

THE  
CONSTITUTION  
OF THE  
Pennsylvania Society,  
FOR PROMOTING THE  
ABOLITION OF SLAVERY,  
AND THE RELIEF OF  
FREE NEGROES,  
UNLAWFULLY HELD IN  
BONDAGE.

BEGUN IN THE YEAR 1774,<sup>1</sup> AND ENLARGED ON THE  
TWENTY-THIRD OF APRIL, 1787.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,  
THE ACTS OF THE  
General Assembly of Pennsylvania,  
FOR THE  
Gradual Abolition of Slavery.

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*“All Things whatsoever ye would that Men should do to you,  
do ye even so to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets.”*

Mat. vii.12.<sup>2</sup>

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M.DCC.LXXXVII.



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ENLARGED AT PHILADELPHIA, APRIL 23d, 1787.

**I**T having pleased the Creator of the world, to make of one flesh, all the children of men—it becomes them to consult and promote each other's happiness, as members of the same family, however diversified they may be, by colour, situation, religion, or different states of society. It is more especially the duty of those persons, who profess to maintain for themselves the rights of human nature, and who acknowledge the obligations of Christianity, to use such means as are in their power, to extend the blessings of freedom to every part of the human race; and in a more particular manner, to such of their fellow-creatures, as are entitled to freedom by the laws and constitutions of any of the United States, and who, notwithstanding, are detained in bondage, by fraud or violence.—From a full conviction of the truth and obligation of these principles—from a desire to diffuse them, wherever the miseries and vices of slavery exist, and in humble confidence of the favour and support of the Father of Mankind, the subscribers have associated themselves under the title of the “Pennsylvania Society for promoting the abolition of slavery, and the relief of free Negroes unlawfully held in bondage.”

Introduction

For effecting these purposes, they have adopted the following constitution:

The Officers of  
the society.

I. The officers of the society shall consist of a president, two vice-presidents, two secretaries, a treasurer, four counsellors, an electing committee of twelve, and an acting committee of six members; all of whom, except the last named committee, shall be chosen annually by ballot, on the first SECOND-DAY called Monday, in the month called January.

Duty of the pres-  
idents and vice-  
presidents.

II. The president, and in his absence one of the vice-presidents, shall preside in all the meetings, and subscribe all the public acts of the society. The president, or in his absence, either of the vice-presidents, shall moreover have the power of calling a special meeting of the society whenever he shall judge proper. A special meeting shall likewise be called at any time, when six members of the society shall concur in requesting it.

Of the secre-  
taries.

III. The secretaries shall keep fair records of the proceedings of the society, and shall correspond with such persons and societies, as may be judged necessary to promote the views and objects of the institution.

Of the treasurer.

IV. The treasurer shall keep all the monies and securities belonging to the society, and shall pay all orders signed by the president or one of the vice-presidents—which orders shall be his vouchers for his expenditures. He shall, before he enters upon his office, give a bond of not less than two hundred pounds, for the faithful discharge of the duties of it.

Of the counsel-  
lors.

V. The business of the counsellors shall be to explain the laws and constitutions of the states, which relate to emancipation of slaves, and to urge their claims to freedom, when legal, before such persons or courts as are authorized to decide, upon them.

Of the electing  
committee.

VI. The electing committee shall have the sole power of admitting new members. Two-thirds of them shall be a quorum for this purpose—and the concurrence of a majority of them by ballot, when met, shall be necessary for the admission of a member. No member shall be admitted, who has not been proposed at a general meeting of the society, nor shall an election for a member take place in less than one month after the

time of his being proposed. Foreigners or persons who do not reside in this state, may be elected corresponding members of the society, without being subject to any annual payment, and shall be admitted to the meetings of the society during their residence in the state.

VII. The acting committee shall transact such business as shall occur in the recess of the society, and report the same at each quarterly meeting.—They shall have a right, with the concurrence of the president or one of the vice-presidents, to draw upon the treasurer for such sums of money as shall be necessary to carry on the business of their appointment. Four of them shall be a quorum. After their first election, two of their number shall be relieved from duty at each quarterly meeting, and two members shall be appointed to succeed them.

Duty of the acting committee.

