

Exploring Colonial Anti-Slavery Documents

SUBJECT:

Colonial anti-slavery sentiments

DOCUMENTS:

The First Protest Against Slavery in the New World, Germantown, 1688

An Exhortation & Caution to Friends concerning Buying or Keeping of Negroes, Philadelphia, 1693

Rhodes, Robert. "Anti-slavery Petition Unearthed." *Mennonite Weekly Review*. 12 July 2006.
<http://www.mennoweekly.org/MAY/05-22-06/PETITION05-22.html>.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING AND ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

Through examination and analysis of documents, one can ascertain similarities and differences between in American culture and government of the colonies and present day Americans.

How do the colonial beginnings of our country have an impact on present day culture and government?

APPLIED KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS:

Content Strand 1 Historical Thinking

I.2 Distinguish between primary and secondary sources.

The eighth grade student will compare and contrast primary and secondary sources.

I.5 Analyze data in order to see persons and events in their historical context, understand causal factors and appreciate change over time.

The eighth grade student will support interpretations with historical evidence in order to construct closely reasoned arguments rather than facile opinions.

Content Strand 2 Local, United States and World History

2.1 Demonstrate an in depth understanding of major events and understandings in United States History

The eighth grade student will demonstrate an understanding of major events, tenets, and trends in United States History from different historical perspectives, time periods, and regions.

Content Strand 3 Historical Themes

3.5 Describe, explain, and analyze the impact of exchange of ideas on societies, politics, and religion

The eighth grade student will demonstrate an understanding of how ideals, principles, and practices of society, politics, and religion have emerged over time and culture.

Content Strand 4 Applying History

4.2 Display empathy for people who have lived in the past

The eighth grade student will intellectually, identify and vicariously experience the feelings, thoughts, and attitudes of people who lived in the past.

FOCUS OF SUBJECT AREA:

- Conditions of slavery in Colonial America
- Unique characteristics of Pennsylvania Colony
- Early anti-slavery thought as seen in the Quaker movement

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:

- Describe conditions of slavery in colonial America, unique characteristics of Pennsylvania colony, and the important characteristics of the Quaker movement.
- Identify the major arguments against slavery presented by the Quakers
- Predict the reactions of others to the Quaker anti-slavery stance

STRATEGIES:

The student will accomplish the instructional objectives by:

- Reviewing and recording their summary of what they have learned about slavery in colonial America, Pennsylvania colony, and the Quaker movement on the left side of the interactive notebook as homework the night before the lesson.
- Completing a SOAPSTone analysis of one of two Quaker primary source documents expressing strong ant-slavery sentiments and affixing this assignment to right side of their interactive notebook.
- Anticipate reaction to said documents by a Quaker farmer with slaves, a shipping merchant in Philadelphia, and a slaveholder (not of the Quaker faith) and portray their reactions to the early Quaker ant-slavery movement using open mind graphic organizers in their interactive notebooks.

OVERVIEW OF LESSON ACTIVITIES:

This lesson will require one to two 40-minute periods. Prior to Day I of this lesson, the students will have studied the founding and characteristics of Pennsylvania colony, the conditions of slavery in colonial America (in both the southern, northern, and middle colonies), and will have some background on the Quaker religion. After reviewing their summaries of this information from their interactive notebook assignment the night before, students will complete a SOAPSTone of one of the two assigned primary source documents in small groups. Following a class discussion of each group's SOAPSTone analysis, the class will read aloud a secondary source article describing how one of the primary source documents was discovered. Students will then be assigned as homework open mind graphic organizers for which will predict the response of other people to these early anti-slavery documents. The following day these predictions will be shared. As the unit progresses, students will have the opportunity to share, analyze, and

discuss additional 18th century anti-slavery documents and assess the impact of growing anti-slavery sentiment on revolutionary America as well as the early Republic.

QUESTIONS ADRESSED:

- Why did many early Quakers object to slavery?
- What do you predict the impact of this antislavery sentiment to have on colonial America and beyond?

MATERIALS:

- Interactive notebooks
- Primary and Secondary Source Documents
- SOAPSTone Analysis Sheet
- Open Mind Graphic Organizers

OPENING THE LESSON:

- Teacher will walk by and stamp completed summaries assigned as previous night's homework.
- Student volunteers will share assigned summaries.
- Students will comment and add additional details to their interactive notebooks as they deem necessary.

