benevolence were used with marked results. His enlarged sympathies had always embraced the criminal and the imprisoned, as well as the oppressed; and the last years of his life were especially devoted to the improvement of prisons and prisoners. In this department of benevolence he manifested the same zealous kindness and untiring diligence that had so long been exerted for the colored people, for whose welfare he labored to the end of his days.

He possessed a wonderful wisdom in furnishing relief to all who were in difficulty and embarrassment. This caused a very extensive demand upon

his time and talents, which were rarely withheld when honestly sought, and seldom applied in vain.

Mrs. Kirkland prepared, under the title of "The Helping Hand," a small volume, for the benefit of "The Home" for discharged female convicts, containing a brief description of the institution, and a detail of facts illustrating the happy results of its operation. Its closing chapter is appropriately devoted to the following well-deserved tribute to the veteran philanthropist, to whose zeal and discretion that and so many other similar institutions owe their existence, or to a large degree their prosperity.

"Not to inform the public what it knows very well already, nor to forestall the volume now preparing by Mrs. Child, a kindred spirit, but to gratify my own feelings, and to give grace and sanctity to this little book, I wish to say a few words of Mr. Hopper, the devoted friend of the prisoner as of the slave; one whose long life, and whose last thoughts, were given to the care and succor of human weakness, error, and suffering. To make even the most unpretending book for the benefit of 'The Home,' without bringing forward the name of Isaac T. Hopper, and recognizing the part he took in its affairs, from the earliest moment of its existence until the close of his life, would be an unpardonable omission. A few words must be said where a volume would scarcely suffice.

"'The rich and the poor meet together, and the Lord is the Father of them all,' might stand for the motto of Mr. Hopper's life. That the most remote of these two classes stood on the same level of benevolent interest in his mind, his whole career made obvious; he was the last man to represent as naturally opposite those whom God has always, even to the end of the world, made mutually dependent. He told the simple truth to each with equal frankness; helped both with equal readiness. The palace owed him no more than the hovel suggested thoughts of superiority. Nothing human, however grand, or however degraded, was a stranger to him. In the light that came to him from heaven, all stood alike children of the Great Father; earthly distinction disappearing the moment the sinking soul or the suffering body was in question. No amount of depravity could extinguish his hope of reform; no recurrence of ingratitude could paralyze his efforts. Early and late, supported or unsupported, praised or ridiculed, he went forward in the great work of relief, looking neither to the right hand, nor to the left; and when the object was accomplished, he shrank back into modest obscurity, only to wait till a new necessity called for his reappearance. Who can number the poor, aching, conscious, despairing hearts that have felt new life come to them from his kind words, his benignant smile, his helping hand. If the record of his long life could be fully written, which it can never be, since every day and all day, in company, in the family circle, with children, with prisoners, with the insane, 'virtue went out of him' that no human observation could measure or describe, what touching interest would

1860 March 15th. William Hull discharged
from custody on giving security for his appearance
at the next Court of Quarter Sessions of the
Peace of Lancashire County. (see Recognizance filed
in the office of the Clerk of the said court.) To answer
H. G. Long

1047/1860

Committee of
Prisoners
to
Jay Cudwell Esq
Keeper of Lane
Co Prison
Hales
Capes
for the
body of
Garrison
Hull

By Act of 1785.

Livingston

Faint, illegible text from the reverse side of the paper, appearing as bleed-through.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania,
TO *Jay Cadwell Esq* Keeper of *Lanc Co* ^{Prison} GREETING:

YOU are hereby commanded that the Body of _____ of _____
Gilmer Hull _____ under your custody
detained, as it is said, together with the day and cause of *his*
being taken and detained, by whatsoever name the said _____
Gilmer Hull _____

shall be charged in the same, you have under safe and secure conduct before the Honorable
N. G. Long at his Chambers at 9 o'clock this afternoon
March 15. 1860

to do and receive all those things which the said Judge shall then and there consider of in
this particular.

WITNESS the Honorable *N. G. Long* _____ Esquire, President of the
Court of Common Pleas of said county, at the city of Lancaster, the *fifteenth*
day of *March* _____ in the year of our Lord, one thousand, eight hundred
and ~~fifty~~ *sixty*

ALLOWED BY

J. Bennett

G. Clarkson
for Prisoner

—♦♦♦—

To the Honorable H. G. Long, President Judge (~~or A. L. Hayes, Associate Judge~~) of the Court of Common Pleas for the County of Lancaster :

—♦♦♦—

JAY CADWELL, the defendant in the within mentioned Writ, for return thereto, respectfully submits to your Honors that the said *Gillmore Hull* — therein named, is confined in the Lancaster County Prison, by virtue of a warrant commitment, whereof the following is a copy, viz :

*Lancaster County Jo. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
To the Const. of the Township of Seidsbury
in the County of Lanc. and to the Keeper
of the Common Jail of the said Co. Gresting.*

*These are to command you the said Const. forthwith
to convey and deliver into the Custody of the said Keeper
of the said Common Jail, the Body of Gillmore Hull
charged before Saml. Hobcom, Esq. a Justice of the
Peace in and for the said County with Kidnapping a
free colored man in said County. And you the said
Keeper are hereby required to receive the Gillmore Hull
into your custody in the said Common Jail, and him
there safely keep until lawfully discharged &c.
Witness the said Justice at the Township of
Seidsbury aforesaid the 4th. day of March 1860.*

Signed *J. Hobcom Esq*

Wherefore the said JAY CADWELL has here before your Honor the body of the said *Gillmore Hull*, together with the said Writ, as therein he is commanded.

Jay Cadwell KEEPER.

1047) 1860

Petition of Gilmor
Hull for ~~State~~ ^{State} ~~Corpus~~ ^{Corpus}

Filed March 15. 1860

To the Hon. Henry G. Long, President Judge of
the Court of Common Pleas of the County of
Lancaster.

Your Petition of Gilmer Hull respectfully
sheweth, that your petitioner is confined un-
justly (as he believes) in the Lancaster County
prison, for some criminal or supposed criminal
matter, as appears by a copy of the warrant of
the Commitment hereto annexed. —

To be relieved from which imprisonment, Your
petitioner now applies, praying that a Writ of
Habeas Corpus may be issued, according to the Act
of Assembly in such case made and provided:
directed to Jay Cadwell, Esq., Keeper of the pris-
on aforesaid, commanding him to bring your
petitioner before your Honor, to do, submit to,
and receive what the laws may require.

And Your Petitioner will &c.,

Gilmer Hull

Lancaster County, Pa. —

Personally appeared before me, Gil-
mer Hull, above named, who being duly sworn
according to law says, that the facts set forth
in the foregoing petition are true, to the best of his
knowledge and belief. Gilmer Hull

Sworn & subscribed,

March 15th A. D. 1860.

Jay Cadwell

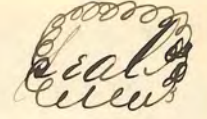
Prison Keeper

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania,
Lancaster County, Pa. -

To the Constable of the Township
of Sadsbury, in the County of Lancaster; and the
Keeper of the Common Jail of the said County,
Greeting: -

These are to command you, the said
Constable, forthwith to convey and deliver into
the Custody of the said Keeper of the said Com-
mon Jail the Body of Gillmore Hull charged
before Sam^l. Stokum, Esq., a Justice of the Peace
and for the said County with Kidnapping a
free Colored man in said County; And you,
the said Keeper are hereby required to receive
the said Gillmore Hull into your Custody in the
said Common Jail and him there safely keep
until lawfully discharged &c.. Witness the said
Justice at the Township of Sadsbury aforesaid, the
4th. day of March, 1860.

