

## John Henry Antes (1736 – 1820)

John Henry Antes was born in 1736 to a prominent and active family in Pennsylvania. The entire family was involved in the Revolutionary War.

Col John Henry Antes (known as Henry) built a Fort on the Nippenose Creek which runs off the Susquehanna River. This fort was a safe haven for settlers in the area and protection for the area's grist mill which was also owned by Col. Antes. Col. Antes was practically the lone defender of this fort and one of the earliest pioneers to have a positive effect on permanent settlement in the area. This stockade fort was the center of military operations for months during not only the Indian raids but also from British raids.

As skirmishes intensified, word was sent to Fort Antes that the inhabitants must evacuate the Fort and return to Fort Muncy for safety where there was military protection. This evacuation was known as "the Great Runaway".

# Today's Story in Pennsylvania History

Flight of the Inhabitants Since Known as The Great Runaway, July 5, 1778.

By **FREDERIC A. GODCHARLES**  
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The great massacre at Wyoming occurred on July 3, 1778, and as the news passed down the North Branch of the Susquehanna, and spread over the hills and valleys leading to the West Branch valley, it caused a general stampede; a wild, precipitate flight of the settlers from the upper region which has ever since been known as the "Great Runaway."

The history of Pennsylvania has failed to record any flight of its inhabitants, either in numbers or the harrowing details of its movement comparable with this catastrophe.

Within two days following the massacre the news had penetrated the entire North Branch valley and had reached as far up the West Branch valley as Fort Antes, now Jersey Shore.

On July 9, Colonel Samuel Hunter, the county lieutenant, and commander of the garrison at Fort Augusta (Sunbury), wrote to the Governor:

"Nothing but a firm reliance upon Divine Providence, and the virtue of our neighbors, induces the few to stand that remain; and if they are not speedily reinforced they must give way; but will have this consolation, that they have stood in defense of their liberty and country as long as

they could. In justice to this country (Northumberland), I must bear testimony that the states never applied to it for men in vain. I am sure the state must know that we have reduced ourselves to our present feeble condition by our readiness to turn out, upon all occasions, when called for in refence of the common cause. Should we now fall, for want of assistance, let the neighboring counties reconcile themselves, if they can, the breach of brotherly love, charity and every other virtue which adorns and advances the human species above the brute creation. I will not attempt to point out the particular cruelties or barbarities that have been practiced on our unhappy inhabitants, but assure you that, for the number, history affords no instance of more heathenish cruelty or savage barbarity than has been exhibited in this county."

Colonel Matthew Smith wrote from Paxtang, July 12, that he "had just arrived at Harris Ferry, and beheld the greatest scenes of distress I ever saw. It was crowded with people who had come down the river, leaving everything." If the distress was the worst this old patriot ever beheld it was truly a sad scene, for Colonel Smith had suffered in both the French

(Continued on Page Nine.)