PROCEDURE

- Students will break into groups of 3 or 4 and will complete a SOAPSTone of one of two assigned primary source documents.
- Within the group, one will take on the role of discussion leader and/or timer, one will record the group's observations, and one will report the group's observations to the class.
- The 1688 groups will present their SOAPSTones first, followed by the groups with the 1693 document. Students will take advantage of these discussions by amending and adding to their SOAPSTones and affix their sheets in their interactive notebooks.
- As a class, students will list the major objections argued by either document. These will be copied into another page of their interactive notebooks.
- Class will end with an oral reading of how the 1688 document was recently discovered, followed by an explanation of their homework assignment.

ASSESSMENT:

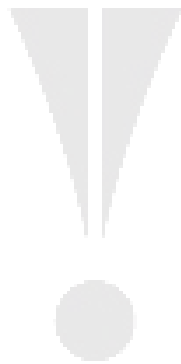
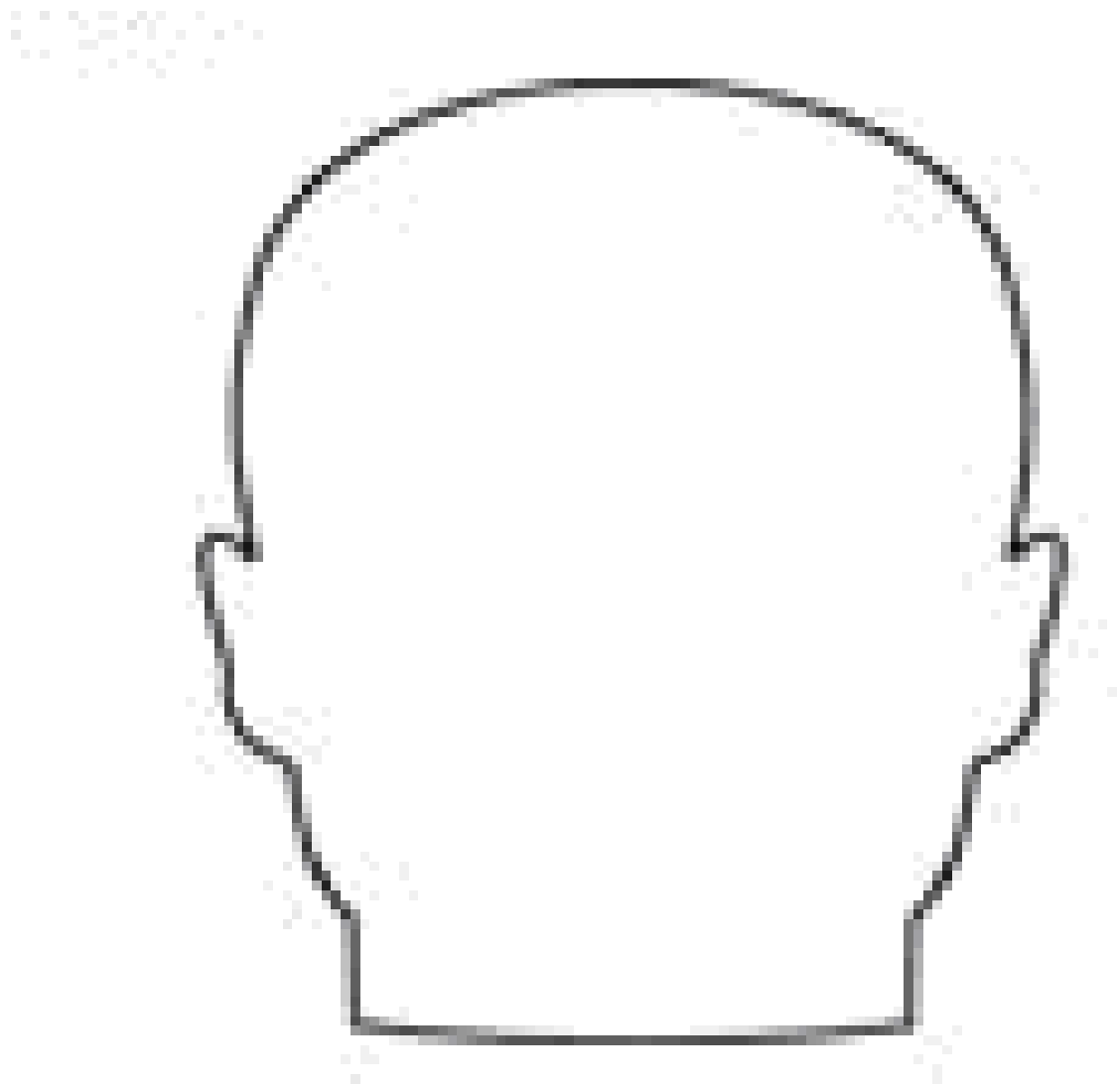
For homework, students will predict the reactions of a Quaker with slaves, a non-Quaker slaveholder and a Philadelphian shipping merchant to these anti-slavery documents. See assignment on the following page.

