THE WILLIAM PENN TERCENTARY

On October 24, 1944, the three-hundredth anniversary of the birth of William Penn, the Historical Society joined in a statewide celebration of that event at its first meeting of the season. The program opened with a symposium on Penn’s life and career by members of the Peabody High School History Club, under the direction of Miss Lily Lee Nixon, their sponsor. These young people instructed or at least refreshed the memories of the older folk present with the following well-delivered addresses.

PENN THE OXFORD STUDENT AND COURTIER

BY EUGENE THRASHER

William Penn is usually thought of as a pious, thoughtful man, a peace-loving Quaker in a broad brim hat and plain drab clothes who founded Pennsylvania on the principles of brotherly love.

But the real Penn, though very religious in thought, was a man of action and at times a courtier and politician, who liked handsome dress and lived well and lavishly. He came from a fighting ancestry and he himself was a soldier for a short time. His life was full of imprisonments and sufferings and his seventy-four years upon the English scene—a period from that of Charles I to George I—was one of the most critical periods of English history.

William Penn was born on October 14, 1644 (old style), in a small house near the Tower of London. At an early age he was sent to a grammar school at Chigwell in Essex. Every morning before the hour of six o’clock, he was on his way to school carrying under his arm Lyly’s Latin Grammar and Cleanard’s Greek Grammar. He was a handsome lad and tall for a boy not yet nine. People often said that he looked like his father who was then vice admiral of the English navy.

William’s school hours were different from ours of today. In the summer, his classes began at six in the morning and ended at six in the...
evening, while the winter hours did not vary much with classes starting at seven and concluding at five.

The professor, or master as he was called in those days, often told his students that, "from the rising of the sun, unto the setting of the same, the Lord's name is to be praised." William often wondered how they could praise the Lord's name from the rising of the sun unto the setting of the same when they were in school all that time learning by heart pages of Latin grammar!

When eleven years of age, Penn first experienced a religious attitude toward life. It all began when his father had been relieved of his command upon a return voyage from the West Indies and placed in the Tower of London. William pondered over the subject and wondered why God had let a great man like his father be punished unjustly, and sometimes he doubted if there really were a God at all. But suddenly, a strange and curious feeling passed over him and he knew that there was some supreme being, not only because people had told him so in church, but also because something within his own conscience made him feel that way. He felt as if God himself were telling him so and giving him hope and comfort to have faith in the future.

In the summer of 1656, the Penn household moved to Ireland and settled down at Macroom Castle. As the years passed by, William continued his studies, rode horseback, and roamed over his father's estate.

Once more, happiness and good fortune were with the Penn family. Oliver Cromwell, the great Lord Protector of England, had died, and the army became the real ruler since Cromwell's son was too weak to retain his father's position. William's father was then knighted Sir William Penn and received the appointment of a commissioner of the navy.

It was about this time that William, after attending a meeting of the religious society of Friends, became interested in the Puritan religion. The preaching of Thomas Loe, who had formerly belonged to the University of Oxford, made the deep impression upon Penn's mind that the simplicity and purity of the Christian religion were being forgotten by most of its teachers. Penn and some other students who were also dissatisfied with the Anglican form of worship held meetings among them-
selves for meditation. The authorities of the college were displeased with these actions and immediately took steps to prevent any other disturbances by fining William and his group. Penn, however, did not heed the warning to desist from these unlawful practices, and, consequently, he was expelled from the university.

His father, although greatly disappointed, decided that his son should finish his education by taking a grand tour of France, Switzerland, and Italy.

After spending some time in the French court, Penn continued his tour to Italy. It was unexpectedly terminated, however, due to the fact that England was on the eve of war with the Dutch, and William was needed at home to take his father’s place as head of the household.

Penn then went to Lincoln’s Inn, in order to obtain a knowledge of the laws of England. All through the worst months of the great plague, when even Parliament fled to the purer air of Oxford, Penn worked hard to understand and memorize Coke’s “Institutes.”

Later, in accordance with his father’s request, William went to Ireland to manage the new family estate at Shangarry. One purpose of his mission was to remove a certain Colonel Wallis from his father’s land, which he accomplished after a satisfactory agreement had been reached by both parties.

