

Pannebakker Familie Views

A Newsletter for the Pannebakker Family Association

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B I C E N T E N N I A L T H O U G H T S A N D C O M M E N T S

BY BURT BAUGHMAN

The following article was written by Burt Baughman and published in the Pulse NEWS, Friday, April 18, 1975. Burt is a descendant of one of the early American settlers, Abraham K. Pennepacker, whose house was used by George Washington as army headquarters.

As you read your Bible every day, like the old folks did when they first came to this beautiful land of America, you are likely to mark in the margin the strange and interesting happenings in your life. As we know, people came to this country so they could be free to read and worship their God in their own way. The Bible was not only a book to read, but a guide for life. The Bible would not be lost or misplaced, but it would be an ideal place to keep records and things of importance. Maybe that is why the early publishers made the margins large.

A large margin was found in the old Heidelberg Bible, published in 1568, that belonged to my mother's great, great grandfather.

My mother was to write an essay in class at school, and she recalled what her great, great grandfather had marked in his Bible margin about the old homestead in Pennsylvania in the year 1777.

Mother's grandfather was Abraham K. Pennepacker (Honest Abe), son of James and Elizabeth Pennepacker, who was born on June 6, 1832 at Schwenksville, Pa., formerly known as Pennypacker Mills, a place made memorable by it's military occupation during the Revolutionary War, and its association with the battle of Germantown.

During his youth, Abe, helped his father on the farm, which was formerly owned by his grandfather and great grandfather, and he lived in the house which George Washington had for his headquarters in 1777.

The following bit of interesting history has been handed down from the great grandfather to the little folks of present day generation, and Mr. Pennepacker found great delight in repeating this story that my mother copied for her school assignment from her grandfather, Abe Pennepacker's books.

In 1770 when Peter Pennepacker died, he left to his sons "William Land", on which is now built the town of Schwenksville and Pennypacker Mills, and the land on the other side of the creek, to his son Samuel, who was my great, great, great, grandfather.

When Samuel was young, a man of 31 years old, he was caught in a tide of events which he, a quiet Mennonite though he was, did not appreciate, but which, while time lasts, will not let him be forgotten.

It was this gloomiest period of the Revolutionary War, when on Friday, September 27, 1777, the American army, 30,000 in all, came down the road and encamped around the Mills. George Washington fixed his headquarters at the house of Samuel Pennepacker, and the tents were stretched along both sides of the river.

The visitation was not very pleasing to the farmers, who looked with misgivings upon their barns filled with recent crops. Their horses all had been driven away and hidden in the distant woods. The poorly supplied soldiers had to make due with what was available.

It was 4:00 in the afternoon when the army arrived and before night, every fence upon the place was carried away for campfires. The hay and straw in the barn disappeared, followed by four stacks of unthrashed wheat, and every fowl perished, save the old hen, which was trying to hatch a late brood. On the 8th day of October, in the midst of a cold and violent rain, the camp was broken and the army marched towards Kulpville.

It would be interesting and instructive, had I time to tell you the story as my grandfather heard it from his grandfather.

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BURT BAUGHMAN
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After glad tidings had come that Gates had defeated Burgoyne at the battle of Stillwater, the council of war met in his grandfather's house under the direction of George Washington, Commander-In-Chief. The house still stands at the present time, and is the house of ex-Governor Samuel Pennypacker of Pennsylvania.

Seeing the desolate fields and empty barn, the great grandfather took his large Bible, which was his solace in every affliction, and wrote in German the story of the encampment. It is due to him, however, to say, often afterwards, he would remark that "George Washington was a very nice man". It is due to me to say that Samuel Pennepacker just had to mark in the margins of his Bible, so God could see the wearisome things going on. He just had to let God know.



The huge home at Pennypacker Mills, as it stands today in Pennsylvania. This was the original home of Abraham K. Pennepacker and later the residence of Samuel Pennypacker, former Governor of Pennsylvania.