VIII. Every member upon his admission, shall subscribe the constitution of the society, and contribute ten shillings annually in quarterly payments, towards defraying its contingent expenses. If he neglects to pay the same for more than two years, he shall, upon due notice being given him of his delinquency, cease to be a member.

Sum to be paid annually.

IX. The society shall meet on the first SECOND-DAY called Monday, in the months called January, April, July and October, at such place as shall be agreed to by a majority of the society.

Days of meeting.

X. No person holding a slave shall be admitted a member of this society.

No slave-holder to be a member.

XI. No law or regulation shall contradict any part of the constitution of the society, nor shall any law or alteration in the constitution be made, without being proposed at a previous meeting. All questions shall be decided, where there is a division, by a majority of votes. In those cases where the society is equally divided, the presiding officer shall have a casting vote.

Manner of altering the constitution, and making laws, and of deciding questions.

## OFFICERS

The Present Officers of the Society.

PRESIDENT:

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.<sup>3</sup>

VICE-PRESIDENTS:

JAMES PEMBERTON,<sup>4</sup>

JONATHAN PENROSE.<sup>5</sup>

SECRETARIES:

BENJAMIN RUSH,<sup>6</sup>

TENCH COXE.<sup>7</sup>

TREASURER:

JAMES STARR.<sup>8</sup>

COUNSELLORS:<sup>9</sup>

WILLIAM LEWIS,

JOHN D. COXE,

MIERS FISHER,

WILLIAM RAWLE.

ELECTING COMMITTEE:<sup>10</sup>

THOMAS HARRISON,

NATHAN BOYS,

JAMES WHITEALL,

JAMES READ,

JOHN TODD,

THOMAS ARMATT,

NORRIS JONES,

SAMUEL RICHARDS,

FRANCIS BAILEY,

ANDREW CARSON,

JOHN WARNER,

JACOB SHOEMAKER, jun.

ACTING COMMITTEE:<sup>11</sup>

THOMAS SHIELDS,

THOMAS PARKER,

JOHN OLDDEN,

WILLIAM ZANE,

JOHN WARNER,

WILLIAM M'ELHENNEY.

## *An ACT for the gradual Abolition of Slavery.*<sup>12</sup>

*Section I.* WHEN we contemplate our abhorrence of that condition, to which the arms and tyranny of Great Britain were exerted to reduce us—when we look back on the variety of dangers to which we have been exposed, and how miraculously our wants in many instances have been supplied, and our deliverances wrought, when even hope and human fortitude have become unequal to the conflict—we are unavoidably led to a serious and grateful sense of the manifold blessings which we have undeservedly received from the hand of that Being, from whom every good and perfect gift cometh. Impressed with these ideas, we conceive that it is our duty, and we rejoice that it is in our power, to extend a portion of that freedom to others, which hath been extended to us; and a release from that state of thralldom, to which we ourselves were tyrannically doomed, and from which we have now every prospect of being delivered. It is not for us to enquire why, in the creation of mankind, the inhabitants of the several parts of the earth were distinguished by a difference in feature or complexion. It is sufficient to know that all are the work of an Almighty Hand. We find in the distribution of the human species, that the most fertile as well as the most barren parts of the earth are inhabited by men of complexions different from ours, and from each other; from whence we may reasonably, as well as religiously, infer, that he who placed them in their various situations, hath extended equally his care and protection to all, and that it becometh not us to counteract his mercies. We esteem it a peculiar blessing granted to us, that we are enabled this day to add one more step to universal civilization, by removing, as much as possible, the sorrows of those who have lived in undeserved bondage, and from which, by the assumed authority of the kings of Great Britain, no effectual, legal, relief could be obtained. Weaned by a long course of experience from those narrow prejudices and partialities we had imbibed, we find our hearts enlarged with kindness and benevolence towards men of all conditions and nations; and we conceive ourselves at this particular period extraordinarily called upon, by the blessings which we have received, to manifest the sincerity of our profession, and to give a substantial proof of our gratitude.

Preamble.

*Section II.* AND WHEREAS the condition of those persons who have heretofore been denominated Negro and Mulatto slaves, has been attended with circumstances which not only deprived them of the common blessings that they were by nature entitled to, but has cast them into the deepest afflictions by an unnatural separation and sale of husband and wife from each other and from their children—an injury, the greatness of which can only be conceived by supposing that we were in the same unhappy case. In justice, therefore, to persons so unhappily circumstanced, and who, having no prospect before them whereon they may rest their sorrows and their hopes, have no reasonable inducement to render their service to society, which otherwise they might; and also in grateful commemoration of our own happy deliverance from that state of unconditional submission to which we were doomed by the tyranny of Britain.

