

# *With a Little Help from the Friends: The Quaker and Tactical Contexts of Anthony Benezet's Abolitionist Publishing*

ON THE MORNING OF NOVEMBER 14, 1766, some Philadelphia Quakers hastened to prepare a parcel to put in the hands of John Griffith, a traveling minister who was about to board a ship that day and return to England. Griffith had arrived in Philadelphia in September 1765, and over the next year he visited Quaker meetings up and down the Atlantic seaboard from North Carolina to New Hampshire, taking their spiritual pulse, preaching the gospel, and calling for a revival of vital piety among Friends. By September 1766 he felt that his work was finished, and so he informed the ministers and elders of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting on the twenty-seventh of that month of his desire to return home. Three men were duly appointed to write a certificate for Griffith “Expressive of Our Unity with his Gospel Labours among us,” one of whom was Anthony Benezet, the schoolmaster, reformer, and pamphleteer.<sup>1</sup> Benezet was attending the Yearly Meeting as a representative of the Burlington (New Jersey) Quarterly Meeting along with his friends John Smith, a councilor in New Jersey’s royal government,

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<sup>1</sup> John Griffith, *A Journal of the Life, Travels, and Labours in the Work of the Ministry, of John Griffith, Late of Chelmsford in Essex, in Great Britain, Formerly of Darby, in Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1780), 358–419; Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (Arch Street), Ministers & Elders Minutes, 1734/5–1774 (hereafter Ministers & Elders Minutes), Sept. 27, 1766, p. 469. All references to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting minutes are from the microfilms at the Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA.

and John Woolman, the pioneering antislavery reformer, among others.<sup>2</sup> Certificate in hand, Griffith learned that the ship *Phoebe* would shortly be departing for London, and so he booked passage aboard her and arrived at Dartmouth, England, on Christmas Day after a six-week voyage.<sup>3</sup>

The package that Griffith carried with him on behalf of the Meeting for Sufferings of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting was addressed to the same committee of the London Yearly Meeting. It contained “about Four Dozen” copies of Anthony Benezet’s latest antislavery tract, *A Caution and Warning to Great Britain and Her Colonies, in a Short Representation of the Calamitous State of the Enslaved Negroes in the British Dominions*. Benezet’s pamphlet had been reviewed by the Overseers of the Press, the committee of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting charged with making sure that publications by Friends were in line with Quaker testimonies. The Meeting for Sufferings had decided on October 17, 1766, to publish Benezet’s work at its own expense, including a London reprinting. It authorized a small subcommittee to seize the opportunity of writing to English Friends if a ship were to leave Philadelphia prior to its regular November meeting. Hence when John Griffith boarded the *Phoebe* that month, he was handed copies of *A Caution and Warning* that were hot off the press of Philadelphia printer Henry Miller.<sup>4</sup>

This seemingly unremarkable series of events offers a glimpse into some of the inner workings of the first abolitionist campaign and why Quakers occupied its vanguard. Specifically, it reveals some of the practical ways in which Anthony Benezet harnessed the transatlantic Quaker network in support of his antislavery activism at both individual and institutional levels. For three decades prior to his death in 1784, Benezet was a pivotal figure, intellectually as well as organizationally, in the first abolition movement. Over the years he aimed his publications at different target audiences—in *A Caution and Warning*, for example, he addressed “those in Power” in the British Empire in the years preceding the Revolution—but always by tapping Quaker contacts among his personal friends, traveling ministers, and the appropriate committees. This essay

<sup>2</sup> Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Minutes, 1747–1779, Sept. 27 to Oct. 3, 1766, p. 223; Craig W. Horle et al., eds., *Lawmaking and Legislators in Pennsylvania: A Biographical Dictionary*, vol. 2, 1710–1756 (Philadelphia, 1997), 917.

<sup>3</sup> Griffith, *Journal*, 421–24.

<sup>4</sup> Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (Arch St.), Meeting for Sufferings, Minutes (hereafter Sufferings, Minutes), 1756–1775, Oct. 17 and Nov. 20, 1766, pp. 266–67.

restores Benezet to the Quaker and tactical contexts in which he lived and worked, something that has been lacking in recent biographies of Quaker “saints” that have focused more on individual inspirations and accomplishments.<sup>5</sup> It thereby helps to explain how Benezet achieved such broad influence and emerged, in the estimation of historian Christopher Leslie Brown, “as the leading propagandist for slave trade abolition and its chief instigator.”<sup>6</sup>

This essay examines how Benezet got his works published and how print culture figured in his long-running campaign against slavery. It began with reading the dozens of Benezet’s letters that are reprinted in George S. Brookes’s 1937 biography, *Friend Anthony Benezet*.<sup>7</sup> In Benezet’s correspondence, print seems ubiquitous. But the answers to these questions require consultation of sources beyond his letters and published works that most scholars have relied on in studying Benezet. Records such as those of eighteenth-century Quaker meetings and committees, along with the manuscripts and memoirs of other key individuals, reveal the complex relationships of Benezet’s life and his embedment in the Society of Friends.

Anthony Benezet’s antislavery publishing efforts grew out of a dense web of interpersonal relationships that were grounded in his affiliation with the Society of Friends. These intertwined relationships included his friendships, especially with a series of collaborators; the far-flung connections made possible by correspondence and traveling Quaker ministers; and his involvement in various institutions, most importantly committees of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Benezet cultivated relationships and harnessed institutions to the work of abolitionism, deriving support and resources from them, including knowledge of how to get his work published and distributed. Moreover, his publications were highly contingent on circumstances and tactically designed to strike where he thought they might have most effect. Current events presented him with ever-shifting opportunities during the turbulent years between the 1750s and early 1780s, and so his target audiences changed over time as well, from Delaware Valley Quakers and fellow Pennsylvanians, to authorities in the

<sup>5</sup> Maurice Jackson, *Let This Voice Be Heard: Anthony Benezet, Father of Atlantic Abolitionism* (Philadelphia, 2009); Thomas P. Slaughter, *The Beautiful Soul of John Woolman, Apostle of Abolition* (New York, 2008).

<sup>6</sup> Christopher Leslie Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2006), 397.

<sup>7</sup> George S. Brookes, *Friend Anthony Benezet* (Philadelphia, 1937).

British Empire, and finally to decision makers in the independent United States at both state and national levels. Accordingly, he engaged in a burst of outreach and correspondence to coincide with each of his publications. Benezet's long-running campaign against slavery calls into question Richard S. Newman's claim that "Quaker activists lacked a coherent plan to systematically attack slavery throughout American society." To the contrary, Anthony Benezet engaged the problem of slavery on both sides of the Atlantic, and his decades-long activism also challenges the chronology of accounts that only take up the story of antislavery in the postrevolutionary era.<sup>8</sup>

*Speaking to Friends and Pennsylvanians (1740s to 1762)*  
*"make as publick as possible for ye sake of ye youth"*

In his 1808 history of the British Parliament's abolition of the African slave trade, Thomas Clarkson commented that Anthony Benezet's 1771 book, *Some Historical Account of Guinea*, was "instrumental, beyond any other book ever before published, in disseminating a proper knowledge and detestation of this trade."<sup>9</sup> However, before his work could achieve such renown, Benezet had first to establish himself within the Society of Friends. In other words, his status as a Philadelphia Yearly Meeting insider positioned him for his later publishing and influence. Benezet first addressed his antislavery synthesis to Quakers and then to fellow Pennsylvanians beginning in the late 1750s.

Comparatively less is known of Anthony Benezet's life prior to the 1750s than for subsequent years, but the evidence reveals that he was an upstanding and active member of the Society of Friends. Benezet was born in France in 1713, but his Huguenot family fled religious persecution there two years later. After a six-month stay in the Netherlands, the family settled in England, where they remained until relocating to Philadelphia in 1731. When exactly Anthony Benezet joined the Society of Friends is unknown, but five years later he married, with the approbation of the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, Joyce Marriott of Burlington,

<sup>8</sup> Richard S. Newman, *The Transformation of American Abolitionism: Fighting Slavery in the Early Republic* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2002), 17. Kirsten Sword's recent article, "Remembering Dinah Nevil: Strategic Deceptions in Eighteenth-Century Antislavery," *Journal of American History* 97 (2010): 315–43, explains how abolitionists aligned the history of antislavery with the new nation, which tended to efface the Quakers' prerevolutionary activism.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Clarkson, *The History of the Rise, Progress, and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade by the British Parliament*, 2 vols. (London, 1808), 1:169.

New Jersey, a Quaker minister. He chose not to follow in the path of the family trading business and instead took up teaching school, first in Germantown in 1739 and then in Philadelphia three years later.<sup>10</sup> In 1743 Anthony and Joyce Benezet transferred their membership back to the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, and they soon became deeply involved in its work. Anthony's name appears regularly in the minutes from the mid-1740s as he engaged in the variety of the meeting's business and discipline, and he quickly moved up the ladder of responsibilities. The Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting, for example, appointed him as one of its representatives to the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting for the first of many times in 1747. In all of these activities he worked closely with other leaders of the Society of Friends in the Delaware Valley.<sup>11</sup>

The young couple also socialized in a rarefied circle. To cite just one example, John Smith recorded in his diary on June 11, 1748, "Supped at I. Pemberton, Junior's, with H. Logan, A. Benezet and wife, etc." Smith was a Philadelphia merchant, born in Burlington in 1723 to a Quaker family that had profited handsomely in trade with the West Indies. In 1750 he would be elected to represent Philadelphia County in the Pennsylvania Assembly, and the following year he was "named an elder by Philadelphia Monthly Meeting . . . [and] appointed clerk of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders."<sup>12</sup> Israel Pemberton Jr. was a son of one of Philadelphia's wealthiest families. Following in his father's footsteps, he, too, became a rich merchant and pillar of Philadelphia's Quaker community. With John Smith, he was also elected to the Pennsylvania Assembly in 1750 and served as clerk of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting throughout the 1750s.<sup>13</sup> Hannah Logan, who would marry John Smith later in 1748, was the daughter of Pennsylvania's "former proprietary secretary," James Logan, and a devout Quaker. When John Smith and Hannah Logan wed, Joyce Benezet delivered the prayer. In short, Joyce

<sup>10</sup> Brookes, *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 13–18, 23–30; Nancy Slocum Hornick, "Anthony Benezet: Eighteenth-Century Social Critic, Educator and Abolitionist" (PhD diss., University of Maryland, 1974), 8–59.

<sup>11</sup> Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting, Minutes, 1723–1772, Aug. 3, 1747, p. 125. In the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting (Arch St.), Minutes, 1745–1755, Anthony Benezet's name appears over one hundred times.

<sup>12</sup> John Smith diary quoted in R. Morris Smith, *The Burlington Smiths: A Family History* (Philadelphia, 1877), 146; Horle et al., *Lawmaking and Legislators in Pennsylvania*, 917–18, quote on 918.

<sup>13</sup> Horle et al., *Lawmaking and Legislators in Pennsylvania*, 921; John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes, eds., *American National Biography*, 24 vols. (New York, 1999), 17:268.

and Anthony Benezet were on close personal terms with some of their most socially prominent and religiously influential peers.<sup>14</sup>

Anthony Benezet and John Smith might seem at first glance like unlikely friends. John Woolman, for example, had a conflicted relationship with the Quaker mercantile class, and the Smith family in particular, because he felt that they had abandoned Quaker simplicity for a lifestyle of worldly grandeur.<sup>15</sup> Benezet, however, did not share his fellow abolitionist's distaste for the Smiths; rather, he and John Smith would become the closest of collaborators in an array of endeavors. Starting in 1747, the two men visited with Quaker families and wayward Friends as part of a reform movement within the Society of Friends led by a younger generation that viewed Pennsylvania's nominally Quaker leadership as too conformed to the world and spiritually asleep.<sup>16</sup> Benezet captured this reformist outlook in a 1760 letter to Smith, when he wrote,

It is much to be wished, that a greater concern prevailed in the Society for the promotion of practical Christianity. . . . I mean true charity, i.e., the love which was in Christ, which is the root of everything that is good. If this love prevailed, it would certainly manifest itself by fruits as well as words. Selfdenial, mortification, sympathy and benevolence, to do good and to communicate, to seek judgment and relieve the oppressed, and to the utmost of our power to bind up the broken-hearted would naturally flow as water from the fountain. I apprehend a shortness here is in a great measure the cause of the declension which prevails. Doctrines of this kind, though sometimes declared in the gallery, are too much contradicted in practice, and but little the topic of discourse, when indeed they ought to be the things chiefly and most frequently remembered and enforced, more especially upon the youth.<sup>17</sup>

Although the specific occasion of these remarks was the plight of Acadian refugees in Pennsylvania during the Seven Years' War, the desires "to do good and to communicate, to seek judgment and relieve the oppressed"

<sup>14</sup> Horle et al., *Lawmaking and Legislators in Pennsylvania*, 920; Smith, *Burlington Smiths*, 154.

