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'So Prays the Muse Unus'd to Artful Song': Female Friends and Eighteenth-Century Poetry

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While scholars have studied the works of major Quaker poets such as Susanna Wright (1697–1784) and Hannah Griffitts (1727–1817), comparatively little attention has been given to poetry as contributing to the larger culture of eighteenth-century Quaker women's writing. Through an examination of sources ranging from letters and diaries to copybooks and samplers, this article demonstrates how female Friends in Ireland, Britain, and North America actively wrote and shared verse within the context of their religious and social lives. Analysing the writings of girls as well as women, the article argues that female Friends of all ages joined in practices of verse composition and circulation that connected them to their religious community and facilitated their sociability.

In 1702, the London Quaker printer Tace Sowle published Mary Mollineux's poetry in a posthumous volume entitled *Fruits of Retirement: or, miscellaneous poems, moral and divine*. The book, which went through several editions, contained some of the earliest published poetry authored by a female Friend.[1] Its publication came amid a broader cultural rise in British women's poetry-writing. As Paula Backscheider has argued, 'as early as 1685, people noted a "fashion" for poetry by women'.[2] A public acceptance of women as published poets continued to grow throughout the eighteenth century, particularly after 1730.[3] Outside of publication, British and American women also engaged with poetry through manuscript circulation and exchange.

As the acceptance of female-authored poetry expanded across the eighteenth century, numerous Quaker women joined the trend in verse-writing. Poetry had an inherently social aspect in the age of sociability, not only through verse designed to commemorate friendship, but also through verse created for social occasions ranging from marriages to dinner invitations.[4] Friends adapted this social aspect to the context of their Society. In Britain and America, female Friends commemorated ministers' visits, friendships, births, marriages, and deaths by writing poetry.[5] They exchanged poems through epistolary correspondence, and, especially later in the century, some even published their work in literary magazines or other publications. Quaker mothers taught poetry and poetry-writing to their children, and teachers introduced manuscript and printed collections of verse to their students. Two of the earliest Quakers to compile published verse miscellanies for children were women.[6] Most of the attention given to Quaker women's poetry has focussed on Pennsylvania, where elite women received an education that prepared them to form literary circles and share verse through correspondence networks.[7] But poetry, like other aspects of Friends' religious and intellectual life, was transatlantic in nature; women also wrote and taught verse in England and Ireland.

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[1] Wright, L. M., *The Literary Life of the Early Friends, 1650–1725*, New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1932, pp. 131–32.

[2] Backscheider, P. R., *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets and Their Poetry: inventing agency, inventing genre*, Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005, pp. 4–5.

[3] Lonsdale, R. (ed.), *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets: an Oxford anthology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989, p. xxvi.

[4] Backscheider, *Women Poets*, p. 3.

[5] Blecki, C. L., and Wulf, K. A. (eds), *Milcah Martha Moore's Book: a commonplace book from revolutionary America*, University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997, p. xiii.

[6] Moore, M. M., *Miscellanies, Moral and Instructive, In Prose and Verse*, Philadelphia, 1787; Barclay, R., *Select Pieces of Poetry, Intended to Promote Piety and Virtue in the Minds of Young People*, London, 1795.

[7] See, for example, Fatherly, S., *Gentlewomen and Learned Ladies: women and elite formation in eighteenth-century Philadelphia*, Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2008.

Poetry's presence in the larger culture of Quaker women's writing has been overshadowed by a focus on other forms of writing such as epistles or testimonies. This article offers a qualitative study of the culture of female Friends' verse-writing, drawing on sources ranging from printed poetry collections to manuscript diaries and copybooks. It argues that an intergenerational engagement with poetry became part of the social and religious lives of eighteenth century female Friends of all ages. Girls and women exchanged verse to strengthen social connections and to enhance piety within the Religious Society of Friends. Women also engaged in verse-writing to enter public debates on topics such as war and abolitionism, to share testimonies with the wider world, and to contribute to the literary culture of the British Atlantic. Female Friends' engagement with poetry thus served simultaneously to inform Quaker religiosity and to facilitate women's entrance into conversations taking place beyond the Religious Society of Friends.

Women's Poetry as Testimony

Aside from a brief flourish in the early 1660s, Quakers published little verse in the seventeenth century. Nonetheless, throughout the period from 1650–1725, some Friends continued to write poetry as part of their religious expression.[8] By the mid eighteenth century, Friends had begun to embrace a wider literary culture. Verse frequently appeared in Quaker epistles or diaries, often interspersed among prose. Friends began to circulate and even publish verse. They wrote to members of their own religious community as well as to readerships beyond it. Philadelphia-born Ann Emlen, for example, exchanged poems with Thomas Burke, an Irish Catholic delegate to the Continental Congress and future governor of North Carolina.[9] Eighteenth-century Quaker women who wrote poetry ranged from those for whom verse-writing served to facilitate public ministry to those who embraced poetry's literary aspects and cultivated reputations as poets.

For women with a public ministry, verse-writing tended to form part of a larger corpus of religious writing. Ministers sometimes incorporated verse in the middle of prose works such as epistles, testimonies, and journals. The English minister Abiah Darby and the Pennsylvania minister Ann Herbert Moore, for example, turned to poetry in their respective journals as a form of inspired writing that differed from the more quotidian entries relating their travels in the ministry. Darby's 'On the Death of

[8] Moore, R., 'Seventeenth Century Published Quaker Verse', *Quaker Studies* 9 (2005), pp. 5–16; Wright, *Literary Life*, pp. 131–32.

[9] Diary of Ann Emlen Mifflin, 6th month (June), hereafter abbreviated, 6mo. 1777, HC. MC-1288, vol. 4, Haverford Quaker and Special Collections (HQC), Philadelphia, PA.

a Friend' memorialised her recently deceased husband, Abraham. Darby 'poured forth the just sense arising from the contemplation of his eminent virtues', stressing that the poem came from 'the aboundings of my heart'. Moore also framed her verse as being inspired from God. In a prefatory statement to 'a few virses i rote at oblong in the provence of new york under a living sence of the love of God to his peopel', she noted: 'I was at Samuel Feeldes [Field's] and had a meeting their wherein my heart was so filled with heavenly love towardes my Lord and master which caused me to sing forth his praise in this manner in the secret of my hart'.[10] Five years later, she wrote down some verse that passed so often through her mind that she thought it was meant to be shared and considered by others.[11] Like Darby, Moore used poetry as a deeper form of expression than prose, and she believed it was divinely inspired.[12]

