

PENNSYLVANIA DEVELOPMENT

I. The Land and the Indians

- A. Indians were not a serious obstacle to the settlement of Pennsylvania. A tribe known as the Delaware lived in this region of the coast, and they gave the English a friendly welcome.
- B. The Iroquois had earlier dispersed the most threatening tribes of the region, the Susquehannocks, and the valley was only sparsely inhabited when the colonists landed.
- C. Penn's respectful treatment of the area's Indians was even more important in insuring peaceful relations.
- D. His attitude was a combination of kindness and paternalism.
 - 1. Penn thought the Indians were descended from the Old Testament Jews and that their religion resembled primitive Christianity; he did not really grasp Indian attitudes toward land and wealth.
 - 2. But his basic motives of love, equity, and justice were almost unique in the English settlements.
 - 3. He accepted Indian statements of friendship at face value and treated them with the same equanimity he showed to Europeans.
- E. Penn purchased land from the Indians and only then resold it to settlers; he believed the Indians were the rightful owners and gave them lavish trade goods in exchange.
- F. He prohibited the sale of alcohol to Indians, regulated the fur trade, and learned their language. By the end of the century, tribes from Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina were moving to Pennsylvania.
- G. Later, of course, the Scotch-Irish, Palantine Germans, and Swiss settlers who dominated eighteenth-century migration would show little such respect for the Indians or their land claims.
- H. But while he lived in the colony, Penn was able to enforce the policy he expressed to the Delaware chiefs: "The king of the Country where I live, hath given me a great Province; but I desire to enjoy it with your Love and Consent, that we may always live together as Neighbors and friends."

II. Quaker settlement proceeds

- A. Most early Pennsylvanians were English, Irish, or Welsh Quakers, but there were also Catholics, Lutherans, Baptists, Anglicans, Calvinists, and Quakers from Germany and Holland.
- B. At first, people settled with their European brethren, but gradually intermarriage and geographical mobility created an ethnic and religious mosaic.
- C. Penn's initial plans for settlement envisioned neighborhoods of five to ten houses close together on ten-acre lots, surrounded by fields with 450 acres of land per family.

D. He expected each such township to cover about five thousand acres and have only about fifty people. Though by 1685 about fifty townships had been established, settlement patterns rarely conformed to Penn's plans.

E. Settlers built their homes in clusters that resembled the rural neighborhoods of northern England. Though the communal pastures and meadows of Penn's idealized vision never existed in these settlements, the Quaker concept of the "loving neighborhood" helped counter the potential disruptiveness of dispersed settlement.

F. By 1700, Pennsylvania had twenty-one thousand settlers; about half had come as indentured servants, the rest as free farmers or artisans.

G. Any settler could purchase one hundred acres for five pounds and was required only to pay a nominal quitrent of one shilling per acre per year.

H. Indentured servants who completed their terms would receive a headright of fifty acres.

I. Still, Penn never believed in economic equality, and the terms for the wealthy were even more generous.

1. Those with sufficient capital could purchase five thousand acres for only one hundred pounds and receive a bonus of five acres in Philadelphia.

2. Those who purchased more than five thousand acres were allowed to form their own townships; forty-one individuals acquired parcels of five thousand to ten thousand acres.

3. As proprietor, Penn also kept one-tenth of the land for his own use. Indeed, Penn enjoyed being a proprietor and actively used the proceeds from lands sales and the fur trade to accumulate capital and to pay off his burdensome debts.

J. Penn also encouraged merchants to migrate to the colony by supporting the Free Society of Traders in Pennsylvania, which had extensive interests in grain mills and timber lands, engaged extensively in land speculation, and maintained a profitable West Indian trade.

K. Philadelphia grew quickly as major economic hub.

L. The major economic staples of the colony were wheat, barley, livestock.

M. Economic staples of Pennsylvania introduce one of the difficult matters to comprehend: Quaker slavery.

1. 1681-1705, of all members at the Philadelphia Yearly Meetings, 70% owned slaves

2. 1688, Quakers of Germantown authored a testimony against slavery - said it violated the golden rule

3. 1696, attempt by two leading Quakers at Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to forbid slavery and slave trade. This resolution failed, but the Meeting agreed to advise Quakers not to import slaves
4. Between 1705-1756 slavery falls.
 - a. 1705 of all members at the Philadelphia Yearly Meetings, 70% owned slaves
 - b. 1756 of all members at the Philadelphia Yearly Meetings, 10% owned slaves
5. 1712 and 1773 attempt to put prohibitive duty on slavery imports, both times defeated by English government that made money off slave trade.
6. 1758 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting: unanimous concern against importing, buying, selling, or keeping slaves
7. 1775 Pennsylvania government forbids importation of slaves
8. 1780 Pennsylvania government provides for gradual abolition of slavery in the state.