*Section III.* Be it enacted, and it is hereby enacted, by the representatives of the freemen of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in general assembly met, and by the authority of the same, That all persons, as well Negroes and Mulattoes and others, who shall be born within this state from and after the passing of this act, shall not be deemed and considered as servants for life, or slaves; and that all servitude for life, or slavery of children, in consequence of the slavery of their mothers, in the case of all children born within this state, from and after the passing of this act as aforesaid, shall be, and hereby is utterly taken away, extinguished and forever abolished.

*Section IV.* Provided always, and be it further enacted, by the authority aforesaid, That every Negro and Mulatto child born within this state after the passing of this act as aforesaid (who would, in case this act had not been made, have been born a servant for years, or life, or a slave) shall be deemed to be, and shall be, by virtue of this act, the servant of such person or his or her assigns, who would, in such case, have been entitled to the service of such child, until such child shall attain unto the age of twenty-eight years, in the manner and on the conditions whereon servants bound by indenture for four years are or may be retained and holden; and shall be liable to like correction and punishment, and enti-

No child born hereafter to be a slave.

Negro and Mulatto children to be servants till 28 years of age.

tled to like relief in case he or she be evilly treated by his or her master or mistress, and to like freedom dues and other privileges as servants bound by indenture for four years are or may be entitled, unless the person to whom the service of any such child shall belong shall abandon his or her claim to the same; in which case the overseers of the poor of the city, township or district respectively, where such child shall be so abandoned, shall by indenture bind out every child, so abandoned, as an apprentice for a time not exceeding the age herein before limited for the service of such children.

*Section V.* And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That every person, who is or shall be the owner of any Negro or Mulatto slave or servant for life, or till the age of thirty-one years, now within this state, or his lawful attorney, shall on or before the said first day of November next, deliver or cause to be delivered in writing to the clerk of the peace of the county, or to the clerk of the court of record of the city of Philadelphia, in which he or she shall respectively inhabit, the name, and surname, and occupation or profession of such owner, and the name of the county and township, district or ward wherein he or she resideth; and also the name and names of any such slave and slaves, and servant and servants for life or till the age of thirty-one years, together with their ages and sexes severally and respectively set forth and annexed, by such person owned or statedly employed and their being within this state, in order to ascertain and distinguish the slaves and servants for life and till the age of thirty-one years, within this state, who shall be such, on the said first day of November next, from all other persons; which particulars shall by said clerk of the sessions and clerk of the said court be entered in books to be provided for that purpose by the said clerks; and that no Negro or Mulatto, now within this state, shall from and after the said first day of November, be deemed a slave or servant for life, or till the age of thirty-one years, unless his or her name shall be entered as aforesaid on such record, except such Negro and Mulatto slaves and servants as are herein after excepted; the same clerk to be entitled to a fee of two dollars for each slave or servant so entered as aforesaid from the treasurer of the county, to be allowed to him in his accounts.

All slaves to be registered before the 1st of November next.

*Section VI.* Provided always, That any person in whom the ownership or right to the service of any Negro or Mulatto shall be vested at the passing of this act, other than such as are herein before excepted, his or her heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, and all and every of them severally shall be liable to the overseers of the poor of the city, township or district to which any such Negro or Mulatto shall become chargeable, for such necessary expense, with costs of suit thereon, as such overseers may be put to, through the neglect of the owner, master or mistress of such Negro or Mulatto; notwithstanding the name and other descriptions of such Negro or Mulatto shall not be entered and recorded as aforesaid; unless his or her master or owner shall before such slave or servant attain his or her twenty-eighth year, execute and record in the proper county, a deed or instrument, securing to such slave or servant, his or her freedom.

*Section VII.* And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That the offences and crimes of Negroes and Mulattoes, as well slaves and servants as freemen, shall be enquired of, adjusted, corrected and punished in like manner as the offences and crimes of the other inhabitants of this state are and shall be enquired of, adjudged, corrected and punished, and not otherwise; except that a slave shall not be admitted to bear witness against a freeman.

