

THE LONDON YEARLY MEETING AND BOOKS IN THE QUAKER ATLANTIC WORLD IN THE LATE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Quaker use of print culture has been an important subject for studying the spread and support of the faith in England and beyond. Kate Peters contributed greatly to the examination of early Quaker print culture, arguing that Quaker writing and publications 'emerged as a tool of leadership', or as a method of maintaining authority over the movement.¹ J. William Frost examined the idea of the Quaker Transatlantic Community through books, comparing books read by English Quakers to those read by Pennsylvania Quakers in the eighteenth century.² This paper looks at the early Quaker Atlantic World and its networks, from travelling ministers and emigrants to commercial trade, examining some of the mechanisms of selection and distribution of Quaker print materials. The paper relies on the term *community* to mean a group of people with shared beliefs and a process of exchange but who were dispersed over a large area. Books printed in London, one process of exchange among others, allowed London Quakers to communicate ideas with a community of scattered Friends. The London Yearly Meeting was able to take advantage of London's position as a national and international city to create systems to exchange correspondence, print materials, and supplies necessary for survival in the colonies, and this paper will focus on its use of books in the Quaker Atlantic World.³

The roots of early Quaker print culture grew out of Thomas Aldam's 1652 recommendation that print materials were 'verye serviceable for weake friends, and convinceing the world',⁴ and the growth of Quakerism into a transatlantic community led to wider use of books and pamphlets for the same purposes. The London Yearly Meeting's 1691 printed epistle encouraged the 'spreading Friends' books for the service of Truth', agreeing that

[T]he said books be sent by the several correspondents of each county; who are desired to send up the money for the books, when received, to the Friends that are correspondents in London: and to be diligent in spreading the Friends' books for truth's service.⁵

Separated by an ocean from the active London press, colonial

Friends' access to the most recent Quaker writings became a concern of the London Yearly Meeting, who relied on two administrative meetings to maintain contact with widespread Quaker meetings: the Second Days Morning Meeting and the Meeting for Sufferings. The Morning Meeting was at the hub of several Quaker networks, its members responsible for writing epistles to colonial meetings, for the approval of ministers travelling abroad, and for the approval of books to be printed. Composed of ministers who had travelled throughout England, but often further, the Morning Meeting had access to newly printed books and to travelling ministers, as well as an existing system of correspondents essential to the distribution of print materials. The Meeting for Sufferings was composed of members of the Morning Meeting, as well as one Friend from each county who could travel to London as needed. The Meeting for Sufferings recorded persecution into the Great Books of Sufferings, kept minutes and reports of cases in which it was involved, and became responsible for the expenses of the London Yearly Meeting. The responsibilities of the two administrative meetings did overlap at some points, as members of the Morning Meeting also attended the Meeting for Sufferings and could address the same issues in each meeting, especially in the case of printing. While the Morning Meeting was the main communicator with American and Caribbean Quaker meetings, the Meeting for Sufferings enabled such activities.

Distribution of books to colonial Quakers emerged from the Morning Meeting's original responsibility of approving Quaker publications. The Quaker relationship with the press had begun with the start of the movement in the 1650s, when books and publications were used to spread beliefs, to defend Friends from anti-Quaker publications, and to be delivered to government officials to gain sympathy or understanding.⁶ In addition to developing a process for publication and relationships with printers, London Quakers also created methods of dispersing books by sending them to local correspondents who would then distribute them locally.⁷ The Morning Meeting set about developing a system of choosing titles and destinations, as well as arranging payment, in order to excite colonial Quakers 'to the reading of the Holy Scripture and religious books',⁸ as it had done in the previous decade for English Quakers. Through books, the Morning Meeting could share emerging ideas and beliefs, mostly from writers in England, with scattered Friends.

In addition to collecting two copies of every Quaker publication, the Morning Meeting also collected one copy of every anti-Quaker publication beginning in 1673, and read and approved responses to

the negative publications. With growing experience in responding to anti-Quaker writing in England, the Morning Meeting was in a position to provide responses for American and Caribbean Quakers in the face of opposition to colonial Quakerism. At other times, books were sent according to the wishes of the authors. For instance, members of the Morning Meeting wrote to Bermuda indicating the inclusion of the printed Yearly Meeting Epistle, as well as 'some few Books which the Authors send as a token of their Love to you'.⁹ The Morning Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings sent books to the American and Caribbean colonies nearly every year, and though destination was often included in the meeting records, quantities were only listed occasionally. The Morning Meeting came to rely on a number of specific titles to ship to colonial Quakers, perhaps counting on these writings to best communicate beliefs and stances on particular issues.

The activity of the Morning Meeting was particularly well documented in 1693, when the minutes of the meeting included titles, quantities and destinations of print materials. The same four titles were shipped to the colonies in 1693: George Whitehead's 1692 *Antichrist in Flesh Unmask'd*;¹⁰ his *The Contemned Quaker*,¹¹ also of 1692; his 1693 *The Christian Doctrine and Society of the People called Quakers Cleared from the Reproach of the late Division of a Few in Some Parts of America*;¹² and Robert Barclay's *An Apology for True Christian Divinity*,¹³ first published in 1675.¹⁴ Barclay's *Apology* was a very important book to send to Quakers abroad, as it is considered to be the first printed work of Quaker doctrine.¹⁵ Barclay's book was extremely important to colonial Quakers with little contact with ministers, '[b]eing a Full Explanation and Vindication of their Principles and Doctrines'.¹⁶ George Whitehead had become a main figure of Quakerism, especially after the deaths of George Fox and Stephen Crisp, being 'the chief of the leaders whose convincement dated back to the first days of the Quaker movement'.¹⁷ He was also an active member of the Morning Meeting and the Meeting for Sufferings. These writings of Whitehead and Barclay served the Morning Meeting's goals in distributing books to colonial Quakers that clearly communicated the latest doctrine and beliefs. George Whitehead's 1693 *The Christian Doctrine* was sent in the largest numbers, with fifty to Barbados and the Leeward Islands, fifty to New England, twenty-five to Maryland and one hundred to Pennsylvania and the Jerseys. Fifty copies of Whitehead's book to Barbados and the Leeward Islands meant multiple copies for each monthly meeting in these colonies, where there were fewer than five meetings. This large number of copies might indicate that

