THE
Pennsylvania
Magazine
OF HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY

The Lobbying of London Quakers for Pennsylvania Friends

IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY LONDON QUAKERS developed a highly effective political lobby, the London Meeting for Sufferings, capable of exerting political pressure on behalf of Quakers throughout the British Isles and the Empire—in the provinces as well as the metropolis, in the American provinces as well as the English. Since Pennsylvania was the American province most clearly dominated by Friends closely tied to the London Meeting, one would have expected it to be consistently the main American beneficiary of the Londoners' attention throughout the eighteenth century. In fact, however, London lobbying for Pennsylvania Friends was uneven over the years. In the quarter century from 1730 to 1755 Pennsylvania did become the strongest American concern of the London Meeting for Sufferings, but immediately after that London lobbying for all the colonies, Pennsylvania included, dropped off abruptly. By the eve of the American Revolution there was almost no lobbying.[1]

[1] The want of an overview of Quaker politicking for Americans (and most especially Pennsylvanians) is not for lack of primary material. Quaker meetings in eighteenth-century England and America left excellent records. So did several of their leaders, and so did the Board of Trade, the English institution primarily concerned with the day-to-day administration of the colonies. Between the two types of records there is ample material for a study of Friends' political influence on imperial questions, but it has not yet been undertaken. More than half a century ago Winfred T. Root and Mabel Wolff produced institutional studies of the relations between Pennsylvania and the British government, but neither mentioned the London lobby; indeed, they did not seem to be aware of it. A.T. Gary, doing her Oxford D. Phil. dissertation at the same time Wolff was writing, certainly did recognize the political influence of London Friends, but Gary's work, like Jack Marietta's fine study of the reformation of American Quakerism, begins only with the

As the century opened London Quakers were highly organized and well set to lobby with the British government. Through a tightly structured organization, reaching from the Yearly Meeting in London to the monthly meetings in the counties, and from there to the weekly local meetings, the London Quakers obtained information on the legal penalties suffered by Friends in various localities so they could then approach the government for redress. In return they could call upon county Friends to petition and address their representatives in Parliament and use their local electoral power, especially in constituencies where they were "swing" voters, to return candidates who had helped them and turn out those who had not.[2] Specifically to handle lobbying the Yearly Meeting established the London Meeting for Sufferings, a committee of Londoners who met weekly throughout the year. They established subcommittees that prepared reports for boards, attended court sessions, visited Parliament, learned from its members of anticipated legislation that might affect Quakers, assessed the best time to have supporting legislation introduced (sometimes even drafting bills themselves), and orchestrated the appropriate grass-roots campaigns.

American meetings fit easily into this organization. The structure of the Society of Friends was similar in England and America,[3] and by 1700 yearly meetings in New England, New York, Philadelphia, Maryland, Virginia, and Carolina corresponded annually with the London Yearly Meeting; the Londoners appointed correspondents, usually merchants trading with the relevant colonies, to draft letters to each of the American

---

middle of the eighteenth century, the earlier period was treated briefly as background Marietta was not primarily interested in discussing how the London Meeting for Sufferings functioned as a lobby N C Hunt (*Two Early Political Associations*) was interested in exactly this point, but he focused exclusively on English, not American, politics In the late 1970s Kenneth Carroll began a promising enquiry in his "American Quakers and Their London Lobby," but he limited himself to only one or two of the English activities Winfred Trexler Root, *The Relations of Pennsylvania with the British Government, 1696-1765* (1912, reprint ed , New York, 1970), Mabel Pauline Wolff, *The Colonial Agency of Pennsylvania, 1712-1757* (Philadelphia, 1933), A T Gary, "The Political and Economic Relations of English and American Quakers, 1750-1785," Ph D diss , St Hugh's, Oxford, 1935, Jack D Marietta, *The Reformation of American Quakerism, 1748-1783*, (Philadelphia, 1984), N C Hunt, *Two Early Political Associations* (Oxford, 1961), Kenneth L Carroll, "American Quakers and their London Lobby," *Quaker History* 70 (1981), 22-39

[2] Hunt, *Early Political Associations*, Sect 1

[3] Edwin B Bronner, "Quaker Discipline and Order, 1680-1720 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and London Yearly Meeting" in *The World of William Penn*, ed Richard S Dunn and Mary Maples Dunn (Philadelphia, 1986), 323-36

meetings. Provincial meetings in America, as in England, passed on to the London Meeting for Sufferings notice of issues on which they needed political help. The London Meeting, in turn, appointed subcommittees to handle American affairs. The same three men—John Field, Joseph Wyeth, and Theodore Eccleston—served on so many committees on American issues that they came close to being full-time lobbyists. They concentrated on obtaining copies of local laws that colonial Quakers wanted either approved or disallowed, petitioning or testifying for or against the laws before the Board of Trade (newly created in 1696 as the Privy Council's advisory body on colonial affairs), drafting modified or substitute laws, and notifying meetings in London and America of the outcome of their efforts.[4]

Not only did the Americans fit into the overall structure, they also had two particularly helpful sets of supporters—the "grandees" and the merchants. The grandees included weighty Quakers like William Penn early in the century and, later, men like John Hanbury, David Barclay, and Dr. John Fothergill. These men gave the meeting better connections with Privy Councillors than rival religious groups had and allowed them the comparative luxury of occasionally being able to use the Privy Council to override the recommendations of the Board of Trade.

