

**WILLIAM PENN,  
FOUNDER OF  
PENNSYLVANIA**

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William Penn, Founder of Pennsylvania by Lucy B. Roberts

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**LUCY B. ROBERTS**

**WILLIAM PENN,  
FOUNDER OF  
PENNSYLVANIA**



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# **WILLIAM PENN**

**Founder of Pennsylvania**

*By*

**LUCY B. ROBERTS**



**PENN IN ARMOR, 1666—Aged 22**

Painted in Ireland

Presented by his Grandson to The Historical Society  
of Pennsylvania

**Issued by**

**The Religious Society of Friends**

**302 Arch Street, Philadelphia**  
(Quakers)

**1919**



**William Penn's Treaty with the Indians, at Philadelphia, 1683.  
Painted by Benjamin West, 1771. From John Boydell's Engraving, 1775.**



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Founder of  
Pennsylvania



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# WILLIAM PENN

## CHAPTER I.

It was during the stormy time of the great Civil War in England that William Penn was born, in 1644, at his father's house on or near Tower Hill in London. His boyhood, too, was spent in stirring times. This gave an intelligent boy like William Penn opportunity to hear much about public affairs, especially as his father was an admiral, and had served in the navy under Charles I., before that monarch lost his kingdom and afterwards his life. Admiral Sir William Penn was an important man, and very ambitious, especially for his son. He had gained a great many honors. When he was thirty-one he was made Vice-Admiral of the British Navy, and was very active under King Charles II. when he came to the throne.

William Penn was a bright, active boy, fond of sports, and enjoying a joke as much as any. And yet he thought of other things besides fun and worldly advantage, for he tells us, in one of the books which he wrote years afterwards, that one day when he was a little boy he was sitting alone in his room thinking, when a strange feeling of being



comforted came over him, and he felt as though the Lord God was right there with him. He thought that from this time he loved the Lord and wished to serve Him, although there were times afterward when he seemed to be careless about it.

We do not know much about how he spent his boyhood, except that he went to Chigwell, in Essex, to school until twelve years old, and also had a tutor at home. One thing that happened when he was eleven years old he seems to have remembered very particularly. Thomas Loe, a Quaker preacher, was in the neighborhood of his home in Ireland, and Admiral Penn thought they ought to do as the Bereans whom the Bible tells about, and hear him before they judged him. So the Friend was invited to their house, and when he had opportunity he preached to them with such earnestness that one of the servants cried out loud, and the Admiral shed tears. His son William sat there and wondered, "What if they would all be Quakers!"

#### **Life at Oxford, 1660-1662.**

When he was sixteen he was sent to Christchurch, Oxford, as a gentleman commoner. He was energetic and thorough, both at study and in all the athletic sports of the day, being particularly fond of fencing. He made excellent friends there, and enjoyed friendship with a number of them all his life.

One day, while a student, he went to a meeting of Friends, and there heard the very same Friend, Thomas Loc, who had impressed him so much when he was a boy at home.

All William Penn's desire to walk more closely with God seemed to be again aroused, and he and some other students held little meetings by themselves. They also refused to go to the other religious services, partly because they were often under the care of people unfitted for such a serious office, and also because they thought students should not be compelled to worship in a prescribed manner. For this they were fined. Charles II. sent a command that a surplice should be worn by every student; this tried William Penn and some others much, as they thought it an unfair interference, and they showed their indignation so strongly that they were expelled. His father was very angry not only because his son was expelled, but because he did not like the Quaker influence. He tried to persuade William to give it up. At first he was kind and gentle with him; but when his son refused to yield, the father resorted to blows and sent him out of the house.

#### **Studies in France, 1662-1664.**

William had a loving mother who pleaded for him, so that his father, who was really

an affectionate man, relented, and tried another plan. He sent his son to France with some people of rank. They went first to Paris, where there was much to tempt him, but he seems to have resisted the evil. Thence he went to Saumur and studied there in the Protestant College.

He also became an excellent French scholar, and gained the polish of manner for which the French are noted. Pepys tells us that he was at that time "a most modish person, grown a fine gentleman."

One evening, while in Paris, a man attacked him for an imagined affront. Penn, like all the young men of the time, was armed; he defended himself and defeated the man. When he found he had the man at his mercy he let him go without injury. Years after, he spoke of this incident, saying it showed "what envy, quarrels and mischiefs have happened among private persons upon their conceit that they have not been respected" in some small matter of form.

"Suppose he had killed me," he added, "or I, in my defence, had killed him. I ask any man of understanding or conscience if the whole round of ceremony were worth the life of a man, considering the dignity of his nature and the importance of his life with respect to God his Creator, himself and the benefit of civil society?"