<sup>15</sup> Slaughter, *Beautiful Soul of John Woolman*, 80–88, 287–88, 297–305, 319–21.

<sup>16</sup> Albert Cook Myers, ed., *Hannah Logan's Courtship: A True Narrative; the Wooing of the Daughter of James Logan, Colonial Governor of Pennsylvania, and Divers Other Matters, as Related in the Diary of Her Lover, the Honorable John Smith, Assemblyman of Pennsylvania and King's Councillor of New Jersey, 1736–1752* (Philadelphia, 1904), 176–77, 288, 291; Jack D. Marietta, *The Reformation of American Quakerism, 1748–1783* (Philadelphia, 1984), 73–77.

<sup>17</sup> Anthony Benezet (hereafter AB) to John Smith, Aug. 1, 1760, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 241.

and to influence the rising generation would also fuel Benezet's first forays into abolitionism. For his abolitionist activism of the 1750s and 1760s, he had no closer assistant than John Smith.<sup>18</sup>

In 1752, in a development pregnant with future import, both Smith and Benezet were appointed to the Overseers of the Press.<sup>19</sup> The Philadelphia Yearly Meeting had established the Overseers in 1691 with the goal of trying to ensure that what Friends published was in accord with the testimony of the society. As the Discipline and Advices, the compilation of guidelines issued by the Yearly Meeting, phrased matters in a 1709 entry, "The Care of the Press being recommended to Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, a Committee of Eight Friends, any five of whom are desired to take Care to Peruse all Writings or Manuscripts that are intended to be printed, before they go to the Press, with Power to correct what may not be for the Service of Truth, otherwise not to Suffer any to be printed."<sup>20</sup> In setting up the Overseers, Philadelphia followed a pattern set in London, as often was the case in Quaker affairs. The corresponding English committee, "the Second Day's Morning Meeting," had been founded in 1673 and was authorized "to consider works submitted for publication" as well as "to answer adverse publications."<sup>21</sup> During the latter half of the 1740s, John Smith had gained experience with the Overseers of the Press, both in getting approval for a pamphlet of his own and assisting in the preparation of others' writings for publication, and these were experiences that he could share with his

<sup>18</sup> Smith was Benezet's most frequent correspondent between 1757 and 1767 to judge from the extant letters in *Friend Anthony Benezet*. Smith's move back to Burlington in 1756 necessitated that their friendship continue in an epistolary mode, which preserved a record of it. On Smith's return to Burlington, see Horle et al., *Lawmaking and Legislators in Pennsylvania*, 924.

<sup>19</sup> The others appointed at the same time were Mordecai Yarnall, Samuel Smith, Samuel Preston Moore, and Owen Jones; Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Minutes, 1747–1779, Sept. 23–27, 1752, pp. 32–33.

<sup>20</sup> J. William Frost, "Quaker Books in Colonial Pennsylvania," *Quaker History* 80 (1991): 6; "A Collection of Christian & Brotherly Advices Given forth from time to time By the Yearly-Meetings of Friends, for New-Jersey & Pennsylvania, Held alternately At Burlington & Philadelphia. Alphabetically digested, under proper Heads," Manuscripts, Disciplines & Advices, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1762, box 4, Friends Historical Library. This particular volume was "Copied for The Monthly-Meeting of Greenwich [N.J.]." See p. 9, s.v. "Books."

<sup>21</sup> David J. Hall, "The fiery Tryal of their Infallible Examination: Self-Control in the Regulation of Quaker Publishing in England from the 1670s to the Mid 19th Century," in *Censorship and the Control of Print in England and France 1600–1910*, ed. Robin Myers and Michael Harris (Winchester, UK, 1992), 61. See also Ian Green and Kate Peters, "Religious Publishing in England 1640–1695," in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, vol. 4, 1557–1695, ed. John Barnard and D. F. McKenzie (New York, 2002), 75.

close friend Benezet.<sup>22</sup> Appointment to the Overseers of the Press would position Benezet and Smith to influence what was published by authority of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

The significance of their appointment quickly became apparent. As John Woolman noted in his journal, in 1754 he presented a manuscript to the Overseers of the Press, “who, having examined and made some small alterations in it, ordered a number of copies thereof to be published by the Yearly Meeting stock and dispersed amongst Friends.” The publication of Woolman’s *Some Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes* represented “a major breakthrough,” as historian J. William Frost has written, because in the past the Overseers had disallowed the antislavery writings of such men as Ralph Sandiford and Benjamin Lay, both of whom had published regardless and suffered disownment.<sup>23</sup> Also in 1754 the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting issued *An Epistle of Caution and Advice, concerning the Buying and Keeping of Slaves*, and Anthony Benezet was involved at every stage in bringing it forward. It was Benezet who in January 1754 “laid before” the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting the initial “proposal of making that Rule of our Discipline respecting the Importation of Negroes or the purchasing of them after imported more Publick, together with some reasons to discourage that Practice.” That meeting directed Benezet, John Smith, and six other men to work up the proposal for publication. In August the Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting commended the manuscript to the Yearly Meeting that would take place at Burlington the following month, and Benezet was appointed as one of the representatives to the Yearly Meeting. The Philadelphia Yearly Meeting approved the text and directed the Overseers of the Press to have the epistle “printed and distributed among

<sup>22</sup> Smith had assisted in the editing of the journal of Thomas Chalkley (Philadelphia, 1749) and in reading Sophia Hume’s *An Exhortation to the Inhabitants of the Province of South-Carolina . . .* (Philadelphia, 1748). He also received the approval of the Overseers of the Press to publish *The Doctrine of Christianity, As held by the People called Quakers, Vindicated: In Answer to Gilbert Tennent’s Sermon on the Lawfulness of War* (Philadelphia, 1748). For details, see Myers, *Hannah Logan’s Courtship*, 139–42, 220, 222; Horle et al., *Lawmaking and Legislators in Pennsylvania*, 919; Frost, “Quaker Books in Colonial Pennsylvania,” 6–7; and George J. Willauer Jr., “Editorial Practices in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia: The Journal of Thomas Chalkley in Manuscript and Print,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 107 (1983): 224, 233.

<sup>23</sup> Phillips P. Moulton, ed., *The Journal and Major Essays of John Woolman* (New York, 1971), 47; Frost, “Quaker Books in Colonial Pennsylvania,” 16; Thomas E. Drake, *Quakers and Slavery in America* (1950; repr., Gloucester, MA, 1965), 41–43, 46.

the several Quarterly and Monthly Meetings.”<sup>24</sup> As one of the Overseers of the Press, Benezet played a key role in approving and distributing these landmark abolitionist works. No doubt he was also learning firsthand how to marshal Quaker support and resources for his own future publications.

By the mid-1750s, Benezet had also become thoroughly enmeshed in a Quaker communications circuit of transatlantic scope, which would serve him well in his future antislavery work. Three examples make this point in different ways. In 1749 Benezet and another man were assigned to “draw an Epistle” from the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to the corresponding body in Maryland. Such epistles were the formal, annual communication between yearly meetings. In subsequent years Benezet often received this assignment of writing to one of the other yearly meetings of Friends, and by performing the task he gained experience in communicating with Quakers in distant colonies and came to know key individuals there. Second, in March 1755, Benezet sent a brief letter to Benjamin Coffin, a Nantucket Quaker and fellow schoolmaster, at the suggestion of Israel Pemberton Jr., who had recently visited the island. Benezet’s hope in writing to Coffin was to establish “a kind of religious fellowship, with a desire of acquaintance and correspondence.” The letter demonstrates how traveling Friends connected otherwise disparate individuals and how a mutual acquaintance could form the basis for writing to a stranger. Another letter that Benezet wrote the following year to English Friend Jonah Thompson further reveals how the traveling ministry linked Quakers from around the Atlantic. Benezet entrusted his letter to Joshua Dixon, another English Friend who was about to return home; this was a means of delivery that Benezet would frequently utilize in subsequent years.<sup>25</sup> In short, well before he engaged in antislavery lobbying, Anthony Benezet had become acquainted with techniques for communicating through personal and institutional channels with other Friends throughout North America and the British Isles.

Benezet’s appointment to the newly created Meeting for Sufferings in 1756 provided him with yet more direct experience in transatlantic

<sup>24</sup> Philadelphia Monthly Meeting (Arch St.), Minutes, 1745–1755, Jan. 25, 1754, p. 291; Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting, Minutes, 1723–1772, Aug. 5, 1754, pp. 179–80; Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Minutes, 1747–1779, Sept. 14–19, 1754, p. 46. The 1754 *Epistle* is also reprinted as document 18 in *The Quaker Origins of Antislavery*, ed. J. William Frost (Norwood, PA, 1980), 167–69.

<sup>25</sup> Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Minutes, 1747–1779, Sept. 16–20, 1749, p. 11; AB to Benjamin Coffin, Mar. 9, 1755, and AB to Jonah Thompson, Apr. 24, 1756, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 211, 220–21.

correspondence and the practical details of publishing. The Philadelphia Yearly Meeting organized the Meeting for Sufferings in response to the dilemmas that Friends confronted with the French and Indian War. Here again they were borrowing an institutional form developed in London, which had founded its own Meeting for Sufferings to deal with religious persecutions eighty years before.<sup>26</sup> Pacifist Quakers balked at paying taxes and otherwise assisting the war effort; most famously, they withdrew from the Pennsylvania Assembly so as not to be complicit in the fighting. The crisis of the war annealed the reformist spirit among many Friends and contributed directly to Anthony Benezet's first antislavery writing.<sup>27</sup> Most of the work of the Meeting for Sufferings at this stage dealt directly with wartime problems, but sometimes it involved Benezet in writing and publishing as well. In 1759, for example, he and merchant John Reynell were "desir'd to agree with a Printer on as reasonable Terms as they can" about getting two theological pamphlets printed in Philadelphia.<sup>28</sup> The Meeting for Sufferings would become in subsequent years an important venue for the prosecution of Benezet's abolitionism.

By the late 1750s, therefore, Benezet had established many of the personal and institutional contacts that he would draw upon in support of his abolitionism. He knew how to tap friends like Smith and Pemberton for advice or financial support, network with traveling Friends to reach distant colonies or the United Kingdom, and mobilize the resources of entities such as the Overseers of the Press or the Meeting for Sufferings. At the same time, a confluence of events prompted Benezet to write his first antislavery tract. Not only was the French and Indian War raging, but Friends were also laboring to rekindle the zeal that an earlier generation of Quakers was believed to have manifested and to convince other Friends of the necessity of emancipating their slaves. Benezet wrote each of his antislavery publications with a particular audience in mind, and 1759's *Observations On the Inslaving, importing and purchasing of Negroes* was no exception. He addressed his fellow Quakers, imploring them to disassociate themselves from the slave trade and slavery.

<sup>26</sup> Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Minutes, 1747–1779, Sept. 24, 1756, pp. 90–91; Frederick B. Tolles, *Quakers and the Atlantic Culture* (New York, 1960), 12, 29.

<sup>27</sup> Marietta, *Reformation of American Quakerism*, 113–14, 152–58.

<sup>28</sup> Sufferings, Minutes, 1756–1775, Nov. 15, 1759, p. 163. The pamphlets were John Rutty's *The Liberty of the Spirit and of the Flesh Distinguished* and William Dell's *The Doctrine of Baptisms*.

