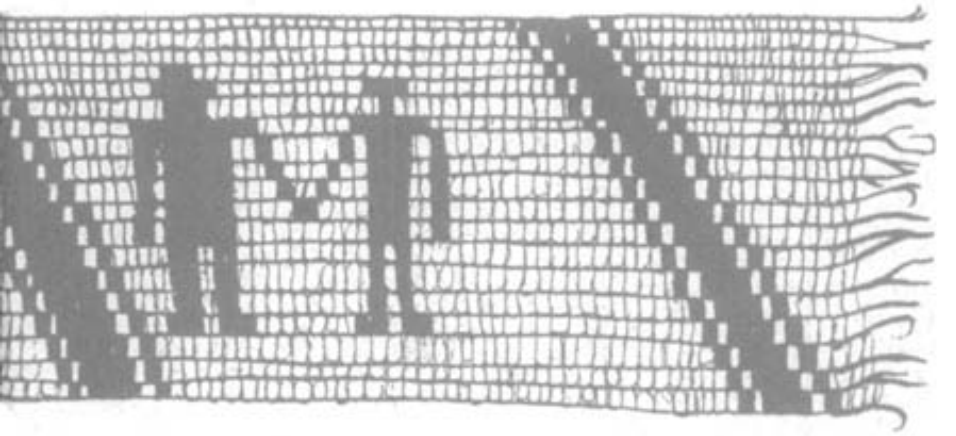


William Penn

A TWENTIETH-CENTURY PERSPECTIVE

Richard R. Wood

Illustration by Lois Powell from the original, *Mutual Trust*, painted by Paul Domville in 1923.

On the cover is shown the Wampum Belt the Indians gave to William Penn, supposedly on the occasion of the Great Treaty, to commemorate the friendship between them. The belt is in the collection of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and is reproduced with permission.

In the King's Study

Young William Penn stood before King Charles II of England, his hat firmly planted on his head. Charles looked at him quizzically and remarked, "Friend William, it is the custom for only one man to be covered in this room. If you insist on keeping your hat on your head, I will remove mine."

This tale suggests the facile good nature of Charles II. It suggests an important fact: that William Penn was a personal friend of Charles II.

This tale of William Penn in the King's study suggests also the stubborn courage of William Penn when he thought a question of principle was concerned. In England in the seventeenth century hats were worn by men more than they are now. They were worn for display and for protection against the elements. They were worn indoors as well as out, for even in palaces—perhaps especially in palaces—cold drafts could chill the unprotected head. And "hat honour," the ritual of who doffed his hat to whom, had become of great importance.

William Penn was a member of the Society of Friends, commonly called Quakers. At the very heart of the Quaker faith is the belief that God has endowed every human being with some measure of "Inward Light," by which everyone can have some direct experience of communion with God, some reliable knowledge of God's purpose. Holding this belief, early Quakers were strongly convinced of the essential equality of all people in the sight of God, and they felt compelled to testify to that equality by refusing to doff their hats to those who by worldly standards were above them in rank, and by insisting on using the second person singular pronoun when addressing a single person.

Insistence on saying "thee" and "thou" instead of the more honorific "you" and insistence on keeping their hats on in the presence of persons of higher rank got early Quakers into much trouble. Today these seem like unimportant gestures for which to incur suffering and embarrassment. But in the religious tensions of the seventeenth century they provided important opportunities for the Quaker to testify to the faith that was in him. William Penn was a Quaker. Therefore, at whatever cost in embarrassment, he kept his hat on, even in the presence of his friend the King. He had the courage of his convictions.

William Penn had other qualities, however. No man could have kept the friendship of a witty, gay, intelligent, unscrupulous man like

Charles II if he had had only stubborn adherence to principles. Penn had great charm and essential courtesy. Belief in the Inward Light leads directly to that respect for personality which is the essence of courtesy. William Penn was passionately and from principle committed to toleration. Charles II was by easygoing good nature inclined to toleration, and Penn could often help the King express his inclination by royal clemency in particular cases of religious persecution which Penn brought to his notice. William Penn offered the hope that free colonies in the New World might provide attractive havens for the advocates of freedom who were becoming centers of controversy in England.

So a curious cooperation developed between the "Merry Monarch," who was the most intelligent of the royal Stuarts, and the well-educated, well-informed, stiff-necked, charming William Penn, who was the son of an admiral and one of the pioneers in exploring the conditions of order, harmony and peace within and between nations.

Son of an Admiral

William Penn was born in October 1644. His father, then Captain William Penn, was a professional naval officer who served effectively under Parliament and the Protector until the collapse of the Commonwealth after the death of Oliver Cromwell. Then, like some more important commanders of Parliament forces, Admiral Penn decided that the best hope for the distracted country lay in the restoration of the Stuart monarchy. Admiral Penn was one of the naval officers who escorted Charles back to England in 1660, and was knighted on the voyage.

So Admiral Sir William Penn entered the Restoration period wealthy, with the fame of a successful naval commander, and with the warm personal friendship of Charles II and his brother, the Duke of York, who later became James II.

