

Quaker Time Line – General and Cass County Area

(Compiled by Brenda and Bill Beadenkopf, Quaker historians and URSCC Research/History Committee co-chairs)

1647- George Fox, founder of Quakerism, begins preaching publicly. Women can be preachers and ministers, can inherit and own property, angers established church – refuse to take oaths or doff their hats to authority. Followers started calling themselves the “Friends of the Truth” or “Friends of the Light,” which became simply “Friends.”

1676- George Fox, in travels to the colonies, encouraged Friends to free their slaves after a term of years, providing for their future.

1683- William Penn comes to New World to establish his colony in Pennsylvania, a Holy Experiment, “To see what love can do.” Insists settlers pay Indians a fair price for native land, treats natives with dignity and respects their culture. Tries to enact legislation against slavery.

1688- First official protest against slavery in U.S. The Germantown Declaration, near Philadelphia, was sent to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends for consideration.

1754- Quaker John Woolman publishes *Some Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes* and travels through the South, encouraging Friends to free their slaves.

1800- Second great milestone after Germantown declaration: Quakers become first major sect to give up their slaves. It becomes a “disownable” offense to own slaves, with the exception of North & South Carolina, Georgia, and Virginia. Some Friends in those states, finding it illegal to free their slaves, make plans to move to states where emancipating slaves is legal.

1807- Britain passes the Slave Trade Act of 1807, which abolished the slave trade in the British Empire, largely through the efforts of Quakers. Slavery itself was still legal.

1816- Charles Osborn writes first article to be published in the US advocating unconditional and immediate emancipation of slaves. Publishes first anti-slavery newspaper, *The Philanthropist*, in Mt. Pleasant, Ohio.

1829- Stephen Bogue purchases land in Cass County, Michigan.

1831- Stephen Bogue marries Hannah East Bonine and they move to Youngs Prairie.

1831- William and Rachel Talbot East move from North Carolina and Virginia to Whitewater, IN.

1832- Levi Coffin (called the ‘President’ of UGRR) sends first freedom seekers north from Wayne County IN via the “Quaker Line” of UGRR; Cass County / Young’s Prairie one of his

main drop-off points.

1833- Slavery abolished in Britain. Friends take a large share in the movements leading up to these events.

1833- American Anti-Slavery Society formed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania by William Lloyd Garrison.

Quaker History Note: In 1840, Brenda Beadenkopf's direct ancestor, Lindley Coates, a Quaker abolitionist who advocated immediate emancipation of the slaves, was named president of the American Anti-Slavery Society until 1843, when he resigned and William Lloyd Garrison resumed the office.

1833- Indiana abolitionists select Charles Osborn as their representative to World Anti-Slavery Convention in London, England.

1833- The William East family arrives in Cass County (Porter and Calvin townships) in November.

1836- Birch Lake Meeting founded by Stephen Bogue at his residence (now M60 and Crooked Creek Rd.)

1836- First record of freedom seeker coming to Cass County.

1837- Michigan becomes a state.

1837- Log Meetinghouse erected for Birch Lake Meeting and the Meeting moves to present-day James Street near home of William and Rachel East. Rachel Talbot East first clerk of the Women's Meeting for Birch Lake Friends Meeting.

1840's-50's-Freedom seekers work on Quaker farms for various amounts of time on route to Canada. A settlement of around 30 cabins on property purchased by James E. Bonine in 1853 at M-60 and Calvin Center Road came to be called Ramptown. Bonine invited free blacks and freedom seekers to clear the land, build their own cabins, send their children to school and church, and earn their own money. Many prospered and were able to purchase their own land, primarily in Calvin Township.

1840-1860- It is said that over 1,500 freedom seekers are sent on the UGRR from the area around Vandalia to Dr. Nathan & Pamela Thomas in Schoolcraft; on to Erastus and Sarah Hussey in Battle Creek, Detroit and then Canada. Freedom seekers were transported from Vandalia to Schoolcraft by Zachariah Shugart and African American UGRR conductor Henry Shepard. Shugart had a store and kept a ledger of freedom seekers he helped. Some Freedom seekers came from the west, through Chicago to Niles, on the "Illinois Line." Quaker UGRR conductor W.S. Elliot brought fugitives from stationmaster L.P. Alexander in Niles to Quakers in Cassopolis and Vandalia. However most freedom seekers are sent to Youngs Prairie by Levi

Coffin north from Wayne County IN on the "Quaker Line" of the Underground Railroad.