*Observations* amplified the message of previous Quaker antislavery publications, for example by echoing the 1754 *Epistle of Caution and Advice* in pointing out the contradiction between the buying of slaves and the Golden Rule. Benezet compared enslavement in Africa to Indian captivity on their western frontier, so that his Pennsylvania readers could imagine the same feelings of terror and grief that the Atlantic slave trade inflicted on African villagers. Moreover, he depicted the war as a manifestation of divine displeasure on account of the British nation's involvement in the slave trade. Where Benezet broke new ground was in citing evidence from the published accounts of traders who had been to West Africa and witnessed how the slave trade fomented devastating and illegitimate wars. He concluded with the hope that "any considerate Christian" who read his pamphlet would seek to avoid being "defiled with a Gain so full of Horrors, and so palpably inconsistent with the Gospel of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which breaths nothing but Love and Good will to all Men of every Nation, Kindred, Tongue and People."<sup>29</sup>

Benezet identified the audience for *Observations* as those who might be persuaded to adopt "a Conduct consistent with their Christian Profession." At the end of his essay was a brief extract from the London Yearly Meeting's 1758 epistle, which warned Quakers everywhere to "be careful to avoid being any Way concerned in reaping the unrighteous Profit arising from the iniquitous Practice of Dealing in Negroes and other Slaves." That was followed by a fictional narrative, "The Uncertainty of a Death-Bed Repentance, Illustrated under the Character of Penitens." "Penitens" was the name of "a busy notable tradesman," who confronting death at age thirty-five was filled with regret at having wasted his life in pursuit of "vain and empty things" instead of the piety and good works that would endure forever. "Could it be a sad thing to go to heaven, before I had made a few more *bargains*, or stood a little longer behind a *counter*?" Penitens asked.<sup>30</sup> It was a question that must have resonated with many of Benezet's Philadelphia neighbors, including his own brothers in the family trading business. He especially hoped to prevent young

<sup>29</sup> [Anthony Benezet], *Observations On the Inslaving, importing and purchasing of Negroes; With some Advice thereon, extracted from the Epistle of the Yearly-Meeting of the People called Quakers, held at London in the Year 1748*, 2nd ed. (Germantown, PA, 1760), reprinted in *Early American Abolitionists: A Collection of Anti-Slavery Writings, 1760-1820*, ed. James G. Basker (New York, 2005), 7-23, quote on 15. See also Jackson, *Let This Voice Be Heard*, 62.

<sup>30</sup> *Observations On the Inslaving, importing and purchasing of Negroes*, in *Early American Abolitionists*, 7, 15-17.

people from becoming entangled in slavery as they set out on life's journey. As he wrote to John Smith, his "Piece on the Negro Trade" he wanted to "make as publick as possible for ye sake of ye youth, who have kept themselves hitherto clear of those People."<sup>31</sup> In short, what this volume demonstrates is that Benezet's first foray into antislavery was of a piece with a much broader campaign aimed at revitalizing Quaker spirituality, especially among the younger generation. Only the year before, in 1758, the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting had decided to dispatch elders "to visit and treat with all such Friends who have any Slaves." Benezet's writing, in other words, dovetailed with the household visits that John Woolman and others were then making in order to persuade their brethren to emancipate their slaves.<sup>32</sup>

To get his planned volume of tracts published, Benezet had to rely on the resources of friends with deeper pockets than his own. Letters he wrote to John Smith in February 1760 show how he tugged at Smith's conscience for financial aid. In his letter of February 8, Benezet complained that he was "tired of begging, even of those [like Smith] who could spare a Thousand Pound without having one Tear the less dropt on that account by their Heirs." He railed against "foolish and blind" men who hoarded their wealth so as to build a family fortune that only served to spoil their children; in the meantime, such shortsighted misers ignored their Christian obligation to charity. He concluded his rant by telling Smith that "thy Letter brought to my remembrance a kind proposal thou once made of joining with me in works of this Nature, and as some friends used to say, I found more than freedom to mention it to thee." Rather than offending his friend with such blunt language, Benezet must have tweaked a vulnerable spot in Smith's conscience, because he got the money he needed. Less than two weeks later he wrote to Smith, "I am obliged to thee for thy kind assistance towards the Book."<sup>33</sup>

Benezet elaborated upon his previous arguments in a second work, *A Short Account Of that Part of Africa, Inhabited by the Negroes*, which he published in 1762. It had the same overarching goal as *Observations* of delegitimizing slavery's customary, taken-for-granted quality, and it vastly expanded the amount of material excerpted from the African

<sup>31</sup> AB to John Smith, Feb. 8, 1760, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 237.

<sup>32</sup> Minutes of the 1758 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, extracted in Frost, *Quaker Origins of Antislavery*, 170; Drake, *Quakers and Slavery in America*, 61–62.

<sup>33</sup> AB to John Smith, Feb. 8, 1760, and AB to John Smith, Feb. 20, 1760, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 237–38.

travel literature. New to this second pamphlet were long quotations from Scottish Enlightenment authors George Wallace, Francis Hutcheson, and James Foster, all of whom attacked slavery as a violation of natural rights, and a twenty-six-page extract from a pamphlet published in London in 1760, *Two Dialogues on the Man-Trade*, that likewise detailed slavery's inhumanity.<sup>34</sup> He also enlarged his intended audience for *A Short Account* beyond Quakers to the colony as a whole as when he wrote, "May the Almighty preserve the Inhabitants of *Pennsylvania* from being further defiled by a Trade, which is entered upon from such sensual Motives, and carried on by such devilish Means." In recent years, the colony had experienced a growing slave population, as employers looked to replace their conventional supply of indentured servants, which the French and Indian War had disrupted.<sup>35</sup> Benezet argued that even the owners of slaves, seemingly reaping advantage, would find themselves and their children morally corrupted. He concluded with a call to end the slave trade immediately and to institute gradual emancipation.<sup>36</sup>

*A Short Account* shows that by 1762 Benezet's abolitionism had quickly reached intellectual maturity. He would recycle many of these same arguments for the rest of his remaining twenty-two years, but he continually sought to adapt them to new circumstances and to reach new audiences. In so doing, he would continue to draw on the support of his Quaker connections in new and increasing ways.

*Addressing the British Empire (1763–1769)*

*"submitted to the Serious Consideration of All, more especially of  
Those in Power"*

In May 1763 Anthony Benezet wrote a letter to an English Quaker, the London coal merchant Joseph Phipps, that forecast some of his pre-occupations over the next five years.<sup>37</sup> Phipps was "personally unknown"

<sup>34</sup> [Anthony Benezet], *A Short Account Of that Part of Africa, Inhabited by the Negroes*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia, 1762). Regarding Benezet's combination of Quaker principles with the writings of Scottish Enlightenment thinkers and the African travel literature, see Jackson, *Let This Voice Be Heard*, 57–61.

<sup>35</sup> Benezet, *A Short Account Of that Part of Africa*, 6; Gary B. Nash and Jean R. Soderlund, *Freedom by Degrees: Emancipation in Pennsylvania and Its Aftermath* (New York, 1991), 16, 55.

<sup>36</sup> Benezet, *A Short Account Of that Part of Africa*, 80, 70–71. See also Hornick, "Anthony Benezet," 343–56, for a thorough discussion of the arguments presented in *A Short Account*.

<sup>37</sup> For biographical information about Phipps, see "The Conversion of Joseph Phipps," *Journal of the Friends Historical Society* 10 (1913): 138–39. The fact that this letter dates from 1763 suggests

to Benezet, but a mutual friend, William Logan, a brother of Hannah Logan Smith, had suggested he write. The end of the Seven Years' War that year had altered the world map, and Benezet was beginning to grapple with how to adapt his abolitionism to the new global realities. As he told Phipps, slave importations had been "greatly encreasing in these Northern Colonies" and were "likely still more to encrease, by the New Acquisitions the English have lately made of the Factories on the great River Senegal." Indeed, the capture of several of France's West African trading posts and Caribbean possessions opened new vistas for the British slave trade and plantation investment.<sup>38</sup> In this imperial context, Benezet came to the realization that "if ever [the Negro Trade] receives a proper Check [that] must come from amongst you" in Britain. He enclosed with his letter a few copies of *A Short Account* and suggested that it be reprinted in England and "dispersed amongst those in whose power it is to put a restraint upon the Trade." He specified that he had in mind "our gracious King, his Councilors, and each member of both Houses of Parliament." Benezet expressed a hope that were these men acquainted with the horrible realities of the slave trade, they would be moved to stop it. Two additional circumstances of 1763 prompted Benezet to action. He had learned from "a pious man, who is returned from a religious visit to Barbie, a Dutch Settlem[en]t near Surinam," of a mass slave uprising in which thousands of slaves had escaped and established a maroon settlement in the interior. Benezet feared that the colonies of Georgia and South Carolina were similarly vulnerable and ripe for bloodshed. However, the thought also occurred to him that Britain's acquisition of the trans-Appalachian West afforded an opportunity for putting his emancipation ideas into practice by settling freed blacks there.<sup>39</sup> Phipps's response to Benezet's letter is unknown; he did not arrange for an English reprinting of *A Short Account*. Nevertheless, Benezet would soon turn his attention to getting another pamphlet distributed to people in authority in Britain, and he would work through acquaintances to reach strategically placed individuals, as he had done in writing to Joseph Phipps.

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that the statement, "[b]efore 1766, before the Stamp Act crisis, Benezet had shown little interest in British attitudes toward slavery," needs to be revised (Brown, *Moral Capital*, 400).

<sup>38</sup> AB to Joseph Phipps, May 28, 1763, in *Am I Not a Man and a Brother: The Antislavery Crusade of Revolutionary America, 1688–1788*, ed. Roger Bruns (New York, 1977), 97; David Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735–1785* (Cambridge, 1995), 26–27, 216.

<sup>39</sup> AB to Joseph Phipps, May 28, 1763, in *Am I Not a Man and a Brother*, 97–99. For further discussion of Benezet's comments regarding slave uprisings, see Jackson, *Let This Voice Be Heard*, 66–69.

Benezet's desire to address political power brokers in the British Empire led him to write his third antislavery pamphlet, *A Caution and Warning to Great Britain and Her Colonies, in A Short Representation of the Calamitous State of the Enslaved Negroes in the British Dominions. Collected from various Authors, and submitted to the Serious Consideration of All, more especially of Those in Power*, which came off the press of Philadelphia's Henry Miller in 1766. It repeated some of the same quotations about West Africa and the slave trade and from Enlightenment writers that he had included in *A Short Account*, but it also featured two new themes. In the first place, Benezet widened his scope to take in a fuller imperial perspective as befitted his intended audience. For example, he quoted from various authors who described how slaves in the West Indies, by far the most significant locus of British slavery, suffered from excessive labor, savage punishments, and deprivations of life's basic necessities of food, clothing, and sleep. Second, he turned the political controversies of the mid-1760s to his advantage by linking the abolitionist cause to the libertarian language of the Stamp Act crisis that was then in the air. He concluded with a familiar theme, how Britain was storing up divine wrath due to its involvement in slavery and the slave trade. He hoped that his intended readers, namely "Those in Power," would put a halt to slavery now that they had been served notice "that it is inconsistent with the plainest precepts of the gospel, the dictates of reason, and every common sentiment of humanity."<sup>40</sup>

From its conception, Benezet wanted his pamphlet to reach people with the political power to take action against slavery, and to realize that goal he drew upon all the Quaker resources he could muster. In the summer of 1766, he presented his manuscript to the Meeting for Sufferings, which "apprehended the Publication thereof may be of use." That committee forwarded it to the Overseers of the Press, "carefully to revise & examine whether the Quotations are exactly copied, & what else relating thereto as they may deem necessary."<sup>41</sup> In October the Meeting for Sufferings approved a printing of 2,000 copies "at the Expence of the Yearly Meeting" and also agreed to contact the London Meeting for Sufferings about a reprinting there at Philadelphia's expense. This led to

<sup>40</sup> Anthony Benezet, *A Caution and Warning to Great Britain and Her Colonies, in A Short Representation of the Calamitous State of the Enslaved Negroes in the British Dominions. Collected from various Authors, and submitted to the Serious Consideration of All, more especially of Those in Power* (Philadelphia, 1766), quote on 5.