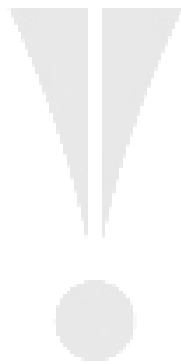
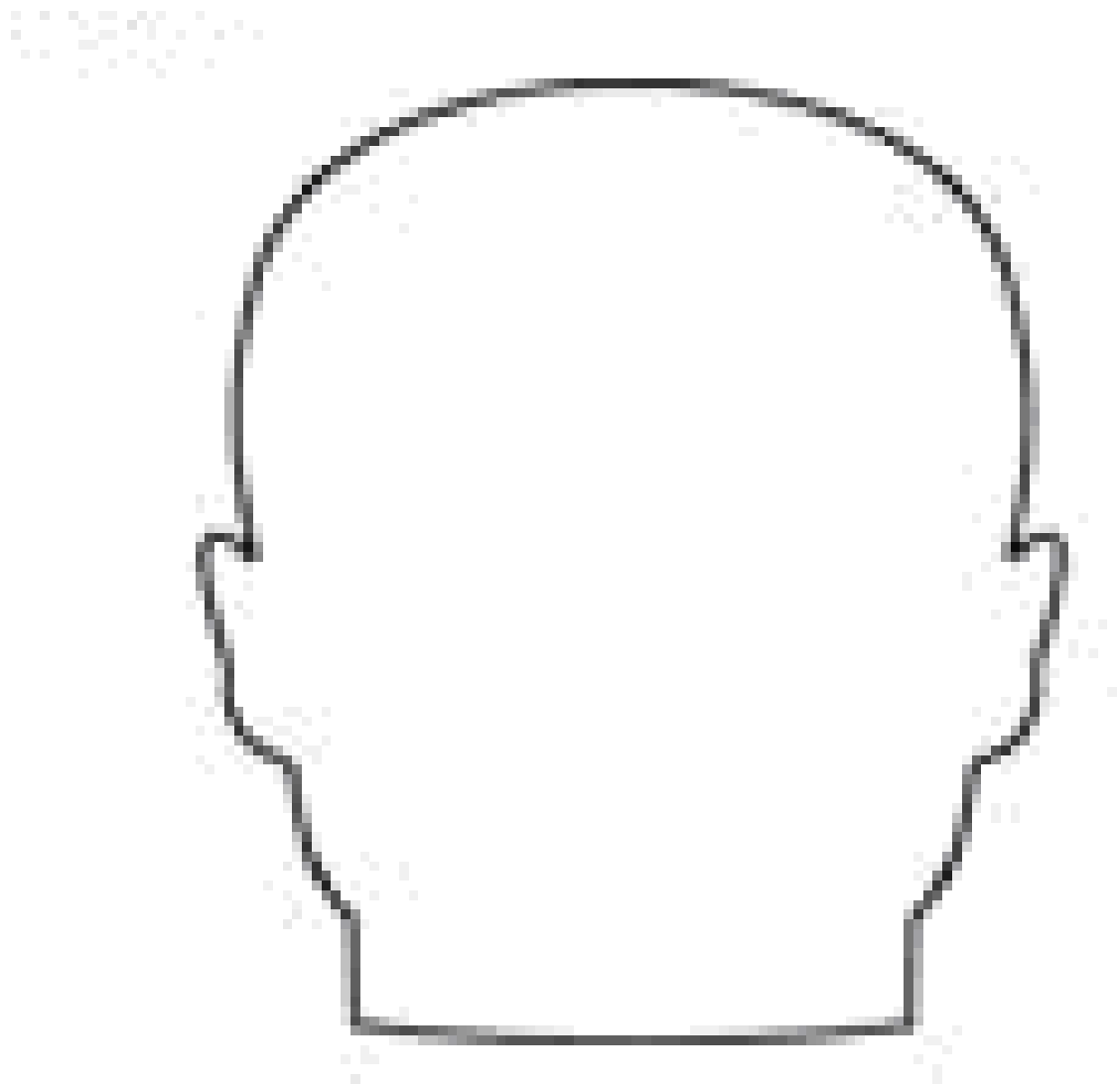
Curriculum created by Amy K. Schiller Hebron, CT