Penn then traveled north to the court of the Duke of Ormond who represented the king in Ireland. It was while William was visiting the duke’s court that he won recognition as a soldier.

The garrison stationed at Carrickfergus, ninety miles north of Dublin, suddenly revolted against the king and seized both his castle and the town. Penn immediately volunteered his services and was made captain of a company. The mutiny was quickly quelled, and Penn’s courage and bravery in the battle won him admirable praise.

It was then suggested that William take his father’s place as captain of a company at Kinsale. But Sir William had always intended to make an ambassador of his son, and besides he thought that by retaining the position himself it might be more profitable for him in the future.

While in Ireland, William had his portrait painted in a suit of armor,
with the finest ruffles and the hair from his very best wig falling over his burnished chest and shoulders. The painting was praised by everyone who gazed upon it; but the characteristics of the face and eyes were too kind and thoughtful to represent that of a military man; we are not surprised, therefore, that he did not receive his world recognition for his military achievements.

PENN THE PERSECUTED QUAKER

BY ROGER SIMON

Not long after his return to England from France, William was again sent to Shangarry, in Ireland. A Colonel Wallis had been awarded an estate there by Cromwell, and Charles had awarded it now to Admiral Penn, who sent his son to remove the colonel from the land. William reached an agreement with Wallis, and it was then that fate seemed to take a hand in his life.

As a young boy, William had been taken by his father to one of the meetings held by a strange religious sect known as the Quakers. At this meeting, a young man had preached; a young vigorous man named Thomas Loe. William had never forgotten him, for as he heard Loe speak, William had turned to his father and saw that the eyes of the stern, hard-bitten admiral were filled with tears. This day he heard that Thomas Loe was to preach at a meeting to be held at Cork. Curiosity led him to attend. Maybe Loe would have a message for him; a message that would help him see his way through the years ahead. Sure enough, Loe spoke on the very subject that would appeal to a young man, troubled by uncertainty. Said Loe: “There is a faith that conquers the world, and there is a faith that is conquered by the world.” After the meeting, William went to speak to Loe, and as they talked he could see the stamp of anxiety and age that years of persecution had left on him. When Loe had to leave, William offered him his horse to make the trip to the next meeting-place. Loe politely refused, and Penn realized that he was not accepted as a true Friend. Then and there he vowed to become a worthy Quaker, one none could doubt.

From that time on, Penn attended the meetings regularly, and since
the persecution of the Friends was continuing, it was only a short time until Penn was jailed with eighteen Quakers. He wrote to a friend of his father's, Lord Orrery, Lord President of Munster, and secured the group's release. Hearing of this escapade, Admiral Penn immediately ordered his son home. Penn returned to Wanstead, stopping only to attend a meeting of the Friends in London. It was at this meeting that he met Gulielma Springett whom he was later to marry. His return to Wanstead was not a pleasant one, for the admiral, unconvinced by his son's arguments, disowned him.

Undaunted, Penn returned to London, to write the religious tract "The Sandy Foundation Shaken" which was later published. He failed, however, to obtain the necessary license for his document, and for this small offense was placed in the Tower. For nine months he remained there, refusing offers of freedom on the condition that he renounce his faith. Only the influence of his father, who longed to see him, secured his release. Another time he was arrested for speaking to a crowd, and this time was placed in Newgate Jail, where he stayed almost a year, but was finally given a trial. The jury of twelve honest Englishmen would not cower before the threats of the judges. Half starved, but undaunted and defiant, the jury stood by Penn who pled his own case using fully his knowledge of English law and the memorized Coke's "Institutes." The jury refused to convict Penn on any charge, and together with Penn they established in England for all time the sacredness of trial by jury.

The Conventicle Act was again invoked to place Penn in the Tower, from which dreadful place he was transferred to Newgate for six more months of prison. Small wonder that he then asked for a sanctuary for all those of Quaker faith and thereby rid Charles II of an awkward debt.