*Section VIII.* And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That in all cases, wherein sentence of death shall be pronounced against a slave, the jury before whom he or she shall be tried, shall appraise and declare the value of such slaves; and in case such sentence be executed, the court shall make an order on the state treasurer, payable to the owner for the same and for the costs of prosecution; but in case of remission or mitigation, for the costs only.

*Section IX.* And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That the reward for taking up runaway and absconding Negro and Mulatto slaves and servants, and the penalties for enticing away, dealing with, or harbouring, concealing or employing Negro and Mulatto slaves and ser-

Owners of slaves, though not registered, to be liable for their support, unless, &c.

Negroes, &c. to be tried like other inhabitants.

Jury to value in case of sentence of death.

Reward for taking up runaways, same as for white servants.

vants, shall be the same, and shall be recovered in like manner as in case of servants bound for four years.

*Section X.* And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That no man or woman of any nation or colour, except the Negroes or Mulattoes who shall be registered as aforesaid, shall at any time hereafter be deemed, adjudged, or holden within the territories of this commonwealth as slaves or servants for life, but as free-men and free-women; except the domestic slaves attending upon delegates in congress from the other American states, foreign ministers and consuls, and persons passing through or sojourning in this state and not becoming resident therein, and seamen employed in ships not belonging to any inhabitant of this state, nor employed in any ship owned by any such inhabitant. Provided such domestic slaves be not aliened or sold to any inhabitant, nor (except in the case of members of congress, foreign ministers and consuls) retained in this state longer than six months.

None to be deemed slaves, but those registered.

*Section XI.* Provided always, and be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That this act or any thing in it contained, shall not give any relief or shelter to any absconding or run-away Negro or Mulatto slave or servant, who has absented himself, or shall absent himself from his or her owner, master or mistress residing in any other state or country, but such owner, master or mistress shall have like right and aid to demand, claim and take away his slave or servant, as he might have had in case this act had not been made: And that all Negro and Mulatto slaves now owned and heretofore resident in this state, who have absented themselves, or been clandestinely carried away, or who may be employed abroad as seamen and have not returned or been brought back to their owners, masters or mistresses, before the passing of this act, may within five years be registered as effectually as is ordered by this act concerning those who are now within the state, on producing such slave before any two justices of the peace, and satisfying the said justices by due proof of the former residence, absconding, taking away, or absence of such slaves as aforesaid; who thereupon shall direct and order the said slave to be entered on the record as aforesaid.

Except runaways from other states.

Slaves carried away, &c. from this state may be brought back and registered.

Preamble.

*Section XII.* AND WHEREAS attempts may be made to evade this act, by introducing into this state Negroes and Mulattoes bound by covenant, to serve for long and unreasonable terms of years, if the same be not prevented:

No Negroes or Mulattoes, other than infants, to be bound for longer than seven years.

*Section XIII.* Be it therefore enacted by the authority aforesaid, That no covenant of personal servitude or apprenticeship whatsoever, shall be valid or binding on a Negro or Mulatto, for a longer time than seven years, unless such servant or apprentice were, at the commencement of such servitude or apprenticeship, under the age of twenty-one years; in which case such Negro or Mulatto may be holden as a servant or apprentice respectively, according to the covenant, as the case shall be, until he or she shall attain the age of twenty-eight years, but no longer.

Repeal of former acts.

*Section XIV.* And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That an act of assembly of the province of Pennsylvania, passed in the year one thousand seven hundred and five, entitled, "An act for the trial of Negroes;"<sup>13</sup> and another act of assembly of the said province, passed in the year one thousand seven hundred and twenty-five, entitled, "An act for the better regulating of Negroes in this province;"<sup>14</sup> and another act of assembly of the said province, passed in the year one thousand seven hundred and sixty-one, entitled, "An act for laying a duty on Negro and Mulatto slaves imported into this province;"<sup>15</sup> and also another act of assembly of the said province, passed in the year one thousand seven hundred and seventy-three, entitled, "An act for making perpetual an act for laying a duty on Negro and Mulatto slaves imported into this province; and for laying an additional duty on said slaves," shall be, and are hereby repealed, annulled and made void.