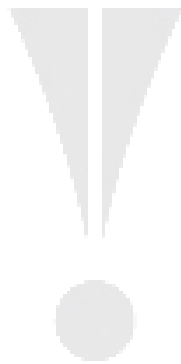
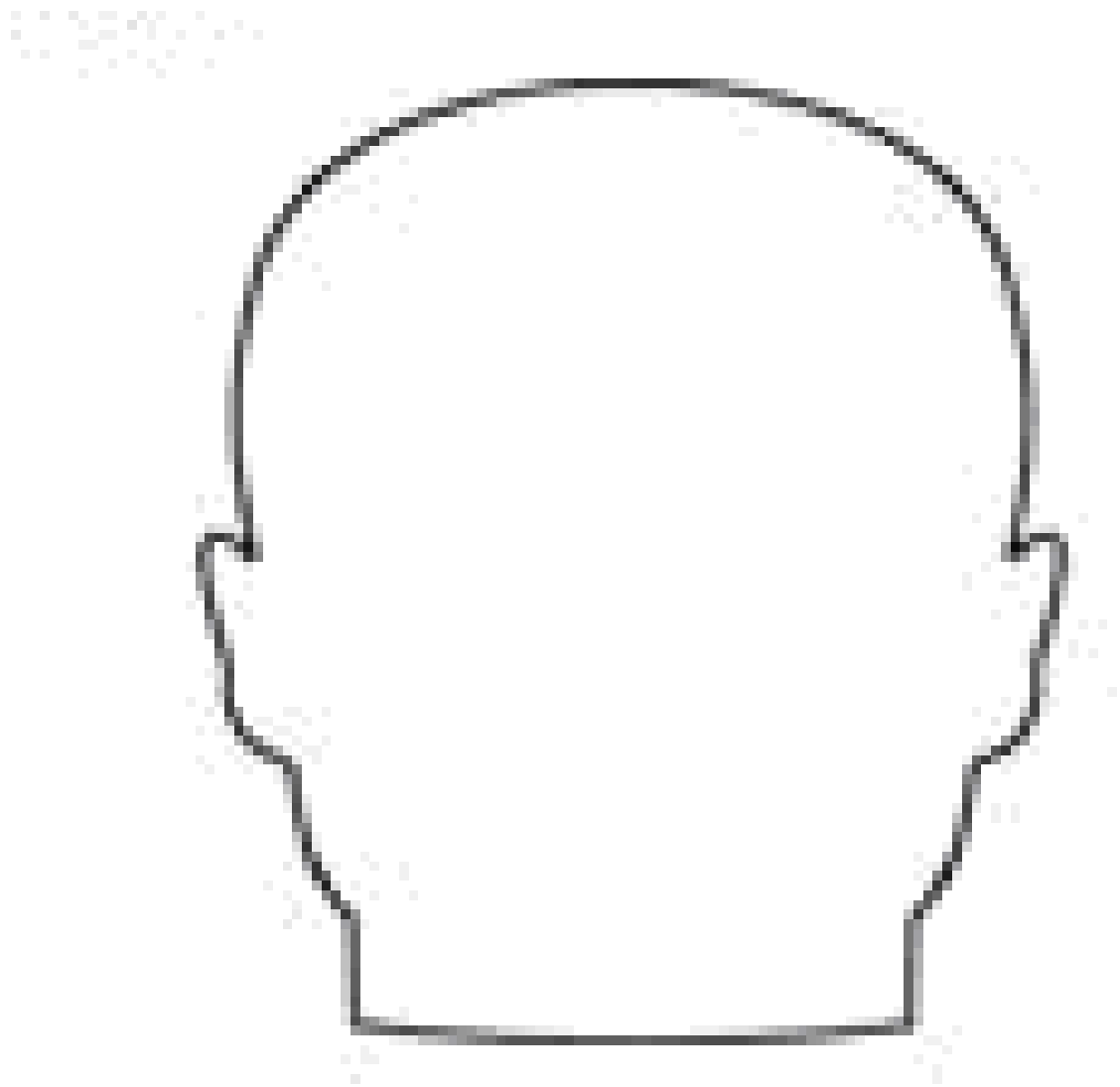
REACTIONS TO ANTI-SLAVERY SENTIMENTS OPEN MIND PREDICTIONS ASSIGNMENT



