

Book of Discipline
1719 (1820)
Mss.289.6.So1

American Philosophical Society
3/2003
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Summary Information

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| Repository | American Philosophical Society |
| Title | Book of Discipline |
| Date | 1719 (1820) |
| Call number | Mss.289.6.So1 |
| Extent | 1.0 Volume(s) 25 p. |
| Extent | 1 vol., 25p. |
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| Language | English |
| Container | 1 |
| Abstract | <p>In October 1719, the Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends for Philadelphia and the Jersies reached consensus on a "book of discipline" governing the "establishment and order of meetings." The regulations covered both the conduct of the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings and the personal comportment of individual members, refining the bureaucratic structure of the meetings and laying out the powers of Overseers and other officials. It touches upon marriage (mandating endogamy), burial, and attendance at meetings, and cautions Friends to plainness of speech and dress, drinking, smoking, backbiting, and gaming.</p> <p>This version of the Book of Discipline is a manuscript copy made for the American Philosophical Society in 1820 "from and antient Copy in the possession of Timothy Matlack, Esqr."</p> |

Preferred Citation

Cite as: Society of Friends, Book of Discipline, American Philosophical Society.

Background note

In October 1719, the Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends for Philadelphia and the Jerseys reached consensus on a "book of discipline" governing the "establishment and order of meetings." The regulations covered both the conduct of the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings and the personal comportment of individual members, refining the bureaucratic structure of the meetings and laying out the powers of Overseers and other officials. It touches upon marriage (mandating endogamy), burial, and attendance at meetings, and cautions Friends to plainness of speech and dress, drinking, smoking, backbiting, and gaming.

Among other rules, the Book of Discipline proscribed selling alcohol to Indians, "it being contrary to the care Friends have always had since the settlement of the Countries, that they might not contribute to the abuse and hurt those poor people receive by drinking thereof" and selling Indian slaves, and banned "the fetching or importing Negroe Slaves from their own Country or elsewhere," cautioning owners of slaves to be humane in their treatment.

Scope & content

The Book of Discipline of the Society of Friends in Pennsylvania and New Jersey is a manuscript copy made for the American Philosophical Society in 1820 "from an antient Copy in the possession of Timothy Matlack, Esqr."

Administrative Information

Publication Information

American Philosophical Society 3/2003

Provenance

Acquisition Information

Gift of Peter Stephen Duponceau, April 7, 1820 (accn. 1900-20).

Processing Information

Catalogued 2003.

Indexing Terms

Genre(s)

- Church records
- Miscellaneous

Personal Name(s)

- Du Ponceau , Peter Stephen, 1760-1844
- Matlack, Timothy, 1736-1829

Subject(s)

- African American
- Indians of North America
- Native America
- Philadelphia History

- Quakers--Pennsylvania
- Religion
- Religion, religious organizations
- Slavery -- Pennsylvania.
- Slaves, slavery, slave trade
- Society of Friends -- Doctrines.

Other Descriptive Information

The manuscript contains the church's position on marriage, smoking, Native Americans, African Americans, backsliding, etc. It entreats church members not to participate in the slave trade, and that if members have slaves, that they treat them "with humanity and in a Christain manner."

Other Descriptive Information

This slender volume is an 1820 transcription of the Society of Friends 1719 Discipline Book, which was handed down by Timothy Matlack. The discipline book provides guidance and rules on a range of matters.