



WILLIAM PENN

PENN AN INSPIRATION TO REALTORS

He was America's first real estate man. A master advertiser and developer his ideas reflected exceptional vision and soundness. All interested in real property should study his career.

By

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VERY appropriately our great state of Pennsylvania has made the birthday of William Penn a holiday. Proclamation as to this was made by Governor James and the date fixed was October 23, although Penn was born on October 13th, 1644 which date became the 23rd in the arrangement of the calendar now in use.

In making his proclamation Governor James called on schools, historical and patriotic societies to conduct appropriate exercises in honor of the founder and former proprietor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

It is unlikely that Real Estate men throughout the State recognized the importance of paying their tribute to William Penn, on the anniversary of his birth, yet all Real Estate men in Philadelphia and throughout the Commonwealth, as well as all Americans owe to Penn a debt of gratitude. Penn significantly was truly a Real Estate man in every sense of the word. He was a Real Estate developer; a master Real Estate Salesman, and the first advertiser of Real Estate in America. He was a success in each field.

If Real Estate men would read the life of Penn, they would find it inspiring and filled with Real Estate romance, although interspersed with much pathos. Here one finds creative ingenuity, courage, faith in the future, and a broad vision combined with a determination to carry plans to a successful fulfillment. His was a mind trained to believe in Real Estate, which made him America's largest and most successful Real Estate man.

Penn Joins Society of Friends

William Penn was born in England in 1644, within the shadow of the Tower of London. His father, Sir William Penn, was an Admiral in the British Navy, who had distinguished himself in battle against the Dutch in the 17th Century. Admiral Penn was an intimate friend of the reigning King, Charles II; thus the son, the Real Estate man, was brought up breathing the corrupt life of the English Court of that period. Penn studied law at Lincoln Inn, but instead of being a barrister he was, about this time, attracted to the doctrines of the new Society of Friends, a sect just formed in opposition to the then dominant religion. His father was disappointed so Penn was sent to Ireland to manage his father's Estate, this being his first fling in Real Estate.

Picture Penn, as he was then, in his early twenties, a handsome, athletic type, virile and endowed with persuasive, convincing and oratorical qualities that held him in good stead in the life ahead of him. Imbued with the Quaker religion, he used his powers first along religious lines by preaching to the populace. He was seized for preaching the new faith and was sent to prison. After his return to England, he was again imprisoned in the Tower of London on account of his writings and preachments. While in prison, he composed his principal work entitled "No Cross, No Crown". On his release, he resumed his advocacy of the new religion and was thrown in jail on several more occasions. With his tongue and pen, he vigorously advocated the doctrines of the Friends and liberalism. In other words, Penn talked himself into jail, but because of his rare gifts, his tongue talked him out of jail on all such occasions.

Penn's Promotional Literature

Penn's remarkable ability to write is evidenced by the literature he employed to further the development of our City and State. Some of the circulars prepared by William Penn over 260 years ago, chronicled in the pages of history, are rare masterpieces of Real Estate literature and belong to the classics.

When Admiral Penn died in 1670 (eleven years before Pennsylvania) he left all his property and landed Estates in Wales and Ireland to his son, who thereupon became a large land owner in his own right; but he was not content. The Duke of York, the King's brother, and the Government, owed Penn's father some Sixteen Thousand Pounds (the equivalent of \$80,000) so William went to the King and demanded the payment of the debt. As usual, because of his salesmanship, he finally induced the King to grant him a tract of land in the New World where he and his followers might have religious and political liberty. So, this Real Estate man, thereby founded the very principles which, 100 years later, formed the basis for the establishment of the Democracy of our nation, and represent those ideals for which we are fighting in a global war today.

Upon receiving the GRANT from King Charles II, the question of naming the new Province was discussed. Penn's choice was either New Wales or Sylvania; but the King insisted it should be named after his dear friend, the Admiral,

so Penn—sylvania was decided upon. This young man, not yet 38 years of age, had a vision. He dreamed of building a great City, and he decided to call his dream city "Philadelphia".

When Penn selected the name of "Philadelphia" for the city he planned to build he may have been influenced by the purpose that was evidently in his mind regarding the relationship which he hoped to develop among his colonists or by the fact that the City of Philadelphia in Lydia, Asia Minor, which was the seat of the seven early Christian Churches, is mentioned in the third chapter of the Book of Revelations. In any event the name is synonymous with "Brotherly Love" and such affection was definitely reflected in all Penn did in developing his colony.

Planning of Philadelphia Started

Penn commissioned Thomas Holme and his surveyors to precede him. They were instructed to find a site on navigable rivers, where the land was high and healthy. They eventually located a suitable site on the neck of land just above the junction of the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers. Then the program of city planning began. The plan for Penn's "Dream City" was unique. It was laid out in checker-board pattern; Penn, no doubt, got his inspiration from the board on which chess was played so much in his time. The streets running North and South he designated by numbers, and the streets running East and West he named after the trees of the forest. It was a practical plan for light and air, as well as for traffic and pedestrians. And, it was a decided improvement on the twisted and narrow streets of the old City of London. (Boston is a sample of the London plan.)