JOHN BAYARD,<sup>16</sup> *Speaker.*

*Enacted into a Law at Philadelphia, on Wednesday, the first Day of March, Anno Domini, 1780.*

THOMAS PAINE,<sup>17</sup>  
*Clerk of the General Assembly.*

*An ACT to give Relief to certain Persons taking Refuge in this State, with Respect to their Slaves.*<sup>18</sup>

*Section I.* WHEREAS many virtuous citizens of America, and inhabitants of states that have been invaded, are obliged by the power of the enemy, to take refuge in this state. AND WHEREAS it is just and necessary that the property of such persons should be protected.

Preamble.

*Section II.* Be it therefore enacted, and it is hereby enacted, by the representatives of the freemen of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in general assembly met, and by the authority of the same, That all and every person and persons, under the above description, now residing in this state, or who hereafter may be in like circumstances, shall retain, possess and hold their slaves; any thing in the "Act for the gradual abolition of slavery," passed the first day of March, one thousand seven hundred and eighty, to the contrary notwithstanding.

Persons taking refuge, may retain their slaves, &c.

*Section III.* Provided always, That the owner or owners of such slaves, his or their lawful attorney, shall, in six months from the passing of this act, or in six months after their arrival in this state, as the case may be, register said slaves in manner and form directed in the fifth section of the act above mentioned, for the gradual abolition of slavery. And be it further provided, That such slaves shall not be aliened or sold to any inhabitant, nor retained in this state as slaves longer than six months after the conclusion of the present war with Great Britain.

Provided they are registered within six months.

And not sold or retained in the state longer than six months after the war.

*Section IV.* And be it also provided, and declared, That nothing herein contained, shall be deemed, construed, or taken to enslave any person or persons, who have been emancipated or freed under or by virtue of the act aforesaid.

Proviso.

*Signed by order of the House,*

FREDERICK A. MUHLENBERG,<sup>19</sup> *Speaker.*

*Enacted into a Law at Philadelphia, on Monday, the first Day of October, Anno Domini, 1781.*

SAMUEL STERRETT,<sup>20</sup>

*Clerk of the General Assembly.*



*Notes*

<sup>1</sup> It is unclear why the title cites 1774 as the year of the PAS's founding. All available records, including the Society's own minutes, date the founding to April, 1775.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 7:12. The Golden Rule featured prominently in eighteenth-century anti-slavery appeals on both sides of the Atlantic, appearing in the writings of such major figures as the British abolitionist statesman William Wilberforce and the Pennsylvania Quaker Anthony Benezet. This and all subsequent Biblical references are from the Authorized (King James) Version of the Bible.

<sup>3</sup> Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790): Statesman, inventor, diplomat, publisher, and writer, Franklin was one of the most renowned figures in eighteenth-century America. He became president of the PAS in 1787, at age 81, and served until his death three years later. Although more of a figurehead than a hands-on leader of the organization (those duties fell to Pemberton), Franklin did sign his name to some of the PAS's most important petitions in this period, including a 1789 address to the public inaugurating the Society's new "Plan for Improving the Condition of the Free Blacks." His final written work, published in 1790, was a satirical letter to the *Federal Gazette* that parodied the arguments of a pro-slavery congressman by expressing them in the guise of a North African prince enslaving Christians.

<sup>4</sup> James Pemberton (1723–1808): An eminent Quaker merchant in Philadelphia, Pemberton would succeed Franklin as President of the PAS in 1790 and serve in that capacity until 1803. His leadership role in the anti-slavery movement allowed him to rehabilitate his public career following his high-profile resignation from the Pennsylvania General Assembly during the Seven Years' War and his arrest during the Revolution, both on account of his "suspicious" pacifist beliefs.

<sup>5</sup> Jonathan Penrose (1735/6–1797?): From a large wealthy Philadelphia ship-building family, Penrose was a founding member of the Society in 1775 and served as its President from 1785 until the group's 1787 enlargement brought Franklin to the top post.

<sup>6</sup> Benjamin Rush (1745–1813): A doctor and professor (the author of the first chemistry textbook in the United States), Rush was Pennsylvania's representative to the Second Continental Congress, at which he signed the Declaration of Independence in 1776; a delegate to the Constitutional Convention in 1787; and a key figure behind Pennsylvania's revamping of the state constitution in 1789. He joined the PAS in 1784 and later served as its President from 1803 to 1813.