the London Yearly Meeting expected the books to be shared with non-Quakers, perhaps attracting them to the established meetings. Other books shipped from London in 1693 were twenty-five copies of Whitehead's 1692 *Antichrist in Flesh Unmask'd* and twenty-five copies of Barclay's *Apology* shipped to Barbados, as well as six, ten, or twelve copies of the three titles shipped to Jamaica, Maryland, Virginia and Carolina, Pennsylvania, the Jerseys and New York.¹⁸

In 1702, the Morning Meeting minutes included a list of fourteen 'Books and Papers which appear most suitable to be collected and Printed in a small Vollume to manifest the Christian Principles and Doctrines of the People called Quakers', therefore representing those works the Morning Meeting preferred Quakers to read.¹⁹ The 'Vollume' contained the names of the three books listed above, as well as Alexander Pyot's *A Brief Apology in Behalf of the People called Quakers*, sent to New England in 1705,²⁰ to Maryland and Carolina in 1715,²¹ and to Connecticut in 1716.²² The Morning Meeting shipped two hundred copies of John Crook's *Truth's Principles* to Maryland and Carolina in 1715,²³ where there were between twenty and thirty meetings, along with one hundred copies each of William Penn's *A key opening a way to every common understanding* as well as another title.²⁴ The Meeting for Sufferings sent 1000 copies of John Field's *The Christianity of the people called Quakers asserted by George Keith* to Maryland in 1700.²⁵ While other titles were shipped on specific occasions, especially those in response to anti-Quaker activities as in the cases of George Keith and Cotton Mather, the titles listed above were the works to which the majority of colonial Quakers would have had access.

Travelling ministers approved by the Morning Meeting occasionally requested books to carry with them or to be sent to American Quakers. When proposing to travel to America in 1702, Samuel Bownas also asked if the meeting wanted to send books with him 'to be dispersed amongst the People as there may be service soon for their Information'.²⁶ Meeting members John Butcher, John Field, John Tomkins and Theodor Eccleston were chosen to select titles to send along with Bownas. Writing from America two years later, Bownas again asked that the meeting send books and pamphlets, this time specifically about baptism, to be directed to Long Island at the cost of twenty shillings.²⁷ Thirteen years later, travelling minister John Farmer wrote a letter from Maryland requesting specific titles and quantities of books and pamphlets to be sent to Maryland Quaker Richard Johns for dispersal to other Quakers or interested parties. He asked for a hundred copies of Penn's 1673 *Key*, two hundred copies of John Crook's *Truth's Principles*, fifty copies of Pyot's 1694

Apology, a hundred copies of Field's *The Christianity of the People Called Quakers*, and ten copies of Joseph Wyeth's 1699 *A Switch for the Snake*.²⁸ For Farmer, these publications communicated the faith most clearly to Maryland Quakers, and apparently the Morning Meeting agreed with Farmer, as it acted on his recommendation. Farmer's request for books was laid before the Meeting for Sufferings, who decided upon the quantity to be sent, added some titles to the list, and the books were apparently shipped.²⁹

In rare cases, individual members of the Morning Meeting could propose books to be sent abroad, as in 1705 when Theodor Eccleston, not a regular correspondent of the New England meetings, asked for the meeting's consent to send four copies of Pyot's *Apology*.³⁰ Also, the London Yearly Meeting directed the Morning Meeting to send books abroad on some occasions, as in 1704, when the Yearly Meeting had the Morning Meeting send five books each to Virginia, New England and Jamaica, titles not specified in the minutes.³¹ The Jamaican Yearly Meeting acknowledged receiving a book shipment sent 'by the Yearly meetings order'.³² Furthermore, colonial Friends could request books that they felt could help defend and spread the religion through the colonial correspondents of the London Yearly Meeting. In 1703, Daniel Zachary, a New England Quaker, advised the Morning Meeting to send books 'to disperse there among the People for their Information in the Doctrines of Truth'. The meeting did so, but with the direction that the value of the shipment should not be more than three pounds.³³ Three years later, the Morning Meeting received a letter from colonial Quakers, acknowledging that they had received copies of Wyeth's *A Switch for the Snake*, as well as printed epistles by George Fox, and further requesting four dozen additional copies of Wyeth's book, as well as 'sundry other books'.³⁴ The responses of the London Yearly Meeting to colonial requests were targeted at times, as in the case of the 1703 reprinting of *New England Judg'd*.³⁵ Requests from colonial Quakers allowed the Morning Meeting to provide books that could meet the needs of Friends abroad and to be sent to more remote areas when ministers could not be spared.

