

William Southeby, Early Quaker Antislavery Writer

ONE OF THE most intriguing figures in the American anti-slavery movement of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was William Southeby, who sometimes has been described as the “first native-born American to write against slavery.” Quaker and civil records before 1720 are full of references to this pioneer crusader and pamphleteer, although the spelling of his name takes eight or ten different forms.¹ When this surprisingly large amount of fugitive information is woven together, there emerges a rough sketch of the man’s life and accomplishments.

Southeby is usually said to have been a native of Maryland, but it does not appear that he was actually born in that colony. Entries in the records of the Land Office in Annapolis record that he first came to Maryland in 1659, returning again in 1663.² Although raised as a Roman Catholic, he had become a Quaker early in his adult life, and it was in a Quaker ceremony on March 29, 1668, that he married Elizabeth Read, daughter of Thomas Read, with whom he had originally come to Maryland. Three children were born of this marriage—William, born on July 28, 1669; Elizabeth, born March 11, 1671; and John, born June 24, 1674.³ Sometime after their marriage the Southebys moved to the Sassafras River in what was then Cecil County. There they lived in a small Quaker community which included George Wilson, James Frisby, John West, and Abraham

¹ The name appears in the following forms: Southby, Southbee, Southbey, Southebe, Southebee, Southeby, Southerby, and Southersby.

² Land Records of Maryland, Liber 6, folio 211, and Liber Q, folio 29, Land Office, Annapolis, Md.

³ Marriage Records of Third Haven Monthly Meeting of Friends, 1, Hall of Records, Annapolis. See also the Birth Records of Third Haven Monthly Meeting, 16, Hall of Records, which also contains the burial records of the Monthly Meeting. Evidence of Southeby’s Quaker connections prior to 1668 are to be found in the Land Records of Talbot County, Liber 1, folios 26, 27.

Strand, and it was there that Southeby was visited in 1675 by the famous Irish Quaker William Edmundson.⁴

Elizabeth Read Southeby died on November 20, 1675. A year and a half later William Southeby and Joan Lee, widow of Richard Lee of Talbot County, were married. They made their home in Cecil County for a time before moving to the Tuckahoe section of Talbot County, where William had bought five hundred acres of "Parker's Parke" from Henry Parker on November 7, 1678.⁵

The minutes of Third Haven Monthly Meeting of Friends, which contain records of the various meetings on the Eastern Shore of Maryland between the Sassafras and Nanticoke Rivers, begin in 1676. From the first, they show the important role that Southeby played in Maryland Quakerism. He contributed to buy Quaker books for circulation, settled estates of the dead, arbitrated differences and "judged disputes" between Friends, aided widows and orphans, supplied certificates for traveling Friends, met with those who had exhibited shortcomings in their personal lives, examined people's "clearness" for marriage, and served as overseer at many weddings.⁶ All of these duties demonstrate the regard in which he was held. Perhaps the clearest indication of Quaker trust and confidence in him, however, is to be found in yet another duty assigned to Southeby in 1679, when he was made a substitute for William Berry or Thomas Taylor if either of them proved unable to take his place with the two Western Shore Friends who were "to attend the Assembly [*at St. Mary's*] on truths account."⁷

Still standing as a memorial to William Southeby's residence in Talbot County is the beautiful old Quaker meeting house at Easton. In 1681, Southeby and seven other Friends were put in charge of building a Quarterly Meeting House at Third Haven (Easton).

⁴ William Edmundson, *A Journal of the Life, Travels, Sufferings, and Labour of Love in the Work of the Ministry of that Worthy Elder and faithful Servant of Christ, William Edmundson, who departed this Life the thirty first of the sixth Month 1712* (London, 1774), 109.

⁵ Marriage Records of Third Haven Monthly Meeting, 3. Joan Lee was Joan Lippit before she married Richard Lee in 1668 at the home of Peter Sharpe at the Clifts. See also Land Records of Talbot County, Liber 3, folios 17-18; Liber 4, folio 82. Shortly after buying "Parker's Park," Southeby bought three hundred acres of nearby "Kingston" from John Sumner.

⁶ Minutes of Third Haven Monthly Meeting of Friends, I, 3, 5, 13, 16, 22-25, 27, 29-31, 33-34, 35-36.

⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21.