III. Government

- A. While Penn's social vision was traditional in its allocation of power to the wealthy, Pennsylvania was truly a "holy experiment" in its religious toleration and in its introduction of Whiggish republican ideas into the government.
- B. The Frame of Government of 1682, established the basic structures of the colony's government.
- C. The proprietor or his deputy served as governor.
- D. The Provincial Council consisted of seventy-two members, one-third elected annually for three-year terms.
- E. The council initiated legislation, which a two-hundred member Assembly accepted or rejected.
- F. The laws granted freemanship and the right to hold office to any white male who owned fifty acres or who paid a personal tax.
- G. About 50 percent of Pennsylvania's adult males qualified under these terms.
- H. Wealthy Quaker merchants came to dominate the council, much as Penn intended, while the assembly included members from the more rural areas and the lower counties.
- I. In 1701, Penn issued a more radical document, the Charter of Privileges that reset the face of government
 1. In this, the proprietor, Penn, limited his powers: he would only appoint the governor and the council members, and retain the power to veto laws
 2. The Council would be only an advisory body

3. He established a unicameral legislature - unique in the British colonies.
 - a. This Assembly dominated Pennsylvania politics until the American Revolution.
 - b. It made all laws
 - c. It could amend the Charter of Privileges by 6/7 vote and consent of proprietor.
4. Penn also granted the three lower counties (later to become Delaware) a separate assembly.

J. Between 1682 and 1745, English Quakers dominated the Pennsylvania Assembly

1. 1730 British Quakers 30% of body
2. 1740 British Quakers 80% of body
3. 1745 British Quakers 83% of body

IV. Religion

A. Politically, Penn sought to perpetuate a deferential government that also ensured popular participation and the preservation of social peace.

B. Economically, he envisioned a liberal, prosperous society with a proper balance of trade, industry, and farming.

C. Socially, he embraced a vision of community where people of different beliefs could live together in peace and harmony, a society that, paradoxically, rejected the materialistic impulses of the modern world.

D. But religion remained central to the colony's basic ethos.

E. Like the Puritans, Quakers sought to recreate the primitive church-but with crucial differences.

1. Quakerism centered around the notion of the inner light, a belief with profound democratic implications.
2. Quakers gathered for meetings at least once a week.
3. Men and women entered through different doors and were seated by order of arrival-not by rank, except for the elders.
4. Once all were present, a time of silence ensued, during which everyone was expected to engage in turning the mind to the light. People rose and spoke spontaneously, as the spirit moved them, including children, women and even strangers. A second period of silent contemplation ensued when there seemed to be no more messages, and the meeting ended when those present seemed to feel it was over, a consensus formalized when the elders rose and shook hands with one

5. *The meetinghouses were simple buildings, patterned after those in England. Most were rectangular with stone walls and double doors for both men and women, intensely lit within, and with numerous large windows set high in the walls. The interior walls were often whitened to heighten the effect of spiritual intensity. There were no pulpits or altars. This quiet, simple religiosity was punctured a bit by the more extremist elements of Quakerism that sometimes emerged-beliefs in witchcraft (though no Quaker court ever condemned an accused witch, mobs did occasionally hang or stone suspects to death), prophecies, divination, reincarnation, the resurrection of the dead, and the healing power of the Holy Spirit. In this, at least, Quakers were one with other English migrants, continuing to embrace a more traditional magical popular culture that often conflicted with the literate culture of learned clergy.*

V. Conclusions: The Shift in Power

A. The mid-eighteenth century witnessed escalating political conflict both with England and with emerging ethnic and religious groups in Pennsylvania.

B. Quaker Pacifism challenged in Great War for Empire

1. By colonists inside Pennsylvania who were not Quakers, Scots-Irish.
2. By other colonies who saw Pennsylvania as a gateway into the Ohio Valley, a gateway that needed to be defended
3. By England

C. Around the 1740s and 50s, many Quakers in the government began to slowly move out of it voluntarily.

D. And yet, the colony had been distinctly shaped by the Quakers.

E. Philadelphia was a leading American center of trade, finance and cultural power.

G. By 1700, the colony was surpassed in population and wealth only by long-established Virginia and Massachusetts.

H. So, like Virginia and Massachusetts, which each had distinct and powerful colonial cultures - but which also had developing incongruities - Pennsylvania was a society in flux in the early decades of the eighteenth century.

I. Next, we will turn to consider how we might make sense of these three massive colonies and their regional cultures - how can we somehow bring them together to consider colonial life as a whole.