In striving to strengthen beliefs throughout the transatlantic Quaker communities, the Morning Meeting chose to target areas where Quakerism was newly introduced or challenged, ensuring their inclusion in the growing Quaker community. For example, in 1699, Theodor Eccleston, John Field, John Butcher and Samuel Waldenfield were appointed by the meeting to select some Friends' books to be sent to America, specifically to Boston and areas east of that city.³⁶ Quakers in Massachusetts were frequent subjects of

persecution through a series of laws enacted before the Restoration to punish Quakers by whipping and mutilation, then by exile after.³⁷ The Morning Meeting took care in selecting titles, taking a year to prepare a list that the meeting then 'left to them to consider as the Quantity and sorts and to Add or Deminish as they see meet of the same or other sorts'. The meeting did ask that the list be presented again, with the costs, before the shipment was made.³⁸ The minutes mention that just months later, John Field and John Tomkins wrote a postscript to an Epistle to Rhode Island regarding the distribution of a shipment of books, possibly referring to the same shipment directed to New England.³⁹ While ministers could have been punished or banished from Massachusetts, books could spread doctrine and discipline in their place with less risk of punishment.

The Payment of Books

The Meeting for Sufferings arranged for the original payment for the books shipped abroad often, whether from the National Stock or donated funds. In 1679, the minutes of the Meeting for Sufferings declared that 'all books read at Second days Morning Meeting be presented to the meeting for Sufferings who are to order and direct the manner and number of books & the printer thereof'.⁴⁰ The first record of the Morning Meeting arranging for the sending of books to Nevis and Bermuda in 1688 raised the issue of payment. Following the proposal in the Morning Meeting to send the books, John Field took this proposal to the Meeting for Sufferings, seeking their 'consent to defrey the charge of them, being about 5 or 6s'.⁴¹ Just a year later, Thomas Northcott, a London printer, presented to the Morning Meeting a bill for books George Fox had sent 'beyond the seas as Barbados &c for the spreading of truth,' which was directed to the Meeting for Sufferings.⁴² The question of payment appeared in the minutes with some frequency, and was usually referred to the Meeting for Sufferings. The distribution of books was important enough for the London Yearly Meeting and its administrative meetings to allocate money from their accounts, and the meetings undertook some of the costs to print and send the publications. Often, books published for colonial communities were a financial burden for the Meeting for Sufferings and Morning Meeting,⁴³ who occasionally sought other methods of payment.

When payment for books did not come from within the London Yearly Meeting, colonial quarterly or yearly meetings paid for the books and shipping, arranged through factors or agents in London. The 1700 epistle from the Bermuda Yearly Meeting included an order for George Fox's *Journal* 'and if you please let us know the price, as

also some other Books that are New and Epistles that are necessary to be Read'.⁴⁴ The minutes of the 1705 Yearly Meeting at Philadelphia recorded an order of two hundred copies of George Bishop's book from printer Tace Sowle, stating that 'She intends to send them in Two Bottoms, at as Low a rate as she can Whereupon this Meeting orders that Care be taken to pay for them (as soon as it shall be known that they are Shipped) out of the Yearly Meeting Stock,'⁴⁵ that is, its own stock. Also, correspondents of the Morning Meeting informed colonial meetings of the cost of books, as with Joseph Wyeth's 1701 letter to New England Friends with an 'Inclosed catalogue of books amounting to the sume of Four pounds Seven Shillings'.⁴⁶ In other cases, individual Friends offered to pay for books to be reprinted and sent abroad with their own money. During the Morning Meeting's work on addressing the New England sufferings, Jonas Langford of Antigua gave money for the new edition of George Bishop's 1662 book.⁴⁷ London Quaker John Baker had offered two guineas to the 1702 Yearly Meeting to be put toward books to be sent to New England. Baker gave his donation to John Field of the Morning Meeting, as well as an additional three guineas more for books to be sent 'to any other parts', which the meeting directed to Carolina, Bermuda, Nevis and Antigua.⁴⁸ Although cases of funding from outside the London Yearly Meeting and other yearly meetings were less common, the Morning Meeting could use these funds for specific shipments on occasion.

The Flow of Books

It is possible to establish where and when shipments were sent from London based on the minutes of the Morning Meeting and the Meeting for Sufferings, and the epistles from Caribbean and American colonies provide some evidence that the shipments were received there. For example, in 1681, the Meeting for Sufferings recorded sending books to Virginia, and in 1682 a member of the Yearly Meeting in Virginia, Thomas Jordan, wrote of their arrival in a letter to the meeting.⁴⁹ Another example was the Morning Meeting's shipment of books to Bermuda in 1688, when in the following year, they received an acknowledgement of receipt in an epistle.⁵⁰ Furthermore, the minutes of colonial yearly meetings record the arrival of book shipments, such as the 1706 entry in the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's records that the 1705 order of two hundred copies of George Bishop's book from Tace Sowle had arrived in part.⁵¹ The number of copies of titles sent hints at the availability of chosen titles to colonial Quakers, and two hundred copies to Pennsylvania and the Jerseys would have provided more than one copy per monthly

meeting, potentially even providing books to be distributed outside of Pennsylvania. In some cases, there is a record of the shipments not arriving, such as in 1694, when 'the Ship wch Friends of late Sent Letters and books &c by to America was taken by the French'.⁵² Many times the question of whether specific shipments arrived is not answered.

