

# ***Quakers and Slavery, 1657-1865: An International Interdisciplinary Conference***

Thursday 4 – Saturday 6 November 2010

**The McNeil Center for Early American Studies  
Swarthmore College  
Haverford College**



## **Keynote Speakers:**

**Gary B Nash (UCLA), Jerry Frost (Swarthmore), James Walvin (York)**

In 1657, George Fox wrote “To Friends beyond sea, that have Blacks and Indian Slaves” to remind them that Quakers who owned slaves should be merciful and should remember that God “hath made all *Nations of one Blood.*” His argument may seem far from radical today, but it initiated three centuries of Quaker debate and activism over the problem of slavery that would ultimately see Friends taking key roles in abolition and emancipation movements on both sides of the Atlantic, and beyond. It was, however, by no means inevitable that Quakers would embrace antislavery. In the seventeenth century, and most of the eighteenth century, Quakers were divided on the issue, particularly in the British American colonies, with some denouncing slavery, and others owning slaves. In the following century, Quakers were more unified in their opposition to slavery, but encountered a range of spiritual, political, and personal challenges while taking their antislavery message to a wider world. This interdisciplinary conference aims to examine the history, literature, and culture of the Quaker relationship with slavery, from the society’s origins in the English Civil War up to the end of the American Civil War, with a focus on what David Brion Davis has called “The Quaker Antislavery International”.

## **CONFERENCE TOPICS**

We welcome proposals for pre-circulated papers from scholars in all relevant disciplines; in particular, from historians, literary scholars, art historians, and scholars studying Quakers and slavery beyond the English-speaking world. Topics to be discussed may include (but are not confined to):

- Quaker Abolitionist Lives, including: Anthony Benezet, Alice Curwen, George Fox, John Hepburn, Elias Hicks, Benjamin Lay, Lucretia Mott, Ralph Sandiford, William Southeby, Joseph Sturge, John Greenleaf Whittier, John Woolman, and many others.

- International Connections: how were Quaker antislavery ideas transmitted around the world in the era before telecommunications?
- Quaker Antislavery Writing: poems, novels, pamphlets, treatises, exegeses
- Quakers and Politics: in colonial assemblies, statehouses, parliaments, federal governments
- Quaker participation in the slave trade
- Debate and Dissension: how did Quakers come to embrace antislavery during the eighteenth century?
- How did the enslaved and the previously enslaved view Quaker antislavery activities?
- Quaker Women and Antislavery
- Slaveholding and Manumission: How many Friends owned slaves, for how long, and where?
- Antislavery Societies: what role did Quakers play in setting them up and running them?
- How did others view Quaker antislavery thought?
- How was slavery actually discussed in meeting houses?

## SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Proposals of no more than 500 words should be made no later than Friday 30 April 2010 via the official conference website at: <http://www.quakersandslavery.org>

If your proposal is accepted, you will be asked to submit a full copy of your paper (approximately 6000-8000 words or 20-30 pages) for circulation to conference delegates by the end of September 2010. At the conference, you will be asked to present a short (10-15 minute) introduction to your paper.

Financial support may be available to cover presenters' travel and lodging expenses.

Further information and updates will be posted on the website closer to the conference.

## ORGANIZERS

Professor Geoffrey Plank, Department of History, University of Cincinnati, Ohio

Dr Brychan Carey, Department of English, Kingston University, London

For more information, visit the conference website at: <http://www.quakersandslavery.org> or email the organizers at [contact@quakersandslavery.org](mailto:contact@quakersandslavery.org)