Draw three open minds on the next three open left hand pages of your interactive notebooks. For the first open mind, pretend you are a slaveholding Quaker and are reading the document (your group just analyzed in class). Predict your reaction. Write the sentence, which you believe to be the most important around the outside of the outline of your mind. Inside the head draw five objects, which reflect your reaction to this document. Also, write inside the head no more than a 25-word reaction to this document. For the second open mind, take on the role of a non-Quaker slaveholder and predict your reaction in the same manner. For the third open mind, take on the role of a Philadelphian shipping merchant and predict your reaction in the same manner. Pages will be stamped and shared in class tomorrow.







SOAPSTone Worksheet

S	<p>SUBJECT: What is the subject of the piece? What general topic(s) and/or idea(s) are contained in the text?</p>
O	<p>OCCASION: What is the occasion, what are the time, place and setting of this piece?</p>
A	<p>AUDIENCE: Who is the audience, which is supposed to read this piece?</p>
P	<p>PURPOSE: What is the purpose or reason this document was written?</p>
S	<p>SPEAKER: Who is the speaker, whose voice tells the story, who is the narrator?</p>
T	<p>TONE: What is the tone of the piece, what emotional words or phrases can be found in this document?</p>

The First Protest Against Slavery in the New World Germantown, 1688

This is to ye monthly meeting held at Richard Worrell's.

These are the reasons why we are against the traffik of men-body, as followeth. Is there any that would be done or handled at this manner? viz., to be sold or made a slave for all the time of his life? How fearful and faint-hearted are many on sea when they see a strange vessel — being afraid it should be a Turk, and they should be taken, and sold for slaves into Turkey. Now what is this better done, as Turks doe? Yea, rather is it worse for them which say they are Christians, for we hear that ye most part of such negers are brought hitherto against their will and consent and that many of them are stolen. Now tho they are black we cannot conceive there is more liberty to have them slaves, as it is to have other white ones. There is a saying that we shall doe to all men like as we will be done ourselves; making no difference of what generation, descent or colour they are. And those who steal or rob men, and those who buy or purchase them, are they not alike? Here is liberty of conscience wch is right and reasonable; here ought to be likewise liberty of ye body, except of evil-doers, wch is an other case. But to bring men hither, or to rob and sell them against their will, we stand against. In Europe there are many oppressed for conscience sake; and here there are those opposd who are of a black colour. And we who know that men must not commit adultery — some do commit adultery, in others, separating wives from their husbands and giving them to others; and some sell the children of these poor creatures to other men. Ah! doe consider well this thing, you who doe it, if you would be done at this manner? and if it is done according to Christianity? You surpass Holland and Germany in this thing. This makes an ill report in all those countries of Europe, where they hear off, that ye Quakers doe here handel men as they handle there ye cattle. And for that reason some have no mind or inclination to come hither. And who shall maintain this your cause, or pleid for it? Truly we can not do so, except you shall inform us better hereof, viz., that Christians have liberty to practise these things. Pray, what thing in the world can be done worse towards us, than if men should rob or steal us away, and sell us for slaves to strange countries; separating housbands from their wives and children. Being now this is not done in the manner we would be done at therefore we contradict and are against this traffic of men-body. And we who profess that it is not lawful to steal, must, likewise, avoid to purchase such things as are stolen, but rather help to stop this robbing and stealing if possible. And such men ought to be delivered out of ye hands of ye robbers, and set free as well as in Europe. Then is Pennsylvania to have a good report, instead it hath now a bad one for this sake in other countries. Especially whereas ye Europeans are desirous to know in what manner ye Quakers doe rule in their province — and most of them doe look upon us with an envious eye. But if this is done well, what shall

we say is done evil?