Because he and his father had been so friendly with the Stuart family, Penn was arrested soon after the succession of William and Mary. The Toleration Act, however, which Penn more than any other person had helped to achieve, was soon passed. But because Penn had liked and still had letters from the deposed James II, a warrant for his arrest on treasonable charges was issued. Penn was ready to sail for America; instead he hid in London. He would not ask for, nor accept a pardon; but finally he was given his official exoneration.
During this most gloomy period of persecution, Penn's province had been taken from him, but after his exoneration it was returned.

Finally in his old age, partly through the trickery of the Fords, his business agents, Penn was sent to Old Bailey, a debtors' prison. This sojourn in debtors' prison, however, was incurred as much for the sake of his fellow Quakers as were the terms spent in the Tower and Newgate.

Penn was always a crusader for freedom of religion and the rights of man regardless of the cost—he was one of England's greatest men.

**Penn the Author**

*By Corinne Welch*

From his dying friend Thomas Loe, William Penn first got the idea of putting into writing some of his beliefs in order to strengthen the faith of his new Quaker friends. Penn, at the early age of twenty-four, wrote "No Cross No Crown," as his contribution to prison literature. Penn at this time was completely shattered, separated from his friends, and heartbroken over the great disappointment he knew his father felt in the son to whom he expected to turn over the riches, titles, and honors he had earned. Yet adrift from the clamor and controversy of enemies and friends, the iron doors hemming in his imagination were at last opened, releasing it to roam where it pleased. When one considers the youth of the author and the fact that he had barely completed his formal education, with only his recollections to call upon, the book "No Cross No Crown" appears as a gem of logical construction and a masterpiece of memory.

In the first part of "No Cross No Crown" Penn discussed the age and society which had produced the Clarendon Code, a body of regulations intended to settle the points in dispute between the king and clergy. He further proceeded to tabulate the vices of that period and their appropriate remedies. The latter part deals with famous men, saints, and apostles whom Penn cited as proof that, as he said, "the Denial of Self and Daily Bearing of the Cross is the Alone Way to the Rest and Kingdom of God." The 111-page Tower pamphlet of "No Cross No Crown" is not the book with which we are now familiar. The 600-page second edition was a completely different book rewritten by a man ten
years older. The difference is seen, not only in the size of the book, but also in the maturity of the author.

At the time of publication of the second edition, Penn was no longer a disinherited, poor prisoner. He was now reunited with his family and friends, with the favor of his father, and he had the knowledge that, at the death of his father, he would become the owner of his great estates.

From the new Penn in his completed experience, we gain a fine moving passage illustrative of his persuasive eloquence. With simple truth he said: "God often touches our best comforts and calls for that which we most love and are least willing to part with. Not that he always takes it utterly away. But to prove the Soul's integrity, to caution us from Excesses, and that we may remember God, the Author of those Blessings we possess."

Throughout the long ordeal of his prison years Penn never once gave up hope of the religious freedom for which he so strongly fought. In his letter to the Lieutenant of the Tower and in referring to his words to the Bishop of London, his feelings are clearly visible. To the lieutenant he said: "I would have thee and all of the men to know that I scorn that religion which is not worth suffering for and able to sustain those that are afflicted for it." In reference to the bishop he said: "I told him that the Tower was the worst argument in the world to convince me: for whoever was in the wrong those who used force for religion could never be in the right."

For more than twenty years his quill was seldom idle except during the four years after 1681 when he was engrossed with his colonizing plans. Besides his most famous work "No Cross No Crown," Penn wrote "Fruits of Solitude," written in the same obscure style—like many writings of his day. In later writings he achieved a style of clarity and imagery such as in "Rise and Progress of the Quakers." Another famous work was his "Advice to his Children Relating to their Civil and Religious Conduct." This work was written after his second departure for America. As Comfort, the latest writer to evaluate Penn's contribution to mankind, observes, there is no evidence that his children were greatly affected by his advice, but others might well profit by it. James Phillips will tell us later of some of his writings which had a more direct application to our present international situation.
In a day when men and women were tortured and hanged for expressing religious views, Penn told the world everybody was welcome in his domain to worship unmolested.

His eloquent phrases preaching tolerance of all faiths were fully matched by his dynamic description of Pennsylvania. He used the best method of selling slices of his territory when he underwrote security for his customers. But the true success of his real estate advertisements is quite largely due to his promise of religious freedom.