Some Friends chose verse form to communicate testimonies. In June 1777, Emlen used her poetic exchanges with Thomas Burke, then a delegate to the Continental Congress, to deliver a peace testimony amid the context of the American Revolutionary War.[13] The following year, two of Emlen's poems appeared alongside Burke's verse in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, a London monthly magazine. The inclusion of Emlen's poetry in an English publication highlights how Quaker cultural exchange continued to have a transatlantic dimension, even amid the disruptions of war.[14] Like many of her co-religionists, Emlen drew on the tradition of Friends' peace testimony to take an anti-war position.[15] Writing under her pen name 'Chloe', she asked Burke ('Colin') to 'acknowledge this doctrine is right,/The test of true patience and worth;/That 'tis highly unlawful for christians to fight'.[16] Emlen wrote in a polished and vivid style that demonstrated an awareness of contemporary literary conventions. She ended her second poem with the lines, 'But stop, daring girl! Nor presume in this strain,/To prescribe to a BURKE what to do', wittily linking her recipient Thomas with Edmund—the other political 'Burke' of her era.[17] At the same time, her poetry was fully Quaker in

[10] Journal of Abiah Darby, 17 5mo. 1763, MS Vol. 310, Library of the Society of Friends, London (LSF); Journal of Ann Herbert Moore, vol. 1, 23 10mo. 1756, HM 66134, Huntington Library Special Collections (HLSC), San Marino, CA.

[11] Journal of Ann Herbert Moore, vol. 2, 8 9mo. 1761, HM 66135, HLSC.

[12] As Sharon Achinstein observes, dissenters across traditions drew on poetry in religious or prophetic writing. See Achinstein, S., *Literature and Dissent in Milton's England*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 187.

[13] Diary of Ann Emlen Mifflin, 6mo. 1777, HC. MC-1288, vol. 4, HQC.

[14] Emlen's authorship was attributed as 'Miss — of Philadelphia', but her location and content likely served to indicate her confessional identity to readers. *The Gentleman's Magazine* published at least 21 entries from Quakers in the 1770s. See Jennings, J., 'Mary Morris Knowles: devout, worldly, and "gay"?', *Quaker Studies* 14 (2010), p. 201.

[15] On Quakers' transatlantic identity amid and after the Revolutionary War see Sarah Crabtree, *Holy Nation: the transatlantic Quaker ministry in an age of revolution*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2015.

[16] Emlen, A., 'Chloe's Reply to Colin,' *The Gentleman's Magazine* 48 (1778), p. 184.

[17] Emlen, 'Chloe to Colin', p. 231.

its testimonial purpose. Indeed, after she failed to convince Burke through her verse, she abruptly ended their correspondence. She did so through a seven-page letter, in which she opposed Burke's position on luxury goods and linked such consumption to the institution of slavery.[18]

The creation of verse that spoke both to broader eighteenth-century literary culture and to the Quaker tradition of testimony also appears in the work of Mary Morris Knowles. Among Friends and other contemporaries, Knowles developed a reputation for her intellectual exchanges. She was perhaps most recognised for having debated Samuel Johnson at a literary dinner party in 1776 regarding the decision of their mutual friend Jane Harry to become a Quaker. In 1791, Knowles published her account of the debate in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, the same periodical in which the exchange between Burke's 'Colin' and Emlen's 'Chloe' had appeared several years earlier. For all her literary connections, Knowles remained deeply connected to Quakerism in her writing.[19] While contemporaries noted her poetry's literary qualities, she also wrote poetry to deliver her testimony against water baptism.[20] In *A Compendium of a Controversy on Water-Baptism*, Knowles (as the interlocutor 'Lavinia') responded to a letter she had received from a clergyman ('Clericus') on baptism. Both sides of the debate employed poetic form.[21] Like Emlen, Knowles offered a testimony in verse while also drawing on the conventions of eighteenth-century literary correspondence.

By the last decade of the eighteenth century, abolition of the slave trade became a prevalent verse testimony among British and Irish Quaker women. These writings contributed to a larger collection of female-authored abolitionist material. As Nini Rodgers has argued, women who penned anti-slavery writing tended to specialise in the imaginative sphere. Evangelical writer Hannah More, the most prolific female abolitionist writer, used both the moral tale and poetry to communicate her message.[22] Mary Shackleton (later Leadbeater) and Mary Birkett (later Card), the two Quaker poets analysed in Rodgers' study, operated in More's literary tradition. But they also came

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[18] Burke to Emlen, 9 February 1779, in Smith, P. H. (ed.), *Letters of Delegates to Congress, 1774–1789*, vol. 12, Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1976–2000, pp. 35–6; Emlen to Burke, 3 3mo. 1779, Philadelphia, Collection 0154, Cox-Parrish-Wharton Papers, Box 10, Folder 51, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP), Philadelphia, PA.

[19] Jennings, 'Mary Morris Knowles', pp. 198, 201.

[20] Knowles received recognition for her literary quality. See Pettigrew, T. J. (ed.), *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Late John Coakley Lettsom, vol. 2*, London: Longman, 1817, p. 18.

[21] Knowles, M. M., *A Compendium of a Controversy on Water-Baptism*, Dublin, [1776–77?]. An example of Knowles' use of poetry as a testimony for plain dress appears in *The British Friend* 6 (1848), pp. 110–11.

[22] Rodgers, N., 'Two Quakers and a Utilitarian: the reaction of three Irish women writers to the problem of slavery 1789–1807', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy: archaeology, culture, history, literature* 100C (2000), p. 139.

from a longer tradition of Quaker women's antislavery writing, which dated back to the late seventeenth century.[23]

At least four Quaker women published anti-slavery verse in the period from 1788 to 1794, during the height of the campaign to abolish the slave trade. Knowles, a member of the London Abolition Committee, wrote an anti-slavery poetic inscription in 1788 for a tobacco box.[24] Irish poets Shackleton and Birkett, both of whom wrote verse from an early age, penned anti-slavery poems between 1789 and 1792. Shackleton addressed hers to Edmund Burke.[25] In 1791, Catherine Phillips (née Payton) wrote a testimony against slavery, which she published in 1794 as *The Happy King*.[26] In her more than 100-page poem addressed to King George III, Phillips emphasised the extemporaneous quality of her work:

> I was rather surpriz'd at the following thoughts flowing in the manner they did. When I began to write, I had no idea of saying so much, but simply proceeded without a plan, or even foresight of some points touch'd upon…I do not recollect that I had ever pen'd more than twelve verses, in the sort of rhyme wherein they are written, and which I should not have chosen, but as it first presented, I sought for no other.[27]

She removed her own agency, focussing instead on the inspired nature of her poem. Like seventeenth-century Quaker prophets who addressed monarchs, she sought scriptural justification for her testimony, citing Psalm 119:46 on her title page ('I will speak of Thy Testimonies before Kings and will not be ashamed'). And like her contemporary Ann Moore, Phillips framed her verse as divinely inspired.