When the transatlantic shipment of print materials was successful, the books were directed to the colonial correspondents for distribution amongst meetings. This further distribution was no longer the responsibility of the London meetings for discipline and fell under the colonial yearly meetings' purview. For example, distribution in Pennsylvania and the Jerseys was impacted by decisions made by the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's Overseers of the Press, a group of ministers and laymen who wished to play a similar role as the Morning Meeting did in the London Yearly Meeting. The Overseers also decided which books would be ordered from London or reprinted by the Philadelphia printer, and distributed books shipped from London, effectively dictating what Pennsylvania Quakers without their own transatlantic connections read.⁵³ The 1705 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting ordered two hundred copies of George Bishop's book from Tace Sowle, suggesting they 'may be divided as usual among the Several Meetings'.⁵⁴ The 1717 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting appointed eleven members of the Overseers of the Press to distribute part of 1500 books, 'one half to the Quarterly meeting and the other half as they find Occasion And it might be mentioned in this meeting that some other books might be of Service to spread in some parts of this and the adjacent Countreys'.⁵⁵ Most of these eleven Overseers signed epistles sent from Philadelphia to London, and several of them were official Correspondents with the London Yearly Meeting, making them active participants in transatlantic Quaker networks.

Outside of Quaker sources, tracking shipments of books is more difficult. While books were entered into the London Port Books, such as an August 1683 entry for William Woodbee's shipment of books, among other items, to Pennsylvania,⁵⁶ the destruction of port books after 1696 makes a study of book trade over several decades difficult.⁵⁷ Furthermore, books that were shipped were not always included in port book entries. For example, avid book collector James Logan avoided paying duties by transporting books in a shipmaster's chest.⁵⁸ However, the shipment of books was well documented in 1695, which allows for an examination of the London Yearly Meeting's response to George Keith.

With the American press outside of New England slower to

develop, colonial Friends were frequently dependent on Europe for print materials, and especially dependent on London, in their earliest decades. Therefore, the flow of Quaker books in the Atlantic World was predominantly from London to the colonies leading up to 1725, and this aspect of the book process was very much overseen by the London meetings for discipline, from the authoring of works, through editing, funding, printing and distribution. As J. William Frost posited, this one-sided flow of books meant that American Quakers read about English Quakers through the books sent by the London Yearly Meeting, while English Quakers learned about American Quakers only through correspondence and the reports of travelling ministers.⁵⁹ In addition to the transatlantic shipments of books reaching Quakers, however, there were a couple of printers in the colonies producing Quaker materials, although less consistently. William Penn arranged for printer William Bradford to establish a press in Philadelphia,⁶⁰ and his press was ready by December 1685. Bradford stayed until 1693, and Philadelphia was without a Quaker printer until 1699, when Reynier Jansen arrived. Jansen died just seven years later and the Philadelphia Quakers were again without a printer until the hiring of Andrew Bradford, William's son, who printed little before 1720.⁶¹

The London Yearly Meeting and the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting attempted to establish an exchange by 1694, rather than simply books flowing from London across the Atlantic, as confirmed in an epistle from the Morning Meeting to the Pennsylvania and Jersey Yearly Meeting that proposed that Quakers in the colonies would request that every book printed regarding Quakers, both against and supporting, would be sent by their correspondents.⁶² For example, John Field was sent ten books from Pennsylvania with the understanding that the books would be returned when finished.⁶³ In 1695, Quakers in Barbados sent a book to Morning Meeting member George Whitehead for examination.⁶⁴ The importance of sending books from the colonies was reiterated in a 1704 epistle from Pennsylvania that agreed 'to send one book of what are printed there,'⁶⁵ for which the Morning Meeting agreed to pay.⁶⁶ However, as James Green wrote, 'the early colonists relied on the presses of London'.⁶⁷ In the early years of the colonies, it was cheaper to import books from London, especially when London Quakers were willing to absorb some of the expense of shipping and the books. This fact gave the London Yearly Meeting the opportunity to use books and pamphlets as tools, giving it a near monopoly of the Quaker press in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in London. Nonetheless, while the vast majority of books travelled westward

from London, early exchanges attempted to establish foundations of a transatlantic dialogue.

Books in the Colonies

Despite the London Yearly Meeting's encouragement, there were concerns about Friends, including children, not reading these materials. In 1705, Friends in Jamaica wrote to the Morning Meeting that 'in this island, the people Generally are more desirous of Reading Play books and such like rather then look into a Friends book'.⁶⁸ Fifteen years later, the interest in the more popular press continued to be enough of a problem that the London Yearly Meeting epistle advised that 'no Friends suffer romances, play-books, or other vain and idle pamphlets, in their houses or families, which tend to corrupt the minds of youth'.⁶⁹ Quaker books and pamphlets needed to be accessible for colonial Quakers to provide an alternative to the more popular press.

Quakers on both sides of the Atlantic started to develop meeting house libraries where their communities could share books. The Philadelphia Yearly Meeting made arrangements for 'a library of a sort and lent or given as there may be occasion' created from a 1712 shipment of books from John Askew of London.⁷⁰ In England, meeting house libraries were established in Lincolnshire in the 1690s, at Evesham as early as 1706, and at St Albans in 1734.⁷¹ Meeting house libraries apparently lent books to members, as when the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting lent a copy of George Fox's *Journal* to member Richard Armitt in 1705.⁷² The content of the collections in these meeting house libraries possibly held the Morning Meeting's most suitable books and papers, although meetings with merchant members may have held a wider range of titles due to these members' access and communication with London. In addition to Monthly Meeting collections, some well-known Quaker individuals had personal collections with non-Quaker, and even non-religious works. James Logan of Philadelphia owned more than 3000 books covering a large range of subjects, while Thomas Chalkley of London, then Pennsylvania, owned about one hundred books.⁷³

