

THE ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY IN WORTHINGTON, OHIO

THE CONSTITUTION, MINUTES AND SIGNERS OF THE ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY

(Copied from manuscript book in possession of Miss Alberta Williams, Columbus, Ohio, December 8, 1921)

(Re-copied from transcribed, typed copy to electronic form March, 2022)

CONSTITUTION

Art. 1. This Society shall be called the Antislavery Society of Worthington and shall be auxiliary to the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society.

Art. 2. Our object shall be the emancipation of the colored people in the United States, the emancipation of the slave from the oppression of the master, the emancipation of the colored man from the oppression of public sentiment and unjust laws and the elevation of both to an intellectual and moral equality with the whites.

Art. 3. We shall seek to do this by endeavoring to convince all our fellow citizens by arguments addressed to their understanding and consciences that slave holding is a heinous crime in the sight of God and that the safety and best interest of all concerned require its immediate abolition. This Society will also endeavor in a constitutional way to influence Congress and our State Legislature to relieve the colored people where they have the power of legislation.

Art. 4. The officers of this Society shall be a President, two Vice Presidents, a Secretary and treasurer who shall constitute an Executive Committee for the management of business.

Art. 5. The annual meeting shall be held on the fourth day of July; the executive shall have power to call other meetings of the Society.

Art. 6. Any person who consents to the principles of this Society may become a member.

The above constitution was adopted by friends of immediate emancipation at a meeting held at the house of W.S. Spencer, March 28, 1835. Said constitution was subsequently circulated for signatures and was subscribed by the following persons:

W.S. Spencer

Israel Matterson

Isaac Magoon

Henry Stites

L. Crittenden

John Smith

A.H. Pinney

Catherine Matterson

John Douglass

Losen Morse

Isaac A. Magoon

Oliver Richardson

C. Carter

Phebe Washburn

Eliza Carter

Submit Stut

Susan Spencer
Almeda Carter
William Hitchcock
Charles Hitchcock
Henry Richardson
David Hitchcock
Hannah Magoon
Selucia A. Magoon
L. Manah Magoon
Hannah E. Magoon
Mary A. Magoon
Lucina Matterson
Lydia M. Bassett
Sally Hitchcock
Guyes G. Stut
Ozem Gardner
Aaron C. Humphrey
Ansel Mattoon [Mattoon]
John M. Hart
D.W. Skinner
Pyrena Whitehead
Ebn Maynard
Sarinda Maynard
William Bills
Nathan Loring
C. Skinner

Abigail Carter
Emma Fisk
Jacob Gunster
John
Jared B. Hitchcock
Henry Mock
Milton Barker
James Goodrich
William J. Holsclaw
Simon Pool
John McLeod
Betsey Humphrey
Isaac Bidwell
Angenett Carter
Hurlburt Parks
Harriet Mattoon
W. C. Pinney
Harriet Richardson
Asariah Pinney
Eunice Pinney
Elvira Maynard
Stephen Maynard
Ezra Gilbert
George McWhirk
S.C. Skinner

May 9, 1836

A meeting of the friends of emancipation was holden at the house of W.S. Spencer. Isaac Magoon was appointed chairman and W.S. Spencer Secretary. Meeting was opened by prayer by Rev. I. Matterson, Jr. The meeting then proceeded to the election. The following persons were individually nominated and by vote of the members duly elected.

Isaac Magoon President

A. H. Pinney, Henry Stites Vice-Presidents

W. S. Spencer Secretary

John Smith Treasurer

And the meeting then adjourned

W. S. Spencer, Sec.

September 4.

A meeting of the Society was holden at the house of W.S. Spencer and was addressed by Rev. A. Humphrey. The subject of colonization was discussed by Jason Bell, W. S. Spencer and others. The officers of the Society were requested to continue in office for the ensuing year. Meeting closed by several prayers and adjourned.

W. S. Spencer, Sec.

1837, July 4

A meeting of the Society was holden at the office of Ansel Mattoon and the following officers were elected for the ensuing year.

John Smith President

Asariah Pinney, Ozem Gardner Vice-Presidents

D.W. Skinner Secretary

Ceophas Carter Treasurer

The report of the executive committee was read by the Secretary.

The following resolution was presented by W.S. Spencer and adopted by the Society.

Resolved that in view of the progress of truth and righteousness and the success of our cause during the past year we have much cause for congratulation. And as patriots, philanthropists and Christians we would render grateful acknowledgements to God for his blessing on our efforts and that we are encouraged to renewed perseverance in this cause of truth and righteousness.

The meeting was then addressed by Mr. Humphrey, Mrs. Thompson, and Mr. Loving.

The following resolution was presented by D.W. Skinner and seconded by W.S. Spencer and adopted by the Society.

Resolved that the effort now being made by political men to bind Northern Free men to the Car of Southern Slavery meets with our decided disapprobation and that as enemies of Slavery in every form, We pledge ourselves to support no man for any office in these United States who is publically opposed to the Immortal sentiment set forth in the declaration of Independence, Viz. That All Men are created Equal, That they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

The constitution was then read and circulated for signatures. Meeting closed by prayer and adjourned.