Signed

S. Stokum 

1860 March 15th Writ of Habeas Corpus awarded
returnable at my chambers this afternoon at 2 O'clock

H. G. Long

Habeas Corpus Papers

1860 March 15th. Gillmor Hull discharged from custody on giving surety for his appearance at this next Court of Quarter Sessions of the Peace of Lancaster County. (See Recognizance filed in the office of the Clerk of the said court) to answer & c

H. G. Long

1047) 1860

Commonwealth of Penna.
Hull

Habeas Corpus for the body of Gilmer

vs.

Jay Cadwell Esq.
Keeper of Lanc. Co Prison

By act of 1785

Livingston

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania TO Jay Cadwell Esq. Keeper of Lanc. Co
Prison

GREETING: YOU are hereby commanded that the Body of Gilmer Hull
under your custody detained, as it is said, together with the day and cause of his
being taken and detained, by whatsoever name the said Gilmer Hull shall be
charged in the same, you have under safe and secure conduct before the
Honorable H.G. Long at his chamber at 2 OClock this afternoon March 15 1860
to do and receive all those things which the said Judge shall then and there
consider of in this particular.

WITNESS the Honorable H.G. Long Esquire, President of the Court of
Common Pleas of said county, at the city of Lancaster, the fifteenth day of
March in the year of our Lord, one thousand, eight hundred and sixty.

ALLOWED BY

G. Clarkson for prothy
[Fe] Brinton

To the Honorable H.G. Long, President Judge of the Court of Common Pleas for the County of Lancaster:

JAY CADWELL, the defendant in the within mentioned Writ, for return thereto, respectfully submits to your Honors that the said Gillmore Hull therein named, is confined in the Lancaster County Prison, by virtue of a warrant commitment, whereof the following is a copy, viz:

Lancaster County Ss. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to the Const. of the Township of Sadsbury in the County of Lanc. and to the Keeper of the Common Jail of the said Co. Greeting

These are to command you the said Const : forthwith to convent and deliver into the Custody of the said Keeper of the said Common Jail: the Body of Gillmore Hull charged before Sam Slokum, a Justice of the Peace in and for the said County with Kidnapping a free colored man in said County. And you the said Keeper are hereby required to receive the Gillmore Hull into your custody in the said Common Jail, and him there safely Keep until carefully discharged & c.

Witness the said Justice [at] the Township of Sadsbury aforesaid the 4th day of March 1860.

Signed S. Slokum [seal]

Wherefore the said JAY CADWELL has here before your Honor the body of the said Gillmore Hull, together with the said Writ, as therein he is commanded.

Jay Cadwell KEEPER

1047 1860

Petition of Gilmor Hull for Habeas Corpus

Filed March 15. 1860

[new page]

To the Hon. Henry G. Long, President Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of the County of Lancaster,

The Petition of Gilmor Hull respectfully showeth That your petition is confined un-justly as he believes in the Lancaster County prison, for some criminal or supposed criminal matter, as appears by a copy of the warrant of the Commitment hereto annexed.

To be relieved from which imprisonment, Your petitioner now applies, praying that a Writ of Habeas Corpus may be issued, according to the Act of Assembly, in such case made and provided directly to Jay Cadwell, Esq. Keeper of the Prison aforesaid, Commanding him to bring your petitioner before your Honor, to do. Submit to, and receive what the laws may require.

And your petitioner & c.

Gilmor Hull

Lancaster County, Ss.

Personally appeared before me, Gilmer Hull, above named, who being duly sworn according to law says, that the facts set forth in the foregoing petition are true, to the best of his knowledge and belief. Gilmor Hull

Sworn + subscribed,

March 15th A.D. 1860.

Jay Cadwell

Prison Keeper

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Lancaster County, S.S.

To the Constable of the Township of Sadsbury, in the County of Lancaster;
and the Keeper of the Common Jail of said County,

Greeting:

These are to command you, the said Constable, forthwith to. Convey and deliver into the Custody of the said Keeper of the said Common Jail the Body of Gillmore Hull charged before Sam Slokum, Esq., a Justice of the Peace in and for the said County with Kidnapping a free Colored man in said County; and you, the said Keeper are hereby required to receive the said Gillmore Hull into your Custody in the said Common Jail and him there safely keep until lawfully discharged to. Witness the said Justice at the Township of Sadsbury aforesaid, the 4th day of March, 1860.

Signed S. Slokum [seal]

1860 March 15th Writ of Habeas Corpus awarded returnable at my chamber this afternoon at 2 O'clock

H.G. Long

LANCASTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mission of The Society

To actively collect, preserve, interpret and make accessible materials representing Lancaster County history.

The JOURNAL is published quarterly by the Publications Group of the Lancaster County Historical Society. Articles, both academic and non-academic, pertaining to any aspect of Lancaster County History are actively solicited. For a Submission Guide, or to discuss a project, you are invited to contact John W. W. Loose, Editor-in-Chief, at (717) 392-4633 or by mail or e-mail. Manuscripts may also be sent directly to Mr. Loose for review.

Publications Group

John Ward Willson Loose, F.L.C.H.S.,

Editor-in-Chief

(jloose@marauder.millersv.edu)

Jean Maysilles, Deputy Editor-in-Chief

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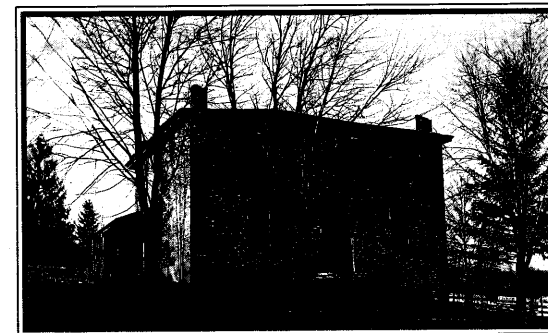
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Journal of the LANCASTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOL. 102, NO. 1, SPRING 2000



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Abolition Divides The Meeting House: Quakers and Slavery in Early Lancaster County

Mark C. Ebersole

Even before the Quakers arrived in 1682, black slavery played an important role in the social and economic life of early Pennsylvania. In Lancaster County, slavery was commonly practiced from around 1700 until the 1830s with the number of slaves peaking in 1780 when slave-owners reported 838 slaves in their possession.¹

It was around 1700 that Quaker families first migrated to territory in Pennsylvania that became Lancaster County. Here these followers of Englishman George Fox created settlements that spanned the area from the

Octoraro Creek on the east to the Susquehanna River on the west. By 1729, approximately 1,000 Quakers had established homes in the county.² Although exact Quaker population records were not kept during the antebellum years, it is known that by 1860 there were eleven Quaker meetinghouses in the county with an aggregate accommodation of 2,650.³

How did the early Quakers of Lancaster County respond to the widespread practice of holding black people in bondage and reducing them to chattels? Were Quakers themselves ever slave-owners? Were they among those who encouraged freed slaves to return to Africa? Were Quakers involved in underground railroad activities? Were they crusaders for the cause of total and immediate abolition? Exactly what was the relation of the Quakers to black slavery in Lancaster County?