Young William Penn lived at home with his mother and younger sister and brother while his father was on active service under the Commonwealth. "Home" was at Wanstead, in Essex, whence he attended the still-excellent Chigwell Grammar School. He was sixteen at the time of the Restoration. That autumn, 1660, he entered Christ Church College, Oxford.

Oxford had always been Royalist, and in 1660 it was enjoying a Restoration orgy. High Church doctrines and ritual in chapel and

teaching were accepted by students with the same enthusiasm as were vigorously anti-Puritan practices in amusements. Admiral Penn was a convinced supporter or the Restoration and a warm friend of the King, but he seems to have been a tough-minded man with a fairly rigorous standard of personal conduct and a strangely broad interest in the ideas of nonconformists. In 1657 he had invited the Quaker preacher Thomas Loe to his house and had been much moved by his preaching, which the son remembered even more effectively. From conversation with an adored and admired father of wide religious curiosity, William Penn developed attitudes which made High-Church, anti-Puritan Oxford uncongenial. He was expelled after less than two years because of his religious nonconformity, and the Admiral arranged to complete his son's education by sending him to France.

With appropriate introductions and in company with some promising young men, Penn spent some time in Paris—long enough to acquire a French style of dressing and an independent disgust with dueling. Then, by himself, he went to Saumur, where he studied hard for about two years under Möise Amyraut, Protestant theologian of beautiful spirit and European reputation and head of the Protestant seminary at Saumur.

In 1664 William Penn came home with enough French to earn him acid comments in Samuel Pepys's *Diary*, enough grace of manner to please his father, and the foundations of a notable education.

For a few months he read law, took part in moot courts and ate dinners in Lincoln's Inn. Then his father sent him to Ireland to attend to some problems of the Admiral's Irish estates and to begin to practice the arts and skills of a country gentleman.

Penn's education is something of a mystery. Much of his knowledge of the history of Christian thought and faith he doubtless acquired at Saumur. But his writings show that he also knew world history and English law; yet his stays at Oxford and Lincoln's Inn seem inadequate opportunities. Perhaps he was one of those fortunate men whose minds are always open, grasping and organizing ideas and information wherever and whenever they are encountered. Whatever the process, William Penn became a well-educated man.

Conversion

Young William Penn, even while a boy, had been interested in religious things. On one occasion, when he was about eleven years old and his father was in the Tower of London in disgrace and in some

danger following the failure of a complicated sea-and-land operation in the West Indies, William Penn had had a vivid experience of light flowing about him and seeming to reveal to him the presence and the protecting love of God. He had been much interested in the visit of the Quaker preacher, Thomas Loe, to his father's house. His two years in France had revealed in him a sound sobriety of character which was reinforced by his studies at Saumur. It may be that the horrors and heroisms of the Plague year, shortly after his return from France, deepened his sense of religious responsibility for his suffering fellows.

It was in a mood susceptible of religious impressions that young William Penn went to Ireland at the age of twenty-one to put his education into practice in the management of his father's estate. He did this job effectively, indicating that he was an able businessman. But while he was in Ireland, Penn heard Thomas Loe preach again. This time the effect was lasting.

Almost at once Penn began his long career of crusading for religious toleration. Shortly after Thomas Loe's meeting, Penn was attending Sunday worship with a group of Quakers when the meeting was broken up by some soldiers and Penn and several others were arrested. He at once wrote to the Lord Lieutenant, a friend of his father, informing him of the situation; and all the Quakers were promptly released. But news reached the Admiral that his son was mixed up with questionable company, and the Admiral invited him home. The invitation could not be ignored.

Admiral Penn was in great distress. He feared that his son was ruining his chances for a fine career by meddling with queer people and queer notions. Yet the Admiral's tough-minded nonconformity made him admire, even if reluctantly, his son's insistence on doing what he believed to be right at whatever cost. And the Admiral was handicapped in attempts to discipline his son by the enthusiastic admiration expressed by the Admiral's closest friends for the high moral tone, sobriety and self-discipline of young William's life, in contrast with the profligacy customary among young men of rank and wealth.

So, despite vehement disagreement and a good deal of plain speaking, Admiral Penn continued to love his son and William, while admiring and loving his father, continued to go his own way into the Quaker faith and the career which, in the light of history, is more brilliant than any that could have been won by careful conformity of the sort that his father had meant to recommend.

Quakerism Detested

The seventeenth century in England was a time of ferment. It was the dawn of modern science. Galileo with his telescope was proving that the planets move around the sun, displacing Earth from its accepted position as the center of the universe. Kepler, by his laborious studies of Tycho Brahe's great series of scrupulously exact observations of the positions of Mars, was discovering the laws of planetary motion. Newton and Leibnitz were inventing calculus; Descartes had invented analytical geometry.

Law was replacing accident or caprice in humanity's idea of the workings of nature. Yet the idea of law, for scholars like Newton, increased instead of diminishing the grandeur of God, who is the Creator of nature and of its laws.