Penn was the only American colonist who sensed that prosperity in a new land must be built upon population. He sold his safe and sensible propaganda with startling success. Over-populated Europe jumped to his call. Why not, the quill of William Penn asked the German peasants, why not come here and own a great farm instead of eking out a slave’s existence upon a garden patch beyond the Rhine?

No wonder that, due to Penn’s leadership as well as his ability to market his land, each year saw more ships at anchor in Philadelphia than plowed the Hudson or came to rest in Boston harbor.

But whether we remember him as the founder of Pennsylvania, a wise and faithful minister of the gospel, a statesman, or a religious writer, we must regard him as one of the foremost benefactors of mankind.

PENN THE ARCHITECT AND CITY PLANNER

BY HENRY FLOOD, JR.

William Penn was in the prime of life—just thirty-eight—when he sailed up the Delaware in the little ship Welcome. Although he had revolted against the political class system of England, Penn himself was the very essence of British aristocracy—the well educated, cultured friend of kings and princes. His most ambitious dream was to build a great metropolis in the Pennsylvania wilderness and establish near it a fine estate for his growing family.

In 1682, a commission headed first by Captain William Crispen and later by Thomas Holme, was appointed to choose the town site. The region chosen was the peninsula formed by the Delaware and Schuylkill
Rivers; the exact location was a well-watered level spot six miles from the juncture. The only disadvantage was the distance to the sea, sixty miles. Penn paid both the Swedes and the Indians a fair price for the land.

The commission adopted Penn's checkerboard pattern for the town, and Holme, as surveyor-general, set to work plotting nine avenues, each to be one hundred feet in width, running east-west from the Delaware to the Schuylkill. Twenty-one more were planned running north-south, each to be fifty feet in width. This narrowness has greatly hampered traffic since the advent of the automobile. The two main highways, Broad, running north-south and High (Market), running east-west, were to intersect in the heart of the city forming a ten-acre public park or common. Four more such parks, in each quarter of the town, would complete the public park system. Also included in the original plan was a promenade along the heights overlooking the water front. Streets running from river to river were numbered, and those running from Vine to Cedar, the northern and southern boundaries respectively, were named for trees.

Penn had lived through a plague and had seen the dread disease sweep unchecked through the close-rowed houses of London. He wanted his city, therefore, to be an open-spaced, well-shaded, country town. Lots were sold in acres and half acres only. Each lot provided ample space for an orchard, a garden, and a house.

It was only proper that the city be named in honor of the God who had so blessed the undertaking; accordingly it was called Philadelphia—city of brotherly love.

The city's first building was constructed in 1682, and within a year it had built eleven score wooden dwellings west, north, and south, until its population exceeded two thousand. The following year the first schoolhouse was opened and two years later the first printing press was set up.

Unfortunately for Philadelphia, Penn was called home to England in the fall of the year 1684 to argue a boundary dispute with Lord Baltimore. (We know this dispute was not settled until the drawing of the
Without Penn’s supervision, the excellent plan for building Philadelphia was more or less disregarded. Upon his return in 1699, fifteen years later, Penn found his “healthy country town” the largest and most prosperous of any in America. Yet it was still a clean, moral city, and Penn’s last prayer for Philadelphia, offered at his departure in 1701, was that it should always remain so.

To know the man Penn well, we need only look at his estate, Pennsbury. He had the Englishman’s love for fine houses, and he determined to build for himself a manor that would excel any found in the New World. He himself said: “A country life I like best for my children. Of cities, and towns of concourse, be ware.”

Penn, together with his cousin William Markham, planned the fourteen room mansion. The two storied house was built with three wings of tile-covered brick. Behind the main building were several smaller ones—a brew house, a kitchen, and a stable for twelve horses. A set of stone steps led from the porch to a spacious receiving hall. The rooms, arranged in suites, were simply but expensively furnished. There were draperies of damask, great leather chairs, satin-covered loveseats, dainty French carved tables, and oriental carpets. Huge fireplaces of Dutch tile, woodwork of imported English oak, and hanging chandeliers completed a home different from that of most Quakers.

In the cellar were cask upon cask of port, Madeira, and Burgundy. Ale and beer were brewed on the estate. Penn had a passion for good food, and he once remarked to his cook: “The book of cookery has far outgrown the Bible, and I fear is read oftener.”

