

“To Friends and All Whom It May Concerne”: William Southeby's Rediscovered 1696  
Antislavery Protest

Author(s): Nicholas P. Wood and Jean R. Soderlund

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## NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

### *“To Friends and All Whom It May Concerne”: William Southeby’s Rediscovered 1696 Antislavery Protest*

ABSTRACT: Pennsylvania Quaker William Southeby wrote one of the earliest American critiques of slavery in 1696 and continued agitating against the institution until his death in 1722. Scholars have been restricted in their attention to Southeby because his 1696 protest and all but one of his other writings have been lost to history. This article reproduces and analyzes a recently discovered transcript of his 1696 address made in 1791 by another Quaker abolitionist, James Pemberton, along with Southeby’s other known antislavery essay, from around 1714. Both documents shed new light on the contentious early history of abolitionism.

**I**N THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY, when enslaved black people were the primary opponents of slavery, Quaker William Southeby was among the few white spokesmen against slavery and slave trading. A few other Friends had publicly criticized slavery before Southeby, but he was the first to make antislavery an ongoing concern. As an essayist and political lobbyist, Southeby was America’s first white abolitionist. He penned one of the earliest antislavery writings in 1696 and continued agitating against slavery into the 1720s.<sup>1</sup> Very few of Southeby’s writings are extant, how-

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<sup>1</sup>In 1934 historian Thomas E. Drake remarked that William Southeby “has, of course, long been recognized as the leading antislavery Friend of the day.” Thomas E. Drake, “Cadwalader Morgan, An Early Antislavery Friend,” *Bulletin of Friends Historical Association* 23 (1934): 97 (quotation); H. J.

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ever, so scholars have been unable to examine the antislavery arguments he advanced, and he has received less attention than such successors as Ralph Sandiford, Benjamin Lay, John Woolman, and Anthony Benezet. The fate of Southeby's original manuscript from 1696 remains a mystery, but a handwritten copy made in 1791 by James Pemberton, another Quaker abolitionist, has been recently identified at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.<sup>2</sup>

With this text of Southeby's 1696 address, "To Friends and All whom it may Concerne" (doc. 1), we can now appreciate the complexity of the arguments he contributed to early antislavery discourse.<sup>3</sup> Southeby's wide-ranging discussion brought together arguments from such earlier essayists as Quaker founder George Fox and Irish Friend William

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Cadbury, "Another Early Quaker Anti-Slavery Document," *Journal of Negro History* 27 (1942): 210; Thomas E. Drake, *Quakers and Slavery in America* (New Haven, CT, 1950), 19; Kenneth L. Carroll, "William Southeby, Early Quaker Antislavery Writer," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 89 (1965): 422; J. William Frost, ed., *The Quaker Origins of Antislavery* (Norwood, PA, 1980), 33; Jean R. Soderlund, *Quakers and Slavery: A Divided Spirit* (Princeton, NJ, 1985), 4, 19, 22; Brychan Carey, *From Peace to Freedom: Quaker Rhetoric and the Birth of American Antislavery, 1657–1761* (New Haven, CT, 2012), 97; Manisha Sinha, *The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition* (New Haven, CT, 2016), 12.

<sup>2</sup>The Pemberton Family Papers (Collection 484A) consist of thousands of documents taking up fifty-two linear feet of shelving at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. James Pemberton's transcript of Southeby's 1696 protest is located in folder 18 of volume 54, with other materials from 1791. The archivist who filed the document clearly did not realize that it included the text of an important document that scholars had believed was lost. Meanwhile, scholars of seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century antislavery would have little reason to look for Southeby's writing in the papers of James Pemberton from a century later. Nicholas Wood came across the document while researching the Philadelphia Meeting for Sufferings' antislavery activity; he was apparently the first scholar to recognize its significance.

<sup>3</sup>On Quaker antislavery, see Drake, *Quakers and Slavery in America*; Sydney V. James, *A People among Peoples: Quaker Benevolence in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge, MA, 1963); David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Ithaca, NY, 1966), esp. 292–332, 483–86; Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770–1823* (Ithaca, NY, 1975), esp. 213–54; Jack D. Marietta, *Reformation of American Quakerism, 1748–1783* (Philadelphia, 1984), 113–28, 273–88; Soderlund, *Quakers and Slavery*; Carey, *From Peace to Freedom*; J. William Frost, "George Fox's Ambiguous Anti-Slavery Legacy," in *New Light on George Fox (1624 to 1691)*, ed. Michael Mullett (York, Eng., 1993), 69–88; Thomas Slaughter, *The Beautiful Soul of John Woolman, Apostle of Abolition* (New York, 2008); Geoffrey Plank, *John Woolman's Path to the Peaceable Kingdom: A Quaker in the British Empire* (Philadelphia, 2012); Maurice Jackson, *Let this Voice be Heard: Anthony Benezet, Father of Atlantic Abolitionism* (Philadelphia, 2009); Jonathan Sassi, "With a Little Help from the Friends: The Quaker and Tactical Contexts of Anthony Benezet's Abolitionist Publishing," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 135 (2011): 33–71; David Waldstreicher, "The Origins of Antislavery in Pennsylvania: Early Abolitionists and Benjamin Franklin's Road Not Taken," in *Antislavery and Abolitionism in Philadelphia: Emancipation and the Long Struggle for Racial Justice in the City of Brotherly Love*, ed. Richard Newman and James Mueller (Baton Rouge, LA, 2011), 45–65; Katherine Gerbner, "'We are against the traffik of men-body': The Germantown Quaker Protest of 1688 and the Origins of American Abolitionism," *Pennsylvania History* 74 (2007): 149–72; Gerbner, "Antislavery in Print: The Germantown Protest, the 'Exhortation,' and the Seventeenth-Century Quaker Debate on Slavery," *Early American Studies* 9 (2011): 552–75.

Edmundson, as well as the authors of the Germantown protest of 1688 and the Keithian pamphlet of 1693.<sup>4</sup> Southeby also offered several arguments against slaveholding and the slave trade not found in other essays at the time. His efforts inspired a briefer antislavery statement by fellow Quaker Cadwalader Morgan, and these two documents helped persuade the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (PYM) to issue its first official statement discouraging the slave trade in 1696. The PYM, however, did nothing to encourage liberating black people who were already enslaved. One scholar, who lacked access to Southeby's 1696 text, concluded that Morgan's anti-slavery address and the PYM advice "were representative of a new strain of antislavery thought in Atlantic Quakerism," which emphasized "that Quakers would be better off without slaves, not that slaves would be better off free, a sharp contrast to the humanitarian-based antislavery arguments of the 'Germantown Protest' and the [Keithian] *Exhortation*." However, the text of Southeby's 1696 address reveals that he expanded humanitarian arguments against slavery, demonstrating that this strain of antislavery discourse had never "disappeared from debate in the orthodox Meeting for decades," as previously assumed.<sup>5</sup>

While building on the work of his predecessors, Southeby was also a transitional figure, anticipating the more provocative antislavery discourses of some of his successors. The PYM's 1696 advice against slave trading might have represented a watershed moment, but many Quakers openly flouted this counsel and expanded their involvement in slavery and slave trading. As a result, Southeby in 1712 challenged Friends and the Pennsylvania legislature to live up to the young colony's promise by abolishing slavery. When this failed, his antislavery rhetoric became increasingly heated, as seen in his only other extant antislavery writing, from around 1714 (also published here for the first time, as doc. 2). After several more years of agitation, Southeby became the first Quaker in the Delaware Valley whose monthly meeting threatened to disown him on account of his antislavery efforts.