If once these slaves (wch they say are so wicked and stubborn men) should joint themselves — fight for their freedom, — and handel their masters and mastrisses as they did handel them before; will these masters and mastrisses take the sword at hand and warr against these poor slaves, licke, we are able to believe, some will not refuse to doe; or have these negers not as much right to fight for their freedom, as you have to keep them slaves?

Now consider well this thing, if it is good or bad? And in case you find it to be good to handel these blacks at that manner, we desire and require you hereby lovingly that you may inform us herein, which at this time never was done, viz., that Christians have such a liberty to do so. To the end we shall be satisfied in this point, and satisfie likewise our good friends and acquaintances in our natif country, to whose it is a terror, or fairful thing that men should be handeld so in Pennsylvania.

**This is from our meeting at Germantown, held ye 18 of the 2 month, 1688, to be delivered to the
Monthly Meeting at Richard Worrell's.**

[signed:]

Garret hendericks

derick up de graeff

Francis daniell Pastorius

Abraham up Den graef

AN EXHORTATION & CAUTION TO FRIENDS CONCERNING BUYING OR KEEPING OF NEGROES.

George Keith

Moore, George, ed. *The First Printed Protest Against Slavery in America, Reprinted from "The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography."* Philadelphia: n.p., 1889.

Seing our Lord Jesus Christ hath tasted Death for every Man, and given himself a Ransom for all, to be testified in due time, and that his Gospel of Peace, Liberty and Redemption from Sin, Bondage and all Oppression, is freely to be preached unto all, without Exception, and that *Negroes, Blacks, and Taunies* are a real part of Mankind, for whom Christ hath shed his precious Blood, and are capable of Salvation, as well as *White Men*; and Christ the Light of the World hath (in measure) enlightened them, and every Man that cometh into the World; and that all such who are sincere *Christians* and true Believers in Christ Jesus, and Followers of him, bear his Image, and are made conformable unto him in Love, Mercy, Goodness and Compassion, who came not to destroy men's Lives, but to save them, nor to bring any part of Mankind into outward Bondage, Slavery or Misery, nor yet to detain them, or hold them therein, but to ease and deliver the Oppressed and Distressed, and bring into Liberty both inward and outward.

Therefore we judge it necessary that all faithful Friends should discover themselves to be true *Christians* by having the Fruits of the Spirit of Christ, which are *Love, Mercy, Goodness, and Compassion* towards all in Misery, and that suffer Oppression and severe Usage, so far as in them is possible to ease and relieve them, and set them free of their hard Bondage, whereby it may be hoped, that many of them will be gained by their beholding these good Works of sincere *Christians*, and prepared thereby, through the Preaching the Gospel of Christ, to imbrace the true Faith of Christ. And for this cause it is, as we judge, that in some places in *Europe* Negroes cannot be bought and sold for Money, or detained to be Slaves, because it suits not with the Mercy, Love & Clemency that is essential to *Christianity*, nor to the Doctrine of Christ, nor to the Liberty the Gospel calleth all men unto, to whom it is preached. And to buy Souls and Bodies of men for Money, to enslave them and their Posterity to the end of the World, we judge is a great hinderance to the spreading of the Gospel, and is occasion of much War, Violence, Cruelty and Oppression, and Theft & Robbery of the highest Nature; for commonly the Negroes that are sold to white Men, are either stollen away or robbed from their kindred, and to buy such is the way to continue these evil Practices of Man-stealing, and transgresseth that Golden Rule and Law, *To do to others what we would have others do to us.*

Therefore, in true Christian Love, we earnestly recommend it to all our Friends and Brethren, Not to buy any Negroes, unless it were on purpose to set them free, and that such who have bought any, and have them at present, after some reasonable time of moderate Service they have had of them, or may have of them, that may reasonably answer to the Charge of what they have laid out, especially in keeping Negroes Children born in their House, or taken into their House, when under Age, that after a reasonable time of service to answer that Charge, they may set them at Liberty, and during the time they have them, to teach them to read, and give them a Christian Education.

Some Reasons and Causes of our being against keeping of Negroes for Term of Life.

First, Because it is contrary to the Principles and Practice of the Christian Quakers to buy Prize or stollen Goods, which we bore a faithful Testimony against in our Native Country; and therefore it is our Duty to come forth in a Testimony against stollen Slaves, it being accounted a far greater Crime under Moses's Law than the stealing of Goods: for such were only to restore four fold, but he that stealeth a Man and selleth him, if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to Death, Exod. 21. 16. Therefore as we are not to buy stollen Goods, (but if at unawares it should happen through Ignorance, we are to restore them to the Owners, and seek our Remedy of the Thief) no more are we to buy stollen Slaves; neither should such as have them keep them and their Posterity in perpetual Bondage and Slavery, as is usually done, to the great scandal of the Christian Profession.