But the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century compelled people to reexamine their religious thought. The publication of the King James version of the Bible made available for everyone the material for the study of religion. The Protestant Reformation had stirred an intense interest in religious ideas, which continued. So desperately important was the right religious faith that toleration was seldom thought of. So Calvinists detested Lutherans almost as much as they detested Catholics; and all detested the Independents (later known as Congregationalists, of whom Oliver Cromwell was one) and the Baptists and the Quakers.

The assumption that it was the duty of government to support the right religion soon became amended to the notion that the right religious faith was a help to the stability of government. Where Lutheranism was strong, the nations tended to support and enforce Lutheranism; similarly with Calvinism. The idea of one state, one church, seemed obvious. In England the Church of England, claiming to be the true Catholic Church but regarding the English monarch rather than the Pope as its head, was endeared to the people by memories of the long struggle of Elizabeth I against Catholic Spain.

But the state church in England underwent terrific strains in the seventeenth century. The Stuart dynasty, which succeeded Queen Elizabeth, had little political sense and great ideas of the rights of the monarch. Trying to use the church to uphold the claim of the divine right of kings, the Stuarts made the Church an instrument of tyranny that disgusted many moderate English people. A strong concern arose to purify the Church of England from this subservience to the Stuart tyranny, and from the vestiges of Roman Catholic practices which the

Stuart use of the Church as an instrument of tyranny emphasized. So a Puritan party developed which was at first moderate and entirely loyal. Eventually it became anti-monarchist, hostile to the Church of England, and in the end victor in the Civil War which resulted in the increased power of Parliament, the execution of Charles I and the military dictatorship of Oliver Cromwell. After Cromwell's death and two years of chaos, the Stuart monarchy was restored in the person of Charles II, who came back in 1660 after issuing the Declaration of Breda, in which he promised a general amnesty, religious toleration and government with the advice of Parliament. As we have seen, Admiral Penn escorted Charles II to England and so prepared the way for an important part of William Penn's career.

The restored Stuart dynasty was nervous. Soon after the Restoration, a plot of former Parliamentary officers who called themselves Fifth Monarchy Men reminded everybody that a king had been overthrown and another might be. The Fifth Monarchy Men did not actually imperil the monarchy but they frightened monarch and people. Violent suspicion was directed against the religious sects, and severe laws were enacted to forbid their activities.

The Quakers were peculiarly unable to conceal their beliefs or to hide their activities. Their reverence for God compelled them to meet to worship and their reverence for truth compelled them to meet publicly. So they drew upon themselves a great mass of popular suspicion and fear. For a time they were in peril of extinction. They never wavered in their faith, but they made strenuous efforts to avoid the accusation of being what they were not. Their great peace statement of 1660 was intended to show that, since they would not fight for any reason whatever, they could be counted on not to fight to overthrow the monarchy. They were not Fifth Monarchy Men and they wanted the world to know it.

The Fifth Monarchy hysteria passed, but the Quakers continued to be unpopular. Although the Society of Friends had and has no official creed, the aspects of its religious faith that distinguish it from other Christian faiths can be summed up under four points:

1. *The Inward Light.* The faculty which Friends believe is actually or potentially in every human being and which can enable everyone to have direct communion with God and to know God's will and God's strengthening, guiding love and care.

2. *Universality of Grace.* Friends believe that Inward Light is given to all people everywhere and that God cares for all creatures and intends their spiritual welfare.

3. *The Call to Perfection.* Friends are fully aware of the fact of sin and of the human tendency to sin, yet they feel sure that God calls all to seek to turn away from their own selfish, self-centered courses and to strive to do perfectly the will of God.

4. *Continuing Revelation.* Friends believe that the records of God's dealings with humans were not finished in the Bible but that God continues to speak to seeking minds.

These four points of Quaker belief were almost ideally designed for misunderstanding, misrepresentation and controversy in the seventeenth century. It was then generally believed that the Bible was the infallible, total, final record of God's dealings with humans; that humans were born in sin, were doomed to sin and could not avoid sin; that they could only hope for forgiveness and salvation through the unmerited mercy and sacrifice of Christ; that God's grace was destined only for the elect; and that humans learned of God and of God's will for themselves only through the Bible. The doctrine of the Inward Light could be easily misunderstood or misrepresented to sound like the assertion that individuals might consider themselves to be Christ since they possessed the Christ Within.

So, on religious and political grounds, Friends were regarded with suspicion and detestation in the seventeenth century. Yet they attracted adherents in amazing numbers, for many people were seeking a religion of simple purity, without the elaborate ritual and establishment of the traditional churches; a religion whose truth could be felt, not merely be accepted verbally; a religion that could inspire people with confidence and a sense of direction. All this the pioneer Quakers demonstrated that they had discovered. So they gained adherents, as well as dislike, distrust, contempt and fear.

The Enthusiastic Quaker

It was in this time of confused crosscurrents of suspicion, of bitterness, of controversy and of stirring intellectual activity that William Penn joined the detested group of Quakers.