<sup>4</sup>George Fox, *Gospel Family-Order, Being a Short Discourse Concerning the Ordering of Families, Both of Whites, Blacks and Indians* (1676); William Edmundson, *Journal of the Life . . . of William Edmundson* (1715); Edmundson, *Letters* (1676); "Germantown Friends' Protest Against Slavery, 1688," all reprinted in Frost, *Quaker Origins*, 35–69; *An Exhortation and Caution to Friends Concerning Buying or Keeping of Negroes* (1693), reprinted in J. William Frost, ed., *The Keithian Controversy in Early Pennsylvania* (Norwood, PA, 1980), 213–18.

<sup>5</sup>Gerbner, "Antislavery in Print," 575. Gerbner points to John Hepburn's *The American Defence of the Christian Golden Rule* (1715) as reviving the humanitarian aspect of Quaker antislavery.

By the time James Pemberton rediscovered Southeby's 1696 protest, nearly a century after it was written, Friends had adopted antislavery as a central part of their collective identity, disowning unrepentant slaveholders. However, in the decades after Pemberton's death in 1809, Quaker meetings retreated from active abolitionism. Southeby's early writings and activism thus represent abolitionism's contingent and contentious status rather than its inevitability within the Society of Friends.

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Originally a Roman Catholic, Southeby first arrived in Maryland in 1659. He became a Quaker and lived among Friends on Maryland's eastern shore, where he participated actively in the Third Haven Monthly Meeting and met traveling minister William Edmundson. In 1676 Southeby welcomed newly arrived Quakers in Salem, West New Jersey, informing them of meetings in Maryland and participating in a Salem disciplinary case. By 1684, he moved from Maryland to Kent County, Delaware, taking part in the government of Pennsylvania and the Lower Counties as a member of the Provincial Council and other offices. He relocated to Philadelphia by early 1686 and was elected to the Assembly in 1688.<sup>6</sup> Southeby was neither wealthy nor among the Quaker elite, but he had earned a reputation that kept him busy in meeting affairs; he represented the Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting at the Yearly Meeting between 1695 and 1709, and he served on Yearly Meeting committees.<sup>7</sup> He was especially active as a member of the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, with "his true gifts," according to historian Kenneth L. Carroll, "in the area of reconciliation." This was reflected in his appointments by the Quaker meeting to resolve disputes and, initially, in his efforts against slavery.<sup>8</sup>

A handful of Quakers preceded Southeby in speaking out against slavery. In the 1670s, several traveling ministers had voiced concern about the growth of slaveholding among Friends in the English colonies of Barbados, Virginia, and Maryland. George Fox in *The Gospel Family-Order* (1672) reminded Quaker slave owners "that Christ dyed for all, . . .

<sup>6</sup> Carroll, "William Southeby," 416–19; Salem Monthly Meeting minutes, 1676–1696, 8, 17, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA; Craig W. Horle et al., eds., *Lawmaking and Legislators in Pennsylvania: A Biographical Dictionary*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1991, 1997), 1:683–85.

<sup>7</sup> Carroll, "William Southeby," 416–22; Horle, *Lawmaking*, 1:683–85; Philadelphia Monthly Meeting (Men's) minutes [PMM mins.], 1684–1719, Quaker & Special Collections, Haverford College, Haverford, PA (hereafter QC).

<sup>8</sup> Carroll, "William Southeby," 419–20.

for the Tawnes and for the Blacks, as well as for you that are called whites.” He recommended that Friends offer the enslaved Africans instruction in Christianity and free them after a term of years. William Edmundson in 1676 reacted similarly to the institution of slavery, suggesting its incompatibility with the Christian religion.<sup>9</sup>

Friends who agreed with Fox and Edmundson hoped that the founding of Pennsylvania in 1681 by Quaker leader William Penn offered an opportunity to create a society based on the principles of justice and the Golden Rule. The arrival in 1684 of the ship *Isabella* with 150 enslaved Africans for sale, however, began a period of extensive slave importations. Affluent Quakers and other Pennsylvania settlers purchased African men and women as laborers, and Friends who emigrated from the West Indies brought enslaved workers with them.<sup>10</sup>

While many Friends saw no problem with buying captive people, in 1688 a group of Germantown Quakers submitted a protest against the slave trade and slavery. Five years later, in 1693, the schismatic followers of George Keith, who in the early 1690s split with Orthodox Quakers in the Delaware Valley, published *An Exhortation and Caution to Friends Concerning Buying or Keeping of Negroes*. The Germantown and Keithian protestors viewed the slave trade as a blight on Penn’s “holy experiment.”<sup>11</sup> By 1696 Southeby agreed, recommending that “there may be a Law made against bringing any more of Slaves into this countrey.” Historians have known that Southeby in 1712 was the first to call on the Pennsylvania legislature to emancipate all slaves; with this text of his 1696 essay, we now know he was the first to call for a law against slave importation as well. He addressed his essay “To Friends and All whom it may Concerne,” indicating his early desire to influence policy both within and beyond the Society of Friends.

In this paper, which he submitted with a copy of Fox’s *Gospel Family-Order*, Southeby made multiple arguments against slavery and the slave trade, all based upon his belief that involuntary bondage was wrong and against God’s will. Like other Quaker antislavery authors, Southeby

<sup>9</sup> Fox, *Gospel Family-Order*, in Frost, *Quaker Origins*, 46–49; Edmundson, Letters (1676), in Frost, *Quaker Origins*, 66–67.

<sup>10</sup> Drake, *Quakers and Slavery in America*, 1–33; Soderlund, *Quakers and Slavery*, 15–22, 32–39; Jean R. Soderlund, “Black Importation and Migration into Southeastern Pennsylvania, 1682–1810,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 133 (1989): 144–46; Gary B. Nash and Jean R. Soderlund, *Freedom by Degrees: Emancipation in Pennsylvania and its Aftermath* (New York, 1991), 3–16.

