

## PENNSYLVANIA SETTLEMENT

### I. Religious Origins: Quakerism

A. Pennsylvania, more than any other British North American colony, was the lengthened shadow of a single man, William Penn. Penn was a Quaker, and so we need to consider the fundamental beliefs of the Society of Friends

B. The Society of Friends

1. Quakerism was a variety of radical Christianity
2. It emerged in England in the 1640s, founded 1647 by Fox
3. Its founder was **George Fox** (1624-91)
  - a. lower middle class, father a weaver, educated informally, mystical bent, gravitates toward faith to understand the world around him--he is growing up during the age of the English Civil War.
  - b. What Fox finds in the England he is growing up in is a great deal of argument or disputation. Religion seems to be an intellectual debate, it had lost its spiritual matter he thought. After looking around, he created or rediscovered Christianity.
  - c. If an individual searches wholeheartedly for the truth he or she will become aware of the inner or inward light.

C. Friends believed:

1. Supreme being who provided the spark of salvation. The Quaker doctrine of the inner light sprang from the belief that every soul contained divine goodness and virtue as a gift from God, so that all individuals could experience salvation if they accepted the existence of this perfection within themselves.
2. The spark of salvation was available to everyone (repudiated limited atonement)
3. Up to the individual to nurture that spark toward individuals own salvation (rejected original sin and predestination)
4. So to work on own salvation means that Quakerism:
  - a. becomes a theology of practice
  - b. Follow Christ's teachings, like the Sermon on the Mount
5. Believed that all people were children in the sight of God
6. Priesthood of all believers (no hierarchy)
7. church is a gathered group, not a building, any building will do
8. No rituals, there was no service, everyone filed in and waited for someone to get the spirit, stand and speak, sit down, and wait for the next person to speak

D. Fox traveled all over England, the West Indies, and America spreading his brand of Christianity. His followers were called heretics.

## **II. Persecution of Quakers**

A. Quakers were persecuted for heresy, but they are also persecuted for calling cultural rituals into question. If everyone is equal in God's eyes, then why should there be class distinctions. Why should there be distinctions in clothing. Quakers go plain.

B. In addition, the Society moved toward pacifism. Members refuse to join the armed forces, and they refuse to pay taxes which will finance war.

C. How were Quakers persecuted

1. 1662, Quaker Act-automatic fine for being a Quaker, or imprisonment
2. 1661 to 1685 imprisoned almost 15,000 and executed 450

D. Yet during these same years, membership in the sect doubled, and as the initial stage of zealous advocacy waned, the Quakers began to develop a solid institutional structure to support their members and extend their proselytizing overseas.

## **III. Quaker Development in the Old World**

A. Fox emerged from prison in 1666 to lead a four-year campaign to construct a system of group discipline.

1. He established a structure of meetings-men's and women's meetings, meetings for worship and for business, and monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings.
2. Elders provided what hierarchical leadership there was, and overseers counseled members and offered personal and religious support.
3. Lay missionaries and preachers helped spread the word.
4. The meetings oversaw marriage, sex, business, personal habits, and involvement in politics and the law.

B. Despite this shift to a more moderate, institutional emphasis, Quakers remained unshaken in their essential beliefs.

1. They maintained their faith in religious freedom and social pluralism, the sanctity of property, a strong work ethic, sexual prudery, the importance of the family, and simple tastes in their daily lives.
2. They dressed in plain black cloth and adopted policies of pacifism and civil disobedience.
3. Most unusual for their times, Quaker women had far greater equality than did most other western European groups.

## **IV. William Penn**

A. Penn was born into English nobility. His father was Admiral William Penn who had helped Charles II during his successful attempt to regain the Crown. Charles gratefully knighted him and made him lord high admiral, giving him an estate in Ireland, where William Penn, Jr. spent his boyhood.

B. Admiral William Penn was thus wealthy, he had a title, and lands in England and Ireland. He was also orthodox, believed in monarchy, Anglican Church, and social hierarchy

C. William Penn (younger) is a true radical--did not accept orthodoxy.

1. As an adolescent, the younger Penn experienced mystic visions.

2. His father sent him to Christ Church at Oxford to calm him down, but the reverse happened. He was shocked by the "hellish darkness and debauchery" of Oxford and refused to attend chapel, and he was expelled for nonconformity.

