**4b. Quakers in Pennsylvania and New Jersey**

  
Central to the Quaker way of life was the Meeting House. Here, Quakers would come together to worship. The above image depicts one of London's Quaker Meeting Houses.

**WILLIAM PENN** was a dreamer. He also had the king over a barrel. Charles II owed his father a huge debt. To repay the Penns, William was awarded an enormous tract of land in the New World. Immediately he saw possibilities. People of his faith, the Quakers, had suffered serious persecution in England. With some good advertising, he might be able to establish a religious refuge. He might even be able to turn a profit. Slowly, the wheels began to spin. In, 1681, his dream became a reality.

**QUAKERS**, or the Society of Friends, had suffered greatly in England. As religious dissenters of the Church of England, they were targets much like the Separatists and the Puritans. But Friends were also devout pacifists. They would not fight in any of England's wars, nor would they pay their taxes if they believed the proceeds would assist a military venture. They believed in total equality. Therefore, Quakers would not bow down to nobles. Even the king would not receive the courtesy of a tipped hat. They refused to take oaths, so their allegiance to the Crown was always in question. Of all the Quaker families that came to the New World, over three quarters of the male heads of household had spent time in an English jail.



William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania ("Penn's Woods") and planner of Philadelphia, established a very liberal government by 17th century standards. Religious freedom and good relations with Native Americans were two keystones of Penn's style.

The Quakers of Penn's colony, like their counterparts across the Delaware River in New Jersey, established an extremely liberal government for the seventeenth century. Religious freedom was granted and there was no tax-supported church. Penn insisted on developing good relations with the Native Americans. Women saw greater freedom in Quaker society than elsewhere, as they were allowed to participate fully in Quaker meetings.

**PENNSYLVANIA**, or "Penn's Woods," benefited from the vision of its founder. Well advertised throughout Europe, skilled artisans and farmers flocked to the new colony. With Philadelphia as its capital, Pennsylvania soon became the**KEYSTONE** of the English colonies. New Jersey was owned by Quakers even before Penn's experiment, and the remnants of **NEW SWEDEN**, now called Delaware, also fell under the Friends' sphere of influence. William Penn's dream had come true.

**4c. City of Brotherly Love — Philadelphia**

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William Russell Birch's idyllic engraving of the back of the Pennsylvania State House hints at the diversity of race and class that typified Philadelphia at the turn of the 19th century.

William Penn had a distaste for cities. His colony, Pennsylvania, would need a capital that would not bring the horrors of European urban life to the shores of his New World experiment. Penn determined to design and to administer the city himself to prevent such an occurrence. He looked with disdain on London's crowded conditions and sought to prevent this by designing a city plan with streets wider than any major thoroughfare in London. Five major squares dotted the cityscape, and Penn hoped that each dweller would have a family garden. He distributed land in large plots to encourage a low population density. This, he thought, would be the perfect combination of city and country. In 1681, he made it happen.

Penn's selection of a site was most careful. **PHILADELPHIA** is situated at the confluence of the **SCHUYLKILL** and **DELAWARE RIVERS**. He hoped that the Delaware would supply the needed outlet to the Atlantic and that the Schuylkill would be the needed artery into the interior of Pennsylvania. This choice turned out to be controversial. The proprietors of Maryland claimed that Penn's new city lay within the boundaries of Maryland. Penn returned to England to defend his town many times. Eventually the issue would be decided on the eve of the Revolution by the drawing of the famed **MASON-DIXON LINE**.

With Penn promoting religious toleration, people of many different faiths came to Philadelphia. The Quakers may have been tolerant of religious differences, but were fairly uncompromising with moral digressions. It was illegal to tell lies in conversation and even to perform stage plays. Cards and dice were forbidden. Upholding the city's moral code was taken very seriously. This code did not extend to chattel slavery. In the early days, slavery was commonplace in the streets of Philadelphia. William Penn himself was a slaveholder. Although the first antislavery society in the colonies would eventually be founded by Quakers, the early days were not free of the curse of human bondage.

Early Philadelphia had its ups and downs. William Penn spent only about four years of his life in Pennsylvania. In his absence, Philadelphians quibbled about many issues. At one point, Penn appointed a former soldier, **JOHN BLACKWELL**, to bring discipline to town government. Still, before long Philadelphia prospered as a trading center. Within twenty years, it was the third largest city, behind Boston and New York. A century later it would emerge as the new nation's largest city, first capital, and cradle of the Liberty Bell, Declaration of Independence, and Constitution.