Books became useful items for the London Yearly Meeting, providing it with tools to address challenges to the faith throughout the Atlantic World. For example, in 1702 the Morning Meeting decided to update George Bishop's 1661 *New England Judg'd* as a response to Cotton Mather's 1702 *The Magnolia Christi Americana*, assigning responsibility to member Joseph Grove,⁷⁴ based on a recommendation from travelling ministers William Ellis, Aaron Atkinson and Joseph Kirkbridge.⁷⁵ The updated book countered

Mather's justification of the execution of four Quakers, while addressing the ongoing interest in the New England Quaker 'martyrs' among colonial Quakers.⁷⁶ Tace Sowle printed and bound fifty copies of the updated *New England Judg'd* by 1704 to be sent by ship as soon as possible.⁷⁷

The concerted effort of the London Yearly Meeting to address the challenges raised by George Keith in the last decade of the seventeenth century also included the printing and distribution of books. In 1691, Keith first broke with the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting over his proposal of a set of rules, including a required confession of faith, ideas the meeting called 'downright Popery'.⁷⁸ He formed a splinter group called the 'Christian Quakers' and the controversy spread beyond Philadelphia by the end of 1691. After returning to London by 1694, Keith was disowned by the London Yearly Meeting, but continued to write and speak out against Quakerism. The first mention of Keith in the official London Yearly Meeting transatlantic correspondence was in a 1693 epistle to the Yearly Meeting for Pennsylvania, East and West Jersey that year in Burlington, West Jersey, referring to Keith's 'controversial point'.⁷⁹ Following that epistle, the 1694 London Yearly Meeting asked members John Field, John Vaughton, and John Butcher to choose books to be sent 'beyond the sea,' including published responses to George Keith.⁸⁰ The 1695 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting requested that the London Yearly Meeting act, writing in their epistle 'we desire that you would be pleased to take care that Such Books and Papers as may be of Service to us may be sent some of each sort by Every opportunity as may happen after their Publication for our adversary George Keith is very Early sending his here'.⁸¹

The Morning Meeting reacted by arranging for books to be written in response to Keith's own writings. According to the Port Books of London, in 1695, well over 600 books left London in eleven different shipments, bound for Antigua, Virginia and Barbados, potentially to be distributed to other colonies from ports in those three colonies.⁸²

Table 1: Recorded Books Shipments from London in 1695

Month	Ship	Destination	Merchants	Quantity of books
May	<i>Adventure</i>	Antigua	Thomas Clarke	300
June	<i>Durham Yard</i>	Barbados	Richard Diamond	75
July	<i>Elizabeth</i>	Barbados	Walter Benthall	100
July	<i>Sarah Mary & Hopewell</i>	Barbados	Richard Diamond	14
July	<i>Sarah Mary & Hopewell</i>	Barbados	Walter Benthall	Hundred-weight (112 pounds)
December	<i>Hampshire</i>	Virginia	Edward Haistwell	50
December	<i>Hampshire</i>	Virginia	Edward Haistwell	25
December	<i>London Armes</i>	Virginia	Edward Haistwell	50
December	<i>Mary</i>	Virginia	Edward Haistwell	14 pounds
January	<i>Harding</i>	Barbados	Sylvanus Grove	25
January	<i>Joseph</i>	Barbados	Richard Diamond	14 pounds

Source: *The National Archives (UK), London Port Books E190/152/1 (Waiters: Overseas: Exports by denizens, Xmas 1694 - Xmas 1695).*

Tace Sowle's bill for 'books sent beyond Sea by the 2d dayes Morning Meet order and for books given at Turners Hall in Answer to Geo. Keith' was over £6.⁸³ The payments from the National Stock included over £20 in 1695 and over £65 in 1696 to Tace Sowle, as well as more than £2 to another London printer Thomas Northcott in 1696.⁸⁴

The exact actions of the colonial yearly meetings upon receiving the shipments is open to further study, but the response by epistle to London to the arrival of the books was appreciative. For example, the 1696/1697 Virginia Quarterly Meeting thanked the London Yearly Meeting for the books sent in 1695, acknowledging 'Edward Haistwells love and kindness to us in sending a parcell of Good Friends Books to be delivered amongst friends here'.⁸⁵ By 1699, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting included in their annual epistle to the London Yearly Meeting that the 'mischievous factions Raised by George Keith, who are soe Confounded Scattered and Divided, that

their Name is now Scarcely heard'.⁸⁶ Epistles sent in 1700 and 1701 from the colonies to London indicated that Keith's influence had waned significantly there.⁸⁷

Conclusion

Quaker use of print materials to spread the faith and support Friends in the Atlantic World was different than that of Puritans in the earlier seventeenth century and preceded the later use of books by the Church of England through the Society for the Promoting of Christian Knowledge, or S.P.C.K., after its 1699 founding. While Puritans transported books and newsletters across the Atlantic, friends and family of the colonists supplied these books.⁸⁸ However, the local autonomy of Puritanism, especially the strong congregationalism of many New England Puritans, meant that the exchange of books was not centrally directed or administered. Following Thomas Bray's report of the 'deplorable State of the English Colonies where they have been in a manner abandoned to Atheism; or, which is much at one, Quakerism, for want of clergy settled among them',⁸⁹ Bray helped the Church create the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, or S.P.G. and the S.P.C.K., relying on the S.P.G.'s ministers and missionaries, as well as the S.P.C.K.'s distribution of books, to more firmly establish the Church of England in the colonies.