Overlapping these grandees were the London Quaker merchants who traded with the American colonies, especially those trading with Pennsylvania (Hanbury and Barclay were in this group). The Quaker merchants of London directed whatever political interests they had through the Yearly Meeting and the Meeting for Sufferings. In their willingness to bring mercantile interests under their religious organization they were unique in the London mercantile community. Unlike their competitors trading to other American colonies, the Pennsylvania merchants did not have their own coffeehouse to serve as a center of organization. They met at the "Bull and Mouth," the Friends' main coffeehouse that was nearly ten blocks away from the center of other American mercantile

[4] For background to this see Gary, "Political and Economic Relations of English and American Quakers," 36 Ethyl Williams Kirty, "The Quakers' Efforts to Secure Civil and Religious Liberty, 1660-1696," *Journal of Modern History* 7 (1935), 420, and Hunt, *Early Political Associations*, Sect 1

coffeehouses clustered around the Royal Exchange.[5] They were not active in the mercantile politics of the City of London, as many of the other American merchants were, and they did not produce or sign mercantile petitions to the government.[6] In the 1720s, when the Pennsylvania Assembly briefly sought a mercantile agent, they had to go outside the community of London Quaker merchants who did most of their trading with Pennsylvania and hire Micajah Perry, an Anglican merchant whose principal trade was with the Chesapeake colonies.

Given the substantial organization the Meeting for Sufferings had for lobbying, and given also that Pennsylvania was dominated by Friends who were quite familiar with the meeting's activities, one would expect Pennsylvanians to have taken maximum advantage of the opportunities presented at an early stage. Surprisingly, they did not. The Pennsylvania Yearly Meeting claimed to be the oldest in the colonies; it claimed also, as early as the mid-1690s, to be the most regular colonial correspondent with the London Yearly Meeting.[7] The London Meeting was, moreover, the only lobby to which Pennsylvania Quaker merchants could appeal, since there was no Pennsylvania mercantile coffeehouse to act as an alternative lobby. Nevertheless, Pennsylvanians made remarkably little political use of the London Meeting for Sufferings in the first decade of the eighteenth century—less than the Marylanders, the New Englanders, or even the North Carolinians. As a meeting the Pennsylvanians asked for books, they asked for help establishing a printing press, they asked for marriage certificates, they welcomed visiting Friends, they granted the London Yearly Meeting's request that they welcome Palatine immigrants, and they maintained a respectful correspondence. When individual members were in England they enjoyed the hospitality of English Friends—food, lodging, invitations to meetings, help with bank-

[5] Charles Edwin Whiting, *Studies in English Puritanism from the Restoration to the Revolution, 1660-1688* (London, 1968), 231 Bryant Lillywhite, *London Coffee Houses* (London, 1963), no 204 The absence of a coffeehouse was actually of key importance, since coffeehouses were the necessary centers for American mercantile lobbies See Alison G Olson, "The Mercantile Coffee House Lobbies in the Eighteenth Century," *History Today* 41 (Jan 1991), 35- 41

[6] There are no identifiable Quaker signatures on mercantile petitions to the Board of Trade in the "Proprietaries" volumes, C O 5 , vols 1264-1296 Micajah Perry was the agent, he had been security for Governor Keith in 1716, Sept 8, 1716, C O 5 /1265 of 38 This may explain why Keith's supporters in the assembly chose him as agent

[7] Pennsylvania Yearly Meeting (hereafter, PYM) to London Yearly Meeting (hereafter, LYM), 7th mo , 22d, 1697, LYM Epistles Received (hereafter, ER) I, 263-65

ing, even good seats at parades. When they were back in Pennsylvania they welcomed long distance introductions to possible business partners, gratefully received donations collected in charity drives, and savored news—news about politics, news about business fortunes, news about neighborhood changes, news about anything. In short, they made the most of Quaker networking and certainly felt themselves part of a transatlantic community—but they did not ask the Londoners for help with the British government.[8]

One possible explanation for the lack of close political cooperation between Friends in London and Philadelphia could lie in the very fact that Quakers were not an oppressed minority in Pennsylvania and, therefore, did not need the "defensive" kind of lobbying that Londoners emphasized. Pennsylvania Friends were not suffering; they were, therefore, inappropriate recipients of help from the London Meeting for Sufferings. This explanation does not carry us very far, however, since a local Quaker majority needed help getting acts favorable to Friends approved by the home government. Even a colony dominated by Quakers watched Parliament carefully, because it was British government policy to insure that colonial acts were consistent with parliamentary law.

A variant of this explanation, one that can be inferred from the interpretation of Jack Marietta, is that many Pennsylvania acts concerning Quakers affected them as politicians rather than as members of the Society, and the London Meeting for Sufferings concerned itself with religion, not politics.[9] The question of whether a Quaker majority could sit in an assembly that was expected to finance military operations concerned politics, not religion, so the argument goes, and the Londoners were reluctant to take it up. This argument runs into some trouble when one considers some of the issues the London Meeting actually did take up later. They worked for approval of a Pennsylvania act forbidding the importation of slaves, they supported the proprietorship as a form of government, they worked to keep the Three Lower Counties (now Delaware) part of Pennsylvania, they backed the separation of New York and New Jersey, and they ardently defended the Pennsylvania assemblymen against Pennsylvania petitions claiming they were not doing enough to

[8] London Meeting for Sufferings (hereafter, LMS) to PYM, Aug 3, 1709, LMS Epistles Sent (hereafter, ES) II, 131, LMS to PYM, 5th mo, 24th, 1730, LMS ES II, 453-54

[9] Marietta, *Reformation of American Quakerism*, 141-42

protect the colony in wartime (1742). In each case the London Meeting considered that Quakers were affected as worshippers rather than as politicians.[10] In fact, the line between them was almost impossible to draw.

More plausible than the arguments that the London Meeting for Sufferings shied away from Pennsylvania issues, either because the Quaker majority in government there did not need their help or because they would not take up primarily political ideas, is a third set of explanations. First of all, despite having the resources for lobbying and a structure into which the Americans fit nicely, the London Meeting for Sufferings had to learn by experimenting just how it could best lobby for Americans. Learning by trial and error could be slow, strained work; Friends' success varied from colony to colony, issue to issue. When they dealt directly with sympathetic Proprietors they did rather well: in North Carolina they got a hostile governor removed and a discriminatory law repealed. When they dealt with a colony like Virginia, where Friends were a tiny minority facing hostile and well-connected governors, their efforts were often ineffectual. In particular, Friends had to learn how to allocate the time and manpower required for such lobbying, reduce to a minimum the time required for transatlantic communications, cultivate connections with politicians in the highest stations of government, take a measure of the strength of rival lobbies, and explore ways to develop the good will of officials about to leave for the colonies—all before trial and error could be replaced by system and assurance.