Southeby himself provided much of the plank for this fine old building, often said to be the oldest frame or wooden church in America.⁸ "Planter" and "boatwright," as he was described, Southeby did not actually use this Quarterly Meeting House, for it was not ready until October, 1684. Earlier in that year, Southeby began to divest himself of his landholdings in Talbot County, and sometime before June 18 had settled at "John's Creek" (Jones' Creek) on the Delaware, in what is now Kent County, Delaware.⁹ He probably was living there as early as May, 1684, when he was named acting register general for Pennsylvania. Southeby also represented this area in the Governor's Council in 1684 and was named a justice of the peace in January, 1685.¹⁰

Several months after his removal from Maryland to Delaware, Southeby started to buy property in the Philadelphia area. In addition to several pieces of land "at the Schoolkill" and thirty feet of frontage "on the bank of Philadelphia on Delaware side" between "Sassafras Street and Vine Street," which he acquired, he was also granted one year's right to gather stone from "the Proprietor's Land on the Schoolkill." It seems likely that Southeby moved to Philadelphia in 1685 or 1686, for by September 20 of the latter year he had become a justice of the peace for Philadelphia, leaving the Governor's Council at that time. In 1688, he was elected a Philadelphia member of the Assembly.¹¹

His activities within the Society of Friends in both the Lower Counties and in Philadelphia are easier to trace than his performance

⁸ *Ibid.*, I, 41, 48, 52. See also Kenneth L. Carroll, "Talbot County Quakerism in the Colonial Period," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, LIII (1958), 332-333. Talbot County Land Records, Liber 4, folios 253-255, show that in 1681 Southeby was one of four Friends to whom John Judwin (Jadwin) deeded one acre to be used as a burial ground and the site of Tuckahoe meeting house.

⁹ Talbot County Land Records, Liber 4, folios 278-280, 301-302; Liber 5, folio 215.

¹⁰ *Pennsylvania Archives, Second Series*, IX, 643, 645, 673.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 718, 732; XIX, 23, 68; *Pennsylvania Archives, Third Series*, III, 18, 19. In 1699, the inhabitants of Kent County, Del., bought two hundred acres of his property to establish a town that eventually became Dover. *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, 1838), I, 50, 80-88, 93-94, 103, 115-148, 162; *Pennsylvania Archives, Eighth Series*, I, 82, 84, 87. Southeby also probably served as some sort of official in the market in 1700 when he and some bakers appeared before the Governor (William Penn) and the Council to explain why the bread being sold in the market was too light. *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania*, I, 553.

in the political field. In the minutes of Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, which begin in 1684, the year Southeby left Maryland, are a total of one hundred and sixty references to him. Typical of them is the first task given to Southeby, and one shared with his old friend William Berry, Jr., who had also just moved from Talbot County to the Jones' Bay area in Kent County, the administering of the estate of "the widow Warner" so that she and her children would not "want."¹² In 1685, Southeby was one of the thirteen Friends appointed to meet ships coming to the Pennsylvania area, "for counselling such as come over from England, at their first arrival, what course to take, to manage what they bring, and also relating to their settlement."¹³ In August, 1686, Southeby volunteered to oversee the workmen putting the roof on Center Meeting House. Four months later, he was named one of three to write to Quakers in Bucks and Chester counties asking for aid in erecting this building, and, in 1688, he was charged with the responsibility of inspecting damage it had suffered. Six years later, he was one of those appointed to find a more "comodious" meeting place.¹⁴

Changes of habitation did not decrease Southeby's official connection with Quaker marriages. In 1686, he was chosen to oversee the wedding of William Fisher and Bridget Hodgkins. Several months later, he resumed the task of inquiring into the "clearness" of male Friends for marriage.¹⁵ This sort of work made many continuing demands on his time through the years.

One of William Southeby's true gifts appears to have been in the area of reconciliation. His ability in settling disputes and healing divisions had often been called upon by his fellow Quakers when Southeby lived on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Appeals for his assistance in these matters were even more frequent after his removal to Pennsylvania. In 1687, Southeby was one of seven chosen to settle a "matter of controversy" between Francis Richardson and Elisabeth Frampton, and one of six asked to remove the source of John Ithell's complaint against Robert Turner. In 1689, he sought to put

¹² Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Philadelphia, I (1682-1714), 13, Arch Street Meeting House, 302 Arch Street, Philadelphia.

