

## THE FOUNDING OF PENNSYLVANIA

**William Penn and the Quakers** — Penn was born in London on October 24, 1644, the son of Admiral Sir William Penn. Despite high social position and an excellent education, he shocked his upper-class associates by his conversion to the beliefs of the Society of Friends, or Quakers, then a persecuted sect. He used his inherited wealth and rank to benefit and protect his fellow believers. Despite the unpopularity of his religion, he was socially acceptable in the king's court because he was trusted by the Duke of York, later King James II. The origins of the Society of Friends lie in the intense religious ferment of 17th century England. George Fox, the son of a Leicestershire weaver, is credited with founding it in 1647, though there was no definite organization before 1668. The Society's rejections of rituals and oaths, its opposition to war, and its simplicity of speech and dress soon attracted attention, usually hostile.

**The Charter** — King Charles II owed William Penn £16,000, money which Admiral Penn had lent him. Seeking a haven in the New World for persecuted Friends, Penn asked the King to grant him land in the territory between Lord Baltimore's province of Maryland and the Duke of York's province of New York. With the Duke's support, Penn's petition was granted. The King signed the Charter of Pennsylvania on March 4, 1681, and it was officially proclaimed on April 2. The King named the new colony in honor of William Penn's father. It was to include the land between the 39th and 42nd degrees of north latitude and from the Delaware River westward for five degrees of longitude. Other provisions assured its people the protection of English laws and, to a certain degree, kept it subject to the government in England. Provincial statutes could be annulled by the King. In 1682 the Duke of York deeded to Penn his claim to the three lower counties on the Delaware, which are now the state of Delaware.

**The New Colony** — In April 1681, Penn made his cousin William Markham deputy governor of the province and sent him to take control. In England, Penn drew up the *First Frame of Government*, his proposed constitution for Pennsylvania. Penn's preface to *First Frame of Government* has become famous as a summation of his governmental ideals. Later, in October 1682, the Proprietor arrived in Pennsylvania on the ship *Welcome*. He visited Philadelphia, just laid out as the capital city, created the three original counties, and summoned a General Assembly to Chester on December 4. This first Assembly united the Delaware counties with Pennsylvania, adopted a naturalization act and, on December 7, adopted the Great Law, a humanitarian code that became the fundamental basis of Pennsylvania law and which guaranteed liberty of conscience. The second Assembly, in 1683, reviewed and amended Penn's *First Frame* with his cooperation and created the *Second Frame of Government*. By the time of Penn's return to England late in 1684, the foundations of the Quaker Province were well established. In 1984, William Penn and his wife Hannah Callowhill Penn were made honorary citizens of the United States, by act of Congress. On May 8, 1985, they were granted honorary citizenship by Pennsylvania.

## POPULATION AND IMMIGRATION

**Native Americans** — Although William Penn was granted all the land in Pennsylvania by the King, he and his heirs chose not to grant or settle any part of it without first buying the claims of the Native Americans who lived there. In this manner, all of present Pennsylvania except the northwestern third was purchased by 1768. The Commonwealth bought the Six Nations'

claims to the remainder of the land in 1784 and 1789, and the claims of the Delawares and Wyandots in 1785. The defeat of the French and Indian war alliance by 1760, the withdrawal of the French, the crushing of Chief Pontiac's Indian alliance in 1764, and the failure of all attempts by Native Americans and colonists to live side by side led the Native Americans to migrate westward, gradually leaving Pennsylvania.

**English** – English Quakers were the dominant element, although many English settlers were Anglican. The English settled heavily in the southeastern counties, which soon lost frontier characteristics and became the center of a thriving agricultural and commercial society. Philadelphia became the metropolis of the British colonies and a center of intellectual and commercial life.

**Germans** – Thousands of Germans were also attracted to the colony and, by the time of the Revolution, comprised a third of the population. The volume of German immigration increased after 1727, coming largely from the Rhineland. The Pennsylvania Germans settled most heavily in the interior counties of Northampton, Berks, Lancaster, and Lehigh, and neighboring areas. Their skill and industry transformed this region into a rich farming country, contributing greatly to the expanding prosperity of the province.

