



CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION

csac.history.wisc.edu > Document Collections > The Founding Period and Slavery > The Middle States Debate Slavery and the Constitution > Debates Over the Foreign Slave Trade

James Thornton, Sr., to Moses Brown, Byberry, Philadelphia County, Pa., 17 December 1787 (excerpts)

Thine dated the 13th. 11 mo. 1787, I received which was very acceptable. . . . your Christian Endeavour, with your Legislature for the Abolition of Slavery and traffick in the African trade being Succesfull as the Law they made thereupon Evinces, is truly Salutuary and wish might take place here, many friends here view the Transactions of the Convention respecting Leaving the Trade open to Africa in the Same point of view as thee does, and have Occasionally mention'd to Leading men in State affairs, as one of the Grand reasons of our Objections to the propo'd Constitution, but as a religious Society we can have Nothing to do with Setting up nor pulling down Governments but Live Peaceably under all Governments Set over us in Godliness and honesty: yet ought to Shew Publickly our disaprobation of Every Oppresive and unrighteous Act—done by men in power. . . .

CITE AS: John P. Kaminski et al., eds., *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*, Vol. XIV: Commentaries on the Constitution, Public and Private [2] (Madison, Wis.: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 1983), 527.