It is useful to look at the position toward slavery taken by the larger body to which the Lancaster Quakers belonged, the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.⁴ Generally speaking, until the 1750s members of the Society of Friends, like most American colonists, either owned slaves and saw nothing wrong with this practice as long as they treated the chattels well or they gave little if any thought to slavery.⁵ According to Professor Edward R. Turner, "[T]here is no doubt that at first the Quakers were the principal slave-holders in

Pennsylvania and probably owned more negroes than any other people in the colony."⁶

The first Quaker protest against slavery occurred in 1688 when four German Quakers (two of whom were of Dutch Mennonite ancestry) at Germantown, Pennsylvania forwarded to the Philadelphia Friends a resolution opposing slavery on the grounds that, among other things, it "was contrary to the Golden Rule, that is, to do unto others as you wish others to do to you." The Philadelphia Friends responded by quietly and discreetly putting the resolution aside. During the years that followed, William Southeby, John Farmer, Benjamin Lay, John Wollman and other prominent anti-slavery Quakers along with several Quaker Meetings, including the Chester Monthly Meeting, urged the leaders of the Society to enact policies opposing the practice of slavery. The Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, however, was not of such a mind. For, among other things, during the years 1681–1705, approximately 70 percent of the Meeting members owned slaves and, in the period 1706–1730, about 60 percent were still slave-holders.⁸

Not until six decades after the Germantown protest, in the 1750s, did the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting significantly alter its stand on black slavery. Many reasons account for the change of position, not the least being that Quaker

slave-owners were now elderly and losing their high offices in Friends Meetings to younger, more reform-minded individuals. In 1754, the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting adopted the position "that slaveholding itself, and not just importation, was an un-Christian practice"⁹ Following that decision, in 1758, the Philadelphia Meeting denounced slavery unequivocally—urging Friends to grant their slaves freedom and calling for disciplinary action against those who did not comply, but not barring them from membership. Finally, in 1776, the Yearly Meeting took its most extreme position against slavery by declaring that Quakers who did not manumit their slaves would be expelled from the Society.¹⁰ "[T]he development of antislavery feeling among the Society of Friends was a very slow process indeed," writes historian Herbert Aptheker, "...the group never, until just before the Civil War, really represented a solid, unified, genuinely articulate opposition to slavery."¹¹

One of the early Quaker settlements in Lancaster County was formed on the edge of the Pennsylvania wilderness at Wright's Ferry—now Columbia Borough—between the years 1726 and 1728. Here, three English Quaker families from Chester—John Wright, Robert Barber and Samuel Blunston—acquired large tracts of land. All three men held public offices: Robert Barber, sheriff of Lancaster County; Samuel Blunston,

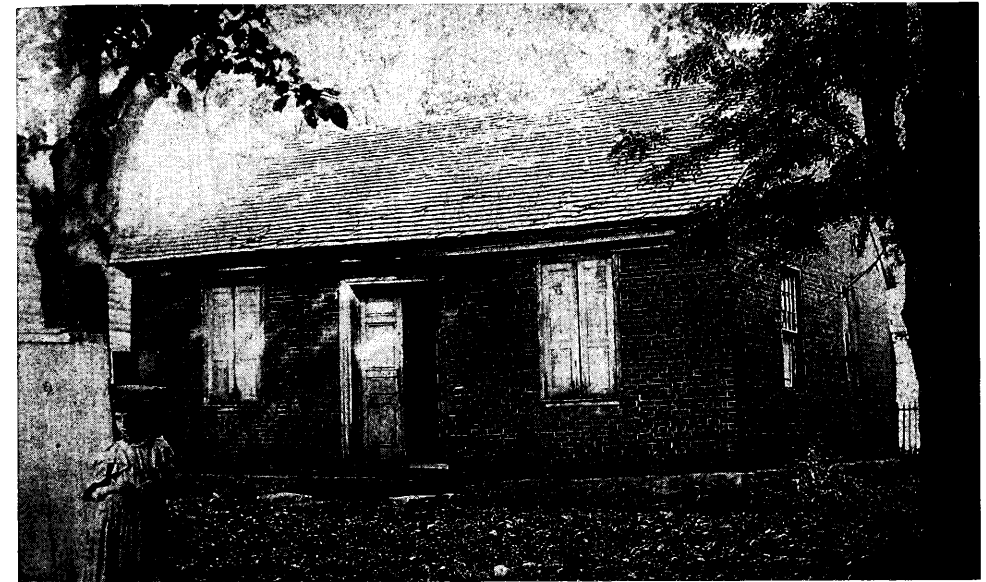
member of the Pennsylvania General Assembly; and John Wright, judge of the county and member of the Assembly. For many years, these pioneer settlers and their descendants in Wright's Ferry constituted a Quaker oligarchy. It was by their determination that most of the labor for the endeavors at Wright's Ferry was provided by German indentured servants and African slaves; and that the Quaker enclave was set apart from the German and Scots-Irish farmsteads.¹²

Early on, the pioneer Quakers gathered in their homes for worship and testimony, with John Wright serving as the principal speaker. In 1758, they built a log meetinghouse on what is now Union Street in Columbia. After four decades of stridently maintaining their independence of an overseeing Quaker Monthly Meeting, they finally agreed in 1799 to give up their autonomy and officially identified themselves with the Society of Friends by becoming an "Indulged Meeting." Thirteen years later, in 1812, they became a "Preparative Meeting" and that same year constructed a new meetinghouse on Cherry Street near Third Street. There they worshipped until 1829 when the Meeting was discontinued by the Sadsbury Monthly Meeting.¹³

The original Quaker settlers on the Susquehanna did not believe that keeping black people in bondage violated their Christian principles. On the contrary, though they affirmed that slave-

holders should treat their black chattels kindly, two of the most notable pioneer Quakers—Samuel Blunston and Robert Barber—were themselves engaged in the practice of slavery. The other pioneer settler, John Wright, was not a slave-owner at any time. But did he disapprove of holding humans in bondage? On at least one occasion he seemed to indicate that he was favorably disposed toward chattel slavery. In 1741, Wright's name was removed from the list of county magistrates because of his opposition to Deputy Governor Thomas' decision to "release indentured servants from service to their masters if they enlisted as soldiers." According to historian Willis Shirk, Wright's objection was grounded in his belief that Thomas' decision was "contrary to ancient usage and destructive to traditional English property rights," and that since Wright and his family "relied upon indentured servants for essential labor on the land" his "theoretical principle was undoubtedly augmented by his desire to preserve the personal privilege of his own station in life as well."¹⁴

Pioneer Samuel Blunston, as already stated, was the owner of African slaves. When he first came from Chester to the Susquehanna "hinterland" in 1726, he brought with him two slaves—one named Peter and the other Sal. During the years following, his retinue of slaves increased so that at the time of his death, in 1746, his will shows he owned in



Quaker Meeting House, Cherry Street, Columbia. "Taken just before its destruction...the porch is gone, and the front fence". The young girl is identified as Cora Ophelia Stern, age 14. Collection of the Lancaster County Historical Society, 2-04-01-38.

excess of six slaves. Of these bound African servants, he bequeathed three to Susanna Wright: the black boy named Sal for one year; a black boy named Rob until he reached the age of 30; and a black boy named Vertulas until he reached the age of 26. Another black slave, Harry, was granted manumission. As to the disposition of all the other slaves, Blunston's Last Will and Testament states the adults, "if they behave well," be set free after seven years and the younger black and mulatto slaves will be granted freedom around the age of thirty.¹⁵ Regarding Robert Barber, his goods and property included a number of slaves, though fewer than Samuel Blunston's. At the time of

his death in 1749 Barber owned four black slaves: a woman and three children.¹⁶ Nathaniel Barber, a descendant of Robert Barber, possessed five slaves in 1758 and two slaves as late as 1769.¹⁷

Still other Columbia Quaker slaveholders were Joseph Jefferies, Emanuel Spoore, and Samuel and Susanna Bethel. Both Spoore and Jefferies still held slaves in the 1780s—one slave and four slaves respectively.¹⁸ Samuel and Susanna Bethel each, at one time, possessed slaves—Samuel owning in 1773 one slave and subsequently, widowed Susanna holding in 1780 a young girl, Bella and a 25 year old man, Cato.¹⁹ Given the action of the Yearly Meeting in 1776, expelling members who there-

after held people in bondage, Quakers possessing slaves in the 1780s likely as not had become separated from the Society.

Four decades after the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting took its most radical stand against slavery, certain Quakers of the Columbia area showed an open resolve to aid slaves in their escape to freedom. A number of influences account for the change of attitude among Columbia Friends: their Quaker conscience was quickened; the original Quaker slave-owners of Wright's Ferry had died; and economic developments resulted in less need for the services of slaves. Furthermore, around the time of the Revolutionary War, anti-slavery sentiment throughout the state was rapidly increasing so that in 1780 the Pennsylvania General Assembly passed the Gradual Abolition Act which, while it did not free any slaves immediately, it did require that thereafter children of blacks and mulattos born of a slave mother might be held in service not beyond the age of 28.

