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● To the Children, Grandchildren...and Great Grandchildren  
of the Late Anne Griffith..."Grandmom Griffith."

Dear Family,

I could use your help on a project that has interested me since a boy. Sister Caroline, my mother, had a very interesting name...BENEZET... Made especially interesting by the fact that our Aunt Stella and Uncle Bob both lived on Benezet Street in Chestnut Hill at one time. Benezet was her middle name, and mother told me the street was named after a relative, Anthony Benezet, who "helped Lincoln free the slaves." Mother was very proud of this fact, and sadly only after her death did I do some research and learn the complete and fantastic story. Truth is Benezet was way before Lincoln!

Anthony Benezet...your relative, Griffiths', was born in 1713 in Piccardy in France and was world famous for his efforts in behalf of the Blacks and the American Indians in Philadelphia before, during and after the Revolution in 1776.

We journeyed to France about three years ago and started doing research on the family. It took us to the old walled city in Southern France, Carcassonne in Languedoc Province. Benezet is a famous name in France. The first reference to the family in the old records we inspected was in 1165 (correct). Young Benezet, first name unknown, was tending the families sheep, and "ordered by God" to build a bridge over the Rhone River at Avignon (the City of the Popes) and for this was made a SAINT. He is also, to this day, Patron Saint of the famous school of engineering in Paris. By the way, a portion of the old bridge still remains.

Over the centuries, the Benezet family became Protestants, and were driven from France because of their Protestant views. Anthony was born on January 31st, 1713 of Jean Etienne and Judith Benezet who left Piccardy to go to London in 1715 (via Rotterdam) and from London to Philadelphia in 1731. Anthony became a Quaker.

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There is also a strong possibility that the Benezet and Franklin (Ben) clans are related. Mrs. Franklin (Deborah) addressed letters to the Benezets as "cousin..." I've drawn a blank on this, as I have with connecting the Benezet line to Grandmother. This is were you can help, please provide me with Grandmother's maiden name, and other names she may have mentioned.

Take pride in this, family, you have a famous relative and a SAINT in the past. Your children and their children should be interested in remembering that. The family was here BEFORE we became a free nation. Benezet is highly honored by the Quakers in Philadelphia and around the world.

I do this out of respect and memory of my mother, Caroline Benezet Griffith and all who knew her, mother would have enjoyed all of this and would have taken pride in being part of history. How many families have their own "in-family" Saint to pray to... Saint Benezet (pronounced in France... Ben-ah-zay). AND... isn't ironic that two of you lived on Benezet Street, of all the streets in Philadelphia and surrounding areas. Mother never read this true, interesting story, but now all of you can share it together.

Bill Kline  
December 25th, 1978