<sup>11</sup> Drake, *Quakers and Slavery in America*, 11–15; Soderlund, *Quakers and Slavery*, 17–19.



referred prominently to the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12), indicating that slavery contradicted God's doctrine, "whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye unto them."<sup>12</sup> Southeby affirmed, like Fox and Edmundson before him, that Africans "are of the same mold" as Europeans and that Christ died for all mankind. Also similar to Fox's advice to limit the servitude of Africans, Southeby suggested that, at a minimum, slaveholders should free their slaves after "reasonable Satisfaction for what they cost."<sup>13</sup> Agreeing with the more recent Germantown protest and Keithian pamphlet, Southeby stated that purchasers were implicated in the violence used to enslave people in Africa and compared slavery in North America with captivity of English people by Turks. Southeby further noted, however, that slaves who converted to Islam became free, making Turkish slavery "more justifiable." He reinforced the alarm of the Germantown Quakers and Keithians against rising slave imports, warning that if Africans remained enslaved, "God will heare their Cry, and also avenge it on their oppressors."<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, he took a cautious approach in this 1696 essay to convince his colleagues through example and careful argument rather than strident accusations.

While building upon previous essays that had initiated antislavery discourse among Friends, Southeby also engaged proslavery arguments in a way that helps us understand how increasing numbers of colonists rationalized purchasing and holding enslaved people. In this paper, Southeby used his gifts of reconciliation by gently pointing out the inconsistencies within proslavery arguments and suggesting how slave owners could make amends with their enslaved Africans through manumission. While making intellectual and moral arguments, he kept his focus on people—black and white—and on the negative impact slavery had on their lives. In this 1696 essay, Southeby took a moderate rhetorical approach more similar to Woolman's *Some Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes* (1754) than to Ralph Sandiford's *The Mystery of Iniquity* (1730) or Benjamin Lay's *All Slave-Keepers, That Keep the Innocent in Bondage, Apostates* (1737).

<sup>12</sup> Drake, *Quakers and Slavery in America*, 19–20; Carroll, "William Southeby," 422; Fox, *Gospel Family-Order*, in Frost, *Quaker Origins*, 39; Edmundson, Letters (1676), in Frost, *Quaker Origins*, 67; "Germantown Friends' Protest," in Frost, *Quaker Origins*, 69; Robert Piles essay (1698), in Frost, *Quaker Origins*, 71; *Exhortation*, in Frost, *Keithian Controversy*, 214–15.

<sup>13</sup> Fox, *Gospel Family-Order*, in Frost, *Quaker Origins*, 48–49; Edmundson, Letters (1676), in Frost, *Quaker Origins*, 66–67; *Exhortation*, in Frost, *Keithian Controversy*, 213.

<sup>14</sup> "Germantown Friends' Protest," in Frost, *Quaker Origins*, 69; *Exhortation*, in Frost, *Keithian Controversy*, 214, 217, 218.

Southeby began by discussing his own experience, as he considered purchasing enslaved Africans because of the scarcity of white indentured servants.<sup>15</sup> He acknowledged but then rejected slave buyers' justification that they were "no wayes concerned in the originall cause of their bondage" and challenged the notion that "a secret hand of God" might be at work to convert enslaved Africans to Christianity. Southeby noted that he understood the appeal of the argument to purchasers, but then he took the standpoint of the enslaved blacks, writing how "being kept Slaves during term of Life, both of them and their posterity, I say this appears to me to be a barr to stop them for ever comeing trewly to own Christianity." This proslavery rationale lost force even further, he contended, because enslaved Africans could not gain freedom in the English colonies through conversion.

Southeby then answered several questions that were likely part of discussions among Friends and other colonists about slavery and the slave trade. To the question, "what shall we doe with those we have already," he answered that one must treat enslaved people as one would want to be treated and make an agreement with them for manumission. Responding to the question, "How shall we as things are here carry on our business," he stated that, without slaves, colonists would work "with more peace, and a clearer Conscience," though not "so high & full as now many by the oppression of these poor people doth." He also warned against "intending to multiply young negroes as a portion for their Children and posterity after them." The abolitionist watched as his neighbors explored and rationalized ways to wealth through slavery, and he tried to convince them that African men, women, and children had the same right to freedom as whites. His essay acknowledged that abolition would involve an economic cost to individuals, but he presented it as a moral imperative that would serve "Christianity, the Countrey, and the good Government thereof."

A paper by Philadelphia Quaker George Gray, written sometime between 1693 and 1700, further suggests the nature of debate among Friends about slavery. Gray was a minister and slaveholder who emigrated in 1692 from Barbados, where he owned a plantation and kept

<sup>15</sup> Cadwalader Morgan advanced similar personal arguments in July 1696 and Robert Piles in 1698; Cadwalader Morgan essay (1696), in Frost, *Quaker Origins*, 70; Robert Piles essay (1698), in Frost, *Quaker Origins*, 71. See also Thomas E. Drake, "Cadwalader Morgan: Antislavery Quaker of the Welsh Tract," *Friends Intelligencer* 98 (1941): 575–76; Henry J. Cadbury, "An Early Quaker Antislavery Statement," *Journal of Negro History* 22 (1937): 488–93.



shop. His essay is undated, but it probably circulated soon before or after Southeby's 1696 paper, perhaps either inspiring or responding to Southeby. Both men employed Fox's *Gospel Family-Order* as a text, but whereas Southeby used that essay as a starting point to demonstrate the injustice and immorality of slavery, Gray emphasized Fox's call for instructing enslaved Africans in Christianity and good behavior. Gray wrote, "it is a Grief unto the faithfull to See & heare how Rude blacks are and more especially on first days [i.e., Sundays] when they gett Liberty & go in Companyes neer the Town to Daunce & drink & have Merry Meetings." Thus Friends must restrain their slaves, "bringing them to Meeting & haveing Meetings with them in their familys." Contrary to Southeby's argument that black people would be unlikely to convert if enslaved by Christians, Gray asserted that most important for blacks was the inner freedom that they would obtain through conversion, not outer freedom through manumission.<sup>16</sup>

Despite the sentiments of slave owners like Gray, Southeby believed that he and like-minded Friends had the opportunity to end slavery in Pennsylvania. He was convinced Quakers could abolish the slave trade and slavery by law. He was unsatisfied by ameliorative measures, such as the advice to educate African workers in Christianity that Fox and Edmundson had given Quaker slaveholders who faced a hostile government in Barbados.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, in the hands of apologists, these measures became props for slaveholders rather than steps toward abolition. Each of Southeby's arguments assumed the right of all people to physical and legal freedom. He wanted to end the practice of slavery, not reform it.