Friends of Columbia came to the aid of black chattels primarily by helping them escape through the underground railroad, a secret line of travel for slaves fleeing North, usually to Canada. Contrary to legend, the underground railroad was not a highly organized system of transportation with signals and travel routes thoroughly fixed, guaranteeing safe fugitive travel. Rather, it was

a shifting network of improvised hiding places, with friends directing fugitives on to other friends. The hiding places were located at intervals of 10 to 12 miles, leaving the final outcome of the fugitives flight weighted with uncertainty. Runaway slaves who were exhausted, starved, and destitute of clothing came to the underground railroad stations where they were then provided food, clothing, protection, safe haven and directed on to the next stage. Accounts of underground railroad activities commonly portray the fleeing slaves as totally helpless, as though they were literally being carried from one station to another. The truth is that it was they who initially planned and executed the escape from their masters. Many of them ran away not once or twice but many times and, although often caught and brutally punished, they persisted in their struggle to be free. Those who made it into Pennsylvania were among the more fortunate ones, since the chances of getting there at all were remote. And even after arriving above the Mason and Dixon line and being helped by underground railroad operators, the fleeing slaves still had to rely heavily on their own ingenuity, stamina and courage in eluding pursuing masters and all sorts of slave catchers.²⁰

There were three major underground railroad routes by which runaway slaves entered Lancaster County in their flight North. One of the routes

was through the Wright's Ferry/Columbia area. At first fugitives traveled from Baltimore and other points South by way of Havre de Grace to Philadelphia. But because of the difficulty of safe passage across the Susquehanna River at Havre de Grace, the line of travel shifted to York and then across the river at Wrightsville and on to Columbia. Very likely fleeing slaves crossed at other points along the Susquehanna but Columbia was the primary western gateway into Lancaster County.²¹

One reason many fugitives traveled North by way of Columbia was because of a solid black community within the borough that provided a safe haven for runaway slaves. The core of this community consisted of two large groups of emancipated slaves. In 1816, 56 slaves who had been liberated by Captain Izard Bacon, a wealthy slave-holder of Henrico County, Virginia, journeyed to Columbia. Two years later, 100 manumitted slaves from Hanover County, Virginia who were formerly owned by a Quaker woman Sally Bell, came to Columbia. By 1850 the population of the black community had reached 943. In that same year the Fugitive Slave Law was enacted. This law stipulated that any person who refused to assist in arresting fugitive slaves and extraditing them to the South would be subject to a fine and imprisonment. Because the law encouraged the unlawful seizure of

blacks by masters and kidnapers, many blacks feared for their lives. In Columbia one year after the law was enacted, the population of the black community declined from 943 to 378, many having migrated to Canada. During the following decade, however, the fortunes of the Columbia black people improved so that by 1860 their number increased by more than 200, reaching a total of 600.²²

Some of the Quaker underground railroad activity commonly identified with the town of Columbia actually took place in two nearby communities located on the west side of the Susquehanna River: York Springs in Adams County and York in York County. In both places the operators of the underground railroads guided most of the fugitives in their care across the Susquehanna and into the hands of friendly people in Columbia and other parts of Lancaster County. In York Springs, William Wright (1788–1865) actively helped runaway slaves. Wright was known as an “unassuming Quaker” and a “champion of the oppressed.” He frequently attended anti-slavery and Liberty Party conventions. His wife Phebe Wierman was no less opposed to holding humans in bondage than was her husband and she wholeheartedly joined him in making their home a refuge for escapees. According to one anecdote as narrated by William Still, when a Dr. Lewis of Lewisburg, York County—who pro-

fessed to be an atheist—assisted William Wright in helping 16 fugitives cross a flooding Susquehanna River, he exclaimed, “Great God! is this a Christian land and are Christians thus forced to flee for their liberty?”²³

In the town of York, Quaker Samuel W. Mifflin was very much involved in aiding black fugitives through the underground railroad, especially during the years 1840 to 1860. He is described as “one who by birth and education strongly opposed slavery.” As the nephew of the wife of William Wright of Columbia, he was accustomed as a child to seeing fugitives cared for by different members of the Wright family. Samuel Mifflin was married first to Elizabeth Martin and later to Hannah Wright. Both wives were devout Quakers and both heartily supported Samuel Mifflin in aiding runaway slaves. He seemed quite adept at designing disingenuous schemes for outwitting pursuing slave-catchers.²⁴

Within the town of Columbia there was another Quaker named William Wright who also worked diligently for the good of bonded blacks. This William Wright, a grandson of John Wright, a pioneer settler of Wright’s Ferry, is said to be one of the first persons in Lancaster County to engage in the practice of secretive fugitive travel, possibly as early as 1804. Being a person who had a “good share of moral courage,” he was credited with “doing everything he

could in the interest of runaway negroes,” and with losing “no opportunity, in court or out of it, to secure the captive’s escape.” It is believed that he cared for hundreds of fugitives in his home and directed many of them on to Quaker Daniel Gibbons, near Bird-in-Hand.²⁵

In addition to the above-mentioned Quakers, other Friends in the Columbia-York area came to the aid of fleeing slaves. Though their deeds may not loom large in the historical documents, their efforts were important. Joel Wierman on numerous occasions collaborated with his brother-in-law William Wright in concealing fugitives; Joel Fisher cared for many fleeing slaves who came his way; and Evan Green was opposed to “Southern Slavery” and assisted black fugitives in escaping to freedom.²⁶

At least two Columbia Friends were prime movers in the formation in 1818 of the Columbia Abolition Society, an auxiliary to the Pennsylvania Abolition Society. William Wright of Columbia was elected president of the Society and William Kirkwood served as secretary. Both men represented the Columbia Society at conferences of the “American Convention for promoting the Abolition of Slavery and improving the condition for the African race” held in Philadelphia. In addition to assisting escaping blacks, the Columbia Abolition Society promoted schools for blacks in

Columbia and York; interceded to foil kidnappers who were set upon seizing free blacks; and provided other services for free blacks.²⁷

Quakers also played a role in the Columbia race riots in the spring and summer of 1834, albeit a relatively minor role. The riots were triggered by the notable economic success of various members of the black community. Their achievements “excited the envy” of white working men of Columbia provoking them into stoning, and destroying the furniture and interior of several houses of black inhabitants. One of the houses and offices that were destroyed belonged to Stephen Smith, an extraordinarily successful and wealthy black business man of Columbia. The white rioters of Columbia demanded that black merchants sell their properties and cease to harbor any more transient blacks. Seemingly, to further the pro-slavery cause of the white agitators, white working men and other white citizens met in the town hall after the riots and adopted several resolutions, one being: “That the Colonization Society ought to be supported by all citizens favorable to the removal of the blacks from the country.”²⁸

Quaker involvement in the riots centered upon Stephen Smith. Though Smith was not the primary target of the riots, he received an anonymous letter at the time of the disruption warning him that “your presence is not agreeable

and the less you appear in the assembly of whites the better it will be for your black hide” as “you are considered an injury to the real value of property in Columbia.” Angered by this acrimonious letter, three Wrights—James, William and John L.—publicly offered a reward for information on its author. Their straightforward, open allegiance to Smith, it is believed, helped consolidate support for him throughout the community.²⁹