Their earliest concentrated efforts concerned a series of laws passed between 1696 and 1701/2 establishing the Anglican church in Maryland and taxing Quakers there £40 per head for its support. London Quakers got the 1696 act repealed with no opposition in 1699.[11] When a similar act of 1700 came over, however, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London were alerted, and on this occasion the Quakers faced opposition. The Lords of Trade repealed the act but themselves drew up the model for a new one, a model that was unacceptable to the Quakers

[10] See, for example, the London Meeting for Sufferings' argument that if the Three Lower Counties went to Maryland its Quaker inhabitants would have to pay tithes to the Anglican Church there, 8th mo., 18th, 1734, LMS Minutes, XXI, 438.

[11] The act "is like to prove Ruinous to Friends here." Maryland Yearly Meeting to LYM, 4th mo., 15th, 1698, LYM, ER I, 283-85; 3d mo., 6th, 1700, LMS ES I, 342-44.

even though they had gone over it "paragraph by paragraph" with the Board of Trade and had provided copies of their objections to the Bishop of London and the Archbishop of Canterbury.[12] When the model was nevertheless sent on to the Privy Council, Friends opposed it there without any more success. They were, however, able to get the council to add a "moderating letter" when it was forwarded to Maryland.[13] With two acts establishing Anglicanism thus repealed, the Maryland legislators tried again, once more seeking the assistance of London Anglican leaders and preparing a bill that would be allowed. Friends in London found out about the bill but could not get copies from the Board of Trade for several months because the board itself had not received them. When the bill was finally received the board would not allow the Quakers to testify against it on grounds that they had testified on the earlier bill which was very similar. When this bill was allowed the Friends shifted their efforts toward obtaining a governor who would apply the law to Quakers sympathetically. They entertained and talked at length with Governor Seymour before he was sent to the colony in 1705.[14]

The handling of the Maryland Act showed, first, the great amount of time required of the committee of the London Meeting and of John Field, the chief lobbyist, in particular. It also showed the speed of transatlantic communications between Friends' meetings. Thanks to Friends' correspondence, news of the repeals reached the governors and the colonial meetings within five months of the Privy Council's decisions. The Meeting for Sufferings learned about the 1701/2 act well before the Lords of Trade. Additionally, Quaker efforts with the Privy Council reveal their confident use of "persons in high station." Unlike other contemporary lobbies they often looked to the Privy Council to override the Board of Trade. Note also that they entertained Governor Seymour: they had come to recognize their potential for influencing non-Quaker governors from

[12] Feb 13 and March 22, 1701 W L Grant et al, eds, *Acts of the Privy Council, Colonial Series* (Hereford, 1908-12) II, no 814, 362 9th mo, 8th, 1700, LMS ES I, 372-73

[13] 3d mo, 9th, 1701, 3d mo, 16th, 1701, 3d mo, 23d, 1701, 3d mo, 30th, 1701, 4th mo, 6th, 1701, 4th mo, 13th, 1701, LMS Minutes XV, 76, 80, 85, 89, 99-100, 108-9 Clearly the Maryland issue was coming up every week over a six week period LMS to Maryland Yearly Meeting, 7th mo, 4th, 1700, LMS ES I, 366

[14] 2d mo, 4th, 1702, 5th mo, 3d, 1702, 8th mo, 16th, 1702, 9th mo, 27th, 1702, 10th mo, 4th, 1702, 11th mo, 15th, 1702, 12th mo, 12th, 1702, 6th mo, 6th, 1703, LMS Minutes, XVI, 21, 36, 79, 105, 114, 141-42, 163-64, 243

London and, thereafter, the gubernatorial send-off was to become an eighteenth-century ritual repeated with each appointee. Finally, the Friends' encounter with the Anglican church hierarchy in the later stages of the episode showed the growing dimensions of interest group conflict over colonial issues. As other groups began lobbying on American issues the Friends found it necessary to negotiate with them as well as the government.[15]

This last facet of Friends' lobbying, the work with other interests, became particularly important for another colonial region almost immediately after the Maryland issue was over. In 1703 the three leading committee members of the London Meeting for Sufferings began occasional meetings with the Independent ministers of London to discuss persecution of Quakers by the Presbyterian/Congregational governments of New England. The Independent ministers lacked both the organization and the political connections of the Quakers; moreover they were not nearly as devoted to the cause of their New England correspondents as the Quakers were to the cause of American Friends. Partly because the Independent ministers did not put up much opposition, Quakers had little difficulty getting disallowed a series of Connecticut laws against "heretics" that taxed Quakers for support of the locally established Presbyterian/Congregational church.[16] Despite the efforts of the Connecti-

[15] It is puzzling that the Anglican Church was not active in the early consideration of the Maryland Act The Bishop of London had a copy of a 1699 petition of Maryland Quakers asking for exemption from tithes and oaths, presumably forwarded from Gov Nicholson An undated note, possibly written by Commissary Thomas Bray of Maryland, complained that the Privy Council had disallowed the bill without consulting the bishops, Lambeth-Fulham Mss Part of the explanation may be that the Church of England was slow to organize in Maryland before 1700 See Rufus Jones, *The Quakers in the American Colonies* (London, 1923), 321