Southeby's protest precipitated formal action after he presented it in April 1696. First, it inspired another Friend, Cadwalader Morgan, to submit an additional statement against slavery in July. Morgan asserted that he had decided slavery was morally wrong "about two years ago, at which time I had not heard of others writing ab<sup>t</sup> it." After learning "that there are divers y<sup>t</sup> [who] are not fully satisfied concerning it," Morgan issued his brief antislavery testimony, which reiterated some of Southeby's points. Morgan's description of his own decision not to buy slaves also indicates

<sup>16</sup> For a full discussion and transcription of Gray's text, see Frost, "George Fox's Ambiguous Anti-Slavery Legacy," 77–84; quotations on 83.

<sup>17</sup> Fox, *Gospel Family-Order*, in Frost, *Quaker Origins*, 53–55; Edmundson, Letters (1676), in Frost, *Quaker Origins*, 66–67.

the way black resistance informed white antislavery from its inception. As a pacifist, he was not sure how he could react if he bought a slave who “must be corrected, or would Run away.”<sup>18</sup>

The Philadelphia Monthly Meeting then referred the documents from Southeby and Morgan to the Yearly Meeting, which established policy for Quakers in the Delaware Valley and surrounding areas. In response to these most recent articulations of Quaker antislavery, but also reflecting the positions of Fox and Gray, the PYM issued its first formal statement on the subject:

Whereas Several Papers have been Read Relating to the Keeping & bringing In of Negroes, which being duly considered its the Advice of this Meeting that Friends be careful not to Encourage the bringing in of any more Negroes, & that such that have Negroes be careful of them, bring them to Meetings, or have Meetings with them in their Families, & Restrain from Loose & Lewd Living as much as in them lies, & from Rambling abroad on First Days or other Times.<sup>19</sup>

As “the first institutional attempt to limit slave trading in America,” this advice represented an important milestone, albeit limited in some ways. While Southeby could hope that this advice against slave importation would be effective, the meeting’s decision otherwise ignored his focus on liberty and instead emphasized the control and Christian education of enslaved people. With its leadership dominated by such slaveholders as Samuel Carpenter, James Fox, Anthony Morris, Phineas Pemberton, and Edward Shippen, the PYM reached a compromise that discouraged but did not ban the slave trade. Many Quakers continued importing slaves despite the meeting’s advice, which included no enforcement sanctions.<sup>20</sup>

Unable to curb demand for enslaved laborers in Pennsylvania, Southeby targeted the supply. In 1698 he was one of nine members of the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting who signed a letter on behalf of the meeting to Friends

<sup>18</sup> Cadwalader Morgan, Quaker Protest Against Slavery, Merion, PA, 1696 5th month 28th, available online through “Quakers & Slavery,” [http://tritych.brynmawr.edu/cdm/ref/collection/HC\\_QuakSlav/id/19](http://tritych.brynmawr.edu/cdm/ref/collection/HC_QuakSlav/id/19); also in Frost, *Quaker Origins*, 70. When citing Quaker sources, we have preserved the practice of numbering rather than naming months. Because the Julian calendar began in March prior to England’s transition to the Gregorian calendar in 1752, 5mo indicated July.

<sup>19</sup> Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (Men’s) minutes, 23 7mo 1696, QC; published in Frost, *Quaker Origins*, 74.

<sup>20</sup> Carey, *From Peace to Freedom*, 98 (quotation); Drake, *Quakers and Slavery in America*, 19; Soderlund, *Quakers and Slavery*, 19, 34–35, 47–49; Gerbner, “Antislavery in Print,” 575.

in Barbados, the island through which many African captives bound for North America passed. They wrote, "It haveng been the sence of our yearly meeting that many negroes in these parts may prove prejudissial several wayes to us and our posterety, it was agreed that endevors should be used to put a stop to the importing of them." Importation had continued, nevertheless, so Philadelphia Friends asked their Barbados colleagues "that no more negroes may be sent to this River to Friends or others," and that they would ask their neighbors to cooperate as well so "that if possible A stop may be put theyrto." Signed by slaveholders Samuel Carpenter, James Fox, and Anthony Morris as well as abolitionist Southeby, this letter clearly represented another compromise of opinions that, unfortunately, did little to stem slave importation.<sup>21</sup> In 1700, when William Penn, also a slave owner, recommended that Quaker slaveholders take their enslaved workers to meetings for worship, the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting decided to set up a monthly meeting of worship for enslaved Africans, designating Southeby "to give publick notice."<sup>22</sup> He remained engaged with the controversy over slavery, but he had not convinced the slaveholding leaders who dominated the Pennsylvania government, the PYM, or his own monthly meeting to abolish slavery in the Quaker colony.

In 1712, frustrated within Quaker meetings that prioritized group consensus, Southeby took his antislavery efforts into the political realm. He petitioned the Pennsylvania Assembly for "the Enlargement," or emancipation, of enslaved Africans. He tried to push the center of discussion from the slave trade to slavery itself, taking a risk by going outside the Yearly Meeting. He took a more provocative approach, but he remained consistent with his 1696 stand that everyone should be free. The lawmakers, dominated by Friends, responded that "it is neither just nor convenient to set them at Liberty." Primarily in response to the 1712 New York rebellion by enslaved Africans, the Pennsylvania Assembly did place a prohibitive twenty-pound duty on imported slaves, which the Crown subsequently annulled.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Philadelphia Monthly Meeting to the General Meeting of Friends in Barbados, the 30th. of 8th mo '98, (copy), Parrish and Pemberton Family Papers (Collection 1653), box 1, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP), reprinted in Frost, *Quaker Origins*, 72; Cadbury, "Another Early Quaker Anti-Slavery Document," 211–12; Soderlund, *Quakers and Slavery*, 36.

<sup>22</sup> PMM mins., 29 1mo 1700, QC; Carroll, "William Southeby," 423.

<sup>23</sup> *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives of the Province of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1753), 2:110, accessed online through HathiTrust Digital Library, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.35112203943966;view=1up;seq=121>; Carey, *From Peace to Freedom*, 106–23; Nash and Soderlund, *Freedom by Degrees*, 41–42; Horle, *Lawmaking*, 1:685.

Southeby also supported appeals of the Chester Quarterly Meeting to obtain a stronger stand in the PYM against the slave trade. The PYM delegates, led by clerk of meeting Isaac Norris and other wealthy slaveholders, declined taking action themselves and instead wrote to the London Yearly Meeting (LYM) for advice. In response, the English Quakers denounced Friends' importation of Africans "from their Native Country and Relations" as neither "a Commendable nor allowed Practice." Though establishing no sanctions against importers, they advised Quakers that the slave trade was inconsistent with the Golden Rule. Again reflecting the influence of black resistance on white antislavery, they also warned: "the Multiplying of Negro slaves among you may be of dangerous Consequences considering the Peaceable Principle we profess."<sup>24</sup>

Southeby lauded the LYM's antislavery advice in an address to the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting (doc. 2), probably written in 1714. No longer willing to compromise on the issue of slavery, and with more vehement rhetoric than his 1696 essay, he expressed his initial disappointment that Pennsylvania Quakers had chosen to consult outsiders rather than setting an antislavery example on their own: "more & better fruits may Reasonably bee expected from us then from other places, being so many ministers & other Ancient friends that came out of england to live hear, theyrfore wee ought to bee exemplary to other places and not take liberty to do things because others do them." However, he added, "in Another Respect I am Realy glad wee did send for england to friends About it so y<sup>t</sup> all that desires to know theyr Advise About it may bee satisfied that they do not Allow nor have unaty with this evel practis of Keping people and theyr posteraty slaves for ever nor y<sup>e</sup> danger that may follow." Slaveholding Pennsylvanians could no longer complacently assume that English Quakers would sanction their actions.