Not all initiatives by Quakers designed ostensibly to help the cause of black slaves were viewed favorably by the people for whom they were intended. One such initiative was the Columbia Colonization Society, an auxiliary of the American Colonization Society. In 1830, Quakers William Kirkwood, James Wright, Robert Barber, Evan Green, Israel Cooper and William Wright were among the persons who founded and served as officers of the Columbia Colonization Society. Generally, the advocates of colonization were men who disapproved of slavery, but did not want to take a drastic, head-on attack against it, preferring rather a gradual and peaceable transfer of slaves to the land of Liberia. But the idea of colonization did not resonate well among African Americans in Pennsylvania and especially in Philadelphia. In 1817 some 3,000 black people assembled in Philadelphia’s Bethel Church and roundly denounced

colonization as a design fraught with racism.³⁰ And in the minds of freed blacks in Columbia, consigning black Americans to the shores of Africa was a grossly ill-conceived idea and they emphatically said so. In 1831 Stephen Smith presided over a public meeting of African Americans at which resolutions were passed denouncing the colonization scheme as an attempt to send blacks “to the burning shores of Africa” and a design based upon “prejudice and hatred.”³¹

Ten miles east of Columbia was the site of another Quaker settlement in Lancaster County, later known as Lancaster Borough. That settlement, which dates back to 1721 or 1722, was laid out as “Lancaster Townstead” in 1730 and given borough status in 1742. The majority of the early residents of Lancaster were of German and Swiss ancestry with German speech and dress prevailing along with Lutheran and German Reformed churches. Quakers, who were of British ancestry, were a decided minority group. Their small number notwithstanding, many of them enjoyed local political popularity—serving as distinguished leaders in the highest levels of local and state government.

The Lancaster Quakers very likely worshipped together in their homes as early as 1735 or 1736. Two decades later, in August of 1755, the Sadsbury Monthly Meeting granted them “the liberty of building a Meeting House” and

building property was promptly deeded to three of Lancaster’s leading Quakers—Peter Worrall, Isaac Whitelock and Thomas Poultney. The meeting house was constructed in 1759. Here Quakers gathered for worship until about 1810 after which the meeting house was used as a school house and for other purposes. By 1844 the Lancaster Meeting was formally discontinued and the meeting house put up for sale.³²

As in Columbia, during the 1760s and 1770s there were Quakers in Lancaster who purchased and possessed black slaves. In each instance the slaveowner was a prominent member of the community. Francis Sanderson, a well-known coppersmith, possessed three slaves. James Webb, Jr., son of one-time burgess James Webb, Sr., bought and sold slaves prior to 1776. For this wrongdoing he had been disowned by the Society of Friends; and, in August of 1776, requested of the Sadsbury Monthly Meeting that, by virtue of having previously freed his slaves, he be reinstated as a member of the society.³³ Isaac Whitelock, who one time served the borough as burgess and treasurer, in 1750 advertised the disappearance of a black slave “with an iron collar around his neck.” Christopher Marshall (1709–1797), who was expelled from the Society because of his active sympathy for the War for Independence, possessed two black slaves—a girl named

Poll and her mother named Dinah. Poll disappeared one night in Lancaster and was hunted down at the place where she frequently went dancing but she could not be found. Later, upon the death of Dinah in 1778 and because of Marshall’s difficulty in finding someone to attend to her burial, he wrote in his diary, “[A]s all the poor women here are rich with Imagination, so it was with Difficulty one could be procured at any rate.” Then after finding “persons for to put the Negro woman into her Coffin” he concluded his account with the lament—“O, what a wretched place is here, full of Religious Professions but not a grain of love or charity, except in words, in the generality of the German inhabitants.”³⁴

Historical records give no indication that Lancaster Quakers ever helped slaves escape bondage, either by assisting absconding slaves through the underground railroad or by aiding them in any other way. Throughout the Lancaster Borough there was very little anti-slavery sentiment. The practice of slavery was widely assumed by the white inhabitants to be part of the social and economic order. Holding blacks in servitude was not a major issue. Few Lancastrians came forward to assist black slaves—and members of the Society of Friends were not among those who did.

Quite different is the story of the Society of Friends in eastern and south-

ern Lancaster County, a stronghold of Quakerism ever since the time of the early settlements. The first Quaker believed to reside in what is now Lancaster County was John Kennerly who settled in 1691 in the town of Christiana (then Chester County). The first Friends Meeting House to be built in Lancaster County was a log house erected in 1725, where Quakers worshipped until 1748 when they constructed a stone meeting house. As early as 1737 a Sadsbury Monthly Meeting was set up, its members made up of Quakers from Leacock, Salisbury and Lampeter. Friends of Little Britain were authorized in 1752 to build a meeting house, which became known as Penn Hill. Other Quaker Meetings and the dates of their organization are as follows: Leacock Meeting, 1728; Eastland Meeting, 1796; East Sadsbury Meeting, 1805; Drumore Meeting, 1816; and Bart Meeting, 1820. A Little Britain Monthly Meeting was created in 1804. Its members included representatives from Eastland and Drumore.³⁵

As in Colombia and the town of Lancaster, some eastern and southern Lancaster County Quakers owned African slaves and, in several instances, retained them beyond the Yearly Meeting ruling of 1776. It is known that three Quakers possessed a total of seven slaves. John Kirk of Lampeter Township released four slaves during the years 1767 and 1777. In January of 1767, he

“disposed of a black woman slave;” in August of 1777, he released a mulatto woman Isabella; and in October of 1777, he set free a mulatto woman Rose and promised to release a mulatto boy Ben, age 17, when he was 21 years of age. John Clemson, Sr. of Salisbury Township freed a “Negro from slavery” in August of 1776. And James Cooper of Sadsbury Township appeared “to hold some Negroes in slavery” as late as June of 1790.³⁶

While some Quakers in eastern and southern Lancaster County possessed slaves, a score and more of these peace-loving people believed slavery to be contrary to their faith and were engaged in helping victims of the practice gain freedom. Underground railroad activity in Lancaster County may have gotten underway as early as 1800 but mostly this secretive operation occurred during the three decades preceding the Civil War, much of it provoked by the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law. As the law put fleeing slaves in even greater jeopardy, Quaker underground railroad activity on behalf of escaping slaves increased appreciably.

Previously it was stated that there were three major underground routes commonly traveled by fugitives in entering Lancaster County. Columbia was one route. A second route originated in Baltimore, crossed the Susquehanna at Peach Bottom in the southern end of the county and continued on to Liberty

Square and then to Christiana. A third route followed the Susquehanna to the mouth of the Octorora Creek and also continued on in the direction of Christiana. There were still other points into Lancaster County—for example, the Kimberton, Chester County trail in the extreme east.³⁷

Who were the Quakers of eastern and southern Lancaster County who assisted black slaves in their flight to freedom? One of the most active and pivotal underground railroad stations in Lancaster County was operated by the Gibbons family, whose home was located near Bird-in-Hand in Upper Leacock Township. Within the Gibbons family there were three generations of underground railroad workers. Of the first generation was James Gibbons (1734–1810). Strongly anti-slavery during his whole life, James was very active in concealing fugitives by day and sending them on to other friends by night. Daniel Gibbons (1775–1852), the older of James Gibbons’ two sons, was his father’s worthy successor. His life-long opposition to slavery was grounded in the Quaker ideal of compassion for “all who were downtrodden and oppressed of every nationality and color.” He was married to Hannah Wierman (1787–1860) who, like her husband, regarded slavery as egregiously evil and “was always ready, day and night, to do all she possibly could to help the poor fugitives on their way to freedom.”

During the 65 years that Daniel and Hannah Gibbons were engaged in aiding fleeing slaves, it is believed that they gave assistance to between 900 and 1000 fugitives.