Surrounding the manor house were extensive gardens, Penn’s special delight. These were planned like the formal Italian gardens of the cavalier period. Fruit and shade trees were imported and the best available gardeners engaged.

Because the Penn heirs did little to keep Pennsbury in repair, it had disintegrated by the time of the American Revolution. However, in 1932, at the instigation of various historical groups, research was begun that led finally in 1939 to its reconstruction, and it will again stand along
with Penn’s beloved Philadelphia as a fitting memorial to the remarkable aristocrat who founded the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

PENN THE LAWGIVER

BY DORIS STETLER

One of the best known facts about William Penn is that he was the founder and governor of Pennsylvania. This land was granted to him (principally because of his father’s deeds) in 1618 by Charles II of England. Although Penn made it a refuge for the Quakers, he did not restrict it to them. Immediately upon coming to Chester a naturalization law was passed, making all Swedes, Finns, and Dutch who lived there citizens of the new Commonwealth. Then the Great Law was passed. While all religions were tolerated and protected, the law said that officeholders and voters “shall be such as profess and declare they believe in Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, and Saviour of the world,” thereby excluding Jews, Unitarians, and atheists from any share in the government. Without detracting from Penn’s advanced ideas of religious tolerance, in all fairness we must say that Roger Williams, about four decades before, was the one man who had made no such restrictions. Also, fifty years before Pennsylvania, Maryland had been founded in a spirit of tolerance, but a triumphant majority had deprived many of the right to worship as they pleased. In Pennsylvania only could Catholics worship publicly. Charles Carroll, father of the signer of the Declaration of Independence, contemplated moving to Pennsylvania for the right denied him in Maryland.

Penn had high ideals for his government of the land. He believed it should be founded on religious principles. He said: “Government seems to me a part of religion itself, a thing sacred in its institutions and end.” Although a first constitution or Frame of Government was drawn up in 1682, it did not last; one, however, consisting of nine clauses, was drawn up in 1701. This lasted for seventy-five years or until Pennsylvania separated from England. In this constitution, Penn established a democratic form of government. This Frame of Government established
an elected unicameral legislature, with an appointive council serving as an advisory board to the governor. It gave to the courts the right to decide all property cases; and it required a six-sevenths vote of the assembly to amend any clause. All freemen worth fifty pounds were allowed to vote for members of this legislative body, as well as for candidates for sheriff, coroner, and commissioners. At this assembly, one should notice, a ruling was made against "superfluous and tedious speeches."

Penn called his undertaking in America the "Holy Experiment." He established absolute religious freedom and perfect equality of all by which he hoped to change savage nations and tribes. This was by no means an easy task, due to the relationship of the colony to the mother country, Great Britain, who did not offer religious freedom to her subjects at home or in her colonies. Although there was a police force for community peace and for self defense, the colony was not founded by military might or a great militia.

Ways of advancement were urged. A school was opened, an almanac was printed in 1685, and a newspaper was put out in 1710. Soon after that a post office was established. One of the clauses in the constitution of 1701 condemned dice or card games, horse races, ale houses, and taverns, and forbade the sale of intoxicating liquors. Pennsylvania was the first state to rise up against slavery. One of the greatest accomplishments of the "Holy Experiment" had to do with prisons. In Great Britain and in other American colonies, scores of crimes were punishable by death. Possessing a great quality of human kindness, Penn disregarded the practices of the others and made only murder and treason crimes calling for capital punishment. He granted to all criminals the right of a free trial. Instead of dirty, filthy dungeons, his prisons were clean and healthy and were considered as workhouses and correction homes. There was no imprisonment for small debt as was customary elsewhere. In one of the first hospitals established in the United States, the sick and aged were cared for. Children under twelve years of age, boys and girls alike, were taught trades. All oaths were abolished. In other words, the "Holy Experiment" was a tremendous social advancement.

