BOOK REVIEWS


Two volumes of The Papers of William Penn, edited by Richard S. Dunn and Mary Maples Dunn, have already been published by the University of Pennsylvania Press (1981, 1982). From the second of these Dr. Soderlund, an associate editor of the larger compilation, has selected eighty-eight documents, adding to these thirteen other contemporary pieces. She provides for the general reader modern spelling, corrected punctuation, useful summaries, and explanations of contents. Technical terms are defined, places and persons identified. Six sections relate to negotiations for the province, the charter granted in 1681, promotion of land sales, the first plan of government, and Penn's preparation for a visit. The last six concern the proprietor's sojourn in America, October 28 to August 18, 1684, and problems developing about the boundary between Maryland and Pennsylvania. The first Frame of Government had been criticized in England and was revised by settlers in 1683. Among matters disputed were questions about the allocation of lands and the quit rent demanded. Initial optimism (p. 217) had diminished before Penn wrote his "Farewell" (pp. 395-96).

The additional material illuminates, for example, the horrors of the Atlantic crossing (pp. 174-76); the variety of immigrants (pp. 212-13); the assembly of March-April 1683 (pp. 226-62); and includes the valuable "Positive Information" by Francis Daniel Pastorius (pp. 353-60). Many illustrations and maps and excellent editorial apparatus combine to make this more vivid than narrative, and there is a splendid introduction to the early years of the "Holy Experiment." Less than a year after petitioning in 1680 for the province Penn drafted laws and a plan of government for it. Careful scrutiny of these and the commentaries of English friends demonstrate the traditional and innovative elements in his political thought, and later complaints by colonists reveal even more.
Penn's landing is but sparsely reported (pp. 186-88), but then and thereafter he displayed an unusual capacity for establishing good relations with earlier inhabitants — the Indians whose language and customs he studied (pp. 312-17); and the Swedes, Finns, and Dutch whose naturalization he made easy (pp. 197-99). Diversity was encouraged. Pastorius, founder of Germantown, arriving late in 1683 on a ship which, he declared, might well be dubbed "A Noah's Ark" (p. 355), listed many different sects and occupations among them. Though disappointed of an independent tract, the German leader had little but praise for the proprietor.

Pennsylvania and its trees, flowers, and water courses "mightily pleased" the great Quaker himself and he expressed delight in letters to Lord Culpeper (p. 203) and to the Free Society of Traders (pp. 311-12). Indeed his zest for travel both in his colony and others is manifest in the correspondence. What Penn did not like was criticism or complaint whether from English friends or colonists. A "Colonel Sidney" received an angry reply to remarks about a Turkish despotism implied in his government (pp. 111-12). Adverse comment by Thomas Rudyard and Benjamin Furly on hereditary rights and veto power, on a failure to ban slavery, and too strict a Sunday observance with respect to full toleration were not well received (pp. 113-17, 134-39). Kasper Batt's reflections on property and on the threat to Quaker control by too many non-Quaker arrivals were, Penn said, "meddling, intruding, and presumptuous" (p. 201). Colonists were vocal in refusal to confirm the charter granted the Free Society of Traders (p. 192), and Penn revised the First Frame with a second in 1683 (pp. 265-73). In 1684 "A Remonstrance from the Inhabitants of Philadelphia" (pp. 376-81) voiced considerable dissatisfaction with proprietary policies (pp. 376-81). Earlier hopes diminished before Penn left. The division of interest between the Penns and the Pennsylvanians that lasted until the American Revolution could already be detected.

_A Documentary History_ more than fulfills its promise for all students of the founding of the commonwealth.

_Rosemont, Pennsylvania_  
_Caroline Robbins_