3. He returned to Ireland, where his father assigned him the task of managing the family estates, undoubtedly hoping that business affairs would take his son's mind off religious fanaticism.

4. But the younger Penn heard the Quaker Thomas Loe preach and was immediately converted.

5. Appalled, his father tried beating the apostasy out of his son; failing this, he sent him on the European grand tour. While in France, Penn went to the Huguenot town of Saumur, a center of Protestantism in the southwest region, where he studied with the liberal theologian Moses Amyraut and became more confirmed than ever in his views.

6. On his return to England, Penn gradually became one of the Quaker's leading lights, second only in fame and influence to Fox.

7. The government locked him in the Tower of London in 1668 for writing a Quaker book, and there he wrote No Cross, No Crown, perhaps his greatest work.

8. He was arrested again in 1670 for preaching outside a locked meetinghouse in London. He argued his case so well that the jurors refused to convict him on the charge of inciting to riot and found him guilty only of speaking in the streets, even though they were threatened with imprisonment themselves.

10. He was arrested yet again in 1671 and sent to Newgate prison, where he refused the comforts his rank entitled him to and wrote The Great Case of Liberty of Conscience.

11. He subsequently traveled throughout Europe, meeting with a number of influential German pietists. Penn also became a trustee of West Jersey and drew up its Fundamental Laws, and he became active in British Whig politics.

12. He believed that restrictions should be placed on the growing court influence in England through frequent Parliaments that could establish checks on tyrants and "arbitrary ministers."

D. America appealed to Penn as a place where he could plant a model colony, an example for all Christians in its preservation of liberty of conscience (excluding, of course, atheists and nonbelievers).

E. He petitioned Charles II for a grant of land in lieu of payment of a debt of sixteen thousand pounds the Crown owed his father.

F. On March 4, 1681, Charles granted Penn a charter that gave him a stretch of land from forty degrees to forty-three degrees latitude north and five degrees longitude west of the Delaware River, an area of about six hundred thousand square miles, or six times the size of England itself.

G. The charter empowered Penn to receive quitrents from all settlers, obligated him only to pay the king two beaver skins a year and one-fifth of all gold and silver discovered in the colony, and gave him the power to appoint all officials and to veto all laws passed by the freemen.

H. In 1682, the duke of York granted Penn the eastern part of the peninsula between Chesapeake and Delaware bays, giving the province direct water access.

I. Penn promoted the colony widely and drew many settlers to Pennsylvania.

## **V. Movement to Pennsylvania**

A. This really was a middle colony: many of the points one makes about Pennsylvania place it between Virginia and Massachusetts.

B. The Quaker movement to Pennsylvania began even before Penn got his grant. The first Quakers started moving in 1675. By 1681, 1,400 Quakers lived in Pennsylvania.

C. The real movement started in 1682, when Penn led a fleet of 23 ships and 2,000 colonists to the new land.

D. Between 1675 and 1715, 23,000 colonists moved to Delaware Valley (Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey) - not all of them Quakers

E. Persecution played a major part in driving Quakers to America, but it was never the leading cause. The primary religious goals of the Friends' migration were positive rather than negative. An historian observes that the founders of the Delaware colonies wished "to show Quakerism at work, freed from hampering conditions."

F. Quakerism grew quickly in North America. By 1750, it was the third largest religious denomination in British North America. Congregationalists had 465 churches, Anglicans had 289 churches, and Quakers had 250 churches.

G. Perhaps Quakerism did so well because many of the first settlers came in families. Here, the colonial pattern of settlement was between Virginia and Massachusetts. 38% of settlers coming to Philadelphia came in nuclear families; 58% came in nuclear families in Bucks County. The Average is something like 45%.

H. Perhaps Quakerism did so well because it was so accepting. Most of the settlers who came to Pennsylvania were of humble origins. They were husbandmen, craftsmen, laborers, and servants.

I. The servants of Pennsylvania were different from those of Virginia. They usually had a fellow Quaker friend loan them money for their voyage.