Persecution was rife. William Penn knew and was known by many officials. He began to make personal appeals to influential officials on behalf of individuals suffering fines and imprisonment for their religious faith. He got attention but, at first, no results.

Of course he was busily attending Quaker meetings, listening to Quaker ministers, spending hours in eager conversation with members of the inspired band who were spreading Quaker ideas all over England. And he began himself to speak in the meetings for worship. Pretty soon he wrote a book. It was not a very good book, but it was enthusiastic and vigorous enough to attract attention. Its author had not obtained a license from the Bishop of London before publishing it. For the crime of publishing an unlicensed book, William Penn was arrested and locked up in the Tower of London. He was there for ten months; he got no favors or comforts because of being Admiral Penn's son, friend of the King.

His presence in prison was, nonetheless, embarrassing to the authorities. Strenuous efforts were made to get him out. He was offered freedom on condition that he would agree to write no more books. To this proposition he replied: "My prison shall be my grave before I move a jot; because I owe my conscience to no mortal man."

The book that got William Penn into trouble was called *A Sandy Foundation Shaken*. Written in haste and enthusiasm, it was not always precise and was capable of being misunderstood. At the suggestion of Edward Stillingfleet, one of the numerous emissaries sent by authority to try to persuade the young enthusiast to mend his ways, Penn wrote another book, *Innocency With Her Open Face*, in which controversial points were put with enough precision and moderation to clear up some of the disagreements without weakening Penn's position. He was released, even more firmly convinced that imprisonment was a poor way to deal with religious disagreement.

Estate business, incessant traveling to speak at Quaker meetings, some writing of tracts, kept him busy in Ireland. And, despite the earlier success, there was still the need to try to get Friends released from prison. He was also beginning to work on *The Great Case of Liberty of Conscience*, which was not finished until a little later, after another period of imprisonment. William Penn was one of those people who work with full energy on actual cases immediately before them and who at the same time seek a reasonable underlying philosophy for their actions.

William Penn, twenty-four years old and a new convert, was already showing his ability to deal with the authorities on behalf of Quakers suffering persecution and his skill in speaking and writing to set forth Quaker ideas. Clearly he was recognized by his associates as a man of ability and sound judgment as well as of enthusiasm and faith.

Freedom and Patriotism

William Penn believed firmly that England's attempt to impose religious uniformity on the English people was both wrong and mistaken; but he did not run away from it to prate in foreign lands of England's shortcomings. He stayed in England; criticized the policies he believed to be wrong; sometimes, very publicly, he broke the laws he disapproved of and made his trials opportunities for still more searching criticism. When he went to prison he went cheerfully, accepting the authority of his country's government while asserting his own right and duty to disagree in word and deed with policies he thought wrong.

And William Penn did four other things:

1. He used his influence, his charm and friendship to persuade the King to grant mercy to victims of religious persecution.

2. While he knew most about the persecutions suffered by Quakers, he never limited his efforts to seeking relief for them. He believed in freedom for everyone; that a man's religious faith cannot be made or unmade at the order of a ruler. The attempt to do so not only creates hypocrisy; it also destroys the unity within a nation which it is one of the chief objectives of government to achieve.

3. He not only pleaded for mercy and toleration for religious dissenters; he also made the trials of those accused of nonconformity in religion opportunities for pointing out that personal freedom of belief was part of the great English tradition of freedom.

4. He wrote *The Great Case of Liberty of Conscience*, still good reading, which argues cogently from law, history, and consideration of right and wrong, that religious freedom, including respectful toleration of those with whom we disagree, is good patriotism as well as sound ethics.

Penn's practice set forth his principles. During his early manhood his arrests were mostly over issues of religious freedom and he always made the point clear. In one famous case he and a man named William Mead were arrested after Penn had preached in Gracechurch Street in London outside the Meeting House which had been padlocked by the authorities. Penn was accused of preaching and Mead of abetting him; both were accused, "with divers other persons

to the jurors unknown," of unlawful assembly "to the disturbance of the peace of the said Lord the King." Penn had to act as defense counsel for William Mead and himself. At the trial, he quoted from memory from the Magna Charta and other important sources of the law and appealed so tellingly to the legal and emotional traditions of English freedom that the jury found him guilty only of the charge of preaching. They refused to find either Penn or Mead guilty of disturbing the peace. The judges were determined to have a conviction and threatened the jury with dire consequences. Penn became in effect the lawyer representing the jury, who stuck to their decision although threatened with being locked up "without meat, drink, fire, and tobacco," until their verdict was acceptable to the judges. The jury, led by Edward Bushel, refused to budge. Eventually Penn, Mead and the jury were confined for contempt of court. They were in a mood to stay in gaol until something gave; it would not be they. Finally a higher court decided in favor of the jury. Bushel's case remains a leading precedent for the right of English and American juries to bring verdicts without judicial coercion. It is a landmark in the history of freedom.

When Penn came to establish Pennsylvania, he provided in its Frame of Government the most complete religious freedom known up to that time. The historian John Fiske believes that the Quaker practice and experience in the Middle Colonies did much to place the guarantee of religious freedom in the Constitution of the United States.

