

# **Anthony Benezet Letters, 1750-1936**

## **HC.Coll.852**

**Finding aid prepared by Diane Rofini**

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November 17, 2011

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	Haverford College Quaker & Special Collections
<b>Creator</b>	Benezet, Anthony, 1713-1784
<b>Title</b>	Anthony Benezet letters
<b>Date</b>	1750-1936
<b>Extent</b>	1.0 Box
<b>General Physical Description note</b>	1 document box, ca. 60 items
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Abstract</b>	<p>A collection of letters of Anthony Benezet (1713-1784), a prominent Friend, philanthropist and teacher. These letters, which are addressed to various persons, reflect cultural and religious aspects, the efforts of Friends to abolish slavery, interest in education, opposition to intolerance and war, missionary work, and observations on the Indians. Mention is made in the letters of Conrad Weiser, George Whitfield, Samuel Wetherill, and others; and there are frequent references to publications in which Benezet was interested.</p>

### Preferred Citation note

Haverford College Library, Haverford, PA, Special Collections, Quaker Collection, Anthony Benezet Letters, Coll. No. 852

## Biographical Note

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Anthony Benezet (1713-1784) was a native of France who became a Quaker at age fourteen. In 1731 he came to Philadelphia and in 1736 married Joyce Marriott. He was a teacher for most of his life and was active in promoting an end to slavery and the slave trade. He wrote and distributed many papers and tracts dealing with slavery, American Indians and education.

(Source for biographical information: Dictionary of Quaker Biography)

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## Summary of collection

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Many of the letters relate to Benezet's views on slavery and his work to end the slave trade. Other topics discussed are: the use of taxes to pay for war; the condition of American Indians; his school and related thoughts on teaching. There are references to various Quaker publications, including his "The plain path to Christian perfection..." "Some observations on the situation... of the Indian natives" and "The Pennsylvania spelling book: or Youth's friendly instructor..." publication of an Elizabeth Webb letter and Samuel Smith's "History of New Jersey." In addition to general news of other Friends, the letters contain religious reflections on friendship, the importance of peace, wealthy Quakers, intolerance and inconsistency among Christians. The bulk of the letters are addressed to George Dillwyn (1738-1820) of Burlington, N.J.; other recipients of letters are Samuel Allinson, Moses Brown, Edward Cathrall, Queen Charlotte of Great Britain, John Fothergill, Samuel Fothergill, Selina Hastings (Countess of Huntingdon), Israel Pemberton, Joseph Phipps, Robert Pleasants, John Smith, Samuel Smith, Jonah Thompson and Caspar Wistar. There are also a few illustrations and receipts.

Mss. (includes ALS, AL, mss. and typed transcripts, photocopies)

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## Arrangement of letters

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All letters (with noted exceptions) are by Benezet and are arranged alphabetically by recipient in folders. A brief notation is included as a guide to topics discussed in the material.

## **Administrative Information**

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### **Publication Information**

Haverford College Quaker & Special Collections

### **Conditions Governing Access note**

This collection is open for research use.

### **Conditions Governing Access note**

Copyright restrictions may apply. Please contact the Archives with requests for copying and for authorization to publish, quote or reproduce the material.

### **Acquisition Information**

Gift of Charles Evans, 1930; Mrs. W.P. Buffum, 1933; some purchased by Haverford College

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## **Controlled Access Headings**

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### **Personal Name(s)**

- Weiser, Conrad, 1696-1760
- Wetherill, Samuel
- Whitfield, George

### **Subject(s)**

- Indians of North America--Government relations.
- Slavery and the church -- Society of Friends
- War tax resistance

## General note

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[Note: see Friend Anthony Benezet / by George S. Brookes. Phila.: U. of P. Press, 1937, for annotated transcripts of these letters.]

## Collection Inventory

### 1. Allinson, Samuel (1739-1791)

#### Scope and Contents note

typed extracts from 1 letter dated Nov. 22, 1936

- letter is from Henry J. Cadbury to Thomas E. Drake re: letter of AB to Samuel Allinson; also 1 p. of Argosy Book store advertisement with S. Allinson material listed

### 2. Benezet, Anthony - Graphics (2 items)

#### Scope and Contents note

- Illustration of AB's house

- photograph of "Benezet instructing colored children" [from Historical poetical and pictorial American scenes / by J.W. Barber, 1850.]

### 3. Brown, Moses (1738-1836)

#### Scope and Contents note

3 letters (ms. copies and photocopies) 1773-1780

- slavery

- taxes used for the military

### 4. Cathrall, Edward

### **Scope and Contents note**

1 ALS dated 11 mo. 25, 1764

- AB sending EC waterlily seed as medicine

### **5. Charlotte, Queen (1744-1818)**

#### **Scope and Contents note**

4 ms. copies of letter dated 8 mo. 25, 1783

- slavery

(folders 6-13 are letters to **George Dillwyn**)

#### **General note**

(Note: most letters to GD have typed transcripts and abstracts, letters are labeled from “Evans collection”)