Most Quaker women who penned verse approached it as a vehicle for expression of their religious, moral, or even political writings. However, a select group of women identified specifically as poets and developed literary reputations for their work in the genre. These women included, among others, Hannah Griffitts and Susanna Wright (Pennsylvania), Mary Mollineux (England), and Mary Shackleton Leadbeater (Ireland). Mollineux's *Fruits of Retirement* serves as an example of post-Restoration nonconformist poetry, but it also resonated throughout the eighteenth century. It went through six published editions from 1702–72. Leadbeater's literary career, which

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[23] Bronner, E., 'An Early Antislavery Statement: 1676', *Quaker History* 62 (1973), pp. 47–50; Ferguson, M., *Subject to Others: British women writers and colonial slavery, 1670–1834*, London: Routledge, 1992, p. 168.

[24] Jennings, J., *Gender, Religion, and Radicalism in the Long Eighteenth Century: the 'ingenious Quaker' and her connections*, Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006, pp. 105–6.

[25] Rodgers, 'Two Quakers', pp. 137–57.

[26] Phillips, *The Happy King. A Sacred Poem: with occasional remarks*, [London], 1794, p. vii.

[27] Phillips, *Happy King*, p. v.

began in childhood and spanned decades, comprised both prose and verse writings. She also participated in an active correspondence with other Irish and English writers such as Melesina Chenevix Trench, Edmund Burke, and George Crabbe.[28] From a literary standpoint, the poetry of Griffitts and Wright is particularly notable, still appearing in contemporary anthologies of early American poetry.[29]

In their lifetimes, all four women mostly gained their readership through manuscript circulation. Mollineux's work likely circulated among friends in manuscript prior to its 1702 publication by the Quaker printer Tace Sowle.[30] Leadbeater also circulated her poetry before publishing it.[31] Griffitts revised her work in drafts by producing 'rough copies' of her poetry. She then shared this poetry among her literary circle, which distributed it further and helped Griffitts achieve canonicity within her community.[32] Likewise, Susanna Wright benefitted from a strong intellectual network that fostered her reputation as a poet through manuscript circulation in Pennsylvania. Contemporaries knew her as the 'Susquehanna Muse'. While Wright had wide-ranging interests in science as well as literature, she became known among Pennsylvania Quakers primarily for her poetry.[33] In 1768, for example, Quaker diarist Hannah Callender Sansom recorded that she spent an evening with several Friends: 'Susey Wright mentioned, an extraordinary Genious, the Author of Anna bullens Letter: to King: Henry 8th in verse'.[34] The reliance of Mollineux, Leadbeater, Griffitts, and Wright on manuscript circulation to establish their literary reputations not only highlights the continued existence of a post-print scribal culture, but it also indicates how other Friends in their social and literary networks actively read and promoted their poetry.

Quaker women poets, both those who established literary reputations and those who did not, often stressed the inspired nature of their work. Some writers did this

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[28] Leadbeater, M. S. (ed.), *The Leadbeater Papers*, 2 vols, London: Bell and Daldy, 1862. See also Behrendt, S. C., 'The Letter and the Literary Circle: Mary Leadbeater, Melesina Trench, and the epistolary salon', in Callahan, M., and Howe, A. (eds), *Romanticism and the Letter*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020, pp. 29–44.

[29] See, for example, Shields, D. S. (ed.), *American Poetry: the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries*, New York, NY: The Library of America, 2007.

[30] Achinstein, *Literature and Dissent*, p. 80.

[31] One example is 'Copy of poem written by Mary Leadbeater to Thomas Carlton in America', mssRV, Box 2, item 98, HLSC; Leadbeater's printed volume (*Poems*, Dublin: Longman, 1808) also includes poetry previously circulated in manuscript.

[32] On Griffitts' process see Rosen, R. M., 'Copying Hannah Griffitts: poetic circulation and the Quaker community of scribes', in Tarter, M. L., and Gill, C. (eds), *New Critical Studies on Early Quaker Women, 1650–1800*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, pp. 167–85.

[33] Wright experimented with lyric forms in the 1720s and 1730s. See Blecki, C. L., and Treese, L., 'Susanna Wright's "The Grove": a philosophic exchange with James Logan', *Early American Literature* 38 (2003): pp. 239–41.

[34] Klepp, S. E., and Wulf, K. A. (eds), *The Diary of Hannah Callender Sansom*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010, p. 220.

by adapting the classical muse to the Quaker tradition of divine inspiration. London Friend Ann Fothergill wrote a poem to commemorate her friend Catherine Payton's transatlantic journey as a minister to America. Fothergill's poem, circulated in manuscript, conflated the artistic and divine inspiration of the poet. Her line, 'So Prays [th]e Muse Unus'd to Artful Song', highlighted both the religious nature of her poetry and her unfamiliarity with writing verse.[35] Similarly, at the young age of ten, Hannah Griffitts consecrated her muse to God.[36] Fifty years later, Griffitts commented in a letter to her cousin Milcah Martha Moore that she was 'more free to entertain the muse, when in humour for her Company—for I study not—This is very perceivable in my Compositions'.[37] Her statement blended the Quaker emphasis on inspired or 'unstudied' writing with the poetic muse. Connecting the muse with divine inspiration had a long association in Protestant poetry. Milton, for example, invoked the heavenly muse in *Paradise Lost* (1667). For women, though, such framing may also have allowed them to enter more comfortably into the world of literary production in an age when Quaker women's public voices were welcome in the context of ministry but not necessarily beyond it.[38]

In addition to emphasizing the inspired aspect of their verse, Quakers differentiated their work from what they criticised as 'worldly' poetry. Frances Owen, whose testimony of her cousin Mollineux served as a preface to *Fruits of Retirement*, made a firm distinction between Mollineux's poetry and that of some of her contemporaries: 'Verse is not so commonly used in Divine Subjects, as Prose, and but too small abused by the extravagant Wits of the Age; yet she, like a Skilful Chymist, had learned to separate the Purer Spirits, and more Refined Parts of Poetry, from the Earthly, Worthless Dross'.[39] Owen's metaphor reinforced Mollineux's religiosity as well as the skill of her poetry. *Fruits of Retirement* received approval from the Second Day Morning Meeting which served as gatekeeper for Quaker publications in London. As Hilary Hinds has argued, 'Mollineux's volume was to be understood and accepted as a fully Quaker publication'.[40] Throughout the rest of the century, though, some Quakers continued to probe the distinction between sanctioned and non-sanctioned verse. For example, Phillips used

[35] Ann Fothergill to Catherine Payton, n.d., Robert Valentine Papers, mssRV, Box 1, item 64, HLSC. The poem was likely written for Payton's 1754 visit to America.