[16] The Board of Trade's deliberations on Connecticut are in C O 5/1291, 144-47, 154, 157, 165, 204-9, 210-17, 429, 445 Connecticut issues occupied the London Meeting for Sufferings for the better part of four years, see New England Yearly Meeting to LYM, 4th mo, 14th, 1706, N E Yearly Meeting Minutes, 34 "We are glad to hear that friends in England hath obtained soe good an Interest for ye Government with ye Queen's favour to this Country in Repealing their Persecuting Law" Rhode Island Yearly Meeting to LYM, n d, 1706, LYM, ER II, 10-12 9th mo, 12th, 1703, 9th mo, 14th, 1703, 10th mo, 17th, 1703, 11th mo, 21st, 1703, 11th mo, 28th, 1703, LMS Minutes XVI, 294, 299-300, 314, 328, 331 1st mo, 10th, 1704, 4th mo, 2d, 1704, 8th mo, 15th, 22d, 29th, 1704, 8th mo, 6th, 1704, 10th mo, 29th, 1704, 2d mo, 6th, 1705, 3d mo, 11th, 1705, 3d mo, 25th, 1705, 4th mo, 2d, 1705, 4th mo, 8th, 1705, 4th mo, 22d, 1705, 5th mo, 13th, 1705, 7th mo, 22d, 1705, 8th mo, 19th, 1705, 9th mo, 9th, 1705, 9th mo, 16th, 1705, 9th mo, 30th, 1705, LMS Minutes XVII, 1, 5, 55, 57, 76, 102-3, 105-8, 212, 234, 247, 257, 268, 274, 309, 320, 321, 324, 334-35 1st mo, 14th, 1706, 2d mo, 11th, 1707, LMS Minutes XVIII, 230-31, 245 Further meetings with the Independent ministers are in LMS Minutes XIX and XX

cut agent, Sir Henry Ashurst, the Independent ministers, after first writing back to Connecticut for information, expressed "their great dislike to their Brethren in New England proceeding against our Friends there." They tried to head off a formal disallowance by writing the Connecticut magistrates "to stop the persecution against our friends," but this was not strong enough and the law was disallowed only after Friends petitioned the queen. The negotiations represented the first sustained set of meetings between Friends and another, often competitive, interest.

In the aftermath of the Connecticut disallowance Friends developed two further dimensions to their lobbying. One was the regularized, if voluntary, contribution of colonial meetings to the lobbying effort. In 1707 seven New England meetings took up a collection and sent over £24 toward getting the Connecticut laws disallowed.[17] The other dimension found Friends using the presentation of an address to the monarch as an occasion to introduce themselves to the secretary of state, an approach all interests developed over the century. When Long Island Quakers sent over an address of thanks to the queen for disallowing the Connecticut laws, Quakers approached the Earl of Sunderland, secretary of state, about presenting it to the queen. Sunderland tactfully turned aside the offer of Friends to present the address in person, but they had succeeded in making his acquaintance.

The Maryland and Connecticut laws drew out the most sustained efforts of the Meeting for Sufferings in the early years of their American lobbying. Indeed the Connecticut laws took more of the members' time than any other issue in the first three-quarters of the century. Through the two campaigns for repeal American Friends had learned to appeal against local discrimination quickly and to offer financial assistance for efforts the Londoners would further subsidize; the Londoners had learned through a small committee of virtually full-time lobbyists how to petition and prepare testimony for the Board of Trade, canvas the Privy Council, and get acquainted with the secretaries of state and, on occasion, the monarchs themselves. They had developed a sophisticated approach to the cultivation of government influence that they were able to use for the next half century on behalf of American Friends, but it had taken

[17] For the increasing organization of New England Quakers, 1700-1710, see Arthur J Worrall, *Quakers in the Colonial Northeast* (Hanover, 1980), 63-71 The collection of £24 is reported in the Lynn Monthly Meeting's letter to LYM 12th mo , 12th, 1707-8, LYM ER II, 27-30

them through the first decade of the eighteenth century to do it. The trial-and-error character of Friends' lobbying early in the eighteenth century was one reason Pennsylvania Quakers did not seek their help at first. The other reason is that they did not have to. As long as William Penn was active as Proprietor the Pennsylvania Friends could turn to him, and the London Meeting for Sufferings was happy enough to leave lobbying for Pennsylvania to him as the last of the seventeenth-century generation of great individual lobbyists. This was partly because of his first-hand experience in the colony, partly because of his significant contacts in English politics, and partly because many members of the London Meeting resented Penn and thought he had pulled the meeting into too much political controversy already. For most of the first decade of the century Penn handled the colony's lobbying virtually by himself.[18]

After Penn was incapacitated by a stroke in 1712, Pennsylvanians tended to direct the English management of their affairs to his wife Hannah and her agents, Henry Goldney and Joshua Gee. Even after Penn died in 1718 and the proprietorship was disputed between the heirs of Hannah and his first wife, Goldney and Gee continued to lobby for the colony. Nevertheless Hannah, William Penn Jr., Gee, and Goldney slowly faded from the picture from 1712 until 1730, and the Meeting for Sufferings gradually assumed full lobbying responsibilities.

When the century opened Penn was temporarily in America and unable to handle in person the two main Pennsylvania issues then before the British government. These were the colony's passage of an act requiring an affirmation in lieu of an oath for its officeholders and the Board of Trade's proposal, at the same time, to resume proprietary colonies to the crown. When the London Meeting for Sufferings first learned that the proposal to resume the proprietorships would come up while Penn was still in the colony, it set up a committee composed of the same men who handled lobbying for all the other colonial issues: John Field and Joseph Wyeth. They were authorized to write to the county meetings for support, if needed, and to report back to the London Meeting every week.[19] They wrote Penn twice and apparently sent him extracts of the Board of Trade's

[18] *The Papers of William Penn*, ed Richard S Dunn and Mary Maples Dunn (5 vols, Philadelphia, 1986), 3 394

[19] I K Steele, "The Board of Trade, the Quakers and Resumption of Colonial Charters, 1699-1702" *William and Mary Quarterly* (hereafter, *WMQ*) 23 (1966), 611

reports to the Lords and the Commons. Penn sent his own agent to one member of the committee for help finding a Quaker lawyer.[20] He also wrote other Friends asking them to "Pray to be a friend to the absent" and prepared arguments against the Board of Trade, but he could do little else from a distance.