While books allowed the London Yearly Meeting to disperse detailed descriptions of faith and ideas to distant Friends cheaply, and without endangering the lives of travelling ministers, by the 1720s, books were less frequently used as a tool in the Quaker Atlantic World and, indeed, amongst all Friends. In London, the number of Quaker books being produced dropped from 117 per year in the 1660s to just six in the 1700s.⁹⁰ For example, while the Morning Meeting continued to send the 'most suitable' books to colonial Friends in 1702 and again in 1715, there are no entries in the minutes of the Morning Meeting about transatlantic books for the following ten years.⁹¹ One suggested reason was that the Morning Meeting's approval process accounted for some part of that reduction, as George Fox and the Morning Meeting's 'successful attempt to delimit political and religious speculation within the movement' led to 'the famous decline of Quakerism into the respectable quietism of the eighteenth century'.⁹² An alternative suggestion is that a more permanent establishment of a print culture in Pennsylvania led to decreased demand on London Quaker presses. Nonetheless, before the decline in the eighteenth century, the London Yearly Meeting and the meetings for discipline effectively used religious, political

and commercial transatlantic networks to communicate with scattered Friends, reaching dispersed people with shared beliefs, in part through the distribution of print materials.

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ENDNOTES

1. Kate Peters, *Print Culture and the Early Quakers* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 36.
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3. This discussion of the transatlantic book trade is a product of a larger study of London Quakers in the Atlantic World in Jordan Landes, *London's Role in the Creation of a Quaker Transatlantic Community in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries* (Unpublished PhD thesis. University of London 2010).
4. Thomas Aldam to George Fox, 1652 from Ian Green and Kate Peters, 'Religious Publishing in England 1640-1695', *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume IV: 1557-1695*, ed. by John Barnard and D.F. McKenzie (Cambridge, 2002), 67-93, (p. 70).
5. London Yearly Meeting, *Epistles from the Yearly Meeting of Friends. Held in London to the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings in Great Britain, Ireland and Elsewhere, from 1681 to 1857, inclusive...* (London, 1858), p.59.
6. Thomas O'Malley, "'Defying the Powers and Tempering the Spirit": A Review of Quaker Control over their Publications 1672-1689', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 33(1) (1982), 72-88, (p. 77).
7. O'Malley, "'Defying the Powers"...', p. 80. For example, the 1699 minutes contain an entry regarding the distribution of books in Norfolk and Suffolk (Library of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain (hereafter referred to as LSF) MS Morning Meeting Minutes (hereafter referred to as MMM), Volume II, transcription, p. 134.)
8. London Yearly Meeting, *Epistles from the Yearly Meeting of Friends*, p. 157.
9. LSF, MS Answers to Forreign and Domestick Epistles (hereafter known as LSF MS Epistles sent). Vol I, p.65.
10. George Whitehead, *Antichrist in flesh unmask'd, the Quakers Christianity vindicated, from the malicious and injurious attempts of [brace] Edward Paye, William Alcott, & Henry Loader, in their late defaming confused book falsly styled. Antichrist in spirit unmask'd, or Quakerism a great delusion, wherein their causeless outrage, folly and falshood are deservedly exposed* (London: Thomas Northcott, 1692.) (English Short Title Catalogue Citation R186514)
11. George Whitehead, *The contemned Quaker and his Christian religion*

- defended against envy & forgery in answer to two abusive invective pamphlets, the one stiled Antichrist in spirit unmasked, the other Railings and slanders detected, promoted by some persons commonly called Anabaptists at Deptford in Kent who have unwarily begun the contest* (London: Thomas Northcott, 1692.) (ESTC Citation R26354)
12. George Whitehead, *The Christian doctrine and society of the people called Quakers; cleared from the reproach of the late division of a few in some part of America, as not being justly chargeable upon the body of the said people there or elsewhere* (London: Thomas Northcott, 1693.) (ESTC Citation R233931)
 13. Robert Barclay, *An apology for the true Christian divinity, as the same is held forth, and preached by the people, called, in scorn, Quakers being a full explanation and vindication of their principles and doctrines, by many arguments, deduced from Scripture and right reason, and the testimony of famous authors, both ancient and modern, with a full answer to the strongest objections usually made against them, presented to the King / written and published in Latin, for the information of strangers, by Robert Barclay; and now put into our own language, for the benefit of his country-men* (London: unknown, 1678.) (ESTC Citation R1740)
 14. Books identified using Joseph Smith's *A Descriptive Catalogue of Friends' Books, or Books written by Members of the Society of Friends, Commonly Called Quakers, From Their First Rise to the Present Time Interspersed with Critical Remarks, and Occasional Biographical Notices, and Including All Writings of Authors Before Joining, and by Those After Having Left the Society, Whether Adverse or Not as Far as Known* (London, 1867).
 15. One historian has even referred to Barclay as 'the systematizer of Quaker doctrine'. [Jack Marietta, 'Wealth, War and Religion: The Perfecting of Quaker Asceticism 1740-1783' *Church History* 43(2) (1970), 230-241 (p. 230).]
 16. Robert Barclay, *An Apology for the True Christian Divinity*, 1678, retrieved from the Quaker Heritage Press, <http://www.qhpress.org/texts/barclay/apology/front.html>.
 17. William C. Braithwaite, *The Beginnings of Quakerism* 2nd edn (York, 1951), p. 454.
 18. LSF MS Morning Meeting Minutes Vol II, p. 16.
 19. LSF MS MMM Vol II, pp. 102-103.
 20. LSF MS MMM Vol III, p. 222. *A brief apology in behalf of the people in derision call'd Quakers. Written for the information of our sober and well-inclined neighbours in and about the town of Warminster in the county of Wilts* (London: Thomas Northcott, n.d.) (ESTC Citation R229320)
 21. LSF MS MMM Vol IV, p. 86.
 22. LSF MS Meetings for Sufferings (hereafter MfS), Vol XXII, p.155.
 23. John Crook, *Truth's principles: or. Those things about doctrine and worship, which are most surely believed and received amongst the people*

