

Journal C of Station No. 2 William Still 1852-1857

Vigilance Committee of Philadelphia, PAS Papers, HSP

Jan. 16th 1856

Five at one arrival- Barnaby Grigby, new name John Boyer, and Mary Elizabeth his wife. Frank Wanzer, new name Robt Scott, Emily Foster new name Anna Wood- all came in company from Loudon Co. Va. on horse back & in carriage for about 150 miles.

They left home on Christmas Eve Monday and arrived at Columbia the following Wednesday about 1 ocl¹. They were hindered with very severe weather though they traveled day and night. When about 100 miles from home, in the neighborhood of Cheat River Md. They were assailed by 6 men & a boy who resolutely demanded of them to give account of themselves- wanted them to show what right they had to travel there as they were doing. The fugitives being strongly arrived aroused and determined on gaining their liberty or death resolutely drew their pistols (double barreled) and said they would not be taken- said that no gentleman would attack persons traveling as they were so the leader amongst the fugitives "pulled back the hammers" of his pistols and the two young women one with a pistol & large dirk² & the other a dirk, resolutely showed a disposition to defend themselves which had the effect to intimidate their pursuers hence they escape- though not without many other difficulties.

Barnaby was owned by Wm. Rogers (farmer) who was considered a moderate slaveholder- though had of late become addicted to intemperance³. He was the owner of about a dozen or 14 slaves. He had a wife & two children. Barnaby's chances of making anything for himself was not favourable of rights he was only allowed to make something for himself. He was prompted to escape because he wanted to live by the sweat of his own brow though all men ought so to live hence he fled that he might occupy that position.

Mary Elizabeth had been owned by Townsend McVee, farmer. He was severe but his wife was charged with making him so. He owned some 25 slaves- he hardly allowed them to talk- would not allow them to raise a chicken- only allowed Mary 3 dresses in a year- the rest they got as they could. Some times he would sell- last year he sold two could not say anything good for her mistress. She knew no mercy no showed no favour. Mary left because of the domineering character of her mistress.

Frank was owned by Luther Sullavin- "the meanest man in Va." "He treated his people just as bad as he could in every respect" - "would 'lowance⁴ the slaves," and "stint⁵ them to save food" & to get "rich" and then sell them, whip them, &c. "About 25 had been sold-" ? quite a large no.⁸ He sold Franks' mother & two children to Georgia some 4 yrs prior. Frank left because he feared that his numerous creditors "would come upon him in which case he knew he would have his poor mother had been often flogged by this brutal master. His mistress was tolerably good.

Anna Wood was owned by McVee and is an own sister to Elizabeth, and could hear testimony to her sisters statement respecting the character of her master &c. The above four are all young & "likely"

Barnaby is 26 yrs of age, molato, medium size and very smart; Anna is good looking and smart.

Julia Little new name Caroline Graves- from Md. Had had more than one owner- the first was kind- the latter was hard to C. thought she had "escape for some time he had been in Pa but not feeling satisfied she prepared to go to Canada. She is about 40 years of age.

¹ o'clock

² dagger

³ excessive drinking

⁴ allowance

⁵ restrict

Good Jan. 16th 1856

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The fugitives being strongly armed and determined on to gain their liberty or death, resolutely drew their pistols (double barreled) and said they would not be taken and that no gentleman would attack persons travelling as they were. As the leader amongst the fugitives "pulled back the hammer" of his pistol, and the two young women one with a pistol & large knife & the other a cork, resolutely showed a disposition to defend themselves which had the effect to intimidate their pursuers hence they escape though not without many other difficulties.

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Parnaby's Chances of making any thing for himself was not favorable. Of Nights he was only allowed to make something for himself. He was prompted to escape because he wanted to live by the sweat of his own brow. Though all men ought to live hence he fled to that he might occupy that position.

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This Mistress was tolerably good.
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Testimony to her sister's statement
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&c. - his wife is about 24 yrs of age
quite dark, good looking, intelligent
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