When Penn arrived back in England in December 1701, the lobbying effort shifted to him. The subcommittee of the London Meeting for Sufferings ceased reporting, and Pennsylvania Friends sent money to cover lobbying expenses directly to the Proprietor. Penn now displayed the lobbying strengths he had developed over a quarter century in English politics. First, he was an excellent publicist and a skilled speaker and pamphlet writer. More immediately useful to the colony, he had first-hand experience working with the relevant boards, even with the Board of Trade. He had testified at the Board of Trade before he last went to Pennsylvania, and during his stay in the colony he had corresponded with them regularly, sending provincial laws for review and preparing reports.[21] He did not much like the members of the board, who he thought were prejudiced against him, but he did at least know how to work with them.

Most useful of all to his lobbying for Pennsylvania were his personal connections with members of the House of Lords, the Commons, and the Privy Council.[22] He numbered among his political friends the speaker of the House of Commons, the leader of the Tory party in the House of Lords, and a trusted personal advisor of Queen Anne. These connections were important since Penn, like the London Meeting, often had to get Board of Trade recommendations overridden at higher levels—by Parliament, the Privy Council, even the queen herself.

By the time Penn was back on the scene the Board of Trade had already prepared its proposal for resumption of the charter colonies to the crown, and this issue occupied him during his first months in England. Within a month of his return Penn was completing his own alternative

[20] Penn to Charlwood Lawton, Dec 10, 1700, *The Papers of William Penn*, 3 624, see also note on p 64

[21] For example, Penn to the Board of Trade [April 28] 1701, sending copies of the colony's laws, *The Papers of William Penn*, 3 596

[22] Steele, "Board of Trade," 613, Alison Gilbert Olson, "William Penn, Parliament, and Proprietary Government," *WMQ* 18 (1961), 176-95

plan, in which chartered colonies relinquished some powers to the home authority but not the power of government itself. He presented this proposal to the speaker of the House of Commons and the secretary of state who passed it on to the Board of Trade. In the same time period Penn conferred with Sir Henry Ashurst, the Connecticut agent, who argued that resumption of charters was designed to penalize colonies settled by dissenters and who urged him to make a "bold appearance" against resumption for "the common cause of dissent."[23] In the spring of 1702 Penn appeared before the Board of Trade eight times in a one month period, debating his arch enemy Robert Quarry, the colonial official who was the leading exponent of resumption. Predictably the Board of Trade supported Quarry, rejected Penn's plan, and pressed its own plan on Parliament. Furthermore, they recommended for the immediate present that Quarry be reappointed to his old job and that Penn be denied the right to appoint a governor for the colony or to claim the Three Lower Counties (Delaware) as part of it.[24]

It was a frustrating start for Penn, but eventually his connections in Parliament and the Privy Council paid off. Parliament did not even debate the board's proposal; the council rescinded Quarry's appointment, and Queen Anne herself, after an interview with Penn, backed his gubernatorial appointment and his claim to the Three Lower Counties. Twice in the next three years the board attempted again to resume charter colonies to the crown. In 1703 the measure was put off the parliamentary agenda indefinitely by Penn's friend Lord Godolphin, and in 1705 Penn's allies defeated the proposal in the House of Commons.

On the resumption issue Penn's main opponents had been colonial officials, themselves not particularly well connected except at the Board of Trade. In his attempts to allow Pennsylvania's acts substituting an affirmation for an oath administered to all public officers in the colony, the Proprietor ran into stronger opposition from the Anglican church and he was less successful. The Anglican church in Philadelphia protested the acts to the Bishop of London and the queen, arguing that they

[23] Penn to James Logan, Jan 4, 1701/2, Penn to Charlwood Lawton, Aug 27, 1701, *Papers of William Penn*, 4 73, 144

[24] *Papers of William Penn*, 4 139-40

discriminated against Anglicans who would not use the affirmation.[25] The bishop, himself an ex-officio member of the Board of Trade, rather slowly took up the issue, backed by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and Penn found himself in interdenominational lobbying competition.[26] Between 1700 and 1715 the Pennsylvania Assembly passed five acts substituting affirmation. During that period Penn, financed by the Pennsylvania Council, appeared at least three times before the board and reprinted his old *Treatise on Oaths*, to no avail.[27] Only in 1715, after Penn was out of politics, did the assembly pass an act *allowing* affirmation rather than *requiring* it. This act received the royal assent.[28]

Only after Penn's incapacitation in 1712 did the London Meeting begin to take up Pennsylvania affairs, applying to them the techniques they had already developed so fully for other colonies. Even then, however, they proceeded very hesitantly. At first Penn's wife Hannah and his son William from his first marriage tried to cover up Penn's indisposition by lobbying with his old connections themselves. Hannah Penn proved competent enough to carry on even after the government turnover of 1714/15, when George I and a Whig ministry succeeded the Tory government of Queen Anne. Even when Hannah's own sons later converted to Anglicanism the London Meeting was reluctant to interfere in their work.[29] The Pennsylvania Yearly Meeting appealed to the London Meeting, only a year after Penn's retirement, for help in gaining approval of a provincial bill prohibiting the importation of slaves, but the bill was never sent.[30] A 1715 Pennsylvania law providing for affirmation was submitted to the Board of Trade by Joshua Gee, a member of the London Meeting but also an agent of Penn's.

The London Meeting did no major lobbying for Pennsylvania until 1724, six years after Penn's death, by which point his Anglican heirs

[25] Vestrymen of Christ Church to King in Council, Jan 28, 1702, C O 5/1289 f/5467 The Anglicans' reasons for opposing affirmation were presented to the board Nov 6, 1706, C O 5 / 1291 f 420-26 Penn's memorial is June 30, 1707, C O 5/1292 f 9 The Board of Trade's negative recommendation of the 1706 law was Dec 30, 1707, C O 5 1292 f 22-23

[26] For background to the controversy, see J William Frost, "The Affirmation Controversy and Religious Liberty" in *The World of William Penn*, 303-22

[27] *Papers of William Penn*, 4 707

[28] Root, *Relations of Pennsylvania with the British Government*, 251

[29] Wolff, *Colonial Agency of Pennsylvania*, 33

[30] PYM to LYM, 7th mo , 19th-22d, 1714, LYM ER II, 171-74

were no longer minors. The issue it took up then was a provision for affirmation—again. In 1724 the Pennsylvania Assembly passed yet another affirmation act, this one drafted to be consistent with a parliamentary statute of 1722 revising English rules for affirmation. As it turned out the act went through the English boards uneventfully, but the very fact that it was handled entirely by the London Meeting made it a turning point in relations between Quakers in London and Philadelphia in several ways.[31]