¹³ *Ibid.*, I, 22.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 27, 30, 47, 87.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 31, 35, 46.

an end to the difference between Andrew Griscom and Richard Townsend and between Isaac Rickets and Elisabeth Zitzwater. Some controversy between James Fox and James Shaddok in 1690 required his reconciling hand. A number of similar cases demanded his attention down until 1702.¹⁶ It was probably Southeby's interest in these matters that led him to produce the earliest of his papers or pamphlets, one that appeared in 1688, twelve years earlier than anything listed in Joseph Smith's *Descriptive Catalogue*.¹⁷ Philadelphia Monthly Meeting noted in its minutes of September 28, 1688, that, "William Southerby having presented a paper to this meeting, it being a Testimony against friends going to the Law one with another, before they have Gospel order given them, this meeting refers it to the quarterly meeting for the disposing thereof, as they shall see meet."¹⁸

Upon a number of occasions Southeby was chosen to inquire into the situation of Friends departing from the Province, such as William Fisher, who was about to return to England in 1691, and William Stockdale, who was planning to leave in 1692. He also drew up a certificate for John Jones to remove to Barbados, having found no "obstruction."¹⁹

One of the more unusual tasks that came his way was the appointment to help stop drinking at funerals and "the disorderly walking in the streets with [the] Corps[e] to the burying ground." Related somewhat to this same duty was his later selection as one of two Friends who were to keep the key of the new burying ground and who were to see that no one used the ground without their "approbation."²⁰ In 1699, he was assigned to assist weak and sick passengers arriving in Philadelphia from Liverpool.²¹

William Southeby became involved in the controversy with George Keith during Keith's rather stormy visit to Philadelphia in the early 1690's, being one of five Quakers who testified that they had heard Keith "deny the sufficiency of the Light."²² Southeby then came

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 34, 36, 54, 55, 62, 83, 127, 141, 164, 167-168.

¹⁷ Joseph Smith, *A Descriptive Catalogue of Friends Books* (London, 1867), II, 615. Smith's catalogue lists only *printed* works of various Quaker authors.

¹⁸ Minutes of Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, I, 49.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 69, 76, 152.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, I, 64, 93.

²¹ *Ibid.*, I, 124.

²² *Ibid.*, I, 74.

under heavy attack in two of Keith's works: *An Appeal from the Twenty-eight Judges* and, with Thomas Budd, *The Plea of the Innocent*. In both of these works Keith charged that Southeby denied any general day of judgment and also the resurrection of the dead.²³ Southeby defended himself against these accusations in his letter to Keith and others in September, 1692, writing that he believed in the resurrection (according to Scripture and the ancient doctrine of Friends) and the judgment, although he now thought these would be "more spiritual" in nature than he had believed when he had been a papist (and had viewed things in a more "carnal" and outward way).²⁴

Early in 1698, Southeby was one of four Friends selected by the Monthly Meeting of Philadelphia to visit with those Quakers who were guilty of "disorderly walking," especially those who were "profuse in their housing and Cloathing, according to the modes and fashions." His experiences and thoughts led him to produce a paper entitled "Testimony against prophaness in Philadelphia and parts adjacent." This was read to the Monthly Meeting in August, 1700, and approved by that body, which then appointed Griffith Owen and Nicholas Waln to help him make minor revisions in it. The Monthly Meeting then recommended the paper "to the meeting of ministering friends for further approbation in order to print it."²⁵

Related to his concern over "prophaness" was the petition Southeby and others submitted to Council early in 1698 about the behavior of Indians and others. The Council ordered the suppression "of noise and drunkenness of Indians, especially in the night, . . . and to put a check on Horse racing."²⁶ Southeby's interest in the Indians con-

²³ George Keith, *An Appeal from the Twenty-eight Judges, to the Spirit of Truth and true Judgment in all faithful Friends, called Quakers, that meet at this Yearly Meeting at Burlington, the 7th Month, 1692* (Philadelphia, 1692), 5; George Keith and Thomas Budd, *The Plea of the Innocent Against the False Judgment of the Guilty, Being a Vindication of George Keith and his Friends, . . .* (Philadelphia, 1692), 11-12. In these two works Keith spells Southeby's name as *Southbe*.

²⁴ Thomas Ellwood, *An Epistle to Friends: Briefly Commemorating the Gracious Dealings of the Lord with them; and warning them to beware of that Spirit of Contention and Division which hath appeared of late in George Keith, . . .* (London, 1694), 41-42. Southeby's defense against Keith's charges has been taken from Southeby's letter to Keith. Ellwood spells the name as *Southebe*.

²⁵ Minutes of Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, I, 112, 136.