1841- Birch Lake Meeting admitted to Northern Quarter of the Indiana Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends.

1842- Charles Osborn (and second wife Hannah Swain) move to Cass County, and live across the street from James E. Bonine until 1847. Son Josiah, and grandsons Jefferson and Ellison are among the defendants in the Kentucky Raid Civil Trial in Detroit that started in 1849. Josiah's daughter, Angelina Osborn, testified at the Kentucky Raid Trial in Cassopolis.

1843- Abolitionist Quakers in Indiana Yearly Meeting split and form the Anti-Slavery Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. In line with that split, Birch Lake Meeting disowns Bagues, Osborns, Lees and Shugarts for "Joining an Anti-slavery Society." Indiana Yearly Meeting disowns Charles Osborn.

1843- James E. Bonine arrives in Cass County, marries Sarah Bogue, daughter of Stephen Bogue in 1844.

1845- James E. Bonine begins construction of the large brick house at location of present-day intersection of M-60 and Penn Road.

1845- Founding of Young's Prairie Anti-Slavery Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. Trustees were Zachariah Shugart, Ishmael Lee and Samuel Thomas, with Stephen Bogue as witness.

1846- Isaac Bonine, father of James E. Bonine, begins an Indulged Meeting (a spin-off of Birch Lake) at his home on Young's Prairie.

1847- Freedom seeker Perry Sanford arrives from Kentucky in April and begins working for Stephen Bogue, staying in one of his cabins. He warned Stephen Bogue and was hidden upstairs in the Bogue house by Hannah East Bogue, where he became an eye witness to the August Kentucky raid, giving an interview to a reporter in Battle Creek some years later.

1847- Kentucky Raid. Nine freedom seekers were captured by Kentucky slave catchers on the Osborn, East, Shugart and Bogue farms. Ishmael Lee and daughter Sallie East Lee shelter Kentucky Raid fugitives at their home during the trial in Cassopolis where the magistrate found for the freedom seekers based on a technicality. All freedom seekers escape on the UGRR.

1848- A Meeting House is built at or near the Indulged Meeting on Isaac Bonine's property and named Prairie Grove Monthly Meeting of Friends.

1849 – Ishmael Lee reinstated in membership with Birch Lake/Prairie Grove

1849- Sherriff John L. Graves, Thornton Timberlake and other members of the Kentucky raiding party filed suits for damages in federal court in Detroit against: Magistrate Ebenezer

McIlvain; Ellison, Jefferson and Josiah Osborn; Ishmael Lee; Zachariah Shugart; William Jones; David T. Nicholson; and Stephen Bogue.

1850- Charles Osborn dies. His wife and several of his children are buried at Prairie Grove Cemetery.

1850-Enhanced Federal Fugitive Slave Law enacted, in great measure as a response to the Kentucky Raid.

1851- Stephen Bogue donates land for the village of Vandalia, and with Charles T. Ball platted the town. Vandalia was formally incorporated in 1875.

1856- Schism in Quakerism is healed. The groups reconcile, and the Anti-slavery Society Friends Meetings dissolved.

1856 thru Civil War-- All Quakers work together in the UGRR

1875 - Prairie Grove becomes Preparative Meeting.

1868--Stephen Bogue dies. He and Hannah Bogue are buried in Prairie Grove cemetery.

1879- December. The red-brick church in Vandalia, completed and dedicated. Lot Bonine donated the bricks for its building. On the building committee were James E. Bonine, Silas H. Thomas, Henry Coat, W. E. Bogue and S. A. Bogue. This becomes the third Friends Meeting in the area.

1880- Construction of Penn Friends Meeting House is completed on land given by Nathan Jones. The Meeting moves from Prairie Grove to the Village of Penn, and at that time the name is changed.

1886- Penn, Birch Lake and Vandalia Monthly Meetings establish their own Quarterly Meeting organization (meeting together four times a year) to be held in the Vandalia church built by the Bonine brothers.

1915 – Vandalia Monthly Meeting discontinued.

1917 – The local Masonic Lodge purchased the brick Meeting House in Vandalia. The Lodge would meet there until 1971.

1921 – Birch Lake Monthly Meeting laid down.

By 1966 Birch Lake's building was torn down due to disuse and vandals. The Birch Lake cemetery was deeded to Indiana Yearly Meeting, which has taken responsibility for its upkeep.

2012 -- The Vandalia church, unused for forty years, was torn down. Penn Friends is the only Friends Meeting or Quaker church left in Cass County.