One should note first that the Pennsylvanians sent copies of the act directly to the London Meeting—surely in the expectation that the meeting, not the Proprietors, would do the necessary lobbying. A week after the act was read the London Meeting appointed Henry Gouldney and Joshua Gee a committee to obtain the royal assent.[32] Gouldney and Gee were William Penn's old agents, but they were working for the meeting now. For this service the Pennsylvanians sent money to Richard Partridge, a member of the London Meeting. After the act was approved, the Pennsylvanians thanked the meeting and entrusted them with a formal address of thanks to the king. A committee of the meeting then arranged with ministers of state for the formal presentation.[33] All these features—the direct notification of the meeting, the financial contribution to it, the committee's work with the Board of Trade and the secretary of state—signaled that the source of the lobbying had changed. The negotiations on the Affirmation Act represented the London Meeting's first full application to a Pennsylvania issue of the lobbying approach they had earlier exercised for other colonies. They followed this up on three other occasions. Soon after the act's approval, the meeting appointed a committee of seven men to call on Patrick Gordon, newly appointed governor of Pennsylvania.[34] The committee included Gee, but the others were new names to Pennsylvania lobbying. More important, the send-off of the colony's governors had previously been handled by Penn or his wife. In 1734 the issue of the Three Lower Counties came up again when a committee of six was appointed to look into a representation from Pennsyl-

[31] See Root, *Relations of Pennsylvania with British Government*, 253-54

[32] 9th mo, 27th, 1724, LMS Minutes XXIII, 425

[33] PYM to LYM, 7th mo, 18th-22d, 1724, LYM ER II, 374-77 2d mo, 22d, 1726, LMS Minutes XXIV, 71

[34] 1st mo, 2d, 1726, LMS Minutes XXIV, 67

vania Quakers that Lord Baltimore was again claiming the Three Lower Counties for Maryland. The committee prepared a petition, which the meeting signed (another first) and sent to the Privy Council, instructing the committee to follow it through.[35] The Privy Council was slow to take up the issue—a blessing because the meeting was preoccupied with parliamentary legislation affecting English Quakers in 1736—but in the spring of 1737 the council held a full hearing on it. The meeting was attended by "a considerable number of Friends" (yet another first for Pennsylvania), and the council came to a decision "much in favor of Friends in Pennsylvania and the proprietors."[36] Finally, in 1739, the meeting lobbied successfully for clauses favoring Quaker affirmation in the American Naturalization Bill.[37]

Bit by bit, measure by measure, the London Meeting had largely supplanted the Penn family as lobbyists for Pennsylvania. Up until 1740, however, they had always worked in cooperation with the Proprietors—exulting for the Proprietors as well as the Friends, for example, on the Privy Council's decision regarding the Three Lower Counties. In the 1740s, however, this cooperation broke down. The Yearly Meeting continued to speak supportively of the Proprietors—they did so, indeed, until well into the 1760s—but they were, in fact, increasingly divided over just what their relationship to the Penn family should be.

The growing estrangement became apparent between 1741 and 1744 over the related issues of Pennsylvania defense and the representation of Quakers in the provincial assembly. In 1739 the British government went to war with Spain. As the war expanded over the next year or so to include the major countries of Europe, it became increasingly clear that the mainland American colonies would also become involved in the fighting. For the pacifist Pennsylvania Quakers this created a crisis. Their refusal to provide for defense, at a time when an increasingly vocal group of Philadelphia non-Quaker merchants was warning that the colony was likely to become a theater of conflict, inevitably called attention to the fact that they dominated the assembly despite their minority position

[35] 8th mo., 18th, 10th mo., 20th, and 11th mo., 3d, 1734, LMS Minutes XXV, 438, 458, 466. LMS to Three Lower Counties Quarterly Meeting, 12th mo., 28th, 1734, LMS ES II, 495-96.

[36] 3d mo., 27th, 12th mo., 21st, 12th mo., 24th, 1737, LMS Minutes XXVI, 294, 416, 418.

[37] 11th mo., 11th, 25th, 12th mo., 1st, 22d, 1739, LMS Minutes XXVII, 65, 68, 71, 78.

in the colony as a whole. Enemies in Pennsylvania and England then seized the occasion to demand their ouster from assembly politics by parliamentary legislation, either disqualifying them directly or by requiring an oath of office. The Pennsylvania Quakers appealed to the London Meeting to lobby on their behalf.

In undertaking such lobbying the Londoners were helped by three things. First, at the peak of the crisis the secretary of state was Lord Carteret, the Quakers' most reliable political patron. Second, the question of assembly representation for the Quakers put the Proprietors in something of a dilemma: if they pressed too hard for disfranchisement they ran the risk that an enraged Quaker majority in the colony would petition for royal government before they left office or that a suspicious parliamentary majority in England would think the Proprietors incapable of running their own colony and take it away from them. So, after initially hoping that Parliament would use the Quaker failure to provide defense as the occasion for expelling them from office, the Proprietors seem to have backed down and worked for the separation of defense issues from questions of representation.