**Scotch-Irish** – Another important immigrant group was the Scotch-Irish, who migrated from about 1717 until the Revolution in a series of waves caused by hardships in Ireland. They were primarily frontiersmen, pushing first into the Cumberland Valley region and then farther into central and western Pennsylvania. They, with immigrants from old Scotland, numbered about one-fourth of the population by 1776.

**African Americans** – Despite Quaker opposition to slavery, about 4,000 slaves were brought to Pennsylvania by 1730, most of them owned by English, Welsh, and Scotch-Irish colonists. The census of 1790 showed that the number of African Americans had increased to about 10,000, of whom about 6,300 had received their freedom. The Pennsylvania Gradual Abolition Act of 1780 was the first emancipation statute in the United States.

**Others** – Many Quakers were Irish and Welsh, and they settled in the area immediately outside of Philadelphia. French Huguenot and Jewish settlers, together with Dutch, Swedes, and other groups, contributed in smaller numbers to the development of colonial Pennsylvania. The mixture of various national groups in the Quaker Province helped to create its broad-minded tolerance and cosmopolitan outlook.

## POLITICS

Pennsylvania's political history ran a rocky course during the provincial era. There was a natural conflict between the proprietary and popular elements in the government which began under Penn and grew stronger under his successors. As a result of the English Revolution of 1688 which overthrew King James II, Penn was deprived of his province from 1692 until 1694. A popular party led by David Lloyd demanded greater powers for the Assembly, and in 1696 *Markham's Frame of Government* granted some of these. In December 1699, the Proprietor again visited Pennsylvania and, just before his return to England in 1701, agreed with the Assembly on a revised constitution, the *Charter of Privileges*, which remained in effect until 1776. This guaranteed the Assembly full legislative powers and permitted the three Delaware counties to have a separate legislature. It made Penn's earlier assurances of religious liberty absolute and irrevocable.

Deputy or lieutenant governors (addressed as "governor") resided in Pennsylvania and represented the Penn family proprietors who themselves remained in England until 1773. After 1763, these governors were members of the Penn family. From 1773 until independence, John Penn was both a proprietor and the governor.

William Penn's heirs, who eventually abandoned Quakerism, were often in conflict with the Assembly, which was usually dominated by the Quakers until 1756. One after another, governors defending the proprietors' prerogatives battered themselves against the rock of an Assembly vigilant in the defense of its own rights. The people of the frontier areas contended with the people of the older, southeastern region for more adequate representation in the Assembly and better protection in time of war. Such controversies prepared the people for their part in the Revolution.

**The Colonial Wars** – As part of the British Empire, Pennsylvania was involved in the wars between Great Britain and France for dominance in North America. These wars ended the long period when Pennsylvania was virtually without defense. The government built forts and furnished men and supplies to help defend the empire to which it belonged. The territory claimed for New France included western Pennsylvania. The Longueuil and Celoron expeditions of the French in 1739 and 1749 traversed this region, and French traders competed with Pennsylvanians for Indian trade. The French efforts in 1753 and 1754 to establish control over the upper Ohio Valley led to the last and conclusive colonial war, the French and Indian War (1754-1763). French forts at Erie (Fort Presque Isle), Waterford (Fort LeBoeuf), Pittsburgh (Fort Duquesne) and Franklin (Fort Machault) threatened all the middle colonies. In 1753 George Washington of Virginia failed to persuade the French to leave and in 1754 they defeated his militia company at Fort Necessity. In the ensuing war, Gen. Braddock's British and colonial army was slaughtered on the Monongahela in 1755, but Gen. John Forbes recaptured the site of Pittsburgh in 1758. After the war, the Native Americans rose up against the British colonies in Pontiac's War, but in August 1763, Colonel Henry Bouquet defeated them at Bushy Run, interrupting the threat to the frontier in this region.

## ECONOMICS

**Agriculture** – From its beginning, Pennsylvania ranked as a leading agricultural area and produced surpluses for export, adding to its wealth. By the 1750s an exceptionally prosperous farming area had developed in southeastern Pennsylvania. Wheat and corn were the leading crops, though rye, hemp, and flax were also important.

