

DEE E. ANDREWS, Professor & Chair, History Department, CSU Hayward
APPLICATION FOR *GEST FELLOWSHIP* at THE QUAKER COLLECTION,
HAVERFORD COLLEGE
January 28, 2005

PROJECT TITLE: EMANCIPATION ON THE BORDERLINE, 1760-1820

It is my great pleasure to apply for a Gest Fellowship at the Quaker Collection at Haverford College. I am requesting support for a research term from July 5-25, 2005 and from December 19-22, 2005.

“Emancipation on the Borderline” relates to the goals and values of the Gest Fellowships in multiple ways.

The work as a whole:

My project is a book-length study of the early emancipation, and attempted emancipation, of slaves in states on either side of the Mason Dixon Line and the Ohio River in the era between the end of the French and Indian War (a critical transition point for American Friends) and the Missouri Compromise of 1820 (the beginnings of the first serious national debate on slavery).

My preliminary work suggests strongly to me that two issues currently receive insufficient attention in studies of the “First” or gradual emancipation. *Regarding the first of these:* gradual emancipation – the compromising efforts of northern legislatures to end slavery and at the same time repay masters through the work of “freed” slaves -- was a deeply flawed system; but it was also successfully pushed to its limits by African Americans themselves, working in alliance with religious activists -- most prominently Quakers and Methodists -- enlightened politicians, and the nation’s first “civil rights” attorneys, to promote the manumission of as many slaves as possible,

both those eligible for freedom and those denied it by the gradual emancipation laws. Historians have long celebrated the active agency of black leaders and spokespeople in early emancipation (Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, James Forten, Prince Hall, Benjamin Banneker, Phillis Wheatley, Daniel Coker, Maria Stewart). But my point will be to highlight the active agency of many hundreds of *everyday* black people over this long era: for themselves, their families, and their friends.

Regarding the second, the fight to free slaves was not just a northern story. Interrelated struggles over emancipation occurred all along the borderline between North and South, broadly defined from New Jersey to Virginia in the East and from Ohio to Tennessee in the West. While in retrospect it may appear that the futures of slavery in the South and emancipation in the North were never in doubt, my supposition is that it did not necessarily appear that way to the individuals involved: and that support for emancipation among the white population of the U.S. and territories was far broader than is customarily assumed.

Progress thus far:

My preliminary research has been in four areas: a) in the Pennsylvania Abolition Society Papers; b) in the antislavery pamphlet literature at the Library Company of Philadelphia, where I held an Andrew W. Mellon Foundational Grant in 1999; c) in British manuscripts at the Public Record Office, the British Library, and Friends House in London where I was seeking American-related materials; and d) intensively for a chapter and other segments on the formation of the African Methodists for my first book, *The Methodists and Revolutionary America, 1760-1800: The Shaping of an Evangelical Culture* (2000). My research on the African Methodists especially

was carried out at St. George's Methodist Church in Philadelphia, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Drew University, the Delaware Historical Society, the Maryland Historical Society, and the Maryland State Archives. *The Methodists* won the Hans Rosenhaupt Memorial Book Award from the Woodrow Wilson Fellowship Foundation and was widely and positively reviewed. Please see my *curriculum vitae* for more detail.

For this next project, I have also read extensively in the secondary literature on early emancipation, especially in works by David Brion Davis, Benjamin Quarles, Arthur Zilversmit, Thomas Drake, Ira Berlin, Paul Finkelman, Jean Soderlund, Gary Nash, Margaret Hope Bacon, Jean Fagan Yellin, Emma Lapsanksy, Julie Winch, Shane White, Graham Hodges, Richard Newman, Joan Melish, and John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger, among others.

On the topic of emancipation, I have also thus far presented a seminar paper, two "popular" lectures at CSUH, and two conference presentations; and I have published an article in *Pennsylvania History* and a review essay in the *Massachusetts Historical Review*. I have also just been commissioned to write an article on antislavery and Philadelphia churches, 1760-1860, for an anthology edited by James Mueller of Independence National Historic Park.

Contributions to scholarly or activist communities:

The story of the first emancipation of slaves, both as a problem of world history (see especially Davis's magisterial work) and as a matter of regional history (see recent volumes by Soderlund and Nash on Pennsylvania and New Jersey, White on New York City, Hodges on New Jersey, Lapsanksy, Soderlund, and Yellin on Philadelphia women, Melish on New England, Winch on

Philadelphian James Forten, and Newman on the Pennsylvania Abolition Society), necessarily entails great moral questions that were framed in both religious and enlightened terms. In effect, understanding the origins of the emancipationist impulse -- for both black people and white people—can lead to an understanding of the important interaction of religion and politics in eighteenth-century American culture, as well as the ultimate *dis*-connect between the religious argument *against* slavery, espoused by the Friends, and the religious argument in *favor* of slavery, emerging notably (and ironically, given the prominence of the Methodists and African Methodists in early antislavery) in evangelical circles in the early 1800s.

My first book, *The Methodists*, explored many aspects of the tension between the emerging dynamism of evangelical religion, race, gender and class, and the creation of a new republic. Part of the purpose of this *new* work will be to continue to examine this larger picture. A central theme will be how religious movements of the Revolutionary era – not least of all a reformed Quakerism -- shaped the African Americans' awareness of the possibilities of emancipation. I believe the book will be a useful contribution to understanding the varying contours of this essential part of the American past for historians, civil rights activists, and the general public.

Pertinence of the Quaker Collection:

At the Quaker Collection I will be looking for 1) materials for my article on antislavery and Philadelphia churches, 1760-1860; 2) materials for the larger project, especially knowledge of individual Quakers involved in the first emancipation.

Regarding the *first* topic on antislavery and Philadelphia churches: the Quaker Collection includes relevant works by Lydia Maria Child, William Furness, James Birney, and Silas McKean, as well as the main early nineteenth-century Quaker journals: The Friend, The Friend or Advocate of Truth, Friends Weekly Intelligencer, and the Friends Review. Access to these sources will greatly enrich my article with material on the ecclesiastical context of antislavery debates in the larger 1830-1860 time period.

Regarding the *second* larger topic: Two initial forays into the Collection persuade me there will be plenty to find, particularly in the microfilm collection of antislavery society papers; the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and other Quaker Meeting records; the individual paper collections of Anthony Benezet, Moses Brown, and Henry Drinker; the Papers of the Allinson, Jones-Cadbury, Pemberton, Scattergood, Stokes-Evans-Cope, Thompson, and Nicholas Waln families; as well as in the British Friends Letters. In my first visit back in 1999 I came across what is truly a treasure to me: a sketch portrait of Thomas Harrison, long-standing member of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society Acting Committee, and two African American boys. If that is the kind of source that lies in store, I will be thrilled to have this chance to explore the Collection's holdings.

Expected completion date:

This book is a large project which will take some years to complete. I foresee completing research, which will take me to collections in multiple states, by the end of my next sabbatical year, 2006-07. I expect to conclude writing a first draft promptly by the end of 2008 and a publishable manuscript by the end of Summer 2009.