Finally, the Londoners were helped by a superb combination of organization, patience, and well-placed political directions. This was the high point of the London Meeting's efforts on behalf of Pennsylvania Quakers; it was also the period right after the Pennsylvania Assembly had dismissed Ferdinando Paris, the Proprietor's representative, as their agent and had replaced him with Richard Partridge, a Quaker merchant active in the meeting. Quaker activity began when Thomas Penn returned to England after a nine-year stay in Pennsylvania. He brought with him a petition of 265 Philadelphia merchants and others against the assembly's failure to provide adequate defense in the War of the Spanish Succession, and he also brought his own determination to oust the Quakers from the Pennsylvania Assembly. His brother, John, dissuaded him from the disqualification effort;[38] the petition, however, was another matter. It was referred to the Board of Trade from the Privy Council and first read on

[38] Alan Tully, *William Penn's Legacy Politics and Social Structures in Provincial Pennsylvania, 1726-1755* (Baltimore, 1977), 29 The Proprietors' perplexity is suggested in John and Richard Penn to Thomas Penn, Nov 20, 1740, Penn Mss , Letter Book I, 339, and Thomas Penn to F J Paris, March 27, 1741, Penn Mss , Official Correspondence III, 141, discussed in Root, *Relations of Pennsylvania with the British Government*, 280-87

March 30, 1742. The following day the Penns appeared with Paris, now serving as their own agent. The London Meeting for Sufferings had known about the petition since February when Partridge had told them of it, but they were not alerted to the exact date of the hearing because Partridge's information had been cut off when he was barred from dealings with the board because of a dispute the year before. On April 7 about twenty Quakers appeared before the board successfully seeking a delay while they petitioned the king and council, and about twenty again showed up at the board's delayed hearing on June 28. The board then simply recommended to the Privy Council that an instruction be sent to the governor requiring him to provide more information. Nearly a year later the Privy Council got around to reviewing the board's recommendation. At the hearing John Penn represented the Proprietors and about thirty or forty Friends represented the London Meeting.[39] The council, after apparently expressing some criticism of the Proprietors, decided to accept the board's recommendations of instructing the governor to send more information.[40] The governor's response was read a year after this but the board took no further action. In the same month (August) that the governor's report was read, the council also received the petition of the mayor and council of Philadelphia asking for better defense.[41] This time the London Quakers were warned. They assumed they would have to argue that the council did not represent the Philadelphia populace, but the Privy Council never sent the petition on to the Board of Trade, and the issue dropped.[42]

[39] March 17, 1740/1, May 27, 1741, *Journal of the Board of Trade, 1734-1741* (1930, reprint ed, Liechtenstein, 1970), 375, 383 March 30, April 1, 7, June 24, July 8, 1742, *Journal of the Board of Trade, 1741-49* (1931, reprint ed, Liechtenstein 1970), 13, 14, 25, 27 [John Hunt] to Israel Pemberton, 4th mo, 28th, 1742, Pemberton Mss, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (hereafter, Pemberton Papers), Board of Trade to Privy Council, July 8, 1742, C O 5/1294, ff 210-17

[40] Jan 18, 1742/3, May 11, May 17, July 19, 1742, *Acts of the Privy Council, Colonial* (hereafter, *APCC*) 3 (1720-1745) (1910, reprint ed, Liechtenstein, 1966) no 532

[41] Richard Partridge to J Pemberton, 3d mo, 13th, 1742, Pemberton Papers

[42] Two years later the mayor and council petitioned again but the petition was scarcely noticed in the English government Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting to LYM 9th mo, 5th, 1744, LYM ER III, 68 For LYM's discussions of it, see 12th mo, 26th, 1741, 2d mo, 2d, 5th, 9th, 16th, 1742, 3d mo, 13th, 4th mo, 24th, 1743, LYM Minutes XXVII, 242, 250, 257, 253, 333, 347 The importance of the issue is shown by the fact that at the height of the crisis the Meeting for Sufferings met more often than its customary once a week *APCC*, 3, no 532

Circulating petitions, attending at least three times on the board or the Privy Council, and reporting weekly to the London Meeting for Sufferings all proved exhausting work for the committee, so much so that shortly after the immediate crisis was over, and the meeting confronted the need to have a regular way of obtaining copies of upcoming parliamentary bills affecting the colonies, they did not appoint another committee but gave the work to Partridge who could devote virtually full time to it. Throughout all the lobbying Partridge had never been allowed to appear at the Board of Trade, but it had been he who handled correspondence—everything from forwarding the council's instruction to the governor to giving personal accounts of what went on at the hearings—circulated petitions in the London Meeting for Sufferings, arranged for attendance of Friends at the board, and billed the Pennsylvanians for expenses.

It was classic Quaker lobbying—early notice, a committee set up, attendance at hearings arranged, expenses shared by the meeting and by Pennsylvania Quakers (in this case the Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting), greater success with the Privy Council than with the Board of Trade. But it was also Quaker lobbying with a difference: the meeting did not work with the Proprietors. The breach was not total—it never was. John Penn had overridden his brother's efforts to remove Quakers from local politics. For their part when the London Meeting wrote to the Philadelphia Meeting, they respectfully referred to the "worthy proprietor." Both sides continued to fear royal intervention more than local adversaries, and both feared that too many complaints might prompt a parliamentary recommendation for resumption of the charter—a course of events that might cost the Proprietors their colony and the Quakers their political position. But the Penns and the London Meeting were clearly on opposite sides, and privately London Friends wrote to Pennsylvanians of their dissatisfaction with the Penns. John Hunt advised them to "persevere" against the Proprietors. Richard Partridge gloated over John Penn's discomfiture at the Privy Council hearing: "I was well pleased he was there to hear what was sayd [*sic*] respecting their degeneracy."[43]

The tense but never openly hostile relationship continued from the early 1740s through at least the 1750s. It was particularly strained when the government threatened to include in the militia bill of 1755 a provision

[43] Partridge to Kinsey 3d mo, 16th, 1743, Pemberton Papers

to disqualify Quakers from the Pennsylvania Assembly. Only after a year of lobbying was the clause removed from the bill in return for the voluntary withdrawal of pacifist Quakers from the assembly during wartime. The bill and the negotiations have been studied exhaustively. There is no need to do more here than suggest that while the proposed legislation did represent some danger to colonial Quakers and did require uncomfortable compromise there was nothing significantly new in the way the London Meeting handled it. The Friends first tried to head off local trouble by entertaining a newly appointed governor before his departure for the colony in 1754. When trouble broke out anyway the London Meeting, as was customary, appointed a committee to handle it (though this one was unusually distinguished). The committee got "a considerable number of Friends" to attend the Board of Trade hearing to no avail,[44] joined forces with the pre-existing committee on parliamentary affairs when it appeared the issue would come before the legislature, worked through "a nobleman in high station" to override the board's recommendation that Parliament take the matter up, and, finally, advised the Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting to take care that proper acknowledgment be made on behalf of the Society to persons in high station.[45] Throughout the crisis the London Friends and the Proprietor were on opposite sides, but both continued to warn that acrimony and intransigence could "be the means, perhaps, of subverting a constitution under which the province had so happily flourished."[46]