²⁶ *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania*, I, 498. See also William S. Dye, "Pennsylvania Versus the Theatre," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, LV (1931), 342.

tinued, for in 1698 he produced a "paper . . . concerning trading with the Indians." This was read to the Monthly Meeting which then took steps to arrange a conference with the natives.²⁷

In the 1690's, Southeby became increasingly interested in the problem of slavery. His concern in this matter may have been awakened by William Edmundson who was very much opposed to the institution. Or, he may have been moved by the 1688 declaration of the Germantown Friends. Perhaps the attitude of the Keithian Quakers, or "Christian Quakers," may have caused him to ponder the subject, for the "Christian Quakers" had become champions of the antislavery position.²⁸ Philadelphia Yearly Meeting recorded in 1696 that "Several papers have been read relating to the keeping and bringing in of Negroes." One of these, seemingly not extant today, was by William Southeby. As a result of these writings, the Yearly Meeting advised that "Friends be careful not to encourage the bringing in of any more Negroes."²⁹

On September 30, 1698, Philadelphia Monthly Meeting recorded in its minutes that, "A paper of Pentecost Teague's was read, relating to the selling of Negroe's at the publick Markett place & Outcry, and it is the sense of this meeting, that friends ought not to sell them after that manner, and it is further agreed that friends do meet together this day week at this house about the first hour, to consider and write to friends of the monthly meetings in Barbadoes to desire them to acquaint friends that they forbear sending any negroes to this place, because they are too numerous here."³⁰

As a result of Pentecost Teague's efforts and a growing worry about the importation of slaves, which continued despite the advice of the 1696 Yearly Meeting, the following letter, signed by William Southeby and eight other prominent Philadelphia Friends, was sent to the General Meeting of Friends in Barbados:

It having been the sence of our yearly meeting that many negroes in these parts may prove preiujissial several wayes to us & our posteraty: it was Agreed that endeavors should bee used to put A stop to the Importing of them; & in order theyrunto that those friends that have correspondences In

²⁷ Minutes of Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, I, 114.

²⁸ Ethyn Williams Kirby, *George Keith, 1638-1716* (New York, 1942), 88-90.

²⁹ Thomas E. Drake, *Quakers and Slavery in America* (New Haven, 1950), 19. Southeby sent a copy of George Fox's work *Gospel Family Order* to bolster his arguments.

³⁰ Minutes of Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, I, 115.

y^e west Indies should discourdg y^e sending Any more hither; notwithstanding which; many negroes have been brought In this last summer; our meeting taking it into consideration thought fit to signifie the same to you; desiring that friends off your Island in general might be Acquainted theyrwith; & its y^e Request of our said meetings that no more negroes may bee sent to this River to friends or others & that as they see ocasion to Acquoint theyr Respective neighbours theyroff, that if possible A stop may bee put theyrto; so desiring your care herein wee conclude with very dear love.³¹

In 1700, Philadelphia Monthly Meeting decided to appoint special monthly meetings for Negroes. William Southeby was asked to give public notice of this innovation, and also to request slaveholders to spread the word and, when possible, accompany their Negroes to meeting.³²

In 1711 and 1712, under the proddings of members of Chester Quarterly Meeting who were "dissatisfied with Friends buying and encouraging the bringing in of negroes," the Yearly Meeting was again asked to face up to the moral issue involved in slaveholding and to take some definite step to discourage the importing and owning of slaves. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, unable to take a definite position, sought advice by referring the problem to London Yearly Meeting in 1712.³³

Southeby appears to have been greatly troubled by the refusal of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to take a firm stand. Convinced that action was needed rather than advice from London, he petitioned the Assembly to free all Negroes in the colony. His petition was accompanied by another signed by "many of the Inhabitants of this Province, praying the Prohibition of Negroes." Southeby's petition was read and left to lie on the table over night. The next day it was decided that "And to *William Southbe's* Petition, relating to the Enlargement of *Negroes*, the House is of the opinion, it is neither just nor convenient to set them at Liberty." The second petition was better received: "Also to the Petition for discouraging the Importa-

³¹ Henry J. Cadbury, "Another Early Quaker Anti-Slavery Document," *The Journal of Negro History*, XXVII (1942), 211-212.

³² Minutes of Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, I, 131.