<sup>41</sup> Sufferings, Minutes, 1756–1775, Sept. 18, 1766, p. 265.

the plan mentioned at the outset of this essay to have John Griffith carry some copies with him back to England. After Griffith's departure, the Meeting for Sufferings determined at its November meeting how to allocate its copies of Benezet's pamphlet. They decided to "distribute about 1500 of them to the Several Quarterly Meetings [of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting], & to send 500 to Friends in New York Government, New England, & the Southern Provinces &c."<sup>42</sup> In other words, they employed the structure of Quaker meetings to distribute *A Caution and Warning* up and down the North American coast and to England. A receipt in the miscellaneous papers of the Meeting for Sufferings confirms that the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting paid the London Quaker printer Mary Hinde a total of £23 7s 6d to print another 1,500 copies and have them delivered "at the dwellings of the Members of both houses of Parliament in & about London & Westminster."<sup>43</sup> Thus, with the assistance and resources of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Benezet fulfilled his desire to communicate with "Those in Power" about the evils of slavery. It was a rare achievement for the writings of an American Quaker to be published in England, but Benezet succeeded on account of the contacts and know-how that he had been accumulating for two decades.<sup>44</sup>

Benezet did not rest content with these official channels of distribution but also engaged in his own letter-writing campaign. He wrote to the Church of England's Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) in April 1767, because it was obviously one of those powerful institutions of the empire that he wanted to enlighten about slavery. He enclosed copies of *A Caution and Warning* and asked, "respectfully, & yet earnestly[,] . . . that you would seriously consider whether the necessity of at least endeavouring to put a stop to this infamous Traffick is not an Object peculiarly worthy the attention & labour of a Society appointed for the Propagation of the Gospel." Just prior to sending his letter to the SPG, he wrote to George Dillwyn, a Quaker minister from Burlington, New Jersey, and asked for Dillwyn's help in articulating his thoughts

<sup>42</sup> Sufferings, Minutes, 1756–1775, Oct. 17 and Nov. 20, 1766, pp. 266–67.

<sup>43</sup> Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Meeting for Sufferings, Miscellaneous Papers, Bound Index, 1755–1877, Papers 1755–1770 (hereafter Sufferings, Misc.), "Account of the charge of reprinting and distributing the caution against enslaving the Africans &c. 12 Mo. 1768." For information about Mary Hinde, see Russell S. Mortimer, "Quaker Printers, 1750–1850," *Journal of the Friends' Historical Society* 50 (1963): 103–5.

<sup>44</sup> Frost, "Quaker Books in Colonial Pennsylvania," 4–5.

more clearly.<sup>45</sup> Benezet's request for Dillwyn's editorial assistance represents another manifestation of how he could enlist his friends in antislavery work. He took advantage of a further Quaker connection to have his letter to the SPG and one to the English Quaker David Barclay carried across the Atlantic "by my old Pupil Samuel Fisher, who is now embarking for London."<sup>46</sup>

His letter to Barclay likewise came with copies of his pamphlet enclosed, and he made clear what he was trying to accomplish. "The principal intent in the publishing this Piece," he informed Barclay, "is, that it may be put in the Hands of Persons of Interest & Power on your side of the Water, if possible, to stir up their attention, & inform their Judgment from an apprehension that many are unacquainted with the corrupt Motives, & most wicked Methods by which so many thousands, yea tens of thousands of our Fellow Creatures, as free as ourselves by nature, & equally with us the Objects of redeeming Grace, are yearly brought to a miserable & untimely end." The letter is also especially noteworthy, because Benezet revealed to Barclay that the specter of slave uprising lent urgency to his work. He repeated the news that he had shared with Joseph Phipps four years earlier about the maroon community of Surinam, adding that the colony was "in imminent Danger" according to "this Week's News Paper." In addition, Benezet commented to Barclay that *A Caution and Warning* might have said much more about the danger of a slave insurrection in the Deep South due to the high proportion of slaves in the population there, but he censored himself. That was "a Subject of too tender a nature to be exposed to view, in places where it might fall into the Hands of the Negroes."<sup>47</sup>

Two additional letters from 1767 shed further light on Benezet's efforts to distribute his pamphlet and the complications of broaching the subject of abolition to slave societies. In June of that year, he took advantage once more of a traveling Quaker to renew correspondence with a North Carolina Friend, Permeanus Hauton. Benezet enclosed *A Caution and Warning*, not singly but as part of "a collection of tracts

<sup>45</sup> AB to SPG, Apr. 26, 1767, and AB to George Dillwyn, Apr. 1767, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 272, 268–69. For Dillwyn, see [William Kite, comp.], *Biographical Sketches and Anecdotes of Members of the Religious Society of Friends* (Philadelphia, 1870), 182–226.

<sup>46</sup> AB to David Barclay, Apr. 29, 1767, in *Am I Not a Man and a Brother*, 139. In his letter to George Dillwyn, he also noted that he was going to take advantage of the opportunity of Samuel Fisher's voyage to send his letter to the SPG.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 140. Benezet's reference to that week's newspaper was probably a reference to the *Pennsylvania Chronicle*, and *Universal Advertiser* of Apr. 27, 1767.

likely to promote true piety in the well-minded of every religious denomination.” He also noted that the antislavery pamphlet “was printed by direction of Friends, with the approbation of our last Yearly Meeting.”<sup>48</sup> Recognizing the sensitive nature of the topic, in other words, Benezet placed his pamphlet amid other, unobjectionably religious ones and stressed that he had the authorization of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting behind him. He emphasized the same two points the following month when he sent bound collections of religious tracts that included *A Caution and Warning* to Sophia Hume, a Quaker minister who had been residing in London for over two decades and was then visiting her native South Carolina. Hume, however, encountered strong resistance from Carolinians who refused to accept Benezet’s antislavery literature. “I am concerned to hear thou cannot venture to disperse the Pamphlet on the Negro Trade,” Benezet wrote her in October 1767. “[G]rievous, very grievous, indeed, & often near to a period is the State of that Body which cannot bear to be acquainted with its dangerous situation.”<sup>49</sup>

The secretary of the SPG, Dr. Daniel Burton, responded to Benezet in a February 1768 letter, and after assuring Benezet that the society shared his concerns that the slaves on its Barbados plantation be well treated and instructed in Christianity, he too flatly rebuffed Benezet’s efforts. The SPG, he informed Benezet, “cannot condemn the Practice of keeping Slaves as unlawful, finding the contrary very plainly implied in the precepts given by the Apostles, both to Masters & Servants, which last were for the most part Slaves.” Burton also told Benezet that if the idea gained currency that slavery contradicted Christianity it would have two pernicious consequences: masters would clamp down on efforts to evangelize the slaves, and the slaves would become rebellious. “[T]herefore,” he concluded his letter, “tho’ the Society is fully satisfied that your intention in this matter is perfectly good, yet they most earnestly beg you not to go further in publishing your Notions, but rather to retract them, if you shall see cause, which they hope you may on further consideration.”<sup>50</sup>

After such rejections, Anthony Benezet must have realized that slavery would not come tumbling down just because he had blown his trumpet, if indeed he had ever been so naively optimistic. Yet he would not be deterred by a few rebukes, and he continued to search for new strategies

<sup>48</sup> AB to Permeanus Hauton, Apr. 12, 1767, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 274–75.

<sup>49</sup> AB to Sophia Hume, July 25, 1767, and Oct. 15, 1767, MS vol. 163, Library of the Religious Society of Friends, London; *Friend* (Philadelphia), July 1, 1909, p. 412.

<sup>50</sup> Daniel Burton to AB, Feb. 3, 1768, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 417–18.

to make his abolitionist message more pungent and better known. By the end of the 1760s, he was on the verge of his most ambitious and consequential period yet.

*Lobbying on both sides of the British Atlantic (1770–1775)*  
*“the best endeavours in our power, to draw the notice of governments”*

The “further consideration” that Benezet gave to the subject of slavery led him to write his magnum opus, *Some Historical Account of Guinea*, a book of just over two hundred pages published in 1771.<sup>51</sup> As he told an English correspondent, his previous abolitionist works were “becoming scarce,” yet he still hoped to influence the “rising generation” against slavery. He had also continued to gain “a farther insight” into the subject, which he was eager to publicize so as to “set this weighty matter in a true point of view.”<sup>52</sup> A persistent man, Benezet initially repeated his previous tactic of writing to Friends in England and calling for an appeal to king and Parliament. However, he also displayed his versatility when he embraced the suggestion that he organize petition campaigns throughout the colonies, which he supported with well-chosen printed materials. By the eve of the American Revolution, Benezet could count significant progress toward his abolitionist goals.

In *Some Historical Account of Guinea*, Benezet sounded many of the same themes that he had advanced in prior works. He held avaricious Europeans responsible for instituting the Atlantic slave trade, which had lit fires of greed, drunkenness, and war in Africa and corrupted what had been a plentiful land of decent, well-governed people. He made his most extensive use of the narratives of European travelers to the Guinea coast and the West Indies in order to document fully the natural abundance and formerly well-functioning societies of West Africa as well as the deleterious effects of the slave trade.<sup>53</sup> Benezet vividly sketched the trade from the grievous separations and violence of capture in Africa, through the

<sup>51</sup> Anthony Benezet, *Some Historical Account of Guinea, Its Situation, Produce and the general Disposition of its Inhabitants. With An inquiry into the Rise and Progress of the Slave-Trade, its Nature and lamentable Effects. Also A Re-publication of the Sentiments of several Authors of Note, on this interesting Subject; particularly an Extract of a Treatise, by Granville Sharp* (Philadelphia, 1771).

<sup>52</sup> AB to Samuel Fothergill, Oct. 24, 1771, and AB to John and Henry Gurney, Jan. 10, 1772, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 280–81, 284 (“true point of view”).

<sup>53</sup> Jonathan D. Sassi, “Africans in the Quaker Image: Anthony Benezet, African Travel Narratives, and Revolutionary-Era Antislavery,” *Journal of Early Modern History* 10 (2006): 95–130.

shipboard filth and high mortality of the middle passage, and on to New World plantations where slaves were worked to death and laws justified the sadistic punishments inflicted on them. He included lengthy quotations from the same Scottish Enlightenment critics of slavery as he had in *A Short Account*. One new element was an extract of a pamphlet by the English abolitionist Granville Sharp, which set forth slavery's incompatibility with the laws of England.<sup>54</sup> In making his case, Benezet sought both to rebut specious justifications for the slave trade, such as the argument that war captives sold into slavery were being rescued from execution, and to answer his critics. For instance, he probably included an extract of an antislavery sermon by the Bishop of Gloucester as a rejoinder to the SPG's rejection of his earlier appeal to that organization. He closed the volume with a renewed call to halt immediately any further slave imports and to emancipate gradually those already enslaved and provide them with education and land.

Prior to its publication, Benezet sent a copy of the manuscript in late 1770 to his friend Samuel Allinson for editorial feedback, leaving a blank page opposite each one with writing on it so that Allinson would have room to suggest changes. Allinson was a Quaker lawyer from Burlington, New Jersey, and clerk of the Burlington Monthly Meeting, who became Benezet's most frequent correspondent during the first half of the 1770s. Presumably the two had become close during the nine-month period in 1766 and early 1767 when Anthony and Joyce Benezet resided in Burlington. Allinson took the place of Benezet's old friend John Smith, who had grown ill in the late 1760s and died in March 1771. A letter addressed to "Dear Sammy" hints at the depth of friendship between the two men. Allinson served as Benezet's closest collaborator during his most important period of activism on the eve of the American Revolution. It was Allinson, for example, who had originally sent Benezet a copy of Sharp's pamphlet, *A Representation of the Injustice and Dangerous Tendency of Tolerating Slavery*. He also provided Benezet with advice, editing, and a key ally in the campaign to advance abolition in New Jersey.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>54</sup> The extract from Sharp's pamphlet was bound with *Some Historical Account of Guinea* but had its own title page and pagination: Granville Sharp, *Extract from a Representation of the Injustice and Dangerous Tendency of Tolerating Slavery, or Admitting the least Claim of private Property in the Persons of Men in England* (Philadelphia, 1771).

