

## AN INTERESTING PAPER,

On behalf of Mr. Ambrose Pownall, of Sadsbury township, W. U. Hensel presented to the Society two pages from the magistrate's record of the late Joseph D. Pownall, J. P., **of** Sadsbury township, upon which was recorded the Coroner's inquest upon the body of Edward Gorsuch, the Maryland slaveholder, who was killed in what passed into history as "The Christiana Riot," an account of which was the subject of an interesting paper some months **ago** read before the Society by Thomas Whitson, Esq. '1 he following is a transcription of this inquest :

LANCASTER COUNTY, as. :

"An inquisition indented taken at Sadsbury township, in the county of Lancaster, the 11th day of September, A. D. 1851, before me, Joseph D. Pownall, Esq., for the county of Lancaster, upon the view of the body of a man then and there lying dead, supposed to be Edward Gorsuch, of Baltimore county, Maryland, upon the affirmations of George Whitson, John Rowland, E. Osborne Dare, Hiram Kinnard, Samuel Miller, Lewis Cooper, George Firth, William Knott, John Hillis, William H. Millhouse, Joseph Richwine and Miller Knott, good and lawful men of the county aforesaid, who, being duly affirmed and charged to enquire on the part of the Commonwealth when, where and how the said deceased came to his death, do say upon their affirmations that on the morning of the 11th inst. the neighborhood was thrown into an excitement by the above deceased and five or six persons in company with him, making

**an** attack upon a family of colored persons living in said township near the brick mill, about four o'clock in the morning, for the purpose of arresting some fugitive slaves, as they alleged many of the colored people of the neighborhood collected, and there was considerable firing of guns and other firearms by both parties. Upon the arrival of some of the neighbors at the place after the riot had subsided, found the above deceased lying on his back or right side dead. Upon a post-mortem examination made by Drs. Patterson and Martin in our presents, we believe he came to his death by gun shot wounds that he received in the above mentioned riot caused by some person or persons to us unknown.

In witness whereof as well as the aforesaid justice, as the jurors aforesaid, have to this inquisition put their seals on the day and year and at the place first aforesaid-mentioned."

JOSEPH D. POWNALL, Esq.

George Whitson (L. S.), John Hillis (L. S.), John Rowland (L. S.), William Knott (L. S.), E. Osborne Dare (L. S.), Samuel Miller (L. S.), Lewis Cooper (L. S.), Joseph Richwine (L. S.), Hiram Kinnard (L. S.), George Firth (L. S.), Wm. H. Millhouse (L. S.), Miller Knott (L. S.)

Some of the names of the jury are strongly suggestive of Quaker origin, and the language of the verdict indicates their sympathy with the anti-slavery cause. In offering the paper, Mr. Hensel emphasized the great historical interest which attached to this event. The occurrence has almost passed out of the common mind, and yet, in its day, this riot threatened to provoke such a conflagration of war as subsequently followed the "John Brown raid." Gorsuch was of a conspicuous

family in Maryland, and his brother was an Episcopal minister, who most severely arraigned the civil authorities of Pennsylvania for their supineness in allowing the murderers of his brother to escape. Wm. F. Johnson was at that time Governor of Pennsylvania, having as Speaker of the Senate succeeded ex-officio to Francis R. Shunk, who died in the gubernatorial office. The riot occurred in the midst of that campaign, and it is said that Johnson, who was in Philadelphia at the time, passed westward on the railroad without stopping at Christiana, where the dead body of Gorsuch lay. He was a Whig and was charged with permitting his anti-slavery sympathies to weaken his enforcement of law as an executive; and so strong was the pro-slavery feeling at the time in Pennsylvania that the incident is said to **have** largely contributed to his defeat by Bigler, the opposing Democratic candidate.

Author: Hensel, W. U. (William Uhler), 1851-1915.

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