³³ Epistles Received, II (1705-1738), 133-134. These manuscript copies of various epistles sent to London Yearly Meeting are at Friends House Library, London. Concerning the agitation of Friends of Chester Quarter, see Drake, 24, 26-27, and Sydney V. James, *A People Among Peoples: Quaker Benevolence in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), 120-121.

tion of *Negroes* (sign'd by many Hands) the House agrees, that an Impost of *Twenty Pounds per Head* be laid on all *Negroes* imported into this Province; and that the Clerk provide a Bill, and bring the same to the House."³⁴

In 1713, London Yearly Meeting reported receiving the Philadelphia epistle and noted that "They desire that Negroes who are made Slaves with their Posterity may not be sent into their Country by friends to be sold. They desire Counsell from friends in this case of Negroes." This letter was turned over to Henry Gouldney, so that he might answer it.³⁵ Gouldney, best known as the Friend at whose house George Fox died, has been described as having "such Power over his friends (as I know none has the like) because of his loving disposition." He and his fellow correspondents for Pennsylvania wrote an answer which was approved by the Morning Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings,³⁶ was sent to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting,³⁷ and was read in the sessions of September, 1714. Philadelphia Friends replied to it as follows:

We also kindly Received your Advice about Negroe Slaves and we are one with you that y^e multiplying of them may be of a dangerous Consequence, and therefore a Law was made in Pensilvania laying Twenty Pounds duty upon Everyone Imported there, wth Law y^e Queen was pleased to disanull, we could hartily wish y^t a way might be found to stop the bringing more here, or at least that Friends may be less concerned in Buying or Selling of any that may be brought in, and hope for your assistance with y^e Government if any further Law Should be made discouraging y^e Importation. We know not of any friend amongst us that has any hand or Concern in bringing any out of their own Country and are of y^e same mind wth you, that the Practice is not Commendable nor allowable amongst Friends, And we take y^e Freedome to acquaint you that our Request unto you was that you would be pleased to Consult or Advise with Friends in other Plantations where they are more numerous than with us, because they hold a Correspondence wth you, & not with us, and your meeting may better prevail wth y^m and your advice prove more Effectual.³⁸

This 1714 epistle from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting was read in the 1715 sessions of London Yearly Meeting and was then turned

³⁴ *Pennsylvania Archives, Eighth Series*, II, 1012-1013.

³⁵ Minutes of London Yearly Meeting, IV (1704-1713), 328. These manuscript minutes are in Friends House Library, London.

³⁶ Minutes of Second Day Morning Meeting, IV (1711-1734), 43; Minutes of Meeting for Sufferings, XXI (1712-1715), 83, Friends House Library, London.

³⁷ Epistles Sent, II (1704-1738), 195-196, *ibid.*

³⁸ Epistles Received, II, 172-173, *ibid.*

over to John Freame (Clerk of London Yearly Meeting several years earlier) and other Friends to answer. After meeting with the approval of the Morning Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings, the following letter was dispatched to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.³⁹

As to what you desire concerning Negroes, 'tis y^e sense of this as well as former meetings, that to be any ways Concerned in bringing them from their native country and then selling them for Slaves, is a Trade not fit for one Professing Truth to be concerned, and 'tis observed y^t several Estates gotten y^t way has not Prospered, and therefore we hope all Friends will be Cautious of being Concerned therein, we writ[e] to you our Sense concerning that matter in our Epistle, 1713, to w^{ch} we Refer you. . . .⁴⁰

The 1713 epistle from London Yearly Meeting had convinced William Southeby that neither London nor Philadelphia Yearly Meetings was ready or willing to speak out clearly. He, therefore, had sent his opinion in writing to the Yearly Meeting, which did not see fit to include it in the minutes. In this paper, William Southeby had observed: "More and better fruits may reasonably be expected from us than from other places; being so many ministers and other ancient Friends that came out of England, to live here, therefore we ought to be exemplary to other places, and not take liberty to do things because others do them."⁴¹ Southeby, then, criticized the members of the Yearly Meeting who had stifled the protests from Chester Quarterly Meeting and from Southeby himself: "You strive to discourage me from being so plain with you, but seeing it is really and truly for the promotion of Truth and Righteousness in the earth, and having the countenance and unity of some of the best of men in it, I am not much concerned for the frowns or displeasure of any that may oppose it."⁴² Southeby's 1714 protest did not cause the Yearly Meeting to go beyond its earlier position.