<sup>55</sup> AB to Samuel Allinson, Nov. 5, 1770, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 280; *ibid.*, 44 (the Benezets' Burlington residence); Horle et al., *Lawmaking and Legislators in Pennsylvania*, 927 (Smith's decline and death); AB to Samuel Allinson, Mar. 30, 1774 ("Dear Sammy"), Allinson Family Papers

Benezet's efforts during these years further benefited from the emergence of two Quaker printers in the Delaware Valley, Joseph Crukshank and Isaac Collins. The two men were briefly partners in Philadelphia during 1770 before Collins moved up the river to Burlington and set up shop on his own. Their work led to a boom in Quaker print, whereas the lack of a "Friends' Printer" for most of the years between 1712 and 1769 had depressed the availability of Quaker books and pamphlets.<sup>56</sup> Through his involvement in the Meeting for Sufferings, Benezet became accustomed to working closely with Crukshank. In September 1769, for example, that meeting directed Benezet along with James and John Pemberton to have two thousand copies printed of an epistle that urged Friends to maintain their peaceable testimony amid the protests of the revolutionary era, and they not surprisingly chose Crukshank for the job.<sup>57</sup> Collins and Crukshank worked with the system of Quaker meetings both to distribute their publications and to solicit subscriptions to larger-scale productions. For example, the Meeting for Sufferings in January 1775 "recommended to Friends in their Several Meetings to promote Subscriptions" for an edition of Barclay's *Apology* that Crukshank planned to produce. Quakers neither invented the system of publishing by subscription nor did they alone make use of it, but it dovetailed perfectly with their organizational structure.<sup>58</sup> In short, the printing offices of Crukshank and Collins effectively functioned as auxiliaries of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and provide another example of a Quaker institutional resource at Benezet's disposal. The presence of these two Quaker printers certainly facilitated Benezet's abolitionist campaign, especially because, as Collins's biographer has pointed out, "Not all colonial printers are known to have accepted manuscripts from Quaker reformers."<sup>59</sup> Crukshank would publish *Some Historical Account of Guinea* and all of Benezet's subsequent works, and several important New Jersey imprints by Benezet's collaborators came off Collins's press.

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(1710–1939), box 6, folder 41, Haverford College Special Collections, Haverford, PA. Benezet also sent his manuscript to George Dillwyn for prepublication critique; see AB to George Dillwyn, May 2, 1771, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 279.

<sup>56</sup> Richard F. Hixson, *Isaac Collins: A Quaker Printer in 18th Century America* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1968), 18; Frost, "Quaker Books in Colonial Pennsylvania," 8–9. Crukshank was identified as "Friends' Printer" in Sufferings, Minutes, 1775–1785, July 20, 1780, p. 275.

<sup>57</sup> Sufferings, Minutes, 1756–1775, Sept. 1 and Oct. 19, 1769, pp. 296–99.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, Jan. 5, 1775, p. 438A; Robert Barclay, *An Apology for the True Christian Divinity: being an Explanation and Vindication of the Principles and Doctrines Of the People called Quakers*, 9th ed. (Philadelphia, 1775). On publishing by subscription generally, see Rosalind Remer, *Printers and Men of Capital: Philadelphia Book Publishers in the New Republic* (Philadelphia, 1996), 18–19.

<sup>59</sup> Hixson, *Isaac Collins*, 42.

The text of *Some Historical Account of Guinea* makes clear that its intended audience was once again “those in whose power it may be, to put a stop to any further progress” of slavery.<sup>60</sup> In particular, Benezet wanted to put the British Crown and Parliament on notice that laws they passed to regulate the slave trade made them responsible for it, although he exculpated the monarchy to some extent by writing that Queen Elizabeth had been deceived about the slave trade’s grim realities, and he again highlighted the contradictions between slavery and British liberalism.<sup>61</sup> To reach his ultimate audience of king and Parliament, Benezet during late 1771 and the first half of 1772 reprised his strategy from the 1760s of writing to contacts in the United Kingdom and enclosing copies of his work. He began with “some of the most weighty of our Friends in London”; his Philadelphia friend Benjamin Franklin, who was then also in London as Pennsylvania’s colonial agent; and Granville Sharp, who at this point he only knew through his publications.<sup>62</sup> These several letters all expressed the same two tactical aims. He suggested that excerpts of his book might be printed in British newspapers so as to foster debate there over slavery. He also hoped for a direct appeal to King George III and Parliament, and he particularly urged English and Irish Quakers to take the lead. As he wrote to the English Quaker capitalists John and Henry Gurney, “we, as a people, have not been backward in applying to Parliament, in cases where our sufferings have been by no means comparable to the present case.” And he raised the stakes with them by invoking the biblical example of Mordecai’s challenging words to Queen Esther. “May we altogether hold our peace?” he implored the Gurneys. “Who knoweth if we are not intended for such a service as this? And what judgments may fall on us (on account of our unfeeling and unbelieving hearts) when deliverance ariseth another way?” As in his dealings with the “Quaker grandees” of Philadelphia and Burlington, Benezet knew how to cast a powerful appeal for support by striking at Friends’ consciences.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Benezet, *Some Historical Account of Guinea*, i–ii.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 126–27, 58, 92.

<sup>62</sup> Benezet specified that those “weighty” London Friends to whom he wrote included “Doct. Fothergill, Thos. Corbin, John Elliott, Mark Beaufoy &c. & now to David Barclay, Thomas Wagstaff &c.” AB to Benjamin Franklin, Apr. 27, 1772, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 287–88. Hornick, “Anthony Benezet,” 380–410, similarly surveys Benezet’s distribution of *Some Historical Account of Guinea* from 1771 to 1774.

<sup>63</sup> AB to John and Henry Gurney, Jan. 10, 1772, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 286. His biblical reference was to Esther 4:14. The phrase “Quaker grandees” comes from Frederick B. Tolles, *Meeting House and Counting House: The Quaker Merchants of Colonial Philadelphia, 1682–1763* (New York, 1963), chap. 6.

The recent visit of two traveling ministers, Samuel Neale and Joseph Oxley, enabled Benezet's outreach to prominent Friends in the British Isles. The two men, Oxley from Norwich, England, and Neale from Cork, Ireland, felt moved by the Spirit in the summer of 1769 to make a religious visit to North America, which they commenced the following year. Like John Griffith in the previous decade, Oxley and Neale ministered and preached for a year and a half at Friends' meetings from the Carolinas to New England.<sup>64</sup> Philadelphia served as the home base for their visit and is where they met Anthony Benezet.<sup>65</sup> Oxley encouraged Benezet to write to his fellow Norwich residents, the Gurneys, and Neale provided an entrée to the close-knit community of Irish Quakers. Benezet used his acquaintance with Neale to send a letter to Richard Shackelton, who was, in turn, a close friend of Edmund Burke, member of Parliament. Both Burke and Shackelton had as boys attended the school at Ballitore, Ireland, that had been founded by Richard's father, Abraham Shackelton. It was Benezet's aim in writing to Richard Shackelton, who then headed the school, that his message would reach Burke, whom he thought "may be a good instrument in forwarding an inquiry into this potent evil" of slavery.<sup>66</sup> Benezet's dealings with Oxley and Neale confirm Frederick B. Tolles's observation that "public Friends,' constantly circulating from meeting to meeting, provided the cement which made the larger community of the Society of Friends a reality."<sup>67</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Richard S. Harrison, *A Biographical Dictionary of Irish Quakers* (Dublin, Ire., 1997), 75–76; [Joseph Pike and Joseph Oxley], *Some Account of the Life of Joseph Pike of Cork, in Ireland, who Died in the Year 1729, written by himself: also, a Journal of the Life and Gospel Labours of Joseph Oxley of Norwich, who Died in the Year 1775; Together with Letters Addressed to their Friends. Now first published from the original MSS. With Preliminary Observations, by John Barclay* (London, 1837), 294–389.

<sup>65</sup> It is probably safe to assume that Oxley and Neale first met Benezet during October 1770 as they made the rounds of Friends' meetings in Philadelphia; see [Pike and Oxley], *Some Account of the Life of Joseph Pike . . . also, a Journal of the Life and Gospel Labours of Joseph Oxley*, 325. Moreover, it can be documented that all three were in the city for the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in September 1771; see *ibid.*, 372, and Samuel Neale, *Some Account of the Lives and Religious Labours of Samuel Neale, and Mary Neale, Formerly Mary Peisley, Both of Ireland* (1805; Philadelphia, [1845]), 202–3. Neale presented the certificates from Irish Friends that authorized his "Religious visit" at the meeting of Ministers and Elders, which Benezet attended as a representative for Philadelphia; see *Ministers & Elders Minutes*, Sept. 21–26, 1771, pp. 508, 511.

<sup>66</sup> AB to John and Henry Gurney, Jan. 10, 1772, and AB to Richard Shackelton, June 6, 1772, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 283–84, 293–96, quote on 296; Harrison, *Biographical Dictionary of Irish Quakers*, 91–93; Mary Leadbeater, ed., *Memoirs and Letters of Richard and Elizabeth Shackleton, late of Ballitore, Ireland; compiled by their daughter Mary Leadbeater. Including a Concise Biographical Sketch, and Some Letters, of Her Grandfather, Abraham Shackleton* (London, 1822), 3–8.

<sup>67</sup> Tolles, *Meeting House and Counting House*, 89–90.

And Benezet's antislavery campaign benefited from his access to the traveling ministry, which extended his outreach across the Atlantic.

Benezet's initial spate of letter writing in 1771–1772 yielded mixed results. Benjamin Franklin replied that he had published a short piece in the *London Chronicle* that cited Benezet's data regarding the volume of the slave trade and made "some close remarks on the hypocrisy of this country, which encourages such a detestable commerce by laws for promoting the Guinea trade; while it piqued itself on its virtue, love of liberty, and the equity of its courts, in setting free a single negro." (The last was a reference to Lord Mansfield's decision in the case of James Somersett.) However, the Irish Quaker James Gough, perhaps responding to Benezet's communication with Richard Shackelton, gave a discouraging report. "I handed the books about to Fr[ien]ds here of the upper Rank," he wrote from Bristol in late 1772. "And were rich Fr[ien]ds Spirited like thee they would print a large Number of them in order to distribute & present them to every Member of both Houses of Parliament: But few lay duely to heart the deep & grievous Sufferings of their enslaved Fellow mortals." Apparently Benezet's hope for a Quaker address to Parliament was going nowhere.<sup>68</sup> Nonetheless, the payoff from his letter to Granville Sharp probably exceeded Benezet's expectations. In Sharp he found an English collaborator whose advice he valued and who actively promoted the cause of abolition on his own.

Benezet must have been electrified when he received Sharp's reply in late October 1772.<sup>69</sup> In the first place, Sharp had distributed copies of the extract of his pamphlet that Benezet had sent him to Lord Mansfield and the lawyers for James Somersett in the midst of that trial. In addition, Sharp noted that he had been in conversation with the Archbishop of York, who was favorably disposed toward antislavery. Most important, Sharp encouraged Benezet that petitions from the colonies could make a noticeable contribution toward suppressing the slave trade and advised him on the proper constitutional distinction between directing petitions to Parliament or the king. Sharp asked Benezet to let him know if peti-

<sup>68</sup> Benjamin Franklin to AB, Aug. 22, 1772, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 422; James Gough to AB, Nov. 1, 1772, Vaux Family Papers, 1739–1923, series 1d: miscellaneous 1794–1835, box 5, folder 26, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Regarding English Quakers' reluctance to take action, see Brown, *Moral Capital*, 404–12.

<sup>69</sup> Benezet noted receipt of Sharp's "long intelligent letter" in AB to Samuel Allinson, Oct. 30, 1772, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 296. Regarding the Sharp-Benezet correspondence, see also Jackson, *Let This Voice Be Heard*, 144–53.

tions would be forthcoming, “because I would endeavour to prevail on some of the bishops to present the memorials that are for the King; and also on Sir George Saville, or some other respectable member of the Lower House, to present the petitions to Parliament.” Granville Sharp, in other words, gave Benezet access to exactly the powerful people in the British Empire whom he had been trying to reach.<sup>70</sup>

Following the receipt of Sharp’s letter, Benezet swung into action to organize the petitions that Sharp had recommended. He communicated with Friends in several colonies, sending them copies of both *Some Historical Account of Guinea* and extracts of Sharp’s letter. He also asked Samuel Allinson to put his skills as an attorney to work and draft suitable language for a petition.<sup>71</sup> By March 1773, Benezet had fine-tuned his strategy after “consulting with some thoughtful people.” Instead of just circulating petitions that would be forwarded directly to London, his plan changed to petitioning the several colonial legislatures, who would then make appeals to the king and Parliament to curtail the slave trade. This strategy paid deference to the sovereignty of American legislatures, a topic much in the air at that time. In adopting this strategy, Benezet applied lessons learned from a recent, successful campaign in Pennsylvania, where petitions to the assembly from an interdenominational coalition of signers had succeeded in getting a law passed that doubled the import duty on slaves, which, he wrote to Sharp, “is thought will amount to a tacit prohibition of the trade.”<sup>72</sup> To support this legislative push in Pennsylvania, Benezet had solicited his fellow Philadelphian Benjamin Rush to publish an abolitionist pamphlet entitled *An Address to the Inhabitants of the British Settlements, on the Slavery of the Negroes in America*. Rush’s pamphlet was intended “to lay the weight of the matter briefly before the members of the session, and other active members of the government.”<sup>73</sup> Benezet’s abolitionist print strategy here widened to deploy works written by others, which he was happy to use when appropriate and would recur to in the years ahead.