[36] Blecki, 'Reading *Moore's Book*', in Blecki and Wulf (eds), *Milcah Martha Moore's Book*, p. 78.

[37] Hannah Griffitts to Milcah Martha Moore, 1 4mo. 1785, Edward Wanton Smith Papers, HC. MC-955, Box 5, HQC.

[38] Cazden, E., '"Within the Bounds of their Circumstances": the testimony of inequality among New England Friends', in Healey, R. R. (ed.), *Quakerism in the Atlantic World, 1690–1830*, University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2021, pp. 44–64.

[39] Owen, F., 'A Testimony', preface to Mollineux, *Fruits of Retirement*.

[40] Hinds, H., 'Mary Mollineux's *Fruits of Retirement* (1702): poetry in the second period of Quakerism', *Quaker Studies* 25 (2020), pp. 148–49.

the preface to *The Happy King* to separate her religious message from her poem's artistic aspects. She remarked that 'the people called Quakers, have ever disapproved of the extravagant flights, romantic fictions, vain and idle productions, both in dramatic and other compositions, which have appeared in poetic dress, as tending to contaminate the minds of the readers'. She then contrasted this extravagance with the simplicity valued in her religious tradition, while also reminding the reader that 'many of the sublime parts of sacred Scripture, were by the inspired Authors, written in verse'.[41] Both Owen and Phillips thus set up a demarcation between sanctioned religious writing and 'extravagant' literary indulgences.

In an age when women poets such as Hannah More and Elizabeth Carter were beginning to gain literary fame, some Friends also wished to avoid association with a desire for public recognition. In her youth, Catherine Payton felt no qualms about writing verse. One poem that she penned at age eighteen circulated in manuscript to the point that 'it suffered much by copying', suggesting that Payton and those in her circle participated in the practice of verse copying and circulation. After leaving school and beginning her public ministry, though, Payton restricted her reading to religious books. She decided to stop writing verse until later in life, not because she believed 'it was a sacrifice required', but rather because she feared it might require too much of her attention or even make her popular.[42]

In a similar vein, Emlen expressed her concerns about writing verse in a 1781 manuscript poem, 'The Maiden's Mite: A Reply to a Piece on the Death of Susanna Lightfoot by S. Lewis'. Emlen's twenty-one stanza poem served as a memorial testimony of the minister Lightfoot, whom Emlen had known and admired.[43] In the poem's first stanza, Emlen lamented that she could not express herself through mere ideation: 'Cou'd I thro' Grace with just Idea's fraught,/Describe aright, & shew Example's End'. Emlen recognised the danger in turning to poetry, which often had the design of 'feeding self' in the author or reader: 'But verse so oft is with polution stain'd/ By feeding self in those who read or write,/That having oft the meek just Christian Pain'd/'Tis seldom thus I Essay to Indite'.[44] Emlen thus framed her verse as a medium to which she reluctantly turned, given its potential for self-promotion, but which nonetheless served as a necessary vessel for her testimony. Emlen's earlier poetic reply

[41] Phillips, *Happy King*, pp. vi–vii.

[42] *Memoirs of the life of Catherine Phillips*, London, 1797, pp. 18–20. Despite these sentiments, Payton (later Phillips) did gain recognition. Her obituary in *The Gentleman's Magazine* observed that 'her life and talents were too extraordinary not too merit record'. Listing her various achievements, the article noted that 'she left also some MS [manuscript] poems'. *The Gentleman's Magazine* 65 (1795), p. 259.

[43] On Emlen and Lightfoot see the Diary of Ann Mifflin, 19 4mo. 1779, HC. MC-1288, vol. 4, HQC.

[44] Ann Emlen, 'The Maiden's Mite', 6 7mo. 1781, mssRV, Box 1, item 59, HLSC.

to Burke, 'Chloe to Colin', also opened with a stanza of authorial modesty: 'So kindly invited, how can I refuse/To proceed on a theme so sublime,/Tho' unpractised in verse, and unfit to amuse/With the flowery strains of good rhyme?'.[45] In making clear that she had been 'invited' to respond to Burke and that she was not accustomed to verse-writing, she downplayed her literary ambitions in entering into a poetic exchange with a leading political figure. This convention of prefacing a work with an apology appears in other eighteenth-century women's poetry, as well as in the prefaces of prose writing from the era.[46]

Indeed, Quaker women poets such as Emlen regularly adapted eighteenth-century literary conventions to their religious context. As Rebecca Rosen has noted, Griffitts juxtaposed classical forms with religious themes in her poetry.[47] Similarly, following neoclassical trends that extended well beyond the Religious Society of Friends, several Quaker female poets used classical pen names when circulating poetry among family and friends. Sometimes these names were chosen by the author, and sometimes they were bestowed. Philadelphia statesman and intellectual James Logan addressed Susanna Wright as 'Philomel' in recognition of her poetry. In Greek mythology, Philomel served as a symbol of literature and art who transformed herself into a nightingale.[48] While the adoption of classical pen names was a common practice in the eighteenth century, some Quaker women who used such pseudonyms retained elements of religiosity in their names. Emlen, as seen above, used the name 'Chloe' in her verse exchanges with Thomas Burke. 'Chloe' had connections not only to classical Greek literature and mythology but also to the early Church, where Chloe was a Christian woman mentioned in the first book of Corinthians. Griffitts signed her poetry with the pen name 'Fidelia', which invoked both faith and classical influence.[49]

In adapting the practices of the larger literary culture to their religious context, writers of Quaker verse represented themselves as, what Phyllis Mack has termed, both 'denizens of the Enlightenment and seekers of the supernatural'.[50] Other historians have similarly argued how educated female Friends expressed their religious beliefs,

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[45] Emlen, 'Chloe to Colin', p. 231.