The third-generation member of the Gibbons family to help runaway slaves was Dr. Joseph Gibbons (1818–1883), a son of Daniel and Hannah Gibbons. Joseph was a devout Friend who helped establish, early in 1873, *The Journal*, a weekly paper devoted to the Society of Friends. At the early age of 19, Joseph Gibbons attended a meeting at Harrisburg to organize an anti-slavery society. Throughout his life he supported his father in helping fugitives and eventually assumed the full range of his father’s underground railroad work.³⁸

One of Daniel Gibbons’ good Quaker friends was his neighbor in East Lampeter Township, Lewis Peart (1808–1882). A “quite cautious but strongly determined person,” Peart was a most reliable agent in operating this secret line of slave escape. Records indicate that he received slaves sent to him directly from William Wright in Columbia as well as from Daniel Gibbons. In 1844 he moved to Chester County, near Valley Forge, where, it is reported, his underground activities quadrupled.³⁹

In Bart Township there were at least seven Quakers who lent outstanding support to fleeing fugitives. Joseph Hood (1812–1866) and his younger brother Caleb C. Hood (1817–1901)



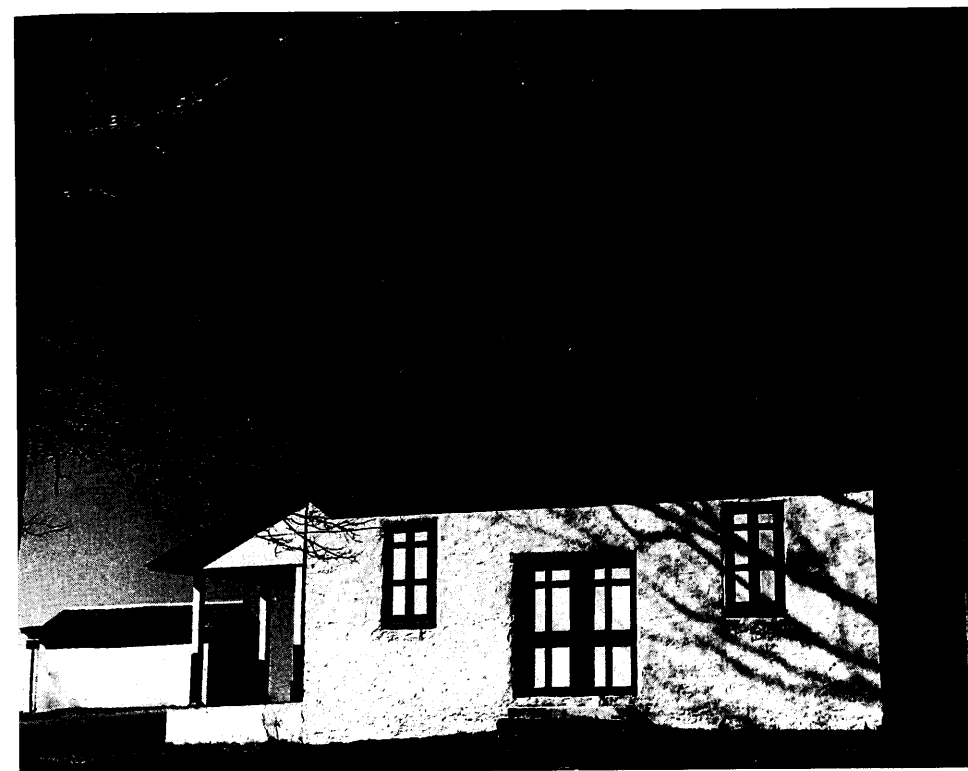
Sadsbury Meeting House. Collection of the Lancaster County Historical Society, 1-01-02-47.

received many slaves, especially from Quaker Joseph Smith at Drumore Township. Caleb is described as being quite bold and daring and rash in his designs, including encouraging slaves to leave their masters—which other underground railroad conductors feared would get him or them in trouble. Among the many runaways who came to the Hoods were three former slaves—William Howard, Charles Long and James Dawse—who had participated in the Christiana Riot in 1851. These men arrived at the Hoods at midnight and there received food and shelter before being sent on to Canada. Another friend of slaves in Bart Township was James Jackson (1805–1881) “whose door was always open to the flying fugitive.” Jackson was a highly esteemed member of the Society of Friends characterized as “a man of unimpeachable personal integrity and of great firmness of character.” During the Christiana Riot, he was indicted but not then arrested; thereafter, his family “suffered great annoyances” from neighboring pro-slavery partisans.⁴⁰

The Bushong home in Bart Township was also a busy and well-known underground railroad station sustained by three generations of Bushongs. The eldest was Henry Bushong (1783–1870). Many fugitives came to his home from Daniel Gibbons, Dr. J. K. Eshleman at Strasburg, and Quakers John N. Russell and Joseph

Smith at Drumore. Henry Bushong is said to have worked “earnestly and enthusiastically” in helping slaves gain freedom. Jacob Bushong (1813–1880), the son of Henry Bushong, continued his father’s work of concealing and guiding fugitives on to other friends. Henry and Jacob Bushong, on one occasion, agreed to pay \$675 to set free two recaptured slaves. Gilbert Bushong, of the third generation, lived on the spacious Bushong homestead where he, too, rendered services to fugitives, providing them with food, clothing and shelter and sending them on during the night.⁴¹

Although Thomas Whitson (1796–1862) lived the last decade of his life in Sadsbury Township, his earlier life was spent in Bart Township where most of his anti-slavery work occurred. Hundreds of fugitives passed through his home, most of them coming from Daniel Gibbons, Dr. J. K. Eshleman, and Quaker Lindley Coates at Sadsbury Township. Thomas Whitson attended the first meeting of “The American Convention for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery” in Philadelphia in 1833 and was among the signers of the convention’s adopted “Principles.” On October 11, 1850 a public meeting was held in Georgetown, Bart Township to protest the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. Quakers Thomas Whitson and Elwood Geist were present at the meeting and served as members of a committee that denounced the Fugitive Slave Law—



Drumore Friends Meeting House, Liberty Square. Collection of the Lancaster County Historical Society, 2-04-06-01.

declaring that they would “harbor, clothe, feed and aid the escape of fugitive slaves in opposition to the law.”⁴² On occasions Whitson appeared along with abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison as a speaker at anti-slavery conventions. At the time of the Christiana Riot in 1851, when a “lawless bandit” threatened Thomas Whitson with the alternative of “recalling the assertion that he was an Abolitionist or having his brains blown out at the point of a revolver,” Whitson replied that he would never deny that

he was an abolitionist. Some of Whitson’s neighbors were so enraged by his anti-slavery activities that they burned down his barn. A most earnest and able opponent of black slavery, Thomas Whitson’s activities on behalf of slaves extended into the more extreme realm of abolitionism.⁴³

Two very active Quaker stations in Drumore Township were those of John N. Russell and Joseph C. Smith—both members of the Drumore Friends Meeting. The home of John Russell (1804–1876) was well known in



Little Britain Friends Meeting House, Penn Hill, Fulton Township.

Lancaster and adjacent counties as a shelter for runaway slaves. At the early age of about ten, according to his son Slater B. Russell, John Russell witnessed an episode in which “a light colored woman, the mother of two small children, was taken in broad light, tied, gagged, thrown into a wagon and, amid the cries of little ones, hurried off across

the border.” This incident made a lasting impression upon young John, influencing him in becoming a champion and friend of the fleeing slave and remaining so until slavery was abolished. John Russell’s home was a very prominent station, receiving many fugitives—especially from his neighbor Joseph C. Smith. Russell’s house was

also the guest house, on occasions, for such distinguished slavery antagonists as William Lloyd Garrison, Lucretia Mott, J. Miller McKim and Lucy Stone.⁴⁴

The residence of Joseph C. Smith (1801–1878) was probably the most important underground railroad station in the southern end of Lancaster County. I. C. Arnold, who was well informed of Smith’s anti-slavery activities, said that Smith “was bitterly opposed to slavery and refrained from using cotton materials because it was the product of slave labor” and that he “was ever ready to help a runaway slave.” Since Joseph Smith’s house was located about four miles north of the Susquehanna River at Peach Bottom, it was to his place that many fugitives came after crossing the river from Maryland. Because of his unrelenting care for escapees, especially his blatant defiance of the Fugitive Slave Law, his enemies tagged him a “Black Abolitionist.” A reward of \$500 was offered for his capture but he was never apprehended. On an occasion when Frederick Douglas was on his way to speak at an abolition meeting in Martic Township and pro-slavery advocates protested his presence, Joseph Smith was among those who kept Douglas safe from the menacing assailants.⁴⁵