Secondly, Because Christ commanded, saying, All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them. Therefore as we and our Children would not be kept in perpetual Bondage and Slavery against our Consent, neither should we keep them in perpetual Bondage and Slavery against their Consent, it being such intollerable Punishment to their Bodies and Minds, that none but notorious Criminal Offendors deserve the same. But these have done us no harm; therefore how inhumane is it in us so grievously to oppress them and their Children from one Generation to another.

Thirdly, Because the Lord hath commanded, saying, Thou shalt not deliver unto his Master the Servant that is escaped from his Master unto thee, he shall dwell with thee, even amongst you in that place which he shall chuse in one of thy Gates, where it liketh him best; thou shalt oppress him, Deut. 23. 15. 16. By which it appeareth, that those which are at Liberty and freed from their Bondage, should not by us be delivered into Bondage again, neither by us should they be oppressed, but being escaped from his Master, should have the liberty to dwell amongst us, where it liketh him best. Therefore, if God extend such Mercy under the legal Ministration and Dispensation to poor Servants, he doth and will extend much more of his Grace and Mercy to them under the clear Gospel Ministration; so that instead of punishing them and their Posterity with cruel Bondage and perpetual Slavery, he will cause the Everlasting Gospel to be preached effectually to all Nations, to them as well as others; And the Lord will extend Peace to his People like a River, and the Glory of the Gentiles like a flowing Stream; And it shall come to pass, saith the Lord, that I will gather all Nations and Tongues, and they shall come and see my Glory, and I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the Nations, to Tarshish, Pull and Lud that draw the Bow to Tuball and Javan, to the Isles afar off that have not heard my Fame, neither have seen my Glory, and they shall declare my Glory among the Gentiles, Isa. 66. 12-18.

Fourthly, Because the Lord hath commanded, saying, Thou shalt not oppress an hired Servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy Brethren, or of the Strangers that are in thy Land within thy Gates, lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee; Thou shalt neither vex a stranger nor oppress him, for ye were strangers in the Land of Egypt, Deut. 24. 14, 15. Exod. 12. 21. But what greater Oppression can there be inflicted upon our Fellow Creatures, than is inflicted on the poor Negroes! they being brought from their own Country against their Wills, some of them being stollen, others taken for payment of Debt owing by their Parents, and others taken Captive in War, and sold to Merchants, who bring them to the American Plantations, and sell them for Bond Slaves to them that will give most for them; the Husband from the Wife, and the Children from the Parents; and many that buy them do exceedingly afflict them and oppress them, not only by continual hard Labour, but by cruel Whippings, and other cruel Punishments, and by short allowance of Food, some Planters in Barbadoes and Jamaica, 'tis said, keeping one hundred of them, and some more, and some less, and giving them hardly any thing more

than they raise on a little piece of Ground appointed them, on which they work for themselves the seventh days of the Week in the after-noon, and on the first days, to raise their own Provisions, to wit, Corn and Potatoes, and other Roots, &c. the remainder of their time being spent in their Masters service; which doubtless is far worse usage than is practised by the *Turks* and *Moors* upon their Slaves. Which tends to the great Reproach of the *Christian Profession*; therefore it would be better for all such as fall short of the Practice of those *Infidels*, to refuse the name of a Christian, that those *Heathen* and *Infidels* may not be provoked to blaspheme against the blessed Name of Christ, by reason of the unparallel'd Cruelty of these cruel and hard hearted pretended Christians: Surely the Lord doth behold their Oppressions & Afflictions, and will further visit for the same by his righteous and just Judgments, except they break off their sins by Repentance, and their Iniquity by shewing Mercy to these poor afflicted, tormented miserable Slaves!

Fifthly, Because Slaves and Souls of Men are some of the *Merchandize of Babylon* by which the Merchants of the Earth are made Rich; but those Riches which they have heaped together, through the cruel Oppression of these miserable Creatures, will be a means to draw Gods Judgments upon them; therefore, *Brethren*, let us hearken to the Voice of the Lord, who saith, *Come out of Babylon, my People, that ye be not partakers of her Sins, and that ye receive not her Plagues; for her Sins have reached unto Heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities; for he that leads into Captivity shall go into Captivity*, Rev. 18. 4, 5. & 13. 10.