Southeby seems to have interpreted the London epistle more expansively than the English Friends intended. While the LYM stated that the African slave trade was not an "allowed Practice," it did not explicitly forbid slaveholding. Southeby advocated abolishing slavery itself, not just the African slave trade, and read that meaning into the LYM's advice, implying that the English Quakers did "not Allow" slavery at all. He concluded his address by venting his frustration with the Philadelphia leadership, writing, "and though you strive to discurriddg mee for being so plain with you,

<sup>24</sup> Frost, *Quaker Origins*, 76; Carey, *From Peace to Freedom*, 116–18.

but seing it is Realy & trewly for y<sup>e</sup> promotion of truth & Righteousness in y<sup>e</sup> earth & having the countenance & unaty of sum of y<sup>e</sup> best of men in it, I am not much concernd for y<sup>e</sup> frownes or displeasure of Any that may Apose it.”<sup>25</sup> He clearly felt marginalized, but confidently believed he was on the right side of the issue.

In the ensuing years Southeby continued pressing Quakers to enforce and expand the antislavery advice issued by the 1696 PYM and the 1713 LYM. In 1716 he published and distributed several antislavery papers without permission of the Quaker overseers of the press. When the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting ordered him to stop distributing the papers and “to condemn his disorderly printing,” Southeby acquiesced, “but not so fully” as the meeting desired. In 1717, he published yet another paper. Friends threatened him with disownment but avoided taking that step against a colleague who had worked many years to uphold Quaker testimony and discipline.<sup>26</sup> Though the seasoned abolitionist apparently stopped publishing antislavery essays, he kept up the fight. Eight months before his death in 1722, he sent another petition “about Negroes” to the Assembly, which the legislators read and laid on the table.<sup>27</sup> At the time of Southeby’s death, antislavery agitation remained a minority position within both the Society of Friends and Penn’s Holy Experiment, although Ralph Sandiford, Benjamin Lay, and others would continue the struggle.

\* \* \*

Nearly a century after Southeby composed his 1696 antislavery protest, James Pemberton found it “among the papers of the Yearly Meeting,” likely as part of his work of copying the PYM minutes. This project was something of a family tradition, begun by his grandfather, Phineas Pemberton, in 1696.<sup>28</sup> By 1781 James had taken over the job, combining the earlier

<sup>25</sup> Despite Southeby’s rebuke of the meeting leadership, he remained active in Philadelphia Monthly Meeting affairs through 1715, assisting poor Friends and serving on oversight committees and as representative to the quarterly meeting. PMM mins., 1711–1715, QC.

<sup>26</sup> PMM mins., 27 2mo 1716, 25 3mo 1716, 29 9mo 1717, QC; Carroll, “William Southeby,” 426–27. Copies of Southeby’s publications have not been found.

<sup>27</sup> *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives of the Province of Pennsylvania*, 2:299; Horle, *Lawmaking*, 1:685.

<sup>28</sup> Phineas Pemberton (1650–1702) had been appointed the PYM’s first regular clerk in 1696 and instructed to compile “soe many of the minutes & papers as are fit to be Recorded and can be had” from the preceding years. PYM minutes 1681–1710 (rough), [p. 33] (23 7mo 1696), QC. Phineas died in 1702, and others continued the task of transcribing loose minutes on scraps of paper into a formal minute book. After 1729, the task was continued by Phineas’s son, Israel (1685–1753), whom

minutes transcribed by his father, grandfather, and other clerks into a new “fair” copy of all the minutes from 1681 to 1746.<sup>29</sup> In creating this copy, Pemberton apparently also referred back to the original loose minutes and miscellaneous papers of the PYM, where he found William Southeby’s antislavery address.

Although Southeby’s letter was not included in the PYM’s formal minutes, it is no surprise that James Pemberton took the time to transcribe it for his own use; he was not only a clerk but also an active abolitionist. Beginning in the 1750s, Pemberton and his brothers actively supported a broad reformation in Quaker policy that, among other things, endorsed the type of antislavery policies that Southeby had advocated decades before. For example, Israel Pemberton Jr. served as clerk for the PYM in both 1754, when it issued *An Epistle of Caution and Advices Concerning the Buying and Keeping of Slaves*, and 1758, when it adopted a disciplinary policy imposing sanctions on those who purchased or sold slaves and instructing “such Friends as who have any Slaves to sett them at Liberty.” Influenced by John Woolman and Anthony Benezet, the PYM suggested that the French and Indian War was evidence of divine retribution and that Quakers had a sacred duty to follow the Golden Rule and free their slaves.<sup>30</sup> James Pemberton had succeeded his older brother as clerk of the PYM by 1776, when the Quakers adopted the policy of disowning members who continued holding slaves.<sup>31</sup> Pemberton had also joined the Philadelphia Meeting for Sufferings (PMS) in 1756, which soon expanded its focus from promoting Quaker peace testimony to efforts against slavery.<sup>32</sup> For example, in January 1776 Pemberton served on a PMS committee that issued *The Antient Testimony & Principles of the People Called Quakers*, outlining the Quakers’ pacifism and opposition to the current rebellion while also suggesting that the imperial crisis was

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the PYM instructed “to provide a suitable fair Book, and therein to cause fairly and truly to be entered all the minutes of this Meeting.” PYM minutes 1681–1746 (fair), 339–40 (20–24 7mo 1729), QC.

<sup>29</sup> James Pemberton began his version of the PYM minutes with a transcription of a letter by his grandfather Phineas from around 1700, giving a brief overview of the history of Quakerism in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. James dated his transcription 13 3mo 1781. PYM minutes 1681–1746 (fair), [unpaginated material at front], QC.

<sup>30</sup> PYM minutes vol. 3, 51–53 (17 9mo 1754), 121 (27 9mo 1758, quotation), QC; Drake, *Quakers and Slavery in America*, 58, 61–62.

<sup>31</sup> PYM minutes vol. 3, 353–55 (27 9mo 1776), QC.