of God, called Quakers viz. concerning the man Christ, his sufferings, death, resurrection, faith in his blood, the imputation of his righteousness, sanctification, justification &c. Written, to stop the mouth of clamour, and to inform all who desire to know the truth as it is in Jesus; by the servant of the Lord, John Crook. To which is added, somewhat concerning the difference between the perswasions of reason, and the perswasions of faith (London: unknown, 1662) (ESTC Citation R204876)

24. LSF MS MMM Vol IV, p. 86. William Penn. *A key opening a way to every common understanding, how to discern the difference betwixt the religion professed by the people called Quakers and the perversions, misrepresentations and calumnies of their several adversaries : published in great good will to all, but more especially for their sakes that are actually under prejudice from vulgar abuses* (London: Thomas Northcott, 1693) (ESTC Citation R28422). The other title was either George Whitehead's *The Christianity of the people commonly call 'd Quakers asserted: against the unjust charge of their being no Christians, upon several questions relating to those matters, wherein their Christian belief is questioned* (London: Tace Sowle, 1698) (ESTC Citation R214792) or John Field's *The Christianity of the people called Quakers asserted, by George Keith: in answer to a sheet, called, A serious call to the Quakers, &c. Attested by eight priests of the Church of England... and affirmed by George Keith, or the new sworn deacon* (London: T. Sowle, 1700,) (ESTC Citation W33617)
25. LSF MS MfS Vol XIV, p. 363.
26. LSF MS MMM Vol III, p. 98.
27. LSF MS MMM Vol III, p. 181.
28. LSF MS MMM Vol IV, pp. 86-7. [Wyeth's publication was, in full, *Anguis flagellatus, or, A switch for the snake being an answer to the third and last edition of The snake in the grass : wherein the author's injustice and falshood, both in quotation and story, are discover'd and obviated, and the truth doctrinally deliver'd by us, stated and maintained in opposition to his misrepresentation and perversion* (London: T.Sowle, 1699). It was written in response to Charles Leslie's *The snake in the grass: or, Satan transform 'd into an angel of light. Discovering the deep and unsuspected subtilty which is couched under the pretended simplicity of many of the principal leaders of those people call 'd Quakers* (London, 1696).
29. LSF MS MMM Vol IV, p. 88. There is no note of receipt of the shipment unfortunately.
30. LSF MS MMM Vol III, p. 222.
31. LSF MS MMM Vol III, p. 180.
32. LSF MS MMM Vol III, p. 41.
33. LSF MS MMM Vol XVI, p. 139. Daniel Zachary of New England had written his brother Thomas Zachary of London four months previous requesting books in that letter, as mentioned in the

- minutes of the Meeting for Sufferings. LSF MS refs Vol XVI, p. 178 and p. 18.
34. LSF MS MMM Vol II, transcription, p. 160.
 35. George Bishop, *New-England judged, by the spirit of the Lord. In two parts. First, Containing a brief relation of the sufferings of the people call'd Quakers in New-England, from the Time of their first Arrival there, in the Year 1656, to the Year 1660* (London: Tace Sowle, 1703.) (ESTC Citation T103606)
 36. LSF MS MMM Vol II, transcription, p. 144.
 37. Carla Gardina Pestana, 'The City Upon a Hill Under Siege: The Puritan Perception of the Quaker Threat to Massachusetts Bay, 1656-1661', *New England Quarterly* 56(3) (1983) 323-353 (p. 325). There was also a threat of execution after the hanging of three Quakers in Boston in 1660.
 38. LSF MS MMM Vol II, transcription, p. 173. Unfortunately, the titles were not listed in the Morning Meeting minutes,
 39. LSF MS MMM Vol II, transcription, p. 182. Quakers in Rhode Island could be relied on to distribute books to Massachusetts Quakers, increasing the chances that the books would not have been confiscated upon arrival in Boston.
 40. LSF MS MfS Vol I, p. 101
 41. LSF MS MMM Vol I, transcription, p. 90.
 42. LSF MS MMM Vol I, transcription, p. 96.
 43. O'Malley, "'Defying the Powers...'", p. 79.
 44. LSF MS Epistles Received, Vol IV, p. 318.
 45. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, minutes, 1681-1821, seventh month 1705. Haverford College Quaker Collection 1250, Microfilm 7X (hereafter referred to as HCQC).
 46. LSF MS MfS Vol XV, p. 122.
 47. LSF MS MMM Vol II, transcription, p. 181. Full title of book from Earlham Digital Quaker Collection.
 48. LSF MS MMM Vol III, p. 183. John Field was also a member of the Meeting for Sufferings, but this donation was noted in the Morning Meeting minutes.
 49. LSF MS MfS Vol II, pp. 57 and 62.
 50. LSF MS MMM Vol I, p. 90, and Epistles Received Vol I, p. 81.
 51. 18 seventh month 1706 at Burlington. PYM, minutes, 1681-1821. (HCQ Collection 1250, Microfilm 7X).
 52. LSF MS MfS Vol II, p. 251 (26 8mo 1694)
 53. J. William Frost, 'Quaker Books in Colonial Pennsylvania,' microfilm, *Quaker History*, 78, (1991), 1-23 (p. 7).
 54. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, minutes, 1681-1821, seventh month 1705. (HCQC Collection 1250 Microfilm 7X).
 55. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, minutes, 1681-1821. 14-18 seventh month 1717. (HCQC Collection 1250 Microfilm 7X).