[46] Nixon, C. L., '"Stop a Moment at this Preface": the gendered paratexts of Fielding, Barker, and Haywood', *Journal of Narrative Theory* 32 (2002), p. 124.

[47] Rosen, 'Copying Hannah Griffitts', p. 185.

[48] Cowell, P., '"Womankind Call Reason to Their Aid": Susanna Wright's verse epistle on the status of women in eighteenth-century America', *Signs* 6 (1981), p. 796.

[49] Other women in Griffitts' network also used classical pen names. See Wigginton, C., *In the Neighborhood: women's publication in early America*, Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016, p. 18.

[50] Mack, P., 'Religion, Feminism, and the Problem of Agency: reflections on eighteenth-century Quakerism', *Signs* 29 (2003): p. 161.

even in predominantly male settings, by drawing on the prevailing social codes that defined the polite culture of eighteenth century sociability. Jennings, who coined the term 'polite quakerliness' to define this mix of Enlightenment and Quaker sociability, has highlighted the example of Knowles as a poet who 'melded popular social practices with serious religious sentiments'.[51] As the above examples suggest, many Quaker women who wrote or exchanged verse operated in these overlapping worlds; so too did the girls who learned to copy, circulate, and write poetry in Quaker classrooms and homes.

Quaker Girls and Poetry Circulation

The exchange and circulation of female Friends' poetry occurred not only across geographic lines but generational ones as well. Children were a focal point of the eighteenth century Religious Society of Friends, which sought to provide youth with a 'guarded' education free of corrupting or worldly influences. While historians have examined the central place of youth in early Quakerism, the first-hand perspectives and lived experiences of Quaker children remain understudied.[52] Considering the voices of young Friends where possible, this analysis shows that girls became active participants in the intergenerational community of female Friends who copied, circulated, and wrote poetry to strengthen friendships and community ties. In these practices, girls learned to interact with poetry in the same way that women did, through the lens of a 'polite quakerliness' that emphasised both the religiosity of Quakerism and the sociability of eighteenth century society.

At schools, one of the most substantial ways that Quaker girls participated in a culture of poetry was through the copying of manuscript or printed verse. Children at Westtown School in Pennsylvania, for example, kept copybooks, also called piece books or commonplace books, in which they copied writings from other authors.[53] Both boys and girls kept such books. The young Rhode Islander Obadiah Brown, for example, compiled a 127-page commonplace book with copied verse and prose selections. Among his entries was Hannah Griffitts' manuscript memorial poem to Daniel Stanton.[54] More

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[51] Pullin, N., *Female Friends and the Making of Transatlantic Quakerism, 1650–1750*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018, pp. 177–78; Jennings, *Gender, Religion, and Radicalism*, p. 16.

[52] On this point see Pullin, N., '"Children of the Light": childhood, youth, and dissent in early Quakerism', in Berner, T., and Underwood, L. (eds), *Childhood, Youth and Religious Minorities in Early Modern Europe*, Cham: Palgrave MacMillan, 2019, pp. 99–126.

[53] Rothermel, 'Prophets, Friends, Conversationalists', p. 77.

[54] Brown did not attend a Quaker school, but his education may have been influenced by the schoolteacher Job Scott, who boarded with Brown's family in the 1770s. Brown, O., Commonplace Book, 1783–85, Mss. Octavo Vols B, pp. 15–22, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts.

frequently found in the archives, though, are examples of girls' copied poetry. As Karin Wulf has shown, Philadelphia teachers such as Hannah Catherall and Rebecca Jones promoted the poetry of women they knew by assigning it to their female students to copy. As a result, generations of girls read and copied the manuscript poetry of Susanna Wright and Hannah Griffitts.[55] These teachers thus helped canonise Wright and Griffitts as regional Quaker poets while also bringing young Friends into the scribal circulation process. As adults, women who first encountered Wright's poetry in schools continued to read and circulate her work. Hannah Callender Sansom, Mary Flower, and Milcah Martha Moore, for example, all copied Wright's verse epistle based on Anne Boleyn's letter to King Henry VIII.[56]

Through copying, children also circulated non-Quaker manuscript and printed verse. Recently, Wendy Raphael Roberts has attributed the manuscript poem 'On the Death of Love Rotch', found in the Quaker Mary Powel Potts' commonplace book, to Phyllis Wheatley. Roberts' discovery sheds new light on Wheatley's geographical reach and influence on scribal culture. It also highlights the role of young Friends in contributing to a poetic network beyond their Society. Potts, who died at eighteen, was thirteen at the time she began her commonplace book and had likely studied at Jones' school.[57] As printed verse miscellanies became more prevalent in the late eighteenth century, Quaker children also copied the published devotional poetry of contemporary poets such as Oliver Goldsmith and Anna Letitia Barbauld.[58] Jones and other educators thus not only taught students to copy their own co-religionists' verse, but also non-Quaker verse that resonated with guarded education or with the larger social and reform goals of the Society such as abolitionism.

Copying poetry served to strengthen identity among girls who operated in the same religious, social, or family circles. As Beth Ann Rothermel has shown, adult Quakers' commonplace books frequently contained women's writings, from the testimonies of Catherine Payton Phillips to the poetry of Hannah Griffitts.[59] These selections, which often circulated through correspondence, reinforced a sense of shared identity. Some

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[55] Wulf, K. A., *Not All Wives: women of colonial Philadelphia*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, p. 47.

[56] Fatherly, *Gentlewomen*, p. 84. Emlen was also a student of Jones and Catherall, and she may have developed her interest in writing poetry through her education. See Nash, G., and Teipe, E., *Our Beloved Friend: the life and writings Anne Emlen Mifflin*, University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2022, p. 25.

[57] Roberts, W. R., '"On the Death of Love Rotch", a New Poem Attributed to Phillis Wheatley (Peters): and a speculative attribution', *Early American Literature* 58 (2023), pp. 155–84.

[58] Westtown student Rachel Sharpless, for example, copied Quaker writings as well as poems from Barbauld, Goldsmith, and Edward Young. See Rachel Valentine (Sharpless) Ashbridge, Copy book, 1800 Dec. 5, Robert Valentine Papers, mssRV, Box 4, item 13, HLSC. Moore included poems by these authors in her *Miscellanies*.