<sup>32</sup> Philadelphia Meeting for Sufferings Minutes, vol. 1, 30 (24 9mo 1756), QC (hereafter PMS minutes). On the PMS’s antislavery activities, see also Drake, *Quakers and Slavery in America*, 84–113; Nicholas P. Wood, “A ‘Class of Citizens’: The Earliest Black Petitioners to Congress and Their Quaker Allies,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 74 (2017): 109–44.



the “Dispensations of Divine Providence” for the colonists’ sins, including slaveholding.<sup>33</sup>

The Pennsylvania legislature adopted a gradual abolition law during the war for independence, but other Americans revived the Atlantic slave trade with the return of peace.<sup>34</sup> Pemberton increased his antislavery activities, and the PYM and PMS petitioned the Confederation Congress against the Atlantic slave trade in 1783, 1785, and 1786.<sup>35</sup> Given Pemberton’s long experience in antislavery activism, it was natural that members of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society (PAS, established in 1775) asked him to join their restructured group and serve as vice president in 1787. He became president of the PAS three years later and remained active in both the PAS and PMS until shortly before his death in 1809.<sup>36</sup>

Based on his antislavery activities, Pemberton undoubtedly took great interest in his discovery of Southeby’s 1696 manuscript. Unfortunately, it remains unclear how he used the transcript he made—or what he did with the original. The PAS and PMS frequently published antislavery literature or had it inserted in newspapers, but there is no evidence that Pemberton did so with Southeby’s letter. We can only speculate on what Pemberton thought about Southeby’s address.

From one perspective, Southeby’s 1696 protest, along with the PYM advice issued in response, represented an early milestone in the history of Quaker antislavery. Indeed, when the British abolitionist Thomas Clarkson created a visual map of the course of antislavery, he included “Qua[ker] Pennsylvania 1696” as one of the earliest “rivulets” that combined to form the antislavery ocean that led Britain and the United States to abolish the Atlantic slave trade in 1808.<sup>37</sup> However, James Pemberton’s own experience and his reading of the PYM minutes would have pre-

<sup>33</sup> PMS minutes vol. 2, 53 (19 1mo 1776).

<sup>34</sup> Nash and Soderlund, *Freedom by Degrees*, 99–136.

<sup>35</sup> Drake, *Quakers and Slavery in America*, 90–94.

<sup>36</sup> PAS General Meeting minutes 1787–1789, 7–8 (23 4mo 1787), AmS. 01, Pennsylvania Abolition Society Papers (Collection 0490), HSP; Nash and Soderlund, *Freedom by Degrees*, 124–25; Richard Newman, *The Transformation of American Abolitionism: Fighting Slavery in the Early Republic* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2002).

<sup>37</sup> The fold-out “map” was generally sewn into the front of 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), and can be viewed through Yale University’s Beineke Library website at <http://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3439900>. On Clarkson’s connections to Quakers, see Dee E. Andrews and Emma Jones Lapsansky-Werner, “Thomas Clarkson’s Quaker Trilogy: Abolitionist Narrative as Transformative History,” in *Quakers and Abolition*, ed. Brycchan Carey and Geoffrey Plank (Urbana, IL, 2014), 194–208.

vented him from adopting a simple narrative of unrelenting antislavery progress. He knew that slaveholding Quakers had ignored the toothless PYM advice from 1696 and frustrated Southeby's desire for more effective reforms. They had similarly stifled the efforts of Southeby's antislavery successors, including Ralph Sandiford and Benjamin Lay.<sup>38</sup> Only during the French and Indian War did the PYM take effective action against slave trading and slaveholding.

Pemberton may have seen parallels between Southeby's position within the PYM at the turn of the eighteenth century and the Quakers' position in the early republic. Quakers as a group had finally embraced the ideas previously confined to such radicals as Southeby, but most white Americans—like most Friends a century before—typically gave only lip service to such ideals while declining to take significant action. Every state south of Pennsylvania—as well as New Jersey and New York—still clung to the institution in the 1790s. Some Friends, like Pemberton's kinsman Warner Mifflin, found it “instructive” to reflect on how slow Quakers had been to adopt antislavery and recognize that they “must not expect more from the worlds [*sic*] people, than those of our own Society.”<sup>39</sup> For Mifflin and Pemberton, this type of reflection led not to complacency but instead to a conviction that constant agitation could eventually sway the public to embrace antislavery measures as Friends had. By the time Pemberton died in 1809, every northern state had initiated programs abolishing slavery (often very slowly), and Congress had banned the Atlantic slave trade, but slavery was nonetheless much more deeply entrenched in North America than during Southeby's time.<sup>40</sup>

Other considerations should also discourage us from assuming a straightforward trajectory of progress from Southeby's generation that continued through Pemberton's time to the Civil War. Not only was the Society of Friends' embrace of antislavery in the eighteenth century slow, but Quakers as a corporate group also backed away from abolitionism during the nineteenth century. After 1830, Friends (both Orthodox and Hicksite) disowned members they deemed too radical when it came to antislavery. As J. William Frost writes, “by 1840 all the major yearly meetings . . . had closed their doors to abolition lectures, and soon several

<sup>38</sup> On the halting progress of Quaker antislavery, see Soderlund, *Quakers and Slavery*.

<sup>39</sup> Warner Mifflin to James Pemberton, 3th Day of 2mo: 1787, vol. 47, Pemberton Family Papers, HSP.

<sup>40</sup> Adam Rothman, *Slave Country: American Expansion and the Origins of the Deep South* (Cambridge, MA, 2005).

prominent abolitionists had either been disowned or resigned from meeting.<sup>41</sup> A biographical sketch of William Southeby published in 1855 by the Orthodox journal *The Friend* indicates this renewed conservatism. The author praised Southeby for being among the earliest Quakers to recognize slavery's sinfulness but also criticized him for going "so far as he did in the matter" without the concurrence of the monthly or yearly meetings. By being "impatient" and acting alone, Southeby "stirred up unnecessarily unkind feelings, which did not increase his own comfort, nor advance the testimony he wished to promote."<sup>42</sup> Some of the most influential nineteenth-century Quaker abolitionists, including Lucretia Mott, followed Southeby's path in pushing the boundaries of what Friends' meetings would tolerate.<sup>43</sup> Southeby's writings and activism are thus best understood as part of the long, contested, and uneven history of antislavery dissent and activism among Quakers and American society at large.

#### Document 1: William Southeby's 1696 Testimony Against Slavery<sup>44</sup>

To Friends and All whom it may Concerne

I having had and kept men Servants above twenty years, that is White men, such as bound themselves for term of years, but now at this place not having that conveniency to have such, have oftentimes been considering the purchase of these negroes, but upon serious consideration, it appears to me to Contradict our Great Law-giver's holy precepts and self-denying doctrine, where he saith, whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye unto them—Mat: 7:12;—I have also considered these negroes

<sup>41</sup> J. William Frost, "Why Quakers and Slavery? Why Not More Quakers?" in *Quakers and Abolition*, ed. Carey and Plank, 29–42 (quotation on 37); Ryan Jordan, *Slavery and the Meetinghouse: The Quakers and the Abolitionist Dilemma, 1820–1865* (Bloomington, IL, 2007).

