

**Pennsylvania Abolition Society/  
The Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery,  
and for the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage, and  
for Improving the Condition of the African Race**



(Seal of the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, c1800, item #8865)

- Founded in 1775 as relief for free Negroes unlawfully held in bondage
- Expanded in 1780s to include "Improving the Condition of the African Race"
- Still in existence today, providing grants to organizations and programs that seek to improve the conditions of African Americans including confronting racism, preserving African American monuments, fighting housing discrimination and promoting multicultural arts and education.

### **Primary Sources**

*Pennsylvania Abolition Society Papers, 1748-1979*

Growing out of egalitarian concerns of members of the Society of Friends, the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, as it is now known, was founded in 1775 as the Society for the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage, but the Revolution caused its early Quaker members to suspend operations until 1784, when it reorganized with a broader base. From the beginning, the Abolition Society's programs were devoted not only to the abolition of slavery, but to the social and economic improvement of Black Americans as well. As early as 1794, the Society helped to found the American Convention, a loose affiliation of anti-slavery societies everywhere, founded a school for Black males, and conducted the first census of Philadelphia's Black community. Collection #0490

*Pennsylvania Abolition Society*

by Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery  
Descriptive brochure about the Pennsylvania Abolition Society.  
Call number: PAM Z 1231 .P2 no. 407

*The Papers of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania*

Contains the official records and papers of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society for the years 1775 to 1975, and also the records of fifteen related organizations collectively spanning the period 1794-1870.

Microfilm

Call number: XR572

*Pennsylvania Abolition Society Papers*

The Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Pennsylvania Abolition Society Digital Exhibit brings together a series of documents to tell a history of the PAS's work during its crucial battle against slavery in the years before the U.S. Civil War.

HSP Digital History Project

<http://hsp.org/history-online/digital-history-projects/pennsylvania-abolition-society-papers>

*Circular: to the members and friends of the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery*

by Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, 1837

Call number: E 441 .A58 v.15 no.10

### **Secondary Sources**

*History of the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery: the relief of Negroes unlawfully held in bondage; and for improving the condition of the African race*

by Margaret H. Bacon, published 1959

Call number: E 446 .B33 1959

*HSP's Legacies*

Volume 5, Number 2

Entire issue about Pennsylvania Abolition Society

*Abolition, Civil War, slavery bibliography*

Photocopies of HSP's manuscript and graphics catalogue cards dealing with abolition, the Civil War and slavery.