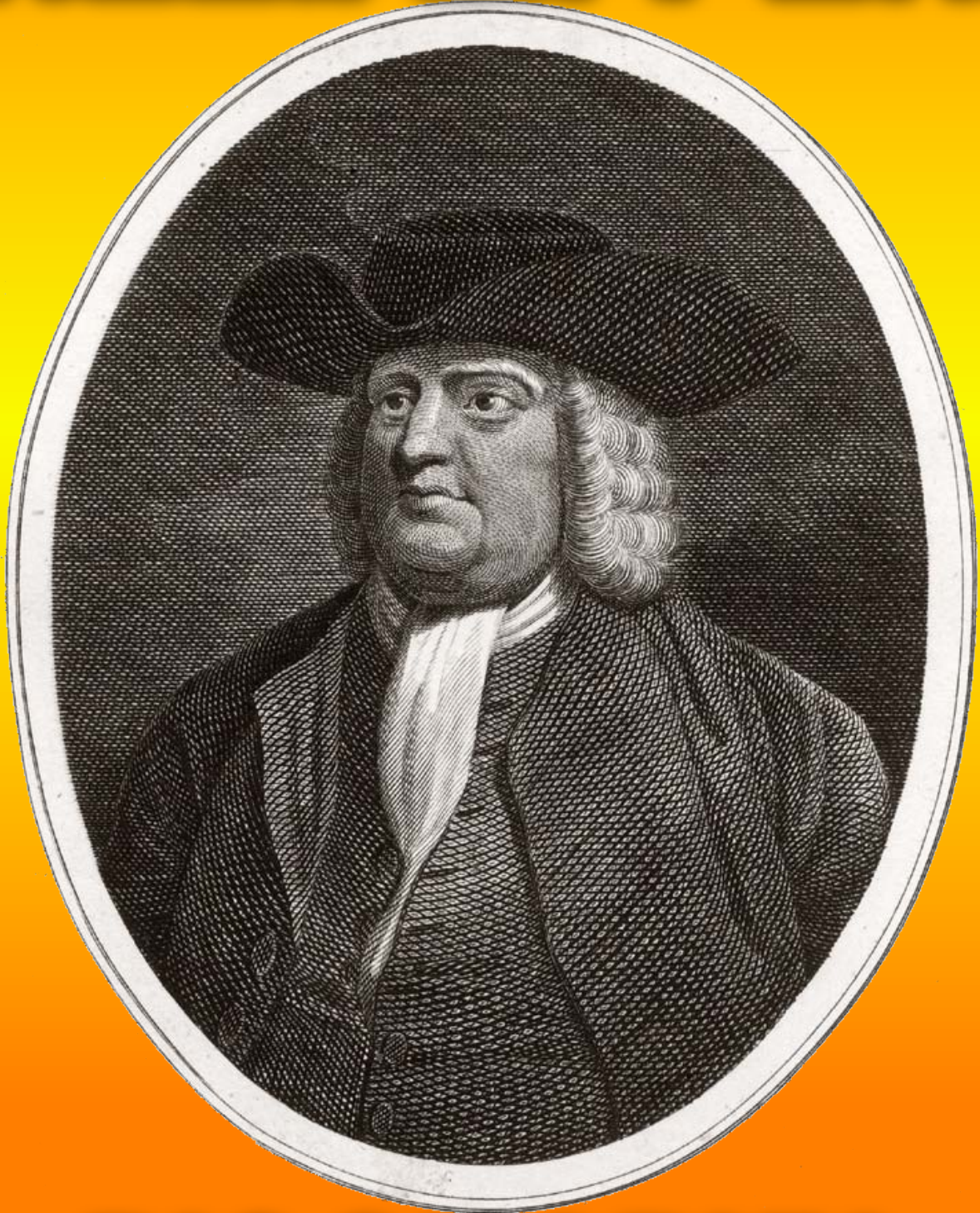


WILLIAM PENN



BIOGRAPHY

WILLIAM PENN

William Penn was born in 1644, the son of English Admiral Sir William Penn. Later he became a Quaker and founder of the Province of Pennsylvania.