<sup>42</sup> "William Southeby," *The Friend* 28 (1855): 301–2. John Richardson, editor of *The Friend* since 1828, may have written the article.

<sup>43</sup> Carol Faulkner, *Lucretia Mott's Heresy: Abolition and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America* (Philadelphia, 2011).

<sup>44</sup> Transcribed by J[ames] P[emberton], Philad: 9: 11mo 1790, vol. 54, folder 18, Pemberton Family Papers, HSP. A note on the transcription: When Pemberton transcribed Southeby's manuscript, he preserved the original's archaic spellings while underlining them, much as a modern scholar might add "[sic]." For example: "Countrey" and "trewly." Our transcription preserves the archaic spellings (and misspellings) but without replicating Pemberton's underlining, except his underlining of the Golden Rule, which presumably reflected Southeby's original emphasis. Pemberton's care in reproducing archaic spellings, along with his experience producing transcripts of various documents as part of his work as a clerk in the PYM and PMS, suggests that his transcription can be regarded as accurate.

To Friends and All whom it may concerne.

Thinking had and kept men servants about twenty years, that is What more, such as bound themselves for term of years, but since at this place not having that convenience to have justice, have often times been considering the purchase of these negroes, but upon serious consideration it appears to me to contradict our great Lawgivers holy precepts and self denying doctrine, whosoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye unto them mat 7. 12. I have also considered these negroes being brought ~~thru~~ <sup>thru</sup> for sale, and would have indulged the purchase of them, as being no wayes concerned in the original cause of their bondage, not as to the violence when they are first taken to be sold for slaves, as also that they might <sup>that is said</sup> have ~~been~~ <sup>been</sup> ~~well~~ <sup>well</sup> with some then in their own Country, as also that there might be a secret hand of God and that there is more probability of coming to know Christianity then in their own Countries, as also that there might be a Secret hand of God, <sup>that is said</sup> ~~in~~ <sup>in</sup> ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> to be so for the cause aforesaid. I say for these reasons I would have indulged the purchase of them to be ~~lawful~~ <sup>lawful</sup>, and might ~~have~~ <sup>have</sup> ~~been~~ <sup>been</sup> ~~dispensed~~ <sup>dispensed</sup> with, and I believe many honest men have made this the maine objection, to ~~allow~~ <sup>allow</sup> ~~them~~ <sup>them</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~be~~ <sup>be</sup> ~~lawful~~ <sup>lawful</sup>, but then this opened on my mind, that the very act of slavery bearing upon their poor blackamoors minds of being kept Slaves during term of life, both of them and their posterity, I say this appears to me to be a bar to stop them, for ever coming freely to own Christianity, or at least to believe us to be their followers, of our great Lawgiver Christ Jesus who said, whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye unto them, and to love our neighbour as our self, is to answer the Law and the Prophets, nor can we be altogether clear of the God's will. He that smiteth a man bloweth him, if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death. Lev. 24. 17. He that smiteth into captivity, shall see his captivity.

First page of William Southeby, "To Friends and All Whom It May Concerne," 1696, vol. 54, folder 18, Pemberton Family Papers (Collection 484A), Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Full document available at <http://digitallibrary.hsp.org/index.php/Detail/Object/Show/idno/14675>.

being brought here for sale, and would have indulged the purchase of them, as being no wayes concerned in the originall cause of their bondage, nor as to the violence that is used when they are first taken to be sold for Slaves, as also that they might live better here with some then in their own Countrey and that there is more probability of coming to know Christianity then in their own Countrey, as also that there might be a secret hand of God in itt to suffer it to be so for the cause aforesaid.<sup>45</sup> I say for these reasons I would have indulged the purchase of them to be tolerable, and might honestly be dispensed with, and I believe many honest men have made this the maine objection to solve this matter; but then this opened on my mind, that the very act Slavery bearing upon these poor blackamoor's minds of being kept Slaves during term of Life, both of them and their posterity, I say this appears to me to be a barr to stop them for ever comeing trewly to own Christianity, or at least to believe us to be trew followers of our great Lawgiver Christ Jesus who said, whatsoever ye would that men should doe unto you, doe ye unto them, and to love our neighbour as our self, is to answer the Law and the prophetts,\* [*Southey/Pemberton's footnote*: Exod<sup>s</sup> 21:16: Hee that Stealeth a man & selleth him, if he be found in his hand, hee shall surely be put to death—Rev. 13.10, hee that leadeth into Captivity, shall goe into Captivity] nor can we be altogether clear of the first violence used in taking of them to be Slaves, because we receive them, which still encourages the first violente Act in takeing of them; Besides suppose any of them should turn Christians, yet no remedy, they must still be Slaves; the Law of England has more of Christianity in it which gives freedom to them who believe in Christ, and are baptized, besides if we justifie this buying of Slaves, we can not condemn the Turk for makeing Slaves of us, but must justifie them in itt, nay they are more justifiable then we, for they have their liberty of freedom, if they turne to mehometizm their Religion; but if we professing ourselves Christians and to own Christs holy self denying doctrine, we ought to be more examplery to the Turks, and to these poor Blacks; and whereas it may be said, what shall we doe with those we have already, I say mind Christ's doctrine, Doe as ye would be done by, if you were violently taken and were in their condition; at least agree with them for to serve you so long 'till they make reasonable Satisfaction for what they cost, which no doubt but they will

<sup>45</sup> Followed by a deletion: "as also that there might be a secret hand of God." The phrase appears later in the sentence and presumably represents an error introduced and corrected by Pemberton while copying Southey's manuscript.



readily assent to, and serve with more cheerfulness and be more honest in their places, they are of the same mold that we are of, and Christ tasted death for them as well as us, and hath given talents to improve as well as us, and if we have a measure of that Divine Love ruling in us that was so large & incomprehensible in him to all mankind, we must manifest it in some degree, or elce no true Disciples; If carnall reasoning take place, that will be ready to say, How shall we as things are here carry on our business, the Planter his planting, the merchants[,] Brewers, Bakers, Bolter and other trades their callings to advance our trade and calling, we hardly know how to carry it on without Slaves, Truely I believe we may doe it with more peace, and a clearer Conscience in the Sight of God, though we may not live altogether so high & full as now many by the oppression of these poor people doth, and I really believe if there be not some remedy for them, to ease them, God will heare their Cry, and also avenge it on their Oppressors; Let us honestly work ourselves with Such Servants as we have & our Children when able; I hope if this be accepted as most agreeable to Christianity, there may be a Law made against bringing any more of Slaves into this countrey, for I desire these may, both as a Friend to Christianity, the Countrey, and the good Government thereof.