56. The National Archives, London Port Books E190/115/1 Surveyor General of Tunnage and Poundage, Overseas: Exports by Denizens, Xmas 1682-Xmas 1683.
57. Jacob M. Price and Paul G. E. Clemens, 'A Revolution of Scale in Overseas Trade: British Firms in the Chesapeake Trade, 1675-1775,' *The Journal of Economic History* 47(1) (March 1 1987), 1-43 (p. 2).
58. Edwin Wolf, *The Library of James Logan of Philadelphia 1674-1751*, 2nd edition (Philadelphia: The Library Company of Philadelphia, 1974), p. xxvi.
59. Frost, 'The Transatlantic Community Reconsidered', p. 6.
60. James N. Green, 'The Book Trade in the Middle Colonies, 1680-1720' in *A History of the Book in America, Volume One: The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*, ed. by Hugh Amory and David D. Hall (Cambridge, 2000), 199-223. Green's discussion of the book trade in the Middle Colonies sheds further light on the development of the press in Pennsylvania and New York.
61. Green, 'The Book Trade in the Middle Colonies...', p. 216.
62. LSF MS Epistles Sent Vol I, p. 439.
63. LSF MS MMM Vol II, transcription, p. 34.
64. LSF MS MMM Vol II, transcription, p. 62.
65. LSF MS MMM Vol III, p. 182.
66. LSF MS MMM Vol III, p. 192.
67. Green, 'The Book Trade in the Middle Colonies, 1680-1720', p. 216.
68. LSF MS Epistles Received, Volume 1, p. 428.
69. London Yearly Meeting, *Epistles from the Yearly Meeting of Friends*, pp.257-58.
70. 23-24 7mo 1712 at Burlington, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, minutes, 1681-1821. (HCQC Collection 1250, Microfilm 7X)
71. Susan Davies, *Quakerism in Lincolnshire: An Informal History* (Lincoln: 1989), pp. 63-64. Several books were given by Evesham Meeting to Woodbrooke Library in 2006 or 2007, and at least one had this inscription inside: 'Gospel-truth demonstrated in a collection of doctrinal books / given forth by that faithful minister of Jesus Christ, George Fox [...]. London, T. Sowle, 1706'. Clifford T. Crellin, *'Where God had a People': Quakers in St Albans over 300 Years* (St Albans Preparative Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends: 1999), p. 39.
72. Frederick B. Tolles, *Meeting House and Counting House: The Quaker Merchants of Colonial Philadelphia 1682-1763* (New York, 1948), p. 153.
73. Wolf, *The Library of James Logan of Philadelphia 1674-1751*, p. xviii and Tolles, *Meeting House and Counting House*, p. 159.
74. LSF MS MMM Vol II, p. 172.
75. LSF MS MMM Vol II, p. 172.
76. Pestana, 'The Quaker Executions as Myth and History', *The Journal of*

- American History* 80(2) (1993), 441-469 (p. 455).
77. LSF MS MMM Vol III, p. 165.
 78. Gary Nash, *Quakers and Politics: Pennsylvania, 1681-1726* New edn (Boston: Northeastern Press, 1993), p. 147.
 79. LSF MS Epistles Sent Vol I, p. 149.
 80. LSF MS MMM Vol II, transcription, p. 46.
 81. LSF MS Epistles Received Vol II, p. 235.
 82. The National Archives, London Port Books E190/152/1 (Waiters: Overseas: Exports by denizens, Xmas 1694 - Xmas 1695). These shipments broke down to 300 books to Antigua, 175 to Virginia, and well over 200 to Barbados, likely to be distributed to other colonies from there.
 83. LSF MS MfS, Vol XI, pp. 185-9. (1 Imo 1697)
 84. LSF MS National Stock Accounts, Vol 1, pp. 62-71.
 85. LSF MS Epistles Received Vol I, p. 268.
 86. LSF MS Epistles Received Vol I, p. 204.
 87. LSF MS Epistles Received Vol I, p. 388, and Epistles Received Vol I, p. 366.
 88. David Cressy, *Coming Over: Migrations and Communication between England and New England in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 232-233.
 89. I.K. Steele, 'The Board of Trade, The Quakers and Resumption of Colonial Charters, 1699-1702', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, third series, 23(4) (1966), 596-619 (p. 613).
 90. David J. Hall, 'The Fiery Tryal of their Infallible Examination': Self-Control in the Regulation of Quaker Publishing in England from the 1670s to the mid 19th Century', in *Censorship and the Control of Print in England and France 1600-1910*, ed. by Robin Myers and Michael Harris (Winchester, 1992) 59-86, (p. 59). Hall points out that these figures are 'possibly misleading in that they take no account of the relative size of the publications in the sample'.
 91. LSF MS MMM Vol. IV, p. 86.
 92. O'Malley, "Defying the Powers" ...', p. 87.