One of William Penn's most honorable characteristics was the human
kindness and generosity with which he treated the Indians. As mentioned before, he believed in practicing Christian virtues and principles in transactions with them. He bought the land from the Indians as he had already bought part of it from the Dutch. He gave them a fair price in kettles, fishhooks, red paint, scissors, etc., in exchange for the land they gave him. He drew up treaties with several tribes. All the tribes regarded him as a benefactor since he neither cheated them nor outwitted them, but rather went among them as a friend. His most famous enactment with the Indians was the Great Treaty of Amity which took place probably in November, 1682. This was a great gathering of whites and Indians under an elm tree in a friendly discussion of relationships. The Indian chief was Tamanend, or Tammany to New York Democrats. All during the meeting great kindness, consideration, and neighborliness were shown, with the result that the treaty drawn up was not only ratified, but even kept during Penn’s entire lifetime. As Voltaire said, “it was the only treaty never sworn to and never broken.”

On the whole, Penn believed in freedom and equality in government as well as religion, and strove for these ideals to the end. In the words of Ebeling: “Of all the colonies that ever existed, none was ever founded on so philanthropic a plan, none so deeply impressed with the character of its founder, none practiced with a greater degree the principles of toleration, liberty, and peace, and none rose and flourished more rapidly than Pennsylvania.”

PENN’S PLAN FOR A LEAGUE OF NATIONS

BY JAMES PHILLIPS

Today we know Penn as a man far ahead of his time. This is illustrated by his great works which he has left to mankind. You have already heard about the Great Charter, from which the “founding fathers” received many ideas for America’s Constitution, and Penn’s reforms, that have remained to this day.

However, it is my main point to discuss Penn’s plan for a society of nations. The bloody tragedies of the Thirty Years’ War and other
struggles which involved the continent of Europe during Penn's life, as well as the civil war in his own land, made Penn ponder the causes of war and strive for peace. Hence his plan for a society of nations. In this respect, he was far ahead of the numerous writers of peace-planning that were to follow him in later years. Penn was one of the first to see clearly the need of a supra-national confederation of Europe. In 1693 he devised a plan that was to be the predecessor of the society of nations, the former League of Nations, or the new one partly formulated at the Dumbarton Oaks conference.

In Penn’s treatise, called “An Essay towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe by the Establishment of a European Diet, or Parliament,” there was to be a general assembly of representatives of the sovereign nations of Europe. The way Penn decided to assign these representatives to the various member nations is interesting. He calculated the approximate evaluation of the countries of Europe, including their power, revenues, exports, and imports. Then, on this basis he allotted a specified number of representatives from each country. The number ranged from twelve representing the German states to one from the small duchies of Holstein and Courland. Incidentally, these men were appointed by the respective sovereigns and were responsible to them. Next, Penn provided for a world court composed of distinguished jurists and established for the purpose of creating equity and settling disputes among nations. When any aggressive state should arise, the member states would unite their strength against it and force it to abide by the court’s decision. Penn also planned for a president of the organization, who was to be elected by rotation among the members. This structure could promote peace, William Penn said, and then proceeded to give his proof. His reasoning, however, was written for his own generation, and must be accepted as such.

I shall not give any criticism of Penn’s proposals beyond the statement that it would have to be altered greatly before it could be applied today. Nevertheless, we must recognize Penn’s plan for a society of nations as being prophetic of a new world to come, in which we all can hope for a better day.
This, then, is the story of Penn's life and of his accomplishments. There is little to say about his later life, after Penn reached the zenith of his glory in Pennsylvania. Two different times he was recalled to England. Previously, he had left his worldly interests in England in the hands of a worthless agent named Ford, who proceeded to ruin him financially. Because of this, Penn was sent to debtors' prison. Later he suffered a stroke, from which he never recovered. He died in England in 1718, and is buried in the cemetery of Jordan's Meeting-House.

In conclusion, we may say that Penn stood for three things: religious freedom, political liberalism, and peace. Prior to Hitler's time all the great English-speaking countries had secured the first two rights. Today, we are again fighting for freedom and liberalism, and also, peace. That accomplishment we must achieve in this generation. "In England," says Fischer, "Penn was a worthy successor to Eliot, Pym, and Hampden in the struggle for English liberty. In America, he founded or helped to found three Commonwealths: New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware." Let us hope that his vision of world peace shall soon be as successful as his colonization and fight for religious and political freedom have been.