### **6. Dillwyn, George (1738-1820)**

#### **Scope and Contents note**

4 ALS dated 4 mo. 1767 to 11 mo. 1769

- slave trade

- AB's school and size of it

### **7. Dillwyn, George (1738-1820)**

#### **Scope and Contents note**

4 ALS dated 5, 6, or 7 mo. 1770 to 8 mo. 5, 1773

- AB asks for GD's help correcting book about to publish
- AB advises GD to go into printing business
- Isaac Collins to print 1000 copies of Sewel's History for the Meeting for Sufferings
- value of friendship
- religious reflections on how to live
- "Murray the Preacher"

#### **8. Dillwyn, George (1738-1820)**

##### **Scope and Contents note**

- 1 ALS with enclosure dated 2 mo. 15, 1774
- religious discussion
  - refers to publication of John Woolman's writings
  - includes extract of letter by Nathaniel Gilbert of Antigua

#### **9. Dillwyn, George (1738-1820)**

##### **Scope and Contents note**

- 5 ALS dated 8 mo. 4, 1779 to 10 mo. 1779
- explains how AB teaches accounting and math
  - Samuel Wetherill controversy
  - importance of Friends peace testimony
  - AB's essay on Friends

#### **10. Dillwyn, George (1738-1820)**

### **Scope and Contents note**

4 ALS dated 4 mo. 1780 to 8 mo. 6, 1780

- religious discussion
- disapproval of wealthy Quakers
- mention of Conrad Weiser traveling with Indians
- sends pamphlets
- AB wants to publish Elizabeth Webb letter
- re-publication of AB's *The plain path to Christian perfection...*
- AB's eye accident
- AB quotes Moses Brown's letter on taxes and war
- thoughts on grammar

### **11. Dillwyn, George (1738-1820)**

#### **Scope and Contents note**

4 ALS dated 5 mo. 1781 to 2 mo. 1782

- Elizabeth Webb's letter published
- discusses intolerance and inconsistency of professing Christians
- educational matters

### **12. Dillwyn, George (1738-1820)**

#### **Scope and Contents note**

4 ALS dated 1783 to 9 mo. 14, 1783

- importance of bringing slave trade before Parliament
- education
- extracts from Abbe Reynal
- letter of Elizabeth Webb and difficulty of printing
- interest in the Indians and AB's desire to remove mistaken prejudices against them, encloses his "Observations on Indians"
- concerning AB's "Observations on Indians" in form of letter to GD
- AB's proposed history of the Indians

### **13. Dillwyn, George (1738-1820)**

#### **Scope and Contents note**

2 ALS (dated 1st day and undated)

- "little book" proposes to reprint
- approval of Christian education of youth and sends books related to same

### **14. Fothergill, John (1712-1780)**

#### **Scope and Contents note**

ms. copy dated 4 mo. 28, 1773

- AB's views on slavery and wants to keep it from spreading

#### **General note**

Some pages are missing

### **15. Fothergill, Samuel (1715-1772)**

**Scope and Contents note**

2 letters (ms. copy and typed transcript) 1757-1771 (folder labeled Roberts Coll.)

- slavery

**16. Huntingdon, Selina Hastings, Countess of (1707-1791)**

**Scope and Contents note**

2 letters (photocopy of ms. copy, photocopy of ALS) 1774-1775

- slavery

**17. Pemberton, Israel (1715-1779)**

**Scope and Contents note**

typed transcript of letter dated 1 mo. 1778

- letter addressed to Israel Pemberton and others

**18. Phipps, Joseph (1708-1787)**

**Scope and Contents note**

ms. copy of letter dated 5 mo. 28, 1763

- slavery and the slave trade

**19. Pleasants, Robert (1723-1801)**

**Scope and Contents note**

5 letters (ALS, typed transcripts) 1765-1781

- slavery and slave trade legislation in Pa.
- future danger of slaves revolting
- sending pamphlets on Friends and their principles
- comments on Patrick Henry and sends him books
- refers to his Pennsylvania spelling book
- financial difficulties of John Hunt
- discusses pro-slavery publication by a Carolina merchant
- education of blacks and his desire to head school for same

## 20. Receipts

### Scope and Contents note

2 typed transcripts of receipts for teaching 1750, 1780

## 21. Smith, John (1722-1771)

### Scope and Contents note

4 letters (ALS, AL, typed transcript) 1758-1760

- publishing project with John Pemberton
- slave trade
- memorials of deceased ministers and elders (mention of Michael Lightfoot)
- general news of acquaintances

### General note

Signatures are cut from two of the letters

**22. Smith, Samuel (1720-1776)**

**Scope and Contents note**

ALS dated 5 mo. 17, 1765

- publication of Smith's "History" [of New Jersey?], AB wishes it to include testimony against war (Friends, Mennonites, Schwenkfelders)

**23. Thompson, Jonah (1702 or 3-1780)**

**Scope and Contents note**

ALS dated 4 mo. 24, 1756

- present unrest and possibility of France declaring war  
- visit of Samuel Fothergill, Mary Peisley and Catharine Payton

**24. Wistar, Caspar (1761-1818)**

**Scope and Contents note**

ALS dated 4 mo. 25, 1784

- sends pamphlets  
- AB's "Observations on Indians"  
- importance of new immigrants to America knowing about the Indians

**25. Wistar, Caspar (1801-1867)**

**Scope and Contents note**

ALS dated Nov. 22, 1839

- letter from CW to Dr. Reynall Coates re: their friendship