Chester Friends, who seem to have taken the leadership in this antislavery drive, once again made known their point of view in a minute adopted August 1, 1715: "A weighty concern coming before the meeting concerning some Friends being yet in the practice of importing, buying and selling negroe slaves; after some time spent in a

³⁹ Minutes of Second Day Morning Meeting, IV, 93; Minutes of Meeting for Sufferings, IV, 393, *ibid.*

⁴⁰ Epistles Sent, II, 232, *ibid.*

⁴¹ "William Southeby," *The Friend* (Philadelphia), XXVIII (1855), 301.

⁴² *Ibid.*

solid and serious consideration thereof, it is the unanimous sense and judgment of this meeting, that Friends be not concerned in the importing, buying or selling of any negro slaves that shall be imported in future; and that the same be laid before the next Yearly Meeting desiring their concurrence therein."⁴³ Philadelphia Yearly Meeting reacted by decreeing that all who imported slaves should be dealt with but did not go any further, except to say that Quakers should treat their slaves in a Christian spirit and that *all* Friends should "forbear judging or reflecting on one another, either in public or private, concerning the detaining or keeping their servants."⁴⁴

For a time, Southeby was quiet. Finally, however, he felt forced to speak out again. The humanitarian who had been so concerned over the trade with the Indians, proper care for poor and sick immigrants, and the many other things which had demanded his attention over a forty-year period, was unable to clear his mind of the oppressing case of Negro slavery in the Society of Friends. Finding that the Yearly Meeting in 1716 failed to go beyond its 1715 position, Southeby took his pen in hand once more and attacked the Meeting for its failure to take a stronger position, and he also censured some of its members.

Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, to which Southeby belonged, seeing "a paper in print signed by Wm. Southby, that he has published without the approbation of friends, which being contrary to our established Discipline, . . . orders that William Southby stop the publication of his papers and condemn his disorderly practice therein."⁴⁵ Southeby complied with the order, but not to the degree desired by that body:

The last monthly meeting having ordered William Southeby to stop the spreading [of] his printed papers, and to Condemn his disorderly printing without the approbation of Friends. Pursuant to which minute Wm. Southeby sent unto this meeting a paper wherein he Condemns his printing without the approbation of friends, but not so fully as this meeting thinks requisite therefore orders that he the said Wm. Southeby Endeavour Effectually to Stop the spreading his printed papers, and condemn the manner of his printing and Censuring friends contrary to the minutes of our Yearly meeting, to the satisfaction of this meeting.⁴⁶

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 309.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Minutes of Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, II, 15-16.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, II, 17.

Apparently, Southeby satisfied the request of the Monthly Meeting, for he was still in good standing seven months later when he acquainted the Meeting with the needs of John Sopes, a "poor man." He and two other Friends were appointed to enquire into Sopes' needs and supply him with his necessities.⁴⁷ Soon, however, he was back at work with his pen to the consternation and dismay of his Monthly Meeting. On November 29, 1717, the Meeting recorded that:

Altho' William Southeby was formerly dealt with for disorderly printing and spreading papers contrary to the rules and discipline of friends, which method of printing he was ordered to and did condemn tho' not to the full satisfaction of friends, yet he having lately printed a paper without the approbation of friends appointed to the oversight of the press, which is a breach of discipline, and has a tendency to division, 'Tis the order of this meeting that he Condemn his disorderly printing and dispersing papers without the Concurrence of this meeting. Otherwise the meeting will be necessitated to testify against him as not in unity with them.⁴⁸

Once again Southeby appears to have slipped into silence on the slavery question following this strong reprimand. Thirteen months went by before the Meeting felt the need to act again when, it would seem, Southeby had again taken to writing. In December, 1718, Samuel Preston was ordered by the Meeting to bring a "copy of the minute of the meeting against William Southerbe" to the next meeting,⁴⁹ but nothing further is recorded in this matter. It does not appear that Southeby was "disowned," for there is no notation of that final development in the minutes of Philadelphia Monthly Meeting. Also, it may be noted that his death in 1720 was recorded in its records.⁵⁰ Both these facts suggest that he finally adopted the position, already accepted by the Friends of Chester Quarter, that *unity* in the Society must be maintained no matter how *right* a man felt himself to be.

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⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, II, 23.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, II, 37.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, II, 48.

⁵⁰ William Wade Hinshaw, *Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy* (Ann Arbor, 1938), II, 422. On this same page are recorded the deaths of William's wife Joan (1707) and his son John (1699). William Southeby's daughter, Elizabeth, married William Alloway at the Philadelphia Meeting House in 1694 (II, 657). No mention of William's other son, William, Jr., is found in these records.