The Pennybaker DNA Project is proceeding. Several family members have joined since the last newsletter. If you are male and carry the Pennypacker surname, or a different spelling of the name, please consider joining. As an incentive to join, we are offering to help with the cost of the DNA testing by waiving dues for a period of time, depending on how many markers you have tested. If you are interested, please contact Bruce Pennypacker for further details. If you are without internet access, or are unsure how to set up the testing, I would be happy to assist you. All you have to do is contact me by email, phone or regular mail.

The Association presently has openings for the position of Vice President and Membership Coordinator. If you are willing to serve in either capacity, please contact Ron Mitchell.

The Family Association does maintain an extensive genealogical database, compiled over many years by several dedicated family researchers. Since the database includes living individuals, we will not "give away" the entire database, or publish it on the Internet. Your privacy is assured! However, we are willing to help those who have a specific question about their lineage. With each birth and death within the family, our database becomes more out-of-date. For the benefit of future generations, we ask that you send us notification of these events. Please send requests for information, or family updates to the editor of this newsletter.

Each edition will feature stories about our family members. We'd love to hear about you! Let us know what you've been up to. Articles could be autobiographical or tell us about the kids, grandkids or maybe about that big trip or the book you just had published. Send your story, with pictures if you wish, to the editor.

Queries

Ron Mitchell has suggested that we use a portion of the newsletter for queries from our members. This will be our first attempt. If you have questions about your family line, please send them to the editor of this newsletter and they will be included in the next issue.

- Patricia Snyder is seeking entry into the DAR. She has previously submitted information to the DAR and there seems to be a problem. The concerns form around Elizabeth Ruffner, wife of Abraham Pennybacker (Dirck, John, Hendrick). Is she the daughter of Benjamin or Peter Ruffner? What is the birth date of Elizabeth? Our Association data lists Elizabeth as born 1779, married July 30, 1798 in Hawksbill Creek, Shenandoah Co. Virginia, the daughter of Benjamin Ruffner. Information from the Old Belleville Cemetery lists Elizabeth's death date as December 6, 1856, in her 67th year. This puts her birth date at 1789 and her marriage at the age of 9. If there are any family members who are already in the DAR, and would like to help Patricia with her entry, please contact the editor.
- Laurie Baker is still trying to nail down Conrad Pennybaker. Does anyone have information for a Conrad with a birth place of St. Peters, New Kent, Virginia and a date of about 1747?

If you have information concerning either of these queries, please send it to the editor.

FROM THE PRESIDENT RON MITCHELL

Greetings to all the members. Hope you are enjoying the summer at your homes. We finally got some leaves on the trees and the redbuds and magnolias got around to blooming. Last week, we had a killing frost that took care of a lot of young leaves and, of course, the gardens of people who didn't cover up the plants.

I want to thank the ladies who wrote me to share the information they had regarding Phoebe Fuget. I know that queries work and I do appreciate the information. I would like to see our members use the newsletter for this purpose when they can.

We have had members who have made donations in the past and I certainly want to say once again that their kindness and generosity are appreciated.

We have also received some interesting entries for the newsletter which will be printed soon. We will certainly use and appreciate all the family input from you.

Don't forget to send your dues if you are behind in paying. I call your attention to the date right under the city/state line on the mailing label. It is the date which our records show as your dues expiration date. The dues year is May 1 to April 30 of each year. Also, please be sure to send dues checks to me at my address since the bank we have our account with is here in Wisconsin.

Thanks to everyone and do take time to let us know how we can improve our Association.

Remember, when you turn 80, you no longer have to pay dues. So, if you've already turned 80 or are about to, please let us know so that we can make the proper adjustment in our records.

The Pannebakker Family
Association



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The Pannebakker Family Association is an out-growth of the family reunion held at Pennypacker Mills, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania on July 2-4, 1999. The reunion celebrated the 300th year wedding anniversary of Hendrick Pannebecker and Eve Umstat, in Germantown, Pennsylvania in the year 1699.

In the words of the Steering Committee of the reunion, "We hope that the 1999 Pfannebecker-Umstat Reunion will lead to the growth of a family association, which will provide a forum for conversation, collection and preservation of information, and a sense of lasting community among the heirs of this rich cultural heritage."

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