The Holy Experiment

In the passion and pressure of religious persecution, William Penn's thoughts sometimes turned to the New World across the Atlantic. There the Puritans had found freedom for themselves in Massachusetts. There, in Maryland, Lord Baltimore had found freedom for Catholics at the price of offering moderate freedom to others. There, in Rhode Island, Baptist followers of Roger Williams, already aided by a number of Quaker settlers, had established a working political democracy with real religious freedom.

William Penn might do something of the same sort.

Penn's deep interest in law and government had led him to imagine a self-governing community, with real political freedom and with completely equal religious freedom for all who believed in a Divine Being—Jew, Catholic or Protestant—all equally enjoying the right to believe and worship as they felt it right, while respecting their

neighbors' rights to do likewise in their different ways. No wonder Penn called his dream project his Holy Experiment.

The tide of persecution rose in England. The Restoration Parliament was succeeded, after the notoriously corrupt and bitter election of 1679, by a Parliament even more vindictive, more hostile to Catholics and Dissenters, more determined to persecute all who believed and worshipped in ways different from those prescribed by the Church of England. William Penn was shocked by the cynical corruption of the election and by the vindictive spirit of Parliament. He began to think actively of the New World.

King Charles II was shocked, too. He saw the unpleasant possibility of being expected to sign warrants for the executions of several of his friends, including William Penn, if the new Parliament had its way and carried out its avowed intention of enforcing religious uniformity at all costs. King Charles did not like the prospect. He began to look for a way out of his difficulty.

The royal family had incurred a debt of some £15,000 to Admiral Penn and his heirs. The royal Stuarts usually took debts to their loyal subjects quite lightly; but in this case the King's emotions ran parallel to his obligations. When Penn suggested a grant of land in the New World in settlement of the debt, the King saw the possibility of an English colony abroad to which could go all the republicans, Whigs, Liberals and dissenters whom he liked and admired, who were such ornaments of English civilization, who were such centers of controversy and who might, if they stayed in England, become the cause of much embarrassment and grief to their king.

In an amazingly short time, for that age, the paper work was completed and William Penn was by royal charter made Proprietor of an ill-defined tract between New York and Maryland, extending from the Delaware indefinitely westward.

Penn set to work at once to enlist settlers.

He had already had some practical experience. West Jersey had been bought from the Duke of York by a group of members of the Society of Friends, partly as a haven for persecuted Quakers, partly as a big real estate investment.

A proprietary colony, like the Jerseys or Pennsylvania, was usually owned by one big investor or by a group. These proprietors expected to recover their investment and make a profit by selling or leasing land to settlers and sometimes reserving to themselves certain

promising trading rights. The Proprietors of West Jersey, working on a shoestring, soon became so involved in frantic sales and resales of shares of their colony in desperate efforts to raise the necessary capital that their financial affairs became hopelessly confused. William Penn was called in to disentangle these West Jersey finances. He had this experience behind him when he started to organize and promote Pennsylvania.

His first concern was for political and religious freedom. With much care he prepared a Frame of Government which provided for a legislative assembly elected by manhood suffrage, for a Council appointed by the Governor, for religious liberty for everyone who believed in a Supreme Being, and for a criminal code with only two crimes, murder and treason, punishable by death. In England at that time, theft of goods worth a small amount was a capital crime.

Penn compiled another small pamphlet, of which the only copy known to be extant is in the Haverford College Library, called *The Excellent Privilege of Liberty and Property, being the Birth-right of the Free-born Subjects of England*. It was printed by William Bradford in 1687, within five years of the first settling of Pennsylvania, and contained Magna Charta with a Commentary, followed by an abstract of Penn's Charter and his Frame of Government, by which was made available to every settler a collection of the basic documents guaranteeing his freedom.

The promotional material for the new colony included a description of its geography, climate, and resources and was quite restrained despite Penn's enthusiasm. Armed with this pamphlet, he began to seek settlers in England and Germany. The Philadelphia neighborhood of Germantown is a reminder that many of the early settlers were German pietists from the Rhineland, led by Francis Daniel Pastorius. Dutch and German Mennonites came. But the first settlers were English and Welsh Friends.

For the settlers the colony was a success from the start. For William Penn, the Proprietor and Governor, it was a prolonged headache. The settlers aggravated somewhat the Proprietor's headache by taking the bit of political liberty in their teeth and proving more obstreperous than William Penn had expected. No one had anticipated the necessity of repeating, on a smaller scale and with less violence, the centuries of internal strife through which the English people worked out the foundations of self-government.

Four chief problems confronted William Penn as founder of a colony: a boundary dispute with Maryland; the attempt of the Board of Trade and Plantations to get rid of proprietary colonies altogether; relations with the Indians; and war in Europe. In addition, Penn's troubles were complicated after the Revolution of 1688 by his frankly asserted friendship with the deposed monarch, James II.