The plan of Philadelphia, when adopted by Penn, made this city the first model city in America and it has since been copied either all or in part, by nearly every other American city. The plan also provided for park areas as breathing spaces and recreational centres for inhabitants to obtain enjoyment. Thus, Penn, the Real Estate man, was not only a land developer; but he was one of the Fathers of the Park and recreational idea now in vogue in large cities. Washington, Franklin, Rittenhouse and Logan Squares, as well as Centre Square, on which City Hall now stands, typify the value of open areas in thickly populated districts.

While the City was being laid out, Penn stayed in England. He printed circulars in English, Dutch, German and Welsh, telling of the wonders of his new Province. The literature was profuse in the use of adjectives, and he painted a most alluring picture of what those who would follow him might expect and enjoy in Pennsylvania. He also told of the agricultural and mechanical pursuits. He told of rivers teeming in fish and the woodlands where game abounded. He even went so far as to say "A land 600 miles nearer the sun than England." All the time he was selling, he was also writing on important religious and political subjects. He made a missionary journey to Holland and Germany spreading the Quaker faith and obtaining buyers for his newly acquired lands 3,000 miles away.

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Penn An Inspiration To Realtors

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When the first settlers arrived at the "Greene Country Towne" they proceeded to carve caves in the clay banks of the Delaware River. Their voyage had been arduous; mutiny and small-pox broke loose en route and six long weeks on the high seas taxed their physical and mental endurance. Housing facilities, though absent for the first comers, were soon solved, for a great building boom took place in the Quaker City. During the first year, 125 homes were built. Artisans of all kinds were engaged in the building—it was a veritable bee-hive of building activity.

Although Penn was now the Proprietor of a vast area, it was not his first connection with America, for prior to his acquisition of Pennsylvania, he was one of the Trustees appointed to manage New Jersey, across the Delaware River. It was in 1677 that the ship "Kent" sailed up the Delaware with 200 passengers and founded the town of Burlington, New Jersey.

In July, 1682, Penn paid his first visit to Pennsylvania when he sailed here on the good ship "Welcome" from England with 100, mostly Quakers, on board. On this 300-ton ship, small-pox and other sickness took a toll of thirty lives. As they reached New Castle, they were greeted by the Swedes, Dutch and some English who had settled there.

During 1682 and the two years following, the buyers who had allotments came from London, Bristol, Ireland, Wales, Holland and Germany, and many other parts of England. Penn's salesmanship knew no bounds. Within two years, more than fifty ships arrived and Philadelphia had a population of 3,000 souls who were free to worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience. Universal suffrage and religious liberty and toleration prevailed. The Code of Laws adopted by Penn were exalted in aim, comprehensive in scope, yet with few exceptions, the details were regarded generally as very practical.

Toleration Insisted Upon By Penn

Under the Laws in effect in the new Province "toleration" was the main theme proclaimed. Furthermore, a charter of "liberties" was solemnly consecrated, and from these ideals and privileges, Penn actually sowed the seed that later established the principals of our Democratic form of Government.

While this great Real Estate man, developer, salesman and first advertiser of Real Estate, divided his time between the management of his vast holdings of land abroad and his gigantic domain here, he was the victim of swindling by his trusted employees, who took advantage of him during his absence on either side of the Atlantic.

While actively engaged in the development of his new Province, Penn met with many trials and tribulations. He learned that his wife was ill, and that a dear friend was being led to a scaffold so Penn returned to England. When James II, formerly the Duke of York, was overthrown Penn was seized and arrested, charged with having held treasonable correspondence with the King. Again his oratory and

salesmanship freed him of the charges. Subsequently (1692), Penn was deprived of his title as Governor of Pennsylvania, but two years later, by an act of Council, he was restored to power, and he again returned to America to continue by example and legislation the humanitarian principal so long expounded by him.

At 57 years of age, he returned to England where he was attacked with fits of epilepsy. His mind became that of a child; he did not know his friends; he crawled on the floor like an animal. He was disappointed and made sad by his son's habits. He was a broken-hearted old man when he passed on to his great reward in 1718 at the age of 75; but his works and deeds will carry on for generations.

Plan Carefully Prepared and Studied

Philadelphia continued to grow and expand. The original plan was designed on comprehensive lines and was not a "hodge-podge plan" such as found in New York, Boston and other old cities. Land that cost Penn, in settlement of the debt, stood Penn one-half cent an acre. The sales plan of Penn was unique. For every 100 acres sold, he offered a Towne lot as a bonus. Soon the original City, running from the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers and from South Street to Vine Street containing over 2,000 acres, was rapidly becoming a real city.

One hundred years later, in the vicinity of Independence Square, the political destiny of a great Nation was being shaped. Such immortals as Washington, Franklin, Jefferson, Morris and the other fathers of our Country were walking the streets of the city founded by a Real Estate man. And, then they framed those precious documents, the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights embodying therein the very principles espoused by William Penn, a Real Estate man.

Today, mounted on a pedestal more than 500 feet above the surface of the land of Centre Square which Penn predicted 261 years ago would be the heart of his Dream City, this Real Estate man's statue overlooks "his City", now the third largest city in the richest nation in the world. All hail to "The Cradle and Shrine of Liberty" and the great Keystone State, the products of the creative mind and great faith in America by a Real Estate man. Nowhere else in the world does a statue of any hero, martyr or political or historical character attain such a lofty pinnacle as that of William Penn, the Real Estate man who helped mould American history.

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