At this time, Quakers were treated as heretics because of their principles and their failure to pay towards the Anglican church. Penn became a close friend of George Fox, the founder of the Quakers.

In 1668, Penn was imprisoned in the Tower of London. From then on, Penn's religious views effectively exiled him from English society. On the death of his father, William Penn came into a large fortune, and with other Quakers he purchased the colonial province of West Jersey (half of modern New Jersey). In 1682, East Jersey was also purchased by Quakers.

Penn then proposed to the King a solution which would solve the problems of Quakers being a thorn in the side in England – a mass emigration of English Quakers.

In 1681, King Charles II handed over a large piece of his American land holdings to William Penn in payment of a debt the king owed to Penn's father. This land included present-day Pennsylvania and Delaware.

Penn became the world's largest private (non-royal) landowner, with over 45,000 square miles (120,000 square kilometers). As a result, Penn became the sole proprietor of land west of New Jersey and north of Maryland (which belonged to Lord Baltimore), and gained sovereign rule of the territory with all rights and privileges (except the power to declare war).

Penn first called the area “New Wales”, then “Sylvania” (Latin for "land of trees"), which King Charles II changed to “Pennsylvania” in honor of the elder Penn. William Penn immediately sailed to America. He landed in New Castle in 1682. He was the owner (proprietor) of the land. The colonists pledged allegiance to Penn, and the first general assembly was held in the colony. He was responsible for laying out a new garden city and calling it Philadelphia.

This was not a new colony, and there were many other colonists, many of whom were also minority religious groups with their own ideas. This was a particular problem in what is now Delaware. In 1704 the three southernmost counties of Pennsylvania were allowed to become the new colony of Lower Delaware (named for the river). New Castle became its capital.

Penn was greatly in favor of unity among the new colonies, but not, as would happen later, in order to split from England. Nevertheless, the democratic principles that he set forth in the Pennsylvania Frame of Government inspired the United States Constitution.

Penn hoped that Pennsylvania would be good business for himself and his family without exploiting either the natives or the immigrants, However, he did keep slaves, as was normal at the time. Penn died on July 30, 1718, in England.

Understanding words

Before we can understand a story we have to know what all of the words mean. Let's try one...

a Write the sentence in which you found the word '**heretics**'.

b From that sentence, suggest what '**heretics**' means.

c Write a new sentence using the word '**heretics**'.

d Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to '**heretics**'.

e Draw a small picture showing what you think '**heretics**' means.

Try this for other words, too. 

Finding key words

Next, we need to find the key words that tell us what the story is about...

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list like the one below. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym). You don't have to use all the spaces, but you should not use more.

Key word	Synonym (similar word)
Example: purchased	bought

Sequencing

Sequencing means getting the events in the right order. Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense.

There Penn and other Quakers bought the colonial provinces of West Jersey and East Jersey.

Penn set up Philadelphia in Pennsylvania.

Quakers were persecuted at that time, and so Penn went to America.

Penn became the owner of Pennsylvania, which was named for Penn's father.

Penn then suggested to the King that Quakers from England emigrate to the colonies in America. The King agreed.

William Penn was a Quaker born in England to a wealthy family.

The King gave Penn land that is now Pennsylvania and Delaware.

Get to the facts

1 What religious group did William Penn belong to?

2 What did Penn first call his land?

3 What did it finally become known as?

4 When did Penn land in New Castle?

5 Which city did Penn set out?

Make a story...

When you read a description it often gives you ideas about how the event might be described differently.

New land, new hope

Imagine you were a Quaker in the 17th century. You are persecuted at home in England, so you set sail for the new Quaker colony in America. Finally you land and set foot in your new home... (now complete the story)

Below is a plain text version for printing:

Understanding words:

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- b From that sentence, suggest what 'heretics' means.
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For example:

Key word – purchased

Synonym – bought

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