If in one sense the Friends' efforts on the Militia Bill of 1755 represented the maturing of long developed Quaker techniques of lobbying on behalf of Pennsylvania Friends, in another sense they represented the beginning of decline in transatlantic political cooperation. There were no other matters on which the London Meeting rendered substantial aid to the Pennsylvanians, or indeed to other colonies. The correspondence consisted increasingly of advice to Americans to accept sufferings quietly,

[44] Board of Trade to Privy Council, March 3, 1756, C O 5/1295, ff 197-211

[45] May 14, 1756, LMS Minutes XXIV, 512 March 21, April 25, May 9, July 4, Sept 5, 25, 1755, Feb 27, April 9, June 3, 1756, LMS Minutes XXIV, 435, 424, 439, 441, 447-48, 458, 460-62, 475-76, 479, 487, 495, 501-6, 518

[46] The most informative set of printed sources on this subject is contained in *Chain of Friendship*, see, for example, Fothergill's letters to Israel Pemberton, April 3, 1756, July 8, 1755, and to Thomas Penn, July 31, 1755

combined with expressions of increasing uncertainty about the deterioration in imperial politics. Richard Partridge, the workhorse of transatlantic Quaker negotiating for nearly thirty years, died in 1759. He had been the London agent for several colonial assemblies, and all of them elected non-Quakers to succeed him—thereby severing their connections with the London Meeting. The Pennsylvania Yearly Meeting began corresponding with other American meetings, as the London Yearly Meeting was accustomed to doing.[47] When Benjamin Franklin served intermittently as the representative of the Quaker party from the late 1750s until the eve of the American Revolution, he did not work with the London Meeting at all. A few highly placed individuals worked with ministers to avert the coming of the revolution in America, but the political efforts of London Friends on behalf of Friends in the separate colonies, and Pennsylvania in particular, slowed virtually to a halt. Taken separately these were minor points, but together they bespoke a decline in transatlantic relations.

Part of the reason concerned the eternally fragile three-way relationship between the London Friends, the Proprietors, and the Quakers in Pennsylvania, a relationship that was undermined when the Quaker party sent Benjamin Franklin to England to appeal for royal government. Franklin's trip to England—right after the London Meeting had warned that "a public discussion here will most probably end in subjecting the charter and whole frame of government to alterations, by which both the proprietaries and the county may be affected to their prejudice"—was more than a little vexing to the Meeting for Sufferings who were cultivating with the Proprietors "free and open Conversation relative to the Society, and affairs of the Province."[48] It is hardly surprising that Franklin did not work with the Meeting for Sufferings; they could not have had much sympathy for him.

In other ways the growing political distance between Philadelphia and London Quakers sprang from problems common to Friends in all of

[47] "Your old and faithful servant R Partridge is no more All connection with the society here in respect to the public concern of the Province to totally cease," John Fothergill to Israel Pemberton, April 9, 1759, in *Chain of Friendship, Selected Letters of Dr Fothergill, 1735-1780*, intro Betsy C Corner and Christopher C Booth (Cambridge, 1971)

[48] For discussions of Franklin's negotiations see James H Hutson, *Pennsylvania Politics 1746-1770, The Movement for Royal Government and Its Consequences* (Princeton, 1972), chaps 1-4, and William S Hanna, *Benjamin Franklin and Pennsylvania Politics* (Stanford, 1964), *passim*

the colonies, problems relating to slight changes in the interests and organization of the London Friends. The London Meeting for Sufferings lost the energetic participation of Quaker merchants trading with the American colonies when these merchants drifted into the all-important merchant coffeehouse lobbies and began shifting their attention to mercantile lobbying.[49] Many of those same merchants had economic interests that inclined them to support—and profit from—the mid-century wars, from which some colonial Quakers suffered severely, even to the point of having their household goods confiscated for taxes.[50] This sort of thing created friction between English and American Quakers. The London Meeting for Sufferings itself began to direct its energies away from colonial issues and toward a renewed application for relief for themselves from paying taxes to the Anglican church, an application that was made in 1773.

The London Meeting was thus left without the primary attention of some merchants, who earlier would have been active on behalf of American Quakers, and without much attention to American affairs on the part of its remaining leaders who were "very tender of giving particular advice" on American questions anyway. On the very eve of the American Revolution a few of the leading Quakers were carrying their lobbying activity even as far as the king, but the rest of the meeting hung back, uncertain of their stance on American affairs.

In the eighteenth century London Quakers were willing to lobby with the British government on behalf of Friends in the American colonies. Pennsylvania Quakers had been slow to capitalize on this response as long as William Penn was alive, but after his death they had slowly come to appreciate the impressive resources that London Friends could mobilize on their behalf. They relied increasingly on political help from the London

[49] Alison G Olson, "The London Mercantile Lobby and the Coming of the American Revolution," *Journal of American History* 69 (1982), 26-28

[50] 9th mo , 30th, 1763, LMS Minutes XXXI, 240 10th mo , 3d, 1755, LMS to Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting, LMS ES III, 441-45 Franklin badly misjudged the London Friends, thinking "they dread nothing more than what they see otherwise inevitable, their Friends in Pennsylvania falling under the Domination totally of Presbyterians" Franklin to John Rose, Feb 14, 1765, in *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, ed Leonard W Labaree et al (28 vols to date, New Haven, 1959-), 12 67-68

Meeting down to the crisis of 1755. After that, the transatlantic cooperation slipped away and, like Quakers elsewhere in the American colonies, Pennsylvania Quakers found that they had lost a voice in imperial decision making.

University of Maryland, College Park ALISON OLSON