The dispute with Maryland was merely the result of inaccurate description. The territories granted to Lord Baltimore and to William Penn, as described in their charters, overlapped; in fact, Maryland's northern border might have been understood to run through Philadelphia. (The boundary was finally settled by the surveying of the Mason and Dixon Line in 1767.) William Penn, instead of devoting his energies to his new colony as he had intended, had to return to England to guard the interests of the Colony in the boundary dispute while James Logan, his able secretary in Pennsylvania, helped to resist settlements that would have been disastrous, to prevent expulsion of the colonists from lands for which they had paid, and to propose compromises that would postpone a decision until a satisfactory settlement could be found. This dispute, with its enforced absence of the Proprietor in England, had unhappy consequences for Penn and for Pennsylvania.

When William Penn was himself in his colony, settlers and Proprietor worked together satisfactorily. Successful as Pennsylvania eventually was, it might have been even more impressive as a demonstration of the beauties of freedom if William Penn had been able to live there, instead of being compelled to spend most of his time in England because of the boundary dispute.

Conflict with the Board of Trade and Plantations was another factor that kept Penn in England. The Board wanted a neat, uniform system of colonial administration with the Crown colonies, New York and Virginia, as examples. Penn became a champion for Massachusetts and Rhode Island as well as for his own colony, for in Massachusetts and Rhode Island the colonists themselves owned the charters and were proprietors, thus giving themselves freedom, as far as they wanted it. At the height of the difficulty, when threats of war—Indian and foreign—were confronting the Colonies with problems, William Penn proposed the union of the English colonies in North America. The suggestion was promptly pigeonholed by the Board of Trade and Plantations lest it give the colonists a united and too powerful voice in their government. But Penn seems to have been the first to propose a United States of North America.

While Penn was wrestling in England with the Board of Trade and Plantations, William III and Mary were wrestling with the problems of replacing the stupid Stuart autocracy of James II with a freer and more effective government. One of the first acts of the new monarchy, called to power by the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688, was the Act of Toleration, which ended the most serious religious persecution. But at the end of a century of civil war and revolution there was a strong tendency to distrust friends of the ousted monarch. And William Penn was, and asserted that he was, a friend of James II.

The situation was complicated by King William's dourness, his inability to relax, and his tendency to trust his tested Dutch staff rather than his new English subjects. Catholics, remembering papal blessings on plots to assassinate Queen Elizabeth, were involved in some attempts on William's life. France continued to regard James as King of England. A certain suspicion of James's friends was natural. William Penn bluntly refused to deny or conceal his friendship.

It is possible that William III understood the situation. After all, he was James's son-in-law; Queen Mary was the eldest daughter of the dismissed King. But William's admirers, particularly those who had switched to him after having been closely associated with James, kept trying to stir up suspicion of James's friends. William Penn's freedom of action was much reduced. In 1692-3, when he wrote the *Essay towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe*, he was practically under house arrest. And when, in 1699, he was setting out for his second visit to Pennsylvania, he learned that his arrest under a bill of attainder was possible. This peril led to a tragic financial complication.

A person convicted under a bill of attainder lost all his property to the Crown. A bill of attainder was a political action by Parliament rather than a judicial action by the Courts. It was unpredictable; innocence was an inadequate defense. With no time for careful work, Penn apparently tried to protect his colony against this danger by technically conveying the title to it to his friend and English agent, Philip Ford. Doubtless the papers were badly drafted in the hurry and anxiety. Then, unfortunately, Ford died; and his widow and son tried to get what they could for the Ford estate. The resulting lawsuit bedeviled William Penn for years, led to his imprisonment for a time in debtors' prison, and presumably brought on the stroke which clouded his last years. James Logan and Penn's able second wife, Hannah Callowhill Penn, eventually worked out a settlement which

maintained Pennsylvania's freedom under Penn's charter as a proprietary colony.

Relations with the Indians caused Penn much less trouble. A good many of the settlers attracted to Pennsylvania had less faith than Penn and the Quakers had in friendship as a safeguard against Indian hostility. But Penn did succeed in preventing wars between his colonists and their Indian neighbors. He did not succeed, and no one has ever succeeded, in solving the tragic problems that arise when a technically advanced population floods into the homeland of a technically primitive society. Nevertheless, the Indians recognized Penn as their friend.

War in Europe added to Penn's troubles as colonizer. Privateers made the seas unsafe. Supplies and exports of the settlers were interrupted; political confusions were more confused. Fear of Indian allies of the contending European powers aggravated anxiety in the American colonies.

This practical experience with war, as well as humane distress at its horrors, led Penn to seek a solution of the persistent problem of developing peaceful means of settling disputes between nations.

The Organization of Peace

Three centuries ago the Society of Friends was strongly aware of its "peace testimony." In 1660 George Fox and others sent a declaration to King Charles II stating that Friends cannot fight with physical weapons for any purpose whatever. The 1660 Declaration is now regarded as the first official assertion of the Quaker peace testimony. Insofar as it dealt with peace at all, it reflected an intuitive sense of individual obligation to abstain from war because war is sin.