W.S. Spencer, Sec.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIGNERS OF THE ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY:

William Spencer and his wife Susan; first hosted the group which formed the Society and drew up their constitution. The Spencers owned a large farm near Fox Lane and W. South Street. He was a Worthington Village Council trustee in 1835 and was the secretary of the organization. Unfortunately, the Spencers were unable to meet their mortgage payments on the farm and after a lengthy court battle forfeited their lands and left town in 1837.

Members of the **Pinney** family were well represented. The Pinney family was an original Scioto Company family. **Abner Henry Pinney**, was a Council Trustee in 1835. His brothers, **William Chester Pinney and Asariah Pinney and Asariah's second wife, Eunice** all signed. **D.W. Skinner**, also a Scioto Company descendant, married **Caroline Pinney** who signed. **S.C. Skinner** is probably their offspring and whose name is at the end of the list.

Stephen Maynard, Jr., his wife **Sarinda** and two children, **Ebn (Elizabeth) and Elvira** all signed the constitution. His father Stephen had owned a large farm west of the Olentangy River. The large farm on the east side of the river, comprising most of present day Riverlea, originally belonged to Moses Maynard, father of Achsa Maynard Johnson, wife of Orange Johnson, Moses

Jr. who married Orange Johnson's sister, Crissa, and other children who were prominent in the Village of Worthington.

The family of Worthington leader, James Kilbourn was represented by his nephew, **John Hart and Ezra Gilbert** who was married to Martha Hart, John's Hart's niece.

Another family which lived just outside the Village all signed the constitution. **Isaac Magoon, his wife Hannah Shaw Magoon, and their family, Isaac A. Magoon, Selucia A. Magoon, L. Manah Magoon, Hannah E. Magoon, and Mary A. Magoon**

Aaron Humphrey and his wife Betsey Humphrey were also Scioto Company descendants who lived in Sharon Township. They were also early leaders in the temperance movement as well as abolitionists. They moved from the Township and later established stops on the Underground Railroad in Ohio and Iowa.

Ceophas Carter, his wife Almeda and children Eliza Carter, Abigail Carter, Angenett Carter lived in the Morris Addition which was a community developed for African Americans and retired Methodist Ministers. Ceophas was also elected treasurer of the Society in 1837.

Other family groups include:

***David Hitchcock, his wife (Sarah) or Sally Hitchcock and their children, William Hitchcock, Charles Hitchcock, Jared B. Hitchcock.**

***Israel Matterson, his wife Catherine Matterson, daughter Lucina Matterson.**

***The Richardsons: Oliver Richardson, Henry Richardson, Harriet Richardson.**

Two families which later operated the Worthington area's only two local confirmed stops on the Underground Railroad:

Ozem Gardner, elected Vice-President of the Society at Ansel Mattoon's home in 1837. Ozem Gardner started here as a brick manufacturer in order to buy land on which to farm. He built his home at 8221 Flint Rd. around 1850 and from here it has been documented that he and his family helped fugitive slaves who were brought to their home by conductors or who found their way there on their own. He is credited with transporting to safety over 200 slaves. He and his wife, Jane were members of the Methodist Church in Flint.

Ansel Mattoon had a home on Worthington's Main Street and was a community leader. Both he and his daughter **Harriet Mattoon** signed the document He hosted meetings of the Anti-Slavery Society in his home and assisted fugitive slaves by transporting them to Ozem Gardner's home. He was a blacksmith and wagon maker and it would not have been suspicious if he made wagon trips north into Delaware County. Also, he had a brother, Dr. John Wesley Mattoon, who lived in Delaware County and with whom he would often visit. In 1854, Mattoon sold his house and moved to Illinois to further pursue his abolitionist activities. He founded Mattoon, Illinois where his Underground Railroad activities helped many fugitives on their way towards Canada.

Some of those who signed, and office holders, have left little or no footprint in our records: They are **Henry Sites, L Crittenden, John Smith, John Douglass, Losen Morse, Phebe Washbun** (a Village resident), **Lydia M. Bassett, Emma Fisk** (associated with the Female Seminary), **Jacob Gunster, Henry Mock, Milton Barker, James Goodrich, William J. Holsclaw, Simon Pool** (a Sharon Township farmer), **John McLeod** (a Village resident), **Isaac Bidwell** (a Sharon Township resident), **Hurlburt Parks, Pyrena Whitehead** whose husband **John** might be the John with no last name listed on the roster, **William M. Bills, George McWhirk**, and **Nathan Loring** (son of Olive Loring, a widow who was a respected Village seamstress). There were even two signers whose name was mistyped from the original transcription: **Guyes G. Stut** was really Keyes Steele and his wife **Submit** (Gould) **Stut** or Steele.

These 67 signatures represented men, women and children of different levels of education and of involvement in the community. Many signatures were female, which at that time women rarely were part of community organizations other than churches. The women signed with their given first name even if married, very unusual when married women were most commonly referred to as Mrs. John Doe, etc. The signers included long time residents, temporary workers or students attending local schools. Several signers lived in Sharon Township rather than the Village and several of the original signers, including some of the office holders, moved on after several years. Interesting to note that these office holders must have been respected to have been voted in to office even though several weren't long time residents.

NOTE: The Worthington Historical Society has two letters **Submit Steele** wrote to her parents and siblings in 1836. They are transcribed from the photocopies and are 97-G-1198 & 1198a. **Submit Steele** was a neighbor of **Isaac Magoon**, the first President of the Worthington Anti-Slavery Society. The letters are a description of the anti-slavery sentiment at the time.