<sup>7</sup> Tench Coxe (1755–1824): An early proponent of a nationalist and industrial

economic policy, Coxe served under Alexander Hamilton as the assistant secretary of the treasury from 1790 to 1792. From 1792 to 1797 he served as commissioner of revenue and, from 1803 to 1812, purveyor of public supplies. He joined the PAS in 1786.

<sup>8</sup> James Starr: A 1775 founding member, Starr served as the PAS's treasurer from 1784 to 1793.

<sup>9</sup> The four men listed under this heading all seem to be lawyers. As Richard S. Newman has put it, "Of the PAS's influential figures, none stood out more than the lawyers. They dominated committees, policy decisions, and the very definition of PAS strategy. . . . Perhaps no single law firm or organization in antebellum America could boast such an impressive group of legal minds." The most notable of the lawyers listed here is William Rawle, who offered legal counsel and labor to the PAS for forty years (until the 1830s) while simultaneously holding such posts as the presidency of the Pennsylvania bar in the 1810s and 1820s. See Richard S. Newman, *The Transformation of American Abolitionism: Fighting Slavery in the New Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 28–29.

<sup>10</sup> The Electing Committee was an innovation of the 1787 reorganization, and consisted of twelve members elected annually. Of those listed here, Harrison, Boys, Whiteall, Todd, Armatt, Bailey, and Warner were all founding members in 1775.

<sup>11</sup> Originally known as the Standing Committee, the Acting Committee succeeded in helping nearly one hundred African Americans regain their freedom between 1784 and 1787. Following the group's enlargement in 1787, the Committee took on a more firmly entrenched executive role as the center of activity during the out-of-session periods between the Society's quarterly meetings.

<sup>12</sup> The bill came up for debate at the behest of the state's Executive Council in September of 1779, when President Joseph Reed sent a message to the General Assembly calling for action on the proposal: "See you give the compleat sanction of Law to this noble and generous purpose, and adorn the annals of Pennsylvania with this bright display of Justice and publick Virtue."

<sup>13</sup> The law set out loose regulations for quick trials for blacks; the array of punishments it sanctioned included lashings, brandings, and confinement.

<sup>14</sup> This act, which came about in part as a result of growing fears about slave insurrections, comprised a harsh and extensive set of regulations for "slothful" free blacks (including taxes and duties, and measures prohibiting miscegenation), as well as a written sanction for the death penalty to be used for slaves, with compensation provided for the owner.

<sup>15</sup> This act, instigated by Quaker pressure, dramatically reduced the extent of slaveholding in Pennsylvania in the 1760s and 1770s.

<sup>16</sup> John Bayard (1738–1807): A successful merchant, originally from Maryland, who served as a delegate to the Continental Congress in 1785.

<sup>17</sup> The famed radical republican and intellectual, and author of such classic works as *Common Sense* and *The Age of Reason*, had fallen on hard financial times in the late 1770s, and so took a clerking position for the General Assembly. Paine was a longstanding opponent of slavery; a fiery anti-slavery essay he wrote and published in March of 1775 entitled “To Americans” may have helped spur the founders of the PAS to organize in the month following its publication.

<sup>18</sup> According to William M. Wiecek, this “sojourner’s provision,” which passed in the wake of the abolition act, came about as a result of Philadelphia’s hopes for becoming the new national capital; this created the need to accommodate visiting diplomats, federal officials, and congressmen who owned slaves and who wanted protection from abolition laws. William M. Wiecek, *The Sources of Antislavery Constitutionalism in America, 1760–1848* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 50.

<sup>19</sup> Frederick A. Muhlenberg (1750–1801): Leading Pennsylvania politician (of the radical “constitutionalist” persuasion) and former Lutheran minister, Muhlenberg was elected as one of the state’s three delegates to the Continental Congress in 1779 and served as Speaker of the Pennsylvania General Assembly from 1780 to 1783. Always bolstered by his base support in the Pennsylvania German community, he became an influential Federalist over the next decade and served as the first ever Speaker of the House for the new national government in 1789.

<sup>20</sup> Samuel Sterrett: Assistant clerk of the Pennsylvania General Assembly before succeeding Paine in the top post in 1780, where he worked until November of 1781. In 1788 he was one of Maryland’s delegates to the Constitutional Convention, and it appears that he served as a U.S. representative from Maryland in the 1790s.