Given forth by our Monthly Meeting in Philadelphia, the 13th day of the 8th Moneth, 1693, and recommended to all our Friends and Brethren, who are one with us in our Testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ, and to all others professing Christianity.

THE END.

Anti-slavery petition unearthed

By Germantown Mennonite Historic Trust

PHILADELPHIA — The manuscript of the first protest against slavery in North America — written in Germantown in 1688 by a group that included Quakers and former Mennonites — has been rediscovered more than 50 years after it was last seen.

The document was uncovered this spring in the vault at the Arch Street Friends Meetinghouse in downtown Philadelphia, according to Randy Nyce, director of the Germantown Mennonite Historic Trust.

The text was composed by four men who wrote that they objected to “the traffik of men-body” in the colonies.

According to retired Goshen (Ind.) College history professor Leonard Gross, one of the men was a Lutheran Pietist named Daniell Francis Pastorius. Two others — Derick and Abraham upde Graeff — were Quakers who had been Mennonites in Europe. The fourth, Garret Hendericks, was presumed to be of Mennonite heritage, Gross said.

There would not be a formally organized Mennonite congregation in the colonies until 1698, so Gross said the document is generally regarded as being Quaker in origin.

The table on which the 1688 petition is believed to have been signed is on display in the old Germantown Mennonite meetinghouse, built in 1770.

Slavery was an issue of some contention among colonial-era peace churches. While some Quakers owned slaves, most Mennonites did not.

Historians know of only one North American Mennonite, a baker named Cornelius Bom, who owned a slave. Gross said little is known about Bom, except that he immigrated to Germantown from the Netherlands in 1683 and died before 1689.

Slave ownership was rare among Pennsylvania Germans in general, Nyce said, because landowners who needed and could afford labor preferred German-speaking indentured servants rather than slaves.

The anti-slavery petition did not have a very broad base of support. After being circulated among several Friends meetings in 1688, it was judged too weighty a matter to be dealt with at the time. As a result, it was largely forgotten.

When the petition was rediscovered in 1841, the issue was treated with greater urgency because the abolitionist movement had started in the United States.



The 1688 anti-slavery petition.
— Photo by Rob Smith
*Germantown Monthly Meeting of the
Religious Society of Friends*

As time passed, the document was judged a seminal contribution to the anti-slavery movement.

In 1888, Mennonite historian Daniel Kolb Cassel wrote of the original petition: “A little rill there started, which further on became an immense torrent, and whenever thereafter men trace analytically the causes which led to Shiloh, Gettysburg and Appomattox, they will begin with the tender consciences of the linen weaver and husbandman of Germantown.”

The original anti-slavery petition was last seen more than a half-century ago, according to Nyce, who said the document was considered “misfiled” rather than lost altogether.

Through the persistence of several Germantown residents, Nyce said, including Chris Nicholson of the Germantown Friends Meeting and Ruth F. Marino of the Germantown Mennonite Historic Trust, a thorough search was begun several years ago for the document.

The petition eventually was found in a vault at the Arch Street meetinghouse by archivist Willman Spawn. It has since been transferred to a local archive for safekeeping and possible restoration.

An excerpt from the petition can be found in an upcoming book by Gross and Jan Gleysteen, *The Colonial Germantown Mennonites*, to be published in 2007 by Cascadia Publishing House.

— *MWR assistant editor Robert Rhodes contributed to this report.*

STUDENT RESOURCES

An Exhortation & Caution to Friends concerning Buying or Keeping of Negroes, Philadelphia, 1693

Rhodes, Robert. "Anti-slavery Petition Unearthed." *Mennonite Weekly Review*. 12 July 2006.
<<http://www.mennoweekly.org/MAY/05-22-06/PETITION05-22.html>.>

The First Protest Against Slavery in the New World, Germantown, 1688

SUPPLEMENTAL TEACHER RESOURCES

Stauffer, John. **Black Hearts of Men: Radical Abolitionists and the Transformation of Race**. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001.

Stewart, James Brewer. **Holy Warriors: The Abolitionists and American Slavery**. New York: Hill and Wang, 1996.

Curriculum created by Amy K. Schiller Hebron, CT