For many Friends ever since, this intuitive sense of the obligation to abstain from war has been sufficient. William Penn was not satisfied with merely abstaining from war. He had read much and thought deeply about the organization of human communities. He knew from personal experience in Ireland and in Pennsylvania something about the problem of keeping order. He was distressed by the misery caused by the wars of Louis XIV in Europe. He was keenly aware of the inconvenience to his own colony of the world war which harried commerce at sea and enlisted native allies, from the plains of India to the forests of New York and Pennsylvania.

Thus Penn became interested in devising arrangements which would promote peace and prevent war among nations. He had leisure to wrestle with the problem. As has been said, in 1692 and 1693 he was living under what practically amounted to house arrest. In that winter he wrote his *Essay towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe*. Despite the uncertain political status of its author, *The Peace of Europe* became a bestseller. Two editions were exhausted almost immediately. It is still readable, as well as worth reading.

It acknowledges at the outset its debt to King Henry IV of France ("Henry of Navarre") and his great minister Maximilian Bethune, Duc de Sully. Their "Grand Design" for keeping peace in Europe, inspired by the Habsburg bid for domination in the latter part of the sixteenth century, was published in 1620. Sully and his master proposed an association of European states, with detailed agreements about the numbers of ships, guns and troops that each should contribute to the common cause of defeating any nation that should break the peace. Incidentally, Sully added, if war was to be ruled out as a method of settling international disputes, peaceful means of settlement would have to be devised.

In *The Peace of Europe* William Penn reversed Sully's emphasis. He described a simple international organization to settle disputes peacefully, to provide means of cooperating to work out mutually satisfactory solutions of common problems, and to develop rules governing the nations in their relations with each other. For Penn the incidental was that there might occasionally be need to devise means of restraining some nation that persisted, despite the international organization, in using its own armed force to impose its will on others. Penn relied chiefly on peaceful means of keeping peace.

"Peace is maintained by justice, which is a fruit of government," Penn wrote in his preliminary examination of this problem. So he proposed a simple world government, based on the English government of his day, whose House of Lords was both legislature and supreme court. He proposed a parliament, or diet, of nations, which should make rules to govern the nations' conduct in their relations with one another; which should, as court, settle disputes; and which should provide a continuing conference for working out solutions of disputes not adequately dealt with by the rules and for devising means of working together to solve common problems.

William Penn took it for granted that the nation which was feared or hated should be included in the organization that was to

give law to the world. There is no suggestion that he ever considered omitting France, England's traditional enemy. In fact, he proposed for France a bigger representation than for England, because France was the bigger country.

The chief rule was that no nation might leave a session of the diet until its work was done and the session ended. There were to be no walkouts in Penn's United Nations.

Two procedural rules that he suggested are no longer needed. In an age when rank and precedence were of great importance, Penn feared that, if the sessions were held in a room of ordinary shape with the usual supply of doors, the delegates might get to quarreling at the doors about who was to go first and never get in at all to attend to the business of the world. So he proposed that the parliament of nations meet in a round room with doors all around, so that all the delegates could come in at once.

And he suggested dividing the member states into three panels and having each panel appoint one of the three secretaries of the organization. The records, he proposed, should be kept in a chest with three locks; each of the secretaries should have the key to one of the locks. Thus there could be no tampering with the records.

Another proposal in Penn's *Essay* is of more contemporary interest. He did not accept the modern practice of treating all nations as equal. He proposed representation on the basis of area, population, trade and wealth. He knew the difficulties and was quite tentative about this suggestion. The details he proposed were intended more as illustration than as final arrangement. He proposed six votes or delegates for England, ten for France, ten for Spain, eight for Italy (which presumably was not to be regarded as a single state), twelve for the German Empire, three for Denmark, four for "Sweedland," and so on; "and if the Turks and Muscovites are taken in, as seems fit and just, they will make ten apiece more. The whole makes ninety. A great presence . . . "

William Penn seems to have expected that his delegates would vote as individuals on many issues. It is not yet fully appreciated that many disputes, insoluble in terms of nations, might be solved if considered in terms of the individual human beings concerned. The Polish Corridor after World War I was an example of such a problem. William Penn, a good Quaker with an awareness of the obligation to respect individual human personalities, seems to have anticipated such problems.

Penn's plan for a world organization probably had no direct influence on the actual structure of the United Nations but it seems safe to say that *The Peace of Europe* is an important landmark in the development of the idea of an international organization to provide peaceful means of settling disputes between nations. Even in Penn's time, war was becoming too horrible and destructive to be accepted as inevitable. He felt it part of the duty of the Christian to wrestle with the problem of preventing war.

Perplexities of a Pioneer

That Penn was, in effect, the first to propose the United States of America is almost unknown. His memorandum to the Board of Trade and Plantations proposing the union of all the English colonies in North America anticipated by half a century the proposal of colonial union which Benjamin Franklin made at the Albany Congress after the French and Indian War had demonstrated the need for cooperation.