[59] Rothermel, B. A., 'Prophets, Friends, Conversationalists: Quaker rhetorical culture, women's commonplace books, and the art of invention, 1775–1840', *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 43 (2013), p. 82.

young Friends began such literary exchanges in childhood. Decades before she kept a commonplace book and corresponded with mid-Atlantic women poets such as her cousin Hannah Griffitts, Milcah Martha Moore, then Hill, sent copied verses to her sisters. In May 1748, seven-year-old Milcah was living with her parents in Madeira. Writing to her older sisters in Philadelphia, she reminded them that 'Sister Rachel promis'd to send me some verses pray don't forget next time to send them'. She also added: 'I now send you some verses but a great many of them are wrote so bad I am asham'd of them but I cant mend my pens myself but I will learn that I may have a good pen when I want one'.[60] This was the letter of a young child still learning how to write. Already, though, she was engaging in a practice of verse exchange through correspondence that she would continue as an adult, culminating in the creation of her commonplace book.[61]

Girls also copied and exchanged poetry to reinforce friendships and to highlight the value of friendship to their lives. Friendship, as multiple scholars have noted, was a particularly important theme in seventeenth and eighteenth century female writings, as well as definitive to female sociability.[62] A few girls wrote original poetry for their friends. By crafting friendship poems, they were engaging in what Backscheider has described as 'the only significant form of poetry that eighteenth-century women inherited from women'.[63] In Ireland, for example, twelve-year-old Mary Birkett authored poetry for her friend Hannah Forbes. By the time she was eighteen, Birkett had adopted classical pseudonyms for Forbes and another young Quaker, Debby Watson, with whom she exchanged poems.[64] Sheffield Quaker Ann Sutcliff, who sometimes used the name 'Lavinia' in her writing, also penned friendship verse in her youth. Sutcliff's poetry was published posthumously after she died at age thirty-three. Most of the poems in her short collection date from around 1782–87, when Sutcliff, then Hirst, was about fifteen to twenty years of age. Like Birkett, the young Hirst wrote verse for other Quaker friends in her circle such as Gulielma Fairbank and Sarah Sutcliff. She dedicated another poem to her friend Rachel Barnard, later Fowler, who became a public minister. These poems resemble the writings of other Quaker girls and young women who penned pastorals or friendship poems and who addressed such themes as grief or

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[60] Milcah Hill to her sisters, 7 5mo. 1748, Madeira, Edward Wanton Smith Papers, HC. MC-955, Box 6, HQC.

[61] See Blecki and Wulf (eds), *Milcah Martha Moore's Book*.

[62] Rothermel, 'Prophets, Friends, Conversationalists', 82–84; Backscheider, *Women Poets*, pp. 175–232; Herbert, A. E., *Female Alliances: gender, identity, and friendship in early modern Britain*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014.

[63] Backscheider, *Women Poets*, p. 175.

[64] Teakle, J., 'Works of Mary Birkett Card', vol. 2, PhD Diss., University of Gloucester, 2004, pp. 37–38, 192; Teakle, 'Works', vol. 1, pp. 6, 28–29.

contentment.[65] In exchanging verse, these young Friends were mirroring the activity of Quaker women such as Hannah Griffitts ('Fidelia'), Hannah Harrison ('Sophronia'), and Mary and Sarah Norris ('Sophia' and 'Fellicia'), who likewise established a 'band of friendship' through literary and epistolary correspondence.[66]

Beyond copybooks, children also circulated verse through other school material. Ciphering books, which children used to learn and practice mathematics and penmanship, provide one example. A poem praising Philadelphia Quaker, Grace Hoopes (b. 1697), appears at the beginning of her ciphering book from c. 1710. The poem included a play on Hoopes' name: 'Thy life is Vertuous GRACE thou art by name/And thy behaviour parallels the same'.[67] The poem's inclusion shows how poetry was integrated into multiple aspects of education—even a child's ciphering book. It was meticulously copied and illustrated with flourishes, suggesting Hoopes' care in including it in her book.[68] Fourteen-year-old Susannah Borton's ciphering book, created at the end of the eighteenth century, also incorporated verse. Borton, a member of the Evesham (New Jersey) Monthly Meeting, chose an ecumenical selection. She copied part of a hymn from Charles Wesley, a hymn that appears in the Catholic hymnal of Philadelphia from this period, and a brief excerpt from Milton's *Paradise Lost.*[69]

By the second half of the eighteenth century, girls such as Borton were regularly copying and circulating interdenominational verse. Advanced needlework samplers offer an example. In creating samplers, young embroiders drew mostly on religious or didactic verse from contemporary poets. Pithy maxims were utilised due to their brevity, but girls also selected hymns by writers such as Isaac Watts or devotional verse by poets such as Edward Young.[70] Ann Marsh, a respected Philadelphia teacher who taught many of the city's elite Quaker children, was particularly renowned for her needlework instruction.[71] Two samplers from Marsh's school came from Hannah Cooper (1791) and Mary Cooper (1789), cousins who were between the ages of ten and fifteen at the time. For the text of her sampler, Mary chose a hymn by James Cuninghame, who associated with the millenarian French Prophets in early eighteenth-century Britain. Hannah used 'The Wish', a poem

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[65] Sutcliff, A., *Poems*, Sheffield: James Montgomery, 1800.

[66] Wigginton, *In the Neighborhood*, p. 18.

[67] Grace Hoopes, Ciphering Book, 1710, Am. 823, HSP.

[68] On similar examples see Burke, V. E., '"The Art of Numbering Well": late seventeenth-century arithmetic manuscripts compiled by Quaker girls', in Daybell, J., and Hinds, P. (eds), *Material Readings of Early Modern Culture: texts and social practices, 1580–1730*, New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010, pp. 246–65.

[69] Susannah Borton, Ciphering Book, 1799, Am. 8240, HSP.

[70] See, for example, Ann West, Sampler, Philadelphia, 1787, #SA000143; Tabitha Rowland, Sampler, Westtown School, 1803, #SA001021, *Sampler Archive*, http://samplerarchive.org/, accessed 15 October 2023.