<sup>70</sup> Granville Sharp to AB, Aug. 21, 1772, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 418–22, quote on 421; Brown, *Moral Capital*, 162–70.

<sup>71</sup> Prince Hoare, ed., *Memoirs of Granville Sharp, Esq. Composed from His Own Manuscripts, and Other Authentic Documents in the Possession of His Family and of the African Institution*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (London, 1828), 1:168–69; Samuel Allinson to AB, Nov. 19, 1772, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 422–23.

<sup>72</sup> AB to Granville Sharp, Mar. 29, 1773, in *Am I Not a Man and a Brother*, 263–67, quotes on 266 and 263; Drake, *Quakers and Slavery in America*, 86.

<sup>73</sup> AB to Dr. John Fothergill, Apr. 28, 1773, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 303.

Throughout 1773 and into 1774, Benezet worked to promote abolitionist activity and legislative action in British colonies from New England to the West Indies. As he told the London Friend Dr. John Fothergill, “the best endeavours in our power, to draw the notice of governments, upon the grievous iniquity and great danger attendant on a further prosecution of the slave trade, is what every truly sympathising mind cannot but earnestly desire, and under Divine direction promote to the utmost of their power.”<sup>74</sup> While it would be beyond the scope of this essay to trace Benezet’s antislavery campaigns through every colonial capital and on to London, his efforts in New Jersey, to take just one example, reveal his *modus operandi*. He collaborated with Friends there to mount a major campaign to pass legislation that would cut off further slave imports and make manumissions less burdensome.

Benezet’s allies arranged with Isaac Collins for the publication in 1773 of three pamphlets. One was *An Essay on Slavery, Proving from Scripture its Inconsistency with Humanity and Religion* by Granville Sharp, which was a rebuttal of an earlier pamphlet by the Anglican clergyman Thomas Thompson, whom some New Jersey readers may have remembered from his stint as an SPG missionary there from 1745 to 1750.<sup>75</sup> Sharp had originally sent his essay in manuscript form to Benezet, who then passed it on to Samuel Allinson. Allinson penned the long preface to the pamphlet and had it published, only later asking Sharp’s permission. “I hope thou wilt not be displeas’d at the Liberty I took with this piece,” he wrote to Sharp in May 1774, “as my sole Motive was to advance the benevolent intention of its author, and I had A. Benezet[’]s permission for my Justification.”<sup>76</sup> A former student of Benezet’s, the Burlington Quaker William Dillwyn, wrote a second pamphlet, *Brief Considerations on Slavery, and the Expediency of its Abolition*, that addressed New Jersey’s legislators. The sixteen-page pamphlet concisely made the case that slavery violated the Golden Rule,

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 302–3.

<sup>75</sup> Granville Sharp, *An Essay on Slavery, Proving from Scripture its Inconsistency with Humanity and Religion; In Answer to a late Publication, entitled, “The African Trade for Negro Slaves shewn to be consistent with Principles of Humanity, and with the Laws of Revealed Religion”* (Burlington, NJ, 1773); Thomas Thompson, *The African Trade for Negro Slaves, shewn to be Consistent with Principles of Humanity, and with the Laws of Revealed Religion* (Canterbury, Eng., [1772]); Thompson, *An Account of Two Missionary Voyages By the Appointment of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. The one to New Jersey in North America, the other from America to the Coast of Guiney* (1758; repr., London, 1937).

<sup>76</sup> Samuel Allinson to Granville Sharp, May 10, 1774, Allinson Family Papers, box 3, folder 30A.

inflicted injustice and misery on the enslaved, and corrupted the morals of everyone who came into contact with it, and then called for a prohibition on slave imports. Dillwyn also offered a proposal for a gradual emancipation act that included an extended payment plan whereby owners could pay an affordable sum that would protect society from the liability of any manumitted slaves becoming burdens on the public welfare. That gradual emancipation plan led directly to a third Burlington imprint of just eight pages that provided some calculations that further demonstrated the plan's fiscal soundness and affordability.<sup>77</sup> All three pamphlets were published, Allinson informed Sharp, to "give to our assemblymen with design to recommend the above mentioned bill ['for the more equitable manumission of Slaves'], and secure its passing into a Law."<sup>78</sup>

A letter that Allinson received from Assemblyman Elias Boudinot testified to the headway that the lobbying campaign made. Boudinot, a Presbyterian from Elizabethtown, enclosed a petition that he had circulated at Allinson's request and updated Allinson on the legislative maneuvering that he was undertaking on the bill's behalf. Ultimately the bill did not become law as the American Revolution swept away the colonial legislature and intruded more pressing business.<sup>79</sup> Nonetheless, the New Jersey experience provides detailed evidence that Anthony Benezet had learned by 1773 how to influence colonial legislation through collaboration with leading Friends and through orchestrating petitions drives that were supported closely by pamphlets aimed at the specific situation.

Benezet's optimism blossomed along with the flowers of spring 1774 as he took stock of developments in Europe and America. In late March he received an update from Granville Sharp, who had been busy in bringing the colonial abolitionist petitions to the attention of Lord Dartmouth, the American secretary. Sharp assured Benezet that he would assail any opposition from the African merchants or West Indian interests so vehemently "as, I trust, will make their 'Ears tingle.'" He also

<sup>77</sup> [William Dillwyn], *Brief Considerations on Slavery, and the Expediency of its Abolition. With Some Hints on the Means whereby it may be gradually effected. Recommended to the serious Attention of All, and especially of those entrusted with the Powers of Legislation* (Burlington, NJ, 1773), 3, 10; *An Account stated on the Manumission of Slaves, Shewing, that in Lieu of the usual Security required, certain Sums paid at several Periods of Manumission, will amply secure the Publick, as well as their Owners from any future Burden* ([Burlington, NJ, 1773]). Benezet identified William Dillwyn as "my friend and old pupil" in AB to John Wesley, May 23, 1774, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 318.

<sup>78</sup> Samuel Allinson to Granville Sharp, May 10, 1774, Allinson Family Papers, box 3, folder 30A.

<sup>79</sup> Elias Boudinot to Samuel Allinson, Jan. 29, 1774, Allinson Family Papers, box 6, folder 47.

informed Benezet that he had recently read a manuscript essay from John Wesley that drew heavily on *Some Historical Account of Guinea*; this would soon be published with the title of *Thoughts upon Slavery*.<sup>80</sup> Thus, the antislavery cause was being heard in England among influential leaders. As for America, Benezet noted to the Virginia Quaker Robert Pleasants that all of the colonies from Maryland northward “have more or less instructed their representatives to endeavour that an end may be put to any further import.” Surveying all these hopeful portents, Benezet believed that the apocalypse of slavery was drawing nigh. He invoked the imagery of Daniel 2:31–45 when he wrote, “I am not discouraged having to hope & believe that which is as y[e] little stone cut out of y[e] mountain wilt strike at y[e] feet of this great image & bring it down in God’s name.”<sup>81</sup>

At the same time, Benezet did not let himself get carried away, but kept up his guard against any inaccuracies making their way into antislavery publications. He informed John Wesley, for example, of an error he had found in *Thoughts upon Slavery*, which troubled him because “it might give an advantage, to the advocate for the trade, to lessen the strength of what is strictly true.” Benezet’s concern for accuracy, reflecting his experience reviewing manuscripts with the Overseers of the Press, was now given added urgency from the sniping of proslavery writers. He noted, for instance, that *Some Historical Account of Guinea* had been criticized, “though without real ground” he told Wesley, for painting a rose-colored picture of West African societies. During the summer of 1774, as Benezet prepared an annotated edition of *Thoughts upon Slavery* for a Philadelphia reprinting, he wished that Samuel Allinson were available to review his work, since that “might preserve me from inadvertently publishing something w[hi]ch might rather weaken the cause we have both at heart.”<sup>82</sup>

By autumn 1774 the pounding waves of revolutionary events were threatening to swamp Benezet’s lobbying efforts, but he marked two major advances. First, the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting “made disownment the

<sup>80</sup> Granville Sharp to AB, Jan. 7, 1774, in *Am I Not a Man and a Brother*, 302–6, quote on 304. He noted receipt of the letter in AB to Samuel Allinson, Mar. 30, 1774, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 311. John Wesley’s *Thoughts upon Slavery* was published in London, and reprinted in Philadelphia, in 1774.

<sup>81</sup> AB to Robert Pleasants, May 5, 1774, Anthony Benezet Letters, 1750–1936, Haverford College Special Collections; AB to Moses Brown, May 9, 1774, in *Am I Not a Man and a Brother*, 310.

<sup>82</sup> AB to John Wesley, May 23, 1774, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 318–19; AB to Samuel Allinson, July 7, 1774, Allinson Family Papers, box 6, folder 41.

penalty for selling or transferring slaves for any reason but to set them free.” Second, when the First Continental Congress convened in Philadelphia in September, Benezet set about “endeavouring to lay before all the delegates I have conversed with, the dreadful situation of the people in the most southern province, and the absolute necessity they are under of ceasing at least from any further import of negroes.” Indeed, the Congress did ban any further slave imports, which fulfilled one of Benezet’s major goals.<sup>83</sup> In future years, he would again look to the Continental Congress as a center of power that might take further action against the slave trade.

Just over a month before shots were fired at Lexington and Concord, Benezet continued to push for further gains. He wrote to the Countess of Huntingdon, urging her to reconsider the use of enslaved labor at the Georgia orphanage founded by George Whitefield that she patronized. In his typical manner, he enclosed copies of his Philadelphia edition of Wesley’s *Thoughts upon Slavery* and John Woolman’s *Journal*. He concluded his letter with the following statement, which epitomized the motivation behind his abolitionist activities: “where the lives & natural as well as religious welfare of so vast a number of our Fellow Creatures is concerned, to be Silent, where we apprehend is a duty to speak our sense of that which causes us to go mourning on our way, would be criminal.”<sup>84</sup> It is a profound irony that the American Revolution—justified on the grounds of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”—would cut short Benezet’s transatlantic lobbying campaign and temporarily stall further progress against human bondage.

#### *Campaigning in Revolutionary Times (1776–1784)*

*“there is an apprehension that ye slave trade may be again opened”*

The American Revolution’s outbreak sidetracked Benezet’s antislavery efforts as other pressing problems demanded his attention, but as circumstances allowed he continued to lobby for abolition during the war years. When the fighting subsided and the end of the war appeared on

<sup>83</sup> Drake, *Quakers and Slavery in America*, 71; AB to Samuel Allinson, Oct. 23, 1774, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 321; Arthur Zilversmit, *The First Emancipation: The Abolition of Slavery in the North* (Chicago, 1967), 98.

<sup>84</sup> AB to Selina Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon, Mar. 10, 1775, in *Am I Not a Man and a Brother*, 379–84, quote on 384. Woolman’s journal was published as *An Extract from John Woolman’s Journal in Manuscript, concerning the Ministry* ([Philadelphia, 1770]).

the horizon by 1782, he launched one more effort to halt the slave trade and published his final abolitionist tract. In this he was aided by a younger cohort of Friends who gathered around the old man and would carry the torch after his death even as the Meeting for Sufferings hesitated to get behind his latest publications. In the year before his death in May 1784, Benezet succeeded in reestablishing contact with antislavery British Quakers and even managed to get a letter delivered to the queen, while in the United States he personally trekked to Princeton, New Jersey, and presented an address to the Continental Congress meeting there. As had been his pattern since the 1750s, he wrote as a tactical response to perceived opportunities for effective action and tapped into the transatlantic Quaker network for assistance.

