

Documenting Slavery: Edward T. Johnson



The following is a transcribed excerpt of Edward T. Johnson's reminiscence of life on Washington Lane.

One of my earliest recollections, about the year, 1858 or 59, was being wakened up very early in the morning, by a furious knocking, at our back door. My Father answered it, and, coming back, said that a big colored man, a slave, was there, with a note, which said, he was trying to escape and please to give him food and clothing and help him along to the next station.

I remember our giving him his breakfast; getting the Dearborn wagon; putting him in the back part; covering him with straw and a piece of old carpet. We then drove back Washington Lane several miles, to put him on the right road to some Quaker farmer, in Montgomery County, whose name was in the note, and whom my Father knew.

We afterwards heard, through the "Underground" channels, that he got safely to Canada, where he was free.

These pages are from a stenographer's notepad in which Edward T. Johnson (1849 - 1919) wrote his reminiscence entitled "Washington Lane, formerly Abington Lane." It was the above entry, made by Edward Johnson when he was in his 60s about an event that occurred when he was about 12 years old, that helped to establish the house as a station on the Underground Railroad. The house, today known as the *Johnson House* at Germantown Avenue and Washington Lane, was built circa 1768 by John Johnson, Sr. and housed several generations of Quakers, including Edward Johnson as a young boy.

The reminiscence is part of the over 300 years of personal papers, manuscripts, books, images and other documents housed in the GHS Library/Archives. For further information email Library@germantownhistory.org.

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