When I writt these lines I had nothing in my mind of anything being written or printed, nor had never seen any such thing that I doe remember; but what is here written is singly to discharge my Conscience in the Sight of God.

W.S.

Philadelphia 12th: 2<sup>d</sup> mon 1696<sup>46</sup>

Postscript

It is also my advice & Caution to all Such as are intending to multiply young negroes as a portion for their Children and posterity after them, that they be really considerate before the Lord in it, for I undoubtedly believe, that the time is come, and coming that one nation shall not oppress, nor one people another; nor make Slaves of Each other, neither that the Great and merciful God will have respect to any one Sort of People more than to another, either because they are Black or White or Taunie, nor for any outward, or meer notional profession of any manner of Religion but as they fear him and come sincerely to bow to his holy Gift of Grace which he hath given to all mankind to profitt withall, and hath tasted death for

<sup>46</sup> Old Style date under the Julian calendar, corresponding to 4mo (April) 1696 under the modern Gregorian calendar.



every man that comes into the world, and Christ the beloved Son of God is in all by this manifestation of his holy Grace and Light as Saith the Apostle, male & female[,] bond & free, Sithian & Barbarian, and we that were of the race of the Gentiles have great cause to believe this Doctrine that were as wile branches who have received of this great mercy and universall loveing kindness being accepted in the beloved Sonn, in whom all the nations of the Earth are accepted, for it is onely through his name that Salvation is without respect of Persons, and this is he who rules and reigns in Righteousness, in Justice and true Judgment, sitting on the throne of David.

[*Followed by Pemberton's comments:*]

William Southbe is supposed to be the author of the foregoing Address, from the original of which found among the papers of the yearly meeting of Friends of Pennsylvania and New Jersey, this copy is transcribed.

JP

Philad: 9: 11mo 1791

[*Docketed by Pemberton:*]

William Southbe

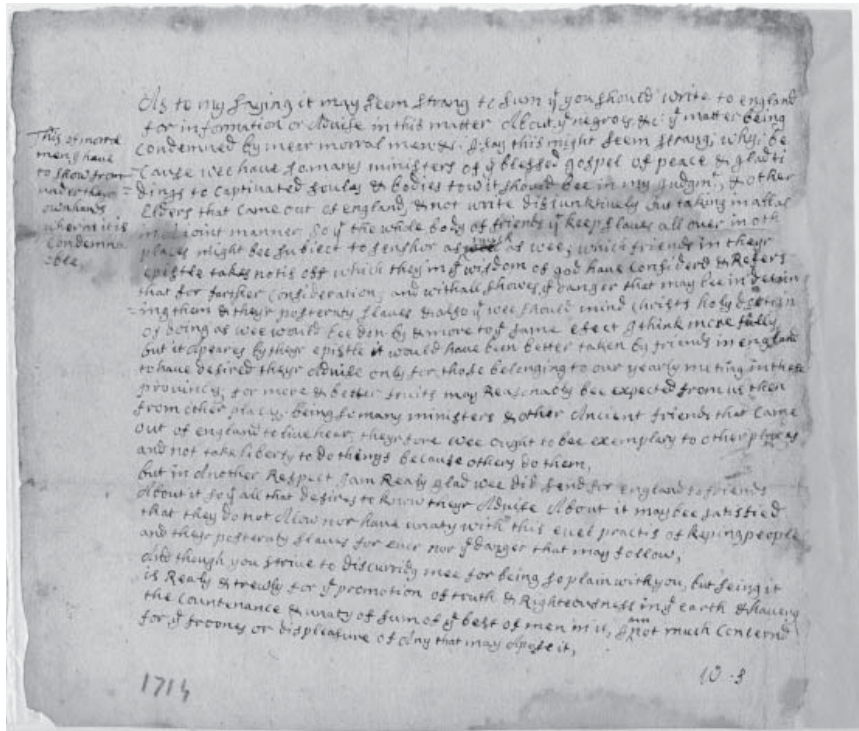
Testimony against Slavery

2 mo 12. 1696.

## Document 2: William Southeby's circa 1714 Paper Relating to Negroes<sup>47</sup>

As to my saying it may seem strang to sum y<sup>t</sup> you should write to england for information or Advise in this matter About y<sup>e</sup> negroes &c: y<sup>e</sup> matter being condemned by mear morral men &c: [*In margin:* This of morral men I have to show from under theyr own hands wherin it is condemnable,] I say this might seem strang; why; because wee have so many ministers of y<sup>e</sup> blessed gospel of peace & glad tidings to captivated soules & bodies to wit should bee in my judgm<sup>t</sup>, & other Elders that came out of england, & not write disjunktively but taking in all as in A joint manner so y<sup>t</sup> the whole body of friends y<sup>t</sup> keep slaves all over in oth[er *MS torn*] places

<sup>47</sup> Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, Miscellaneous Original Papers 1682–1737, HV 1250/S 3.2, 229, QC. Marked in pencil on front and reverse: 1714. Docketed on reverse: Wm Southbeys paper Relateing [*sic*] to Negroes. The authors are grateful to J. William Frost for suggesting that we include this document for publication.



William Southeby's c. 1714 Paper Relating to Negroes, Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, Miscellaneous Original Papers 1682–1737, HV 1250/S 3.2, 229, Quaker & Special Collections, Haverford College, Haverford, PA. Courtesy of Quaker & Special Collections, Haverford College.

might be subject to sensor as well much as wee; which friends in their epistle takes notis off which they in y<sup>e</sup> wisdom of god have considered & Refers that for farther consideration; and withall shoves y<sup>e</sup> danger that may be in detaining them & their posteraty slaves & also y<sup>t</sup> wee should mind Christs holy doctrine of doing as wee would be don by & move to y<sup>e</sup> same effect I think more fully but it Apeares by their epistle it would have been better taken by friends in England to have desired they Advise only for those belonging to our yearly meting in these provinces; for more & better fruits may Reasonably be expected from us then from other places, being so many ministers & other Ancient friends that came out of England to live hear, theyrfore wee ought to be exemplary to other places and not take liberty to do things because others do them,

but in Another Respect I am Realy glad wee did send for england to friends About it so y<sup>t</sup> all that desires to know theyr Advise About it may bee satisfied that they do not Allow nor have unaty with this evel practis of Keping people and theyr posteraty slaves for ever nor y<sup>e</sup> danger that may follow,

And though you strive to discurridg mee for being so plain with you, but seing it is Realy & trewly for y<sup>e</sup> promotion of truth & Righteousness in y<sup>e</sup> earth & having the countenance & unaty of sum of y<sup>e</sup> best of men in it, I am not much concernd for y<sup>e</sup> frownes or displeasure of Any that may Apose it,

W. S

*Spring Hill College*  
*Lehigh University*

NICHOLAS P. WOOD  
JEAN R. SODERLUND