The Revolutionary War was a severe trial for American Friends, and Anthony Benezet labored alongside other leaders to defend the society's peace testimony and those who suffered on account of it. Patriots scorned and harassed neutral Quakers for their refusal to perform military service or swear allegiance to the new government. As General Howe's troops advanced on the Pennsylvania capital, patriots exiled to Winchester, Virginia, seventeen leading Quakers whom they suspected of loyalist sympathies, including Anthony Benezet's good friends the Pemberton brothers, Israel, James, and John. Benezet was one of ten men appointed by the Meeting for Sufferings in September 1777 to formulate a response to the banishments and the "several False Charges and Calumnies which have been published against us in the public newspapers by order of the Congress."<sup>85</sup> He was still trying to deal with the fallout of the occupation and exiles in February 1779 when he wrote to the president of the Continental Congress, John Jay, and expressed the hope that Jay would not take offense at "Friends' refusal to take part in matters of a military nature" but that Jay could "distinguish between such who are active in opposition [to the patriot cause], and those who have been restrained [from participating] from an apprehension of [religious] duty."<sup>86</sup> Amid

<sup>85</sup> Marietta, *Reformation of American Quakerism*, 222–42; Robert F. Oaks, "Philadelphians in Exile: The Problem of Loyalty during the American Revolution," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 96 (1972): 298–325; Sufferings, Minutes, 1775–1785, Sept. 18, 1777, pp. 129–131, quote on 130.

<sup>86</sup> AB to John Jay, Feb. 7, 1779, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 330. See also Sufferings, Minutes, 1775–1785, Aug. 5, 1778, pp. 161–62, where Benezet is part of a committee appointed to present a protest to the Pennsylvania Assembly regarding Quakers being jailed "for refusing to pay the Fines imposed in lieu of personal Services in the present War and others for refusing to take the Test prescribed by some Laws lately made."

the turmoil of the war, antislavery largely disappeared as a topic from Benezet's correspondence for the five years from 1777 to 1781 as he focused instead on other issues.

Despite the war's challenges, Benezet did publish *Serious Considerations On several Important Subjects* in 1778, a portion of which dealt with slavery and abolition. The first and longest section of the work articulated the Quaker view that the war that was then raging was destructive, sinful, and contrary to numerous passages of scripture.<sup>87</sup> In part two, he argued that slavery arose from the same motives of pride and avarice that fueled war. He quoted from both the Declaration of Independence and the first article of the Virginia Declaration of Rights in order to contrast with slavery their statements about mankind's natural rights to liberty. Such crystalline expressions of natural liberty turned slaveholding Americans into "a witness against themselves," Benezet wrote in an echo of Joshua 24:22. The new United States of America he portrayed as a guilty nation that was already feeling the sting of divine judgments.<sup>88</sup> In this Benezet once again displayed his tactical shrewdness for turning current events to the abolitionist cause.<sup>89</sup>

Benezet sought to distribute *Serious Considerations* as he had his previous works and as wartime circumstances would permit. He enclosed a copy in his aforementioned letter to John Jay, for example, and he directed Samuel Allinson to deliver one to New Jersey governor William Livingston.<sup>90</sup> In Philadelphia, Benezet could distribute his work in person and so did not leave behind a trail of letters to document his activities. Nevertheless, he doggedly lobbied Pennsylvania legislators and witnessed abolitionists' greatest victory to date, the passage of the state's landmark gradual emancipation act of 1780. He may have provided input to those who drafted the bill's preamble, but he was disappointed in the

<sup>87</sup> [Anthony Benezet], *Serious Considerations On several Important Subjects; viz. On War and its Inconsistency with the Gospel. Observations on Slavery. And Remarks on the Nature and bad Effects of Spirituous Liquors* (Philadelphia, 1778), 2–26.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 27–31, quote on 31. The text of the Virginia Declaration of Rights is available online via the Yale Law School's Avalon Project, [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th\\_century/virginia.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/virginia.asp).

<sup>89</sup> As Christopher Leslie Brown has likewise written, Benezet was "an opportunist," who "seized on and attempted to exploit those situations that promised to expand the constituency for antislavery measures." Brown, *Moral Capital*, 400.

<sup>90</sup> Samuel Allinson to William Livingston, July 13, 1778, in *The Papers of William Livingston*, ed. Carl E. Prince et al., 5 vols. (vol. 1–2, Trenton, NJ, 1979–1980; vol. 3–5, New Brunswick, NJ, 1986–1988): 2:388. Livingston replied to Allinson that, in his opinion, "[t]he piece on Slave keeping is excellent—but the arguments against the lawfulness of War have been answered a thousand times." William Livingston to Samuel Allinson, July 25, 1778, in *ibid.*, 2:403–4.

final legislation that extended until age twenty-eight the point at which children born to slave mothers would be freed.<sup>91</sup>

By 1782, as the end of the Revolutionary War loomed, Benezet recognized that the time had arrived for him to renew his abolitionist correspondence based on what he had learned of circumstances in both Britain and America. His thoughts are revealed in an undated letter he wrote to George Dillwyn in late 1782 or early 1783.<sup>92</sup> Dillwyn was a former student of Benezet's who had become a close friend despite being twenty-five years his junior; during the war years he was Benezet's most frequent correspondent.<sup>93</sup> Benezet wrote to Dillwyn that he had sent letters to half a dozen men in England, including George's brother William who was then residing there, "on the necessity of Friends, by themselves, or in conjunction with others[,] laying before Parliament that if they expect the Divine Blessing on their labour, they must endeavour to put an end to the Slave Trade." Benezet admitted to Dillwyn that his attempt twenty years earlier to prompt English Friends to lobby Parliament had fallen on deaf ears. Now, however, he sensed a different mood and the possibility for a renewed push. He observed that there "now appears a favorable Crissis; the minds of people generally appearing in some degree of softness." Indeed, recent scholarship has confirmed that Britain's defeat in the American War for Independence touched off a national soul-searching that played a key role in jump-starting the abolitionist movement.<sup>94</sup> As for the American scene, Benezet mentioned to Dillwyn that he had drafted the pamphlet that would be published in 1783 as *Short Observations on*

<sup>91</sup> Zilvermit, *First Emancipation*, 131; Nash and Soderlund, *Freedom by Degrees*, 102–4, 223n23.

<sup>92</sup> AB to George Dillwyn, n.d., in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 372–75. My dating of the letter is based upon Benezet's reference to his manuscript that would be published as *Short Observations on Slavery, Introductory to some Extracts from the writing of the Abbe Raynal, on that important Subject* ([Philadelphia, 1783]). In March 1783, Benezet wrote to Benjamin Franklin that "I am at the point of publishing a small representation . . . introductory to some deep remark of the Abbe Raynall on that important subject [of slavery]," which suggests that the pamphlet appeared that year; see AB to Benjamin Franklin, Mar. 5, 1783, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 387. I therefore conclude that Benezet's letter to Dillwyn was written sometime in the months prior to March 1783, in either late 1782 or early 1783.

<sup>93</sup> For Dillwyn's age, see [Kite, comp.], *Biographical Sketches*, 182. The claim for "most frequent correspondent" is based on the letters reprinted in Brookes, *Friend Anthony Benezet*. On Benezet's relationship with Dillwyn, see also Ann Dillwyn Alexander, *Gathered Fragments: Briefly Illustrative of the Life of George Dillwyn, of Burlington, West New Jersey, North America* (London, 1858), 10.

<sup>94</sup> AB to George Dillwyn, n.d., in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 373–74; Brown, *Moral Capital*. The six men Benezet mentioned were William Dillwyn, Morris Birkbeck, Granville Sharp, Jacob Duché, David Barclay, and Thomas Wagstaffe.

*Slavery, Introductory to some Extracts from the writing of the Abbe Raynal, on that important Subject* and submitted it to the Meeting for Sufferings for review. (The Meeting for Sufferings had subsumed the role of the Overseers of the Press in 1771.) This pamphlet, he wrote, “we intend to put in ye hands of all the men [in] power on the continent particularly to ye southward where there is an apprehension that ye slave trade may be again opened.”<sup>95</sup> In sum, with the Revolutionary War drawing to a close and “when others rested content with the progress already made,” Benezet looked to resume his prewar lobbying activities on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>96</sup> Once again he planned to deploy a new publication written for that particular situation.

The Meeting for Sufferings, however, hesitated to approve Benezet’s text. As he wrote to George Dillwyn, the committee had had his work “for I think more than six months” and not yet authorized its publication. In frustration Benezet had “several times intended to lay aside ye design,” he told Dillwyn, “but cannot with ease of mind.” There was, apparently, a division among the Quaker leadership over whether or not to authorize his latest work. In Benezet’s analysis, his text met with “a kind of a damp cast upon it by some friends, I think arising from a contraction of Ideas tho’ approved by others.”<sup>97</sup> Probably some members of the Meeting for Sufferings hesitated to publish anything that might stir even more antagonism toward the Society of Friends. While Benezet did not reveal the names of those who were casting “a kind of damp” upon his work, he identified a few younger men such as Warner Mifflin (b. 1745), John Parrish Jr. (b. 1729), and Nicholas Waln (b. 1742), who “thought it might be of service.”<sup>98</sup> In his last years, Benezet would rely on the assistance of these younger protégés.

<sup>95</sup> AB to George Dillwyn, n.d., in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 374–75. For the Meeting of Sufferings taking over the role of the Overseers of the Press, see Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Minutes, 1747–1779, Sept. 21–26, 1771, p. 280.

<sup>96</sup> Nash and Soderlund, *Freedom by Degrees*, 113.

<sup>97</sup> AB to George Dillwyn, n.d., in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 374–75.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 374; AB to John Pemberton, May 29, 1783, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 394 (quote). For the birth dates of Mifflin, Parrish, and Waln, respectively, see Hilda Justice, comp., *Life and Ancestry of Warner Mifflin: Friend, Philanthropist, Patriot* (Philadelphia, 1905), 16; Susanna Parrish Wharton, comp., *The Parrish Family (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), Including the related families of Cox, Dillwyn, Roberts, Chandler, Mitchell, Painter, [and] Pusey, by Dillwyn Parrish, 1809–1886, With special reference to Joseph Parrish, M.D., 1779–1840, With sketches of his children, by members of the family and others* (Philadelphia, 1925), 62; Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, eds., *Dictionary of American Biography*, 11 vols. (New York, 1958–1964), 10:386.

This was not the first time that Benezet had run into a problem with obtaining Friends' authorization to publish during the war years, nor was he the only author who had to confront that difficulty. He noted that only "with very great difficulty" had he "prevailed upon friends to print" *A letter from Elizabeth Webb to Anthony William Boehm, with his Answer* in 1781.<sup>99</sup> Whereas Benezet perseveringly won approval in that case, David Cooper, by contrast, decided to circumvent the oversight process altogether when in both 1772 and 1783 he published his antislavery pamphlets anonymously. He rationalized the decision in his own mind when he wrote in his diary that he considered the requirement that Quakers must submit their proposed publications to advance scrutiny as designed "to guard the reputation of the Society, and that any performance for which the Society was not answerable, nor its reputation thereby in any way affected, said rule could not be supposed to reach."<sup>100</sup> Whether or not Benezet followed the same reasoning is unknown. *Short Observations on Slavery* did not carry his name on its first page, and that led Cooper to conclude that "he [Benezet] has not consulted the overseers of the press, which I suppose has been the case, as he tells me the difficulties arising there have occasioned him to lay aside the essay upon which he had bestowed so much care." Then again, the pamphlet's next to last page identified "A. Benezet" as "[t]he writer of the foregoing introductory observations," so it was not published anonymously, strictly speaking.<sup>101</sup> Probably Benezet and his friends convinced the publication committee to relent, and *Short Observations on Slavery* came off the press of Joseph Crukshank in early 1783.

In *Short Observations on Slavery* Benezet put forth his by-then familiar blend of the natural-rights language of the Continental Congress, Enlightenment humanitarianism, sentimental appeals to sympathy, and biblical texts about justice for the oppressed and divine vengeance to the oppressors, which he contrasted with American slavery, "a bondage often rigorous and cruel . . . without condition, without end, and without appeal." He repeated his call for gradual emancipation, noting that "[i]t will be when measures of this kind takes place in America, and when a final end is put to a horrible Slave Trade in England, that both countries

<sup>99</sup> AB to George Dillwyn, n.d., in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 375.

<sup>100</sup> *Friends' Review*, July 19, 1862, pp. 722–23, quote on 722; Henry J. Cadbury, "Quaker Bibliographical Notes," *Bulletin of the Friends' Historical Association* 26 (1937): 39–53.