There were several Quaker underground railroad stations in Little Britain Township, all at sites close to the Lancaster County border. William Brown, a member of the Eastland

Friends Meeting, lived in a house located along the Octorora Creek in the extreme southeastern corner of the county. His underground railroad station was made famous by Elwood Greist, a one-time Quaker, who wrote *John and Mary, Fugitive Slaves*, a true story of two fugitive slaves who lived for a short time with Mr. and Mrs. William Brown.⁴⁶ Another underground railroad agent, Oliver Furness (1794–1858) was regarded as a faithful worker and known as “the fugitives’ friend.” The Furness family was said to be extraordinarily fearful about recriminations in the event their secretive work for runaway slaves became known. Their farm was located along the Octorora Creek near that of their neighbor and friend Joseph C. Taylor.⁴⁷

Joseph C. Taylor (1802–1876) (a birthright Friend who later disassociated himself from the Society) was a most aggressive advocate for the freedom of slaves. He lived in Ashville, four to six miles north of the Mason and Dixon line, where his farm was easily accessible to fugitives crossing the Conowingo as well as those traveling up the Eastern Shore of Maryland. He frequently worked in collaboration with Oliver Furness in caring for fleeing slaves. Rugged and fearless, he did not shy away from taking on dangerous escapades to rescue kidnapped slaves.

Hearing that a slave girl had been abducted and was being hurried to the

Maryland line, Taylor mounted a horse and chased the kidnappers. Realizing that he needed to be armed, he borrowed a gun from a friend along the way. Upon overtaking the fleeing kidnapper's wagon, he rode around it, aimed the gun at the driver and shouted, "Stir another foot and I'll blow your brains out." The girl was discharged and the kidnappers jailed. The Quaker sequel: "The old gun hadn't a ghost of a load in it."⁴⁸

In Fulton Township, located at the southern tip of the county, underground railroad stations were operated by Quakers Day Wood, Timothy Haines, and Jeremiah Brown. All were members of the Penn Hill Meeting. Day Wood (1812–1865), a state legislator, was characterized as one of "the most honored and highly respected men in Lancaster County." Influenced deeply by the tenets of his Quaker faith, he sought earnestly "to promote benevolence, peace and good will to men." Regarded as "an uncompromising hater of slavery", he is known to have forwarded fugitives to many friends including some in Chester County. As a legislator, he went on record in favor of a proposed amendment to the Constitution of the United States, "for ever abolishing slavery."⁴⁹

Well-known Quaker, Timothy Haines (–1831) lived on a 150 acre farm near the Susquehanna River. Although his place was not situated along a direct underground railroad line, numerous

fugitives came his way after crossing the river. His father-in-law, Jeremiah Brown (1812–1865), was an esteemed elder in the Society. He also served as a member of the State Legislature and the U. S. Congress and was elected Associate Judge of the Courts of Lancaster County. Knowing that Brown was always concerned about the plight of black slaves, Thaddeus Stevens requested Brown to intervene on behalf of "two colored girls" who were being pursued by "manstealers of Lancaster" by giving the fugitives "immediate notice to flee to a city of refuge."⁵⁰

Within West Sadsbury Township, one Quaker who was especially diligent in helping black fugitives was Thomas Bonsall (1797–1882). During the many years that he lived on his West Sadsbury farm, he was an active underground railroad agent—working jointly with Daniel Gibbons, Thomas Whitson and Lindley Coates. Fugitives trusted Thomas Bonsall to the extent that many who gained their freedom wished to remain with him to work on his farm. Bonsall joined with Thomas Whitson, Lindley Coates and other Quakers in sending to Representative John Quincy Adams a recommendation that Congress take action outlawing the practice of slavery. At the time of a Christiana celebration of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, Bonsall was singled out for praise by the black people of Christiana because of his

many years of service to runaway slaves.⁵¹

There were in Sadsbury Township three Quakers who were very active in helping fleeing slaves—Jeremiah Moore, Joseph Fulton, Jr., and Lindley Coates. Jeremiah Moore (1803–1887) fed, clothed and secreted numerous escapees in his house in Christiana. Many of them crossed the Susquehanna at Columbia and came to him by way of Daniel Gibbons. From an anecdote, we glean something of Moore's disdain for slavery. A Quaker preacher of pro-slavery sentiments once asked Jeremiah Moore the question, "What would thee think if thee had a horse stolen and taken to Maryland and the person having him and knowing him to be stolen would refuse to give him up?" Moore simply responded by citing "the unjust and un-Christian comparison between a man and a brute." Allowing for the imperfection of such narrative accounts, this one is enough to reveal Moore's offense at the idea that slaves were being looked upon as something less than human beings.⁵²

Joseph Fulton (1782–1852) stridently denounced the practice of slavery, declaring it to be "the crying sin of the nation." He was especially active after the passage of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law in plotting to spare runaway slaves from being recaptured. Because of his reputation as a friend of the slave, his home was closely watched by pro-

slavery zealots—especially "negro-informers" near the Gap who wished to see the "talons of law fixed" against him. But despite the daily threats by rancorous neighbors, Joseph Fulton was unfaltering in his determination to help slaves escape bondage. After the Christiana riot of 1851 he sheltered many fugitives who feared for their lives, including the wife of William Parker, the leader of the riot.⁵³

Lindley Coates (1794–1856) of Sadsbury Township was also one of the most forthright and uncompromising opponents of slavery in the county, if not the state. A steadfast underground railroad operator, he received at his house fugitives from Daniel Gibbons, Thomas Whitson and others. Because his place was widely known as a safe haven for runaways, deputy marshals and constables would check it out frequently—searching for escapees. Like his friend Thomas Whitson, Lindley Coates was an advocate of immediate emancipation. He participated in the organization of the American Anti-Slavery Society and in 1840 was chosen as president of the Society. As mentioned previously, Lindley Coates joined with other Quakers in requesting John Quincy Adams to take action against slavery.

In 1837 Lindley Coates served as a member of the Constitutional Convention and was one of three delegates who voted against the insertion of

“white” as the restriction of suffrage in Pennsylvania. On one occasion when Lindley Coates took Charles C. Burleigh, a noted abolitionist, to speak in Strasburg they were pelted with “unmarketable eggs and their carriage stoned” as they were leaving town. In 1850 miscreants in Strasburg were so aggravated by Lindley Coates’ “treasonable disregard” of the Fugitive Slave Law that they reduced his house to ashes.⁵⁴

In addition to the above Sadsbury Township Quakers who assisted fugitives, within the township there was a group of Quaker women who also aided runaway slaves. The group was called the Abigail Tent Society. Little is known about the work of the Society other than that it concealed fugitives in two places in Lancaster County: in a farmhouse in Drumore Township that provided a special hiding place given the name “slave cellar” and a farmhouse in Sadsbury Township that contained a hiding place under a false floor in the basement.⁵⁵ Presumably the society was named in honor of Abigail Adams, the very independent and rebellious-minded wife of John Quincy Adams—a woman who strongly opposed slavery, contending that the maintenance of bonded blacks could not be reconciled with the American struggle for independence.

Assuredly, there were still other Quakers in eastern and southern Lancaster County who assisted slaves in their flight to freedom, though the

records of their activities are quite sparse. In this group are Joseph Brinton, Salisbury Township; Thomas Pownall, West Sadsbury Township; Truman Cooper, Levi Pownall, Joseph Moore, Moses Whitson and James Williams (known as “Abolition Jim”) all of Sadsbury Township. In other townships, too, there were Quakers who rendered good deeds on behalf of fugitives but about whom little has been recorded.