Penn was a pioneer in many directions. He was among the first to set forth the idea that diversity of religious belief and practice was compatible with national vigor and unity. He was one of the first to be willing to invest heavily—thought and effort as well as capital—in a state whose government rested finally in the hands of the citizens. He was one of the first to understand that international peace requires the organization of peaceful means of settling disputes between nations. He was one of the first white colonists to look at the American Indians neither as savages whose extermination or conversion was equally pleasing to God, nor as noble examples of what human beings ought to be under natural conditions. Penn appreciated their religion and their social organization, liked them, won their affection and respect.

Despite his disappointments and anxieties about it, Pennsylvania is Penn's most evident monument. The financial stress of pioneer days, which kept Penn in relative poverty and acute anxiety, was eventually overcome by the wise management of James Logan and Hannah Callowhill Penn, as well as by the economic development which Penn had foreseen. Although it was the last founded of the major colonial cities, Philadelphia by the time of the American Revolution had become the leading city of the colonies. Penn's Holy Experiment had worked, at least to the extent of showing that religious and political freedom are compatible with effective government and economic progress.

The Summing Up

William Penn cannot be summed up in a brief sentence.

Religiously, he was enthusiastic and devoted, with a serene faith and a simple willingness to do what it required, even to disobeying his father or seeming discourteous to his friend the King. Yet his friendship for the King, and his faithfulness in using the opportunities that friendship gave him to plead for mercy for sufferers from religious persecution, caused him to be regarded with suspicion by some of his fellow Quakers. He was suspected of undue concern for the fine life of the person of high rank.

The leaders of the Society of Friends, however, saw more clearly the worth of William Penn. They relied on him as spokesman, author, advisor. They had a high regard for his judgment. Many of them approved and encouraged his Holy Experiment. George Fox, the founder of Quakerism, was particularly cordial in his relations with his younger colleague, who in his turn regarded Fox very much as a spiritual father.

Penn's last six years of life were clouded by the stroke which unfitted him for business, weakened his memory and made him unable to speak much, but left him full of sunny faith and of affectionate love for Friends. This love he often expressed in short but warmly welcomed sermons in Reading Meeting, which he continued to attend until his death in 1718, in his seventy-fourth year.

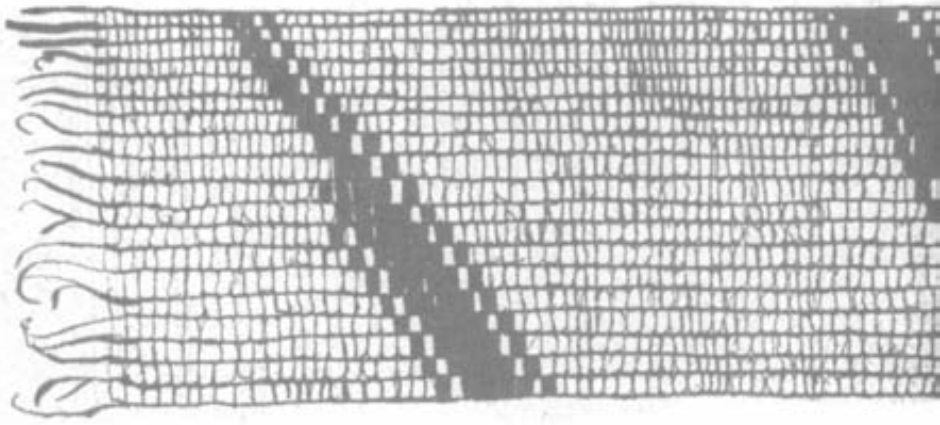
William Penn was a great creative pioneer in religious and political liberty. His vision of a commonwealth based on freedom was not fully realized but it was a new idea when Penn tested it and Pennsylvania did demonstrate that freedom is practicable. His attitude toward the Indians and his discussion of international order revealed the true Quaker's instinctive, persistent respect for the personalities of individual human beings because they are human beings created by God. This flows from the basic Quaker doctrine, the belief that the Inward Light is in us all.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Richard Reeve Wood (1897-1982) was an active member of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. At the end of World War I, he did relief work in France under the American Friends Service Committee, and later finished his degree at Haverford. He went on to serve as secretary of the Yearly Meeting Peace Committee and editor of *The Friend* (one of the predecessors of *Friends Journal*). He remained in these positions through the rejoining of the Orthodox and Hicksite yearly meetings in Philadelphia in 1955. In his monthly meeting he was a valued minister.

His commitment to peace and international organization led to his membership in the National Peace Conference and in the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace, a group of scholars seeking ways for countries to achieve peace through cooperation. In 1945 he was a consultant at the meetings in San Francisco which laid the foundation for the United Nations. As well as his special interest in world order, he had a strong concern for Quaker education. He served on the boards of Penn Charter School, Haverford College, and later Friends Select School, where he also taught Bible and Quakerism for some years.

From these same interests, peace and education, grew his deep admiration for William Penn. He wrote this pamphlet (first published in 1961 by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends) to provide a brief introduction to William Penn and his continuing influence.



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