<sup>101</sup> David Cooper to Samuel Allinson, June 15, 1783, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 457; Benezet, *Short Observations on Slavery*, 11.

may expect to flourish, under the blessing of Him who delights in Justice and Mercy.”<sup>102</sup> That remark confirms that the audience Benezet sought for this, his final pamphlet, included readers on both sides of the Atlantic. About one-third of the twelve-page pamphlet consisted of an extract from the Abbé Raynal’s *A Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies*, the purpose of which, Benezet wrote, was to “assist in eradicating the deep rooted prejudice which an education amongst Slaves has planted in many minds.” Benezet quoted Raynal’s statements that slavery was contrary to “universal justice,” that slave traders were worse than highway robbers, and that no religion could legitimately justify slavery.<sup>103</sup>

In addition to the extract from the Abbé Raynal, what was new in *Short Observations* was Benezet’s use of examples drawn from his own local experience. In this pamphlet there was no reference to the testimony of travel writers upon whom he had drawn so fruitfully and frequently in his past writings. Instead, Benezet cited the case of “a Negroe, residing near Philadelphia” who wept over his master’s children, because they reminded him of his own family who had been left behind in Africa when he was kidnapped and whom he would never see again.<sup>104</sup> Living in Philadelphia, he had seen southern congressmen come to town with their chattels in tow and had witnessed slaves commit suicide so as to release themselves once and for all from bondage.<sup>105</sup> Benezet also referred to his experience teaching Philadelphia’s African Americans, which showed him that his black students were equal to whites. The idea of black intellectual inferiority he dismissed as “a vulgar prejudice.”<sup>106</sup> In the scope of a dozen pages, *Short Observations on Slavery* dispatched the most common justifications for slavery and built a straightforward case for abolition.

With *Short Observations on Slavery* finally in print, Benezet kicked off another correspondence and lobbying campaign in May 1783. On the

<sup>102</sup> Benezet, *Short Observations on Slavery*, 1–3, 6–7. The two congressional sources quoted were the Declaration of Independence and the Declaration of the Causes and Necessities of Taking Up Arms, the particular passages of which are reprinted in *Colonies to Nation, 1763–1789: A Documentary History of the American Revolution*, ed. Jack P. Greene (New York, 1975), 298, 255.

<sup>103</sup> Benezet, *Short Observations on Slavery*, 7, 9–10. Benezet took his extracts from [Abbé Raynal], *A Philosophical and Political History of the Settlement and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies*, trans. J. Justamond, 4 vols. (London, 1776), 3:165–68.

<sup>104</sup> Benezet, *Short Observations on Slavery*, 5.

<sup>105</sup> AB to John Pemberton, Aug. 10, 1783, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 397.

<sup>106</sup> Benezet, *Short Observations on Slavery*, 11–12. See also Nancy Slocum Hornick, “Anthony Benezet and the Africans’ School: Toward a Theory of Full Equality,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 99 (1975): 399–421.

twenty-ninth of that month he penned letters to both John Gough and John Pemberton, two Friends then in Britain. Both letters were carried overseas by one of Benezet's younger associates, Nicholas Waln, who was on his way to England to minister to Quakers there. Benezet enclosed with each letter a copy of his new pamphlet, explaining that it was intentionally "short & [meant to] set the horrid iniquity of that practice in a striking light." As he also explained to them, he was motivated by the fear that both the British and Americans were about to reopen the Atlantic slave trade. His concerns were justified. As John Pemberton wrote in his diary at Liverpool on July 13, 1783, which was around the time when he must have received Benezet's letter, "It would grieve our dear friend Anthony Benezet, were he here, to see with what earnestness and diligence, numbers of vessels are fitting out for Africa. The great profits made last year, have stimulated many."<sup>107</sup> As he had first tried to do twenty years earlier, Benezet wanted to put British Quakers "upon a weighty Consideration whether it is not high time for them Individually and as a Religious Society, to lay this important Concern before the King & Parliament, the great Senate of the Nation." He again invoked the frightening prospect that "divine Judgment" would come upon the nation that condoned the slave trade, and in this respect he referred to the infamous *Zong* case that had recently been in the newspapers, in which 133 sick slaves had been tossed overboard so as to recoup their insurance value.<sup>108</sup>

The response that Benezet received in August 1783 led him to fire off a second round of letters to England along with a packet of printed material. He had learned that William Dillwyn was planning to publish something about the slave trade "to be put in the hands of the active people in [the British] Government," and so he sent Dillwyn a bundle of American antislavery writings that might be of use to him. These included a copy of each of Benezet's own abolitionist works along with pamphlets by John Wesley, Benjamin Rush, and David Cooper.<sup>109</sup> This time Benezet entrusted the delivery of his correspondence to Casper Wistar, a recent

<sup>107</sup> AB to John Gough, May 29, 1783, and AB to John Pemberton, May 29, 1783, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 375–77, 388–94, quote on 394; Johnson and Malone, *Dictionary of American Biography*, 10:386; William Hodgson Jr., comp., *The Life and Travels of John Pemberton, a Minister of the Gospel of Christ* (London, 1844), 131.

<sup>108</sup> AB to John Gough, May 29, 1783, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 375–77; Adam Hochschild, *Bury the Chains: Prophets and Rebels in the Fight to Free an Empire's Slaves* (Boston, 2005), 79–82.

<sup>109</sup> AB to John Pemberton, Aug. 10, 1783, AB to William Dillwyn, Aug. 20, 1783, and AB to George Dillwyn, Aug. 17, 1783, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 396 ("active people in Government"), 381–82 (list of publications being sent), 400.

graduate of the University of Pennsylvania who was heading to Britain for further medical studies.<sup>110</sup> Another letter that Wistar carried for Benezet was addressed to Queen Charlotte. Benezet enclosed copies of abolitionist publications with this letter too, and he urged the queen to exert whatever influence she could on behalf of the enslaved.<sup>111</sup> With this letter to the queen, he acted directly to fulfill the desire to address the monarchy that he had first articulated twenty years earlier. In brief, Anthony Benezet succeeded with the help of such friends as James and John Pemberton, George and William Dillwyn, and Nicholas Waln in finally catalyzing a reaction among English Friends and getting them to take such forthright actions against slavery as petitioning Parliament and distributing abolitionist publications widely.<sup>112</sup>

In the United States, Benezet worked to disseminate *Short Observations on Slavery* himself. He correctly read the signs of the times, fearing “the disposition of some of the principal people in the Southern provinces in support of slavery, and even giving some encouragement to a fresh importation of Negroes from Guinea.” (Slave imports to the United States soared after the war.) As he had done during the war years, he took advantage of the proximity of the Continental Congress in Philadelphia to see that his pamphlet was “put in the hands of each member of Congress.”<sup>113</sup> He also must have been pleased when he discovered that Isaac Collins had published another pamphlet at Trenton, *A Serious Address to the Rulers of America: On the Inconsistency of their Conduct Respecting Slavery*. That pamphlet was published pseudonymously by “A farmer,” but Benezet correctly surmised that its author was David Cooper. Cooper noted that Benezet planned to have *Short Observations on Slavery* bound together with *A Serious Address* for distribution. “He has sent one to each member of Congress, and to our Assembly at Burlington, and is about writing to our Governor,” Cooper wrote to his fellow New Jerseyan, Samuel Allinson.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>110</sup> AB to William Dillwyn, Aug. 20, 1783, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 381; James Grant Wilson and John Fiske, eds., *Appletons' Cyclopædia of American Biography*, 6 vols. (New York, 1888–1889), 6:583.

<sup>111</sup> AB to Charlotte, Queen of Great Britain, Aug. 25, 1783, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 402. Benezet thanked Wistar for his “kind endeavours with respect to the presenting my book & letters to the Queen” in AB to Gaspar Wister [Caspar Wistar], Apr. 25, 1784, Anthony Benezet Letters.

<sup>112</sup> Roger Anstey, *The Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition, 1760–1810* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ, 1975), 225–33; Brown, *Moral Capital*, 412–32.

<sup>113</sup> AB to John Pemberton, May 29, 1783, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 394.

<sup>114</sup> [David Cooper], *A Serious Address to the Rulers of America, On the Inconsistency of their Conduct respecting Slavery* (Trenton, NJ, 1783); David Cooper to Samuel Allinson, June 15, 1783, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 457–58, quote on 458.

Benezet's distribution efforts prepared the way for the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's address to the Continental Congress in October 1783. Taking note of how British Friends had already been actively campaigning "to represent to the Rulers in that Nation the crying Iniquity of the Traffic" in slaves, the Yearly Meeting decided to appoint a committee "to discern the true Line of Duty in this Business," and Benezet headed the list of forty-eight names.<sup>115</sup> The committee drafted an address to the Continental Congress, and Benezet was one of the men assigned to present it in person. The address, which was dated October 4, 1783, and signed by 535 of those present at the Yearly Meeting, very briefly aimed to call the Congress's attention to the issue of slavery, especially because of the prospect of a renewal of the transatlantic slave trade.<sup>116</sup> Benezet was then one of the four men who journeyed to Princeton, New Jersey, where the Continental Congress was meeting, to deliver the address, and he wrote the subsequent report to the Meeting for Sufferings to explain what transpired. The Friends conferred with Elias Boudinot, who was then the president of the Congress, and received permission to present their address. The Quaker delegation appeared before Congress on October 8 "with our hats on," and James Pemberton read their address aloud. Benezet reported that they were "respectfully received, and have Satisfaction in our Performance of this Service."<sup>117</sup>

Despite the respectful hearing that Congress gave to the Quaker address, it prompted no action. In December, Benezet was one of a dozen men appointed to seek "the openings & Direction of best Wisdom" as to what to do next. Philadelphia Quakers would eventually learn that southern representatives prevented the Congress from taking any action on their address, or so one of its later presidents, Richard Henry Lee, subsequently informed them.<sup>118</sup> Still, this address in person to the Continental Congress in many ways represented a culmination of Benezet's abolitionist career. He had succeeded in speaking directly to those in power, the

<sup>115</sup> Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Minutes, 1780–1798, Oct. 1, 1783, p. 62.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, Oct. 4, 1783, pp. 65–66. The address is reprinted in Frost, *Quaker Origins of Antislavery*, 262.

<sup>117</sup> Sufferings, Minutes, 1775–1785, Oct. 16, 1783, p. 408. David Cooper's diary entry revealed the details of "hats on" and James Pemberton's reading. He added, "Some of the committee had opportunity of much conversation with divers of the members,—dining, on invitation, with a number of them; and we were treated through the whole with civility and respect." *Friends' Review*, July 26, 1862, p. 738. See also Drake, *Quakers and Slavery in America*, 93–94.

<sup>118</sup> Sufferings, Minutes, 1775–1785, Dec. 18, 1783, p. 413; Sufferings, Misc., 1781–1790, "Report of the committee on the African trade. 9 mo. 24. 1785."

same legislators to whom he had previously delivered copies of his latest antislavery tract, and he did so with the support and in the company of his close associates of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends, his spiritual and activist home.

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Anthony Benezet died in Philadelphia on May 3, 1784, after a brief illness. He was seventy-one. His death, James Pemberton observed, “necessarily occasions a chasm in many respects not easily supplied, and an additional weight which few will be disposed to bear.” Nevertheless, some of Benezet’s younger collaborators would carry on his work in the early republic.<sup>119</sup> While some of Benezet’s efforts, such as the 1783 address to Congress, may not have succeeded in the short run, he had a long-term impact on both sides of the Atlantic due to his ability to tap into the support of the Quaker network for his publications and lobbying. With the help of the Society of Friends, Anthony Benezet had access to collaborators, correspondents, and committees that enabled him to publish a series of works that advanced the abolitionist agenda as never before.

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<sup>119</sup> James Pemberton to John Pemberton, May 14, 1784, in *Friend Anthony Benezet*, 458–60, quote on 460. John Parrish, for example, would publish his own abolitionist tract in 1806, and he, Warner Mifflin, and Nicholas Waln were among representatives of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting who petitioned Congress in 1797–1798 on behalf of African Americans in North Carolina who had been emancipated by their Quaker owners and then re-enslaved. Mifflin especially drew the ire of congressmen from the Deep South during the 1790s for his repeated attempts to petition Congress to take action against slavery and the slave trade. John Parrish, *Remarks on the Slavery of the Black People; Addressed to the Citizens of the United States, particularly to those who are in Legislative or Executive Stations in the General or State Governments; and also to such Individuals as Hold Them in Bondage* (Philadelphia, 1806), 54–57; Drake, *Quakers and Slavery in America*, 105–8.