Of all the events in eastern and southern Lancaster County—indeed, in all Lancaster County—having to do with slavery, none is of greater historic importance than the Christiana Riot of 1851. One year after the passage of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law when feelings for and against the law were running high, three or four fugitive slaves were hiding in the house of William Parker in Christiana. Parker was a much-revered black anti-slavery advocate who had fled from Maryland to York, to Columbia, and then to Christiana. Edward Gorsuch, a slave owner of Maryland, claimed that the runaways concealed in Parker’s house were his slaves and he attempted to force his way into the Parker house to reclaim them. William Parker’s wife Eliza sounded a cry for help and black people of the Christiana area, armed with guns and clubs, immediately confronted Edward Gorsuch’s party. After mutual threats, a bloody battle resulted. Several black people were wounded. Edward Gorsuch



Eastland Friends Meeting House, Little Britain Township. Built in 1803.

was killed and his son and others of his party were badly wounded. Local authorities arrested 34 black men and three white men, of whom two were Quakers—Elijah Lewis and Joseph R. Scarlet—and one was non-Quaker—Caster Hanway. Lewis was accused of not cooperating with Gorsuch’s attempt to recapture the fugitives. Scarlet was charged for attending to a wounded black man. Quaker James Jackson, who appeared on the grounds after the riot, was indicted but not arrested. All the white men except Jackson and all the black participants were tried and exonerated of the charges of treason and

murder. The real hero of the entire affair was William Parker who had boldly resisted the Fugitive Slave Law and ultimately had to be spirited away by friends through the underground railroad to Canada, “where none dared to molest, or make him afraid.”⁵⁶

Having now recounted the relation of Lancaster County Quakers to black slavery, what conclusions can be drawn regarding the distinctive contribution of these peace-loving people to the cause of the slaves’ struggle for freedom? First, can we conclude that Quaker anti-slavery activities rose to the level of abolitionism? Admirers called Quakers

“abolitionists” in praise. Enemies tagged them “abolitionists” in derision. But who was an abolitionist? Defining nicely an abolitionist is a complex, many-layered issue with a broad spectrum of overlapping attitudes and constituencies. Among themselves, abolitionists were at considerable odds as to the right course of action. There was, however, a distinction between abolitionist activity and underground railroad activity. Both are deliberately subserving but, in the main, abolitionists were pushing the issue to the extreme, working aggressively to end all slavery totally and immediately; whereas underground railroad operators took the less radical position of ameliorating the plight of the slaves by aiding them in fleeing their masters.

In Lancaster County, it appears there were Quakers whose opposition to slavery stretched into the abolitionist range. Thomas Whitson and Lindley Coates are two clear examples in that both assisted fugitives fleeing to freedom and, at the same time, agitated to overthrow the entire system of black slavery. And there were other Quakers who, on occasions, displayed a sympathy for the idea of complete and immediate emancipation. The homes of John Russell and Joseph Smith provided shelter for distinguished abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, and Frederick Douglas, and others—shelter against the violent attacks of local pro-slavery

mobs. Day Wood at one time cast a vote favoring a federal amendment to abolish slavery. Thomas Bonsall, Amos Gilbert and Moses Whitson joined Thomas Whitson and Lindley Coates in requesting Congressman John Quincy Adams to advance the cause against slavery.

Other Quakers of the county participated in the conferences of societies that bore the title “abolition” although the societies, their titles notwithstanding, do not seem to have been preoccupied primarily with abolition. Quakers Benjamin B. Wright and William Wright of Columbia were active members of “The Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, for the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage, and for Improving the Condition of the African Race.” William Kirkwood and William Wright of Columbia played a major role in forming and perpetuating the Columbia Abolition Society, an auxiliary of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society. But, according to the reports of the Pennsylvania and Columbia societies delivered to “The American Convention for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery,” these “abolition” societies were preeminently concerned with assisting runaway slaves and, more especially, with improving the lot of freed slaves by opposing discriminatory legislation, combating the practice of kidnapping, and opening schools for black children

and adults.⁵⁷

The distinctive contribution of the Quakers of Lancaster County who served the cause of anti-slavery was that of helping fugitives flee North through the underground railroad. In taking this more ameliorative course of action the achievements of certain Quakers on behalf of bonded blacks are most notable. Although the very secrecy of the underground railroad operations precluded conductors from keeping records, the Quakers of the county very likely helped more than a thousand black men, women and children escape the world of slavery. Hiding fugitives from kidnappers and other slave-hunters was a precarious, dangerous undertaking—especially after the enactment of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law. Underground railroad operators commonly faced public abuse, vulnerable to the verbal and physical threats of their rancorous pro-slavery neighbors. To engage in assisting slaves required not only a kind-hearted and benevolent spirit, it also called for a good measure of intrepidity, coolness, firmness, resourcefulness, and skillful management. And it was by virtue of these qualities that Quakers of Lancaster County aided many shackled blacks on their courageous journey to freedom.

Credit for this remarkable record of achievements of Lancaster County Quakers on behalf of enslaved blacks must be accorded to individual

Quakers, rather than to Quakers as a body. The Quakers of the county were by no means uniformly minded on the matter of helping slaves—not a strong phalanx of anti-slavery champions. Only a minority of Friends reached out to assist runaways escaping slavery. And this minority should not be construed as symbolic of the entire antebellum generation of Quakers. There were undoubtedly many Quakers during the decades preceding the Civil War who looked unfavorably upon the enslavement of human beings. But the majority of them remained aloof from all anti-slavery activity. The historical records give no indication that fleeing slaves in the county could count on receiving assistance from any and every Friend they might encounter. Of the Quakers of Lancaster County, the individuals who came forth to care and protect black slaves were the “notable exceptions.”

Indeed, within the Quaker Meetings in Lancaster County, it was individual members rather than the collective membership who served the cause of the slaves. Except for rhetoric, the Quaker meetings were not really involved in assisting slaves. Around the time of the Revolutionary War, the Sadsbury Monthly Meeting did put “under notice” members of the Society who were slave-holders. But until the time of the Civil War, the Lancaster County meetings remained remarkably

distant from the daily laboring of the underground railroad operations, rarely serving either as a fugitive hideout or as a place for anti-slavery meetings. In fact, distinguished anti-slavery Quakers were not always warmly welcomed at meetings. Thomas Whitson, Esq., son of Thomas Whitson, Sr., observed that Quaker Lucretia Mott, one of Pennsylvania's most conscientious and indomitable anti-slavery advocates, "did not always get a spontaneous welcome" when she appeared at the monthly meetings of Sadsbury, Penn Hill and Eastland. Whitson goes on to point out that because of Mott's "persistent anti-slavery discourses," a Philadelphia Meeting "made strenuous efforts at one time to have her disowned from membership."⁵⁸ Although the Lancaster Quaker Meetings propagated a gospel that extolled the virtues of humane and Christian compassion for all people, it was individual Friends of the county who brought this lofty idealism to bear upon black people bonded in permanent servitude.

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About the Author

Mark C. Ebersole was born in Hershey, Pennsylvania. He earned his Ph.D. at Columbia University. He served as professor and provost at Bucknell University before becoming dean of the graduate school at Temple University. Dr. Ebersole was president of Elizabethtown College from 1977 to 1985.

Endnotes

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- 2 Paul L. Whitely, "A History of Friends in Lancaster County," *Journal of Lancaster County Historical Society*, Vol. 51, No. 1, 1947, p.11.
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Indulged Meeting—A newly formed meeting for worship only, and is under the care and oversight of a Monthly Meeting.

Preparative Meeting—A regularly-organized meeting of a single worshipping congregation which may prepare and present business to a Monthly Meeting.

Monthly Meeting—The basic unit of Quaker administration which holds monthly business meetings. Indulged and Preparative meetings may be under the jurisdiction of a Monthly Meeting.

Quarterly Meeting—Meeting for business held four times per year, attended by representatives of all Monthly meetings in a county or region. (Today, the business considered by the Quarterly meeting has diminished, and the meetings mostly involve inspiration and fellowship.)

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