**Manufacturing** – The abundant natural resources of the colony made for early development of industries. Arts and crafts, as well as home manufactures, grew rapidly. Sawmills and gristmills were usually the first to appear, using the power of the numerous streams. Textile products were spun and woven mainly in the home, though factory production was not unknown. Shipbuilding became important on the Delaware. The province early gained importance in iron manufacture, producing pig iron as well as finished products. Printing, publishing, and the related industry of papermaking, as well as tanning, were significant industries. The Pennsylvania long rifle was an adaptation of a German hunting rifle developed in Lancaster County. Its superiority was so well recognized that by 1776 gunsmiths were duplicating it in Virginia, Georgia, North Carolina, and Maryland. The Conestoga wagon was also developed in Lancaster County. Capable of carrying as much as four tons, it was the prototype for the principal vehicle for American westward migration, the prairie schooner.

**Commerce and Transportation** – The rivers were important as early arteries of commerce and were soon supplemented by roads in the southeastern section. Stagecoach lines, by 1776, reached from Philadelphia into the southcentral region. Trade with the Indians for furs was important in the colonial period. Later, the transport and sale of farm products to Philadelphia and Baltimore, by water and road, formed an important business. Philadelphia became one of the most important centers in the colonies for the conduct of foreign trade and the commercial metropolis of an expanding hinterland.

## SOCIETY AND CULTURE

**The Arts and Learning** – Philadelphia was known in colonial times as the "Athens of America" because of its rich cultural life. Because of the liberality of Penn's principles and the freedom of expression that prevailed, the province was noted for the variety and strength of its intellectual and educational institutions and interests. An academy that held its first classes in 1740 became the College of Philadelphia in 1755, and ultimately grew into the University of Pennsylvania. It was the only nondenominational college of the colonial period. The arts and sciences flourished, and the public buildings of Philadelphia were the marvel of the colonies. Many fine old buildings in the Philadelphia area still bear witness to the richness of Pennsylvania's civilization in the 18th century. Such men of intellect as Benjamin Franklin, David Rittenhouse, John Bartram, and Benjamin West achieved international renown. Newspapers and magazines flourished, as did law and medicine. Pennsylvania can claim America's first hospital, first library, and first insurance company.

**Religion** – Quakers held their first religious meeting at Upland (now Chester) in 1675, and they came to Pennsylvania in great numbers after William Penn received his Charter. Most numerous in the southeastern counties, the Quakers gradually declined in number but retained considerable influence. The Pennsylvania Germans belonged largely to the Lutheran and Reformed churches, but there were also several smaller sects: Mennonites, Amish, German Baptist Brethren or "Dunkers," Schwenkfelders, and Moravians. Although the Lutheran Church was established by the Swedes on Tinicum Island in 1643, it only began its growth to become the largest of the Protestant denominations in Pennsylvania upon the arrival of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg in 1742. The Reformed Church owed its expansion to Michael Schlatter, who arrived in 1746. The Moravians did notable missionary work among the Native Americans. The Church of England held services in Philadelphia as early as 1695. The first Catholic congregation was organized in Philadelphia in 1720, and the first chapel was erected in 1733; Pennsylvania had the second largest Catholic population among the colonies. The Scotch brought Presbyterianism; its first congregation was organized in Philadelphia in 1698. Scotch-Irish immigrants swelled its numbers. Methodism began late in the colonial period. St. George's Church, built in Philadelphia in 1769, is the oldest Methodist building in America. There was also a significant Jewish population in colonial Pennsylvania. Its Mikveh Israel Congregation was established in Philadelphia in 1740.

## PENNSYLVANIA ON THE EVE OF THE REVOLUTION

By 1776, the Province of Pennsylvania had become the third largest English colony in America, though next to the last to be founded. Philadelphia had become the largest English-speaking city in the world next to London. There were originally only three counties: Philadelphia, Chester, and Bucks, but by 1773 there were eleven. Westmoreland, the last new county created before the Revolution, was the first county located entirely west of the Allegheny Mountains.

The American Revolution had urban origins, and Philadelphia was a center of ferment. Groups of artisans and mechanics, many loyal to Benjamin Franklin, formed a grassroots revolutionary leadership. Philadelphia was a center of resistance to the Stamp Act in 1765 and moved quickly to support Boston in opposition to the Intolerable Acts in 1774.