[71] Isaac, A., 'Ann Flower's Sketchbook: drawing, needlework, and women's artistry in colonial Philadelphia', *Winterthur Portfolio* 41 (2007), pp. 146–48.

by 'M. S.' that expressed the guarded educational values taught at Marsh's school. The poem originally appeared under the title 'A Wish' in *The Lady's Magazine* in 1774, but Cooper—or perhaps Marsh—likely knew the text from the recent publication of Milcah Martha Moore's *Miscellanies, Moral and Instructive, In Prose and Verse* (Philadelphia, 1787). The circuitous route of the poem from literary magazine to miscellany to child's sampler shows how literature circulated not only among Quaker women but also Quaker children.[72]

The poem's route also highlights how educators such as Marsh and Moore introduced poetry that allowed youth to be conversant in a literary culture beyond Quakerism.[73] While some mid-century teachers such as Rebecca Jones and Anthony Benezet had already been assigning non-Quaker verse for students to copy or learn, late eighteenth-century printed miscellanies such as Moore's extended this trend. Moore's *Miscellanies*, which included a mix of prose and verse, had transatlantic reach. After its initial Philadelphia printing, it was reprinted later in 1787 by the London printer James Phillips, and eventually in Dublin as well. The miscellany ultimately went through over a dozen editions and was adopted at Quaker schools including Westtown.[74] Eight years later, Phillips printed the English Quaker Rachel Barclay's posthumous *Select Pieces of Poetry, Intended to Promote Piety and Virtue in the Minds of Young People* (1795), which Barclay compiled especially for girls.[75] In these publications, Moore and Barclay emphasised the non-Quaker moral and didactic poetry popular among Britain's broader reading public. Nathaniel Cotton's poem 'The Fire-side', for example, appears not only in Barclay's and Moore's volumes but also in at least seven other printed eighteenth-century miscellanies for children and adults. Moore and Barclay also excerpted writings from well-known authors such as Samuel Johnson, John Milton, Alexander Pope, and Elizabeth Carter.[76] Two other late eighteenth-century Friends who published compilations for youth, Lindley Murray and Daniel Lawrence, similarly selected non-Quaker entries.[77] Young Friends remained under what the preface to Barclay's *Select*

[72] Mary Margaret Cooper, Sampler, New Jersey/Philadelphia, 1789, #SA000270; Hannah Cooper, Sampler, Philadelphia, 1791, #SA000271, *Sampler Archive*. See also 'A Wish', *The Lady's Magazine* 5 (1774), pp. 551–52.

[73] In 1767, Moore was disowned from her meeting for having married a first cousin. She remained deeply connected to the Quaker community, however, and leading Friends such as Martha Routh supported her efforts toward reinstatement. She rejoined after the death of her husband. See Letter from Milcah Martha Moore to her sister, 20 2mo. 1797, HC. MC-955, Box 6, Edward Wanton Smith Papers, HQC; Wulf, Introduction to *Moore's Book*, pp. 18–19.

[74] Blecki and Wulf, Preface to *Moore's Book*, xv.

[75] Barclay, *Select Pieces*, iv.

[76] Barclay, *Select Pieces*, 48–51; Moore, *Miscellanies*, 171–74; For a database of printed miscellanies from 1680–1800 see Abigail Williams and Jennifer Batt, *Digital Miscellanies Index*, http://digitalmiscellaniesindex.org, Accessed 15 October 2023.

[77] Murray, L., *The English Reader: or, pieces in prose and poetry*, New York, 1799; Lawrence, D., *A Selection of Miscellaneous Pieces, In Verse and Prose*, Philadelphia, 1792. Lawrence's book also included a few Quaker selections, including verse by Knowles.

Pieces called 'greater restrictions in the reading of poetical productions', but Quaker compilers and publishers on both sides of the Atlantic nonetheless sought to publish children's miscellanies that integrated with a wider literary culture.[78]

Diaries offer evidence of how girls educated at Quaker schools continued the practice of copying poetry into adulthood, often in ways that blurred with their own creative work. Philadelphian Elizabeth Drinker, who learned poetry at Benezet's school as a girl, incorporated verse in the diary that she kept for nearly five decades (1758–1807). She opened her diary for the year 1795, belatedly, with the following: 'More then [sic] one twelfth of the new year already gone and past,/The other eleven certainly will fly away as fast,/Then let us daily keep in mind, what we at School were taught,/That every moment of our time, is still with mercy fraught'. Below this verse, she noted: '"Every moment of time, is a monument of mercy" was a copy, we used to write at A. Benezets School—A fine temperate morning quarterly meeting'.[79] Here she turned the maxim from a former copybook exercise into her own verse creation to address a weighty topic among Friends: the value of time and the importance of not wasting it. Sally Wister, whom Anthony Benezet taught a generation later, also copied and created verse. As she came of age during the American Revolution, she kept a journal in which she invoked lines from the mid eighteenth-century poets William Whitehead and William Collins to describe the moments of grief she encountered amid war. By her late twenties, Wister began to compose her own poetry, which she wrote mainly for family and friends.[80]

Diarist Hannah Callender Sansom, likewise educated in Quaker Philadelphia, drew on poetry to grieve the death of her infant daughter in February 1770. Sansom wrote that her daughter 'carried with her to the grave this Label, the counter part of which, viz— "Is Resignation's lesson hard/Examin we shall find/That Duty gives up little less/Than anguish of the mind"'.[81] The stanza came from Edward Young's 'Resignation' (1762). Sansom employed the practice of copying, which she learned in school, to express grief over her 'little Caty' in a culturally acceptable manner. As Lucia McMahon has argued in her study of maternal grief in eighteenth-century Philadelphia, 'such poetry ultimately upheld the doctrine of resignation, but enabled women to hint at the intense force of their grief within a carefully stylized medium'.[82] Copied (and original) verse could serve

[78] Barclay, *Select Pieces*, p. iv.

[79] Crane, E. F. C. (ed.), *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*, Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 1991, vol. 1, p. 645.

[80] Derounian, K. Z. (ed.), *The Journal and Occasional Writings of Sarah Wister*, Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1987, pp. 17, 69–73, 104.

[81] Klepp and Wulf (eds), *Diary of Sansom*, p. 243. In the third line, Sansom changed the word 'more' to 'less'.

[82] McMahon, L., '"So Truly Afflicting and Distressing to Me His Sorrowing Mother": expressions of maternal grief in eighteenth-century Philadelphia', *Journal of the Early Republic* 32 (2012), p. 43.

as a *memento mori* for eighteenth-century women such as Sansom, who were tasked with the rituals and duties of mourning in their society.[83] The practices that Quaker girls were learning in childhood thus had myriad religious and social implications for their adult lives.

