

A Collection of Testimonies, 1760: a bibliographical note

In 1760 Luke Hinde published for the Society of Friends the work entitled:

A Collection of Testimonies concerning Several Ministers of the Gospel Amongst the People called Quakers, Deceased: With some of their last Expressions and Exhortations.

The pre-publication history of the book is well-documented in the Minutes of the Meeting for Sufferings and deserves examination for the light it sheds on Friends' method of publication in the eighteenth century. In 1757 Yearly Meeting recommended to the Morning Meeting:

The Care of looking over and printing such Testimonies of Public Freinds [sic] deceased as now are and heretofore have been read in this Meeting and Publish them or such of them as they shall think proper for the Service of Friends.¹

In 1758 it was reported back to the Yearly Meeting that the Morning Meeting had taken no action so the task was then entrusted to the Meeting for Sufferings to report back to Yearly Meeting in 1759.² Meeting for Sufferings considered the matter, noting the previous failure of the Morning Meeting to do so, and appointed a Committee of twelve (of whom any four members might act) "to select such of Testimonys as they may see meet."³

The Committee of Meeting for Sufferings brought in a minute to that meeting on 13th of 10th month 1758 seeking the Meeting's permission to have a transcript of the "record of testimonys" made for correction before submitting it for printing⁴ and on 25th of 5th month 1759 a corrected manuscript, for which Robert Bell was paid five guineas, was brought to the meeting with this minute:

¹ Minutes of Yearly Meeting, vol. XI, p. 259 (quotations from these and the Minutes of the Meeting for Sufferings, both housed in Friends House Library, London, are by permission of the Librarian).

² *Ibid.* p. 367.

³ Minutes of Meeting for Sufferings, vol. XXX, pp. 178, 200.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 225.

Read through & Corrected the Testimonys concerning Publick Friends deceased, and Wm. Pitts & Josh Phipps or either of them, are desired to carry them to the Meeting for Sufferings, in order that they may be Transmitted to the Yearly Meeting.⁵

Yearly Meeting in 1759 received the collection and promptly entrusted its publication to Meeting for Sufferings:

referred to the case of the said Meeting to get the same printed with the Addition of such of the Testimonies brought to this Meeting as shall be judged proper; and the Publishing and spreading of the same is also left to the care of the said Meeting.⁶

Meeting for Sufferings proceeded to consider these matters soon afterwards and entrusted to the Committee the interesting and important question "what number may be of Service to have Printed" on which the Committee were to "confer with Luke Hinde . . . , and make report".⁷

So far, after the apparent lack of interest from the Morning Meeting, the course of preparation and publication had run smoothly. The next report from the Committee is of especial interest for its detail of costing:

It is agreed to propose to the Meeting for Sufferings the printing Two Thousand of them; and that Luke Hinde be desired to inform the several Counties thereof; & desire them to send up an Account what number of Books they will severally take as soon as they can, the Terms are as under viz: upon a Calculation that the Book will make Twenty seven Sheets,⁸ the Charge of One Thousand Copies on fine Demy paper £84 w[hi]ch is ab[ou]t 20^d p[er] Book

Fifteen Hundred £120	19½
Two Thousand £150	18
Three Thousand £212	17 ⁹

Subsequently Hinde reported that he had sent a copy of the minute concerning publication to the Quarterly Meetings and he was asked to ensure that it went also to Monthly and particular meetings.¹⁰ On 25th of 4th Month the text of the preface was approved.¹¹ Then orders began to come in and

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 294.

⁶ Minutes of Yearly Meeting, vol. XI, p. 470.

⁷ Minutes of Meeting for Sufferings, vol. XXX, p. 309.

⁸ The collation is actually 8°: a⁶ B-Aa⁸ Bb².

⁹ Minutes of Meeting for Sufferings, vol. XXX, p. 343.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 351-2.

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 413.

exceeded the two thousand copies ordered by Meeting for Sufferings by a total of one hundred and thirty-five copies on 9th of 5th Month 1760, so that the Meeting agreed to order a further thousand copies¹² Two weeks later it was reported that Friends in Philadelphia had ordered eight hundred copies, so a thousand more were ordered from the printer, making now a grand total of four thousand.¹³ But neither increased print order reached Hinde in time. It was reported to Meeting for Sufferings on 20th of 6th Month that the Books of Testimonies were almost ready for delivery, and the Committee were asked to "confer with Luke Hinde about the price thereof & make Report."¹⁴ John Hunt brought back the report of that conference to Meeting for Sufferings:

the Press being broke up when the first two Thousand Books of Testimonies concerning Publick Friends deceased were printed off; the other Two Thousand which were ordered by the Meeting cannot come at less than the former price which will be Two Shills. & 6 pence p[e]r Book Bound.¹⁵

No more references have been found as to the quantities printed though it seems right to assume that the additional copies were prepared. There is a further substantial order, from John Ruddy, for four hundred copies in sheets.¹⁶ Concern was expressed about the counties that had not ordered copies so it may be that the second printing moved more slowly.¹⁷

One would not expect copies from the two printings to be identical in every detail. The examination of a small number of copies of *A Collection of Testimonies* has established that there are occasional differences in spellings and setting which demonstrate that there are at least two states but the examination in detail of a large number of copies might well show the existence of some made up of mixed sheets of the two printings.¹⁸ So far though I have seen seven copies (and been told of an additional two) with the 'A' points and two

¹² *Ibid.* p. 417.

¹³ *Ibid.* p. 418.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 435.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 452 (26th of 6th Month 1760).

¹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 526.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 472, 475, vol. XXXI, p. 13.

¹⁸ This suggestion was made to me by Mr. D. J. McKitterick of Cambridge University Library. The copies examined so far may be too small a sample, but they show no evidence of mixed sheets from the two printings.

copies (I know also of the existence of another) with the 'B' points. None of these have had owners' dates which would give any clue to the chronological order of 'A' and 'B'. In addition to the differences listed below, the result of a random rather than an exhaustive comparison of copies, it is my impression that the press-work in 'B' is slightly better and that there are some differences in the italic ligatures used.

R. S. Mortimer, in an examination of two copies in Leeds University Library, has noted 71 further points in which 'A' [Birkbeck Library 609] and 'B' [Leeds Friends' Old Library 29] differ. These points apply to the copies I have examined.

Location	A	B
[p. 1] line 9	Kirklington	Kirklington
line 10	Rigghead	Righead
p. 35 last line	(begins) Minister	(begins) about
p. 75 line 24	(begins) end	(begins) Water-end
p. 216 line 10	Oustwick	Owstwick
p. 224 line 5	old	Old
p. 246 first word	sweet	weet
p. 259 line 11	Crosfield	Crossfield

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