While schools were an important setting for introducing girls to poetry, girls also learned verse-writing at home. As noted above, Abiah Darby wrote a poem to memorialise her husband's death in 1763, which she transcribed in her diary for her children's benefit. The next year, Abiah's daughter Mary followed her mother's example by writing her own poem, 'A Soliloquy', in which the fifteen-year-old sought to commemorate her father and bring comfort to her mother.[84] Ann Sutcliff also shared her poetry with her children for their spiritual profit. Shortly before her marriage, she wrote a poem to her future husband. The poem signalled an end to the verse-writing that had shaped her youth: 'Adieu to Poetry! whose pleasing charms/With pleasure crown'd each calm, each tranquil hour'. She pledged that, after marriage, 'Domestic cares Lavinia's mind shall aid,/And scorn the pleasures of the young and vain'.[85] But after she became a mother, Sutcliff took a different view toward the value of poetry. Rather than rejecting its vanity, she now viewed her verse as beneficial to her children's upbringing. She sought to publish her poetry 'as a remembrancer to the minds of her children, —that their Mother's time was not spent, even in early age, without some SERIOUS MEDITATION' [her emphasis].[86] For Darby and Sutcliff, poetry facilitated the Quaker mother's rearing of faithful young Friends.

Under the encouragement of their families, a few children created substantial collections of verse from a young age. Mary Birkett, Hannah Griffitts, and Mary Shackleton all wrote poems as young girls. The earliest surviving manuscript poem authored by Griffitts dates from October 1737, when she was ten years old.[87] Around the time of her tenth birthday, Birkett wrote 'A Farewell to Old England' as her family moved from Liverpool to Dublin.[88] Birkett was prolific, authoring nearly seventy surviving poems before the age of sixteen. Her early poems were religious, occasional (as commemorating an event), or moral in nature. They focussed on such themes as nature, truth, family, and grief over the death of her young siblings. The poems had a

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[83] Stabile, S. M., *Memory's Daughters: the material culture of remembrance in eighteenth-century America*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004, pp. 178–227.

[84] Labouchere, R., *Abiah Darby*, York: William Sessions Limited, 1988, p. 138.

[85] Sutcliff, *Poems*, poem 27.

[86] Sutcliff, *Poems*, [Author's Preface].

[87] Griffitts, H., 'To Thee, my Life', 7 10mo. 1737, Yi 2 7422F, no. 3, Library Company of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA.

[88] Teakle, 'Works', vol. 2, p. 3.

clear social function and were likely shared with teachers, parents, and other family members.[89]

Shackleton's surviving manuscript poetry from girlhood addressed similar themes to Birkett's: religion, friendship, nature, and commemoration.[90] Most of Shackleton's poetry was serious in nature, but she also acknowledged having composed some 'silly rhymes' at age seven.[91] Her early manuscript poems ranged from an acrostic to friendship poetry and even a 'fairy-tale' in verse. She noted that her father Richard, who ran the Irish Quaker boarding school Ballitore, encouraged such work: 'my father was generally an accurate judge of poetry; although his partiality led him to value mine, especially when I was a child'. Shackleton's mother, Elizabeth, was less enthusiastic about her daughter's verse-writing and 'often expressed her justly grounded fear that my mind was too much engrossed by this propensity'. The family memoirs further explain that Elizabeth admired good poetry, but 'feeling the limit which had restrained her youthful imagination, she justly feared the danger of transgressing it for herself and others'.[92] Elizabeth's concerns did not ultimately suppress her daughter's literary interests, but the Shackletons' varied responses to verse-writing highlight how some Friends continued to examine or debate their motives for reading and writing poetry, while others participated more freely in this literary culture.

Shackleton's childhood poetry had a long afterlife. When she was nearly fifty, the author published a collection of her poems through subscription, in which her subscribers, many of whom were Irish or English Quakers, subvented the publication costs.[93] Her earliest poems did not appear in this volume, but they did survive in a manuscript collection that, like other poetry such as Emlen's, crossed the Atlantic. In the mid-1780s, Shackleton dedicated a substantial packet of her poems as a farewell gift to the American Quaker, Sarah (Hill) Dillwyn, who had visited Ireland on a religious visit. The collection's organization was largely chronological, starting with 'An Hymn', which Shackleton penned at age 11. Also included were poetic exchanges between the young Shackleton and the Irish Quakers Dorothy Roberts and Anne Strangman.[94] In 1820, Dillwyn gave the manuscripts to her sister, Milcah Martha Moore.[95] Shackleton's childhood poetry thus travelled across the Atlantic and

[89] Teakle, 'Works', vol. 1, pp. 5, 31.

[90] Mary Shackleton Leadbeater Manuscripts, HC. MC-975-07-059, vol. 1, 'Poems, 1780', HQC.

[91] Leadbeater, *Leadbeater Papers*, vol. 1, p. 45.

[92] Leadbeater, *Leadbeater Papers*, vol. 1, p. 116; Leadbeater, M. S. (ed.), *Memoirs and Letters of Richard and Elizabeth Shackleton*, London: Harvey and Darton, 1822, pp. 27–28.

[93] The list of subscribers appears in the prefatory material to Leadbeater, *Poems*.

[94] Leadbeater Manuscripts, HC. MC-975-07-059, vol. 1, 'Poems, 1780', pp. 1, 40–44, 46–51, HQC.

[95] An inscription on the title page states, 'This volume given to M M Moore, by her beloved sister S Dillwyn, 1820'. Leadbeater Manuscripts, HC. MC-975-07-059, vol. 1, 'Poems, 1780', HQC.

across generations, remaining in circulation long after her childhood through the preservation of Dillwyn and Moore.

As the above examples show, girls throughout the British Atlantic engaged with verse as an active part of their Quaker childhoods. In copying, exchanging, and writing poetry, they participated in similar forms of social and literary exchange to that of their elders. Verse-writing featured in diaries, letters, schoolbooks, commonplace books, literary exchanges, miscellanies, testimonies, material culture, and even public mourning. This intergenerational engagement with poetry held two major functions within Quakerism. First, it informed the religious lives of Friends of all ages. Girls learned poetry as part of a guarded education, ministers employed verse for testimonies, and mothers turned to poetry as an instructional tool in childrearing. Second, poetry supported female Friends' sociability. Through the exchange of verse, Quaker women—and their children or pupils—entered literary and correspondence networks that strengthened social ties. Some of these networks were intra-confessional, solidifying friendships among schoolchildren or reinforcing religious identity across distance. But some were also external, allowing Friends to contribute to literary circles or correspondence networks beyond their Society. Women such as Knowles, Emlen, and Leadbeater even weighed in on political or intellectual debates with contemporaries such as Samuel Johnson, Thomas Burke, and Edmund Burke. Poetry thus served as a diverse genre within eighteenth-century Quaker culture, facilitating women's and girls' contributions to their religious community and to a social and intellectual world beyond Quakerism.

Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.