

EARLY SETTLEMENT OF PENNSYLVANIA – WILLIAM PENN – THE FIRST PROPRIETARY

Interesting and instructive is the story, it is one which needs no repetition to the ears of Pennsylvanians – the story of the beloved and peaceful founder of their noble State – *William Penn*, he who was not only the promoter of permanent white settlements within its boundaries, but sole proprietor of its vast territory.

Accounts of the earliest settlements in Pennsylvania are somewhat vague and uncertain, but it appears that the Dutch and Swedes made numerous voyages and attempted settlements at various points along the Delaware nearly simultaneously.

In 1623 the Dutch West India Company sent Cornelius Jacobse Mey, who visited the Delaware and erected a fortification, which he called Fort Nassau, at a point near the mouth of Timber creek, on the east side of the river, a few miles below the city of Philadelphia, and very near the site of the Red Bank.

In 1630-31 De Vries found this work abandoned. He also found a settlement at Lewis creek (*Koerne Kill*). In 1632, De Vries again visited the Delaware, and found his settlement destroyed. The Swedes are said to have made settlements on the Delaware in 1633, but they were probably abandoned or destroyed by the natives; and in 1633-34 there appears to have been no European remaining in this region. From the latter date to 1638 no further attempt was made to colonize the shores of the Delaware.

In 1637-38, Minuit, with a ship-of-war and a transport named the “Griphen,” under the patronage of the court of Sweden, visited the Delaware. He made the acquaintance of the Indians, cultivated their good will, and eventually made a treaty with them, at which he purchased a strip of country extending from Cape Hinloop of “Inlopen,” along the west bank of the Delaware river to the *Sandikans* Falls, opposite the present city of Trenton.

In 1638 he made a settlement and built a fort, which he called Christina, at a place called by the natives *Hopohaccan*, situated on the north side of a stream called *Minquas* or *Suspecough*, near its mouth. Minuit died in his colony about 1641. John Printz made a settlement and built a fort on Tinicum Island, in 1642-43. He erected a fine dwelling for himself and built a church. An English settlement was made at *Oijitsessing*, *Asamocking*, or “Hot Creek,” now Salem, in New Jersey, in 1640 or 1641. At about the same time another colony of English settled on the Schuylkill; but they were soon after compelled to remove by the Dutch.

In 1652, John Pappegoria succeeded Printz as Governor of the Swedish colony, and in 1654 he was succeeded by John Risingh. The Dutch and Swedes held the Delaware in common for some years. The Dutch built Fort Kasimer in 1641 on the present site of New Castle, Delaware. War broke out between the two nations, and in 1654 the Dutch Governor of New Amsterdam, the renowned Peter Stuyvesant, marched a force against the Swedish settlements on the Delaware, and compelled their surrender; thus bringing the whole region along the two great rivers, Delaware and Hudson, with the country lying between, under the dominion of the Netherlands. Their rule was of only short duration, for, in 1664, they were conquered in turn by the English.

About the year 1648 a grant was made by James the First, of England, to Sir Edward Ploeyden of the greater part of the country lying between New England and Maryland, which he erected into a province and country palatinate.

The bounds of his grant were given as follows: “One thousand miles compass of this most temperate, rich province, – four our south bound is Maryland’s north bound, – and beginning at Aquato, or the southernmost of first cape of Delaware Bay, in thirty-eight degrees and forty minutes, and so runneth, by or through on including Kent Isle, through Chesapeake Bay to Piscataway, including the Falls of Potomac river, to the head or northernmost branch of that river, being above three hundred miles due west, and thence northward to the head of the Hudson river to the ocean sixty leagues, and thence to the ocean and isles, across Delaware Bay to the South Cape, fifty leagues; in all, seven hundred and eighty miles. Then all Hudson river isles, Long Island of Pamunke, and all isles within ten leagues of the said province being.”

These limits, it will be readily perceived, while ambiguous in the extreme, covered a vast region, including the whole of the Dutch and Swedish settlements on the Hudson and Delaware rivers. A company had been formed by Sir Edward* Ploeyden for the purpose of colonizing this grant, which was to be called New Albion.

*Written also Edmund.

Agents were sent out, some of whom established themselves; and it is supposed that the Palantine himself, with several of his friends, retired from England during the Civil war, and sought an asylum in America.

Forts were said to have been erected at various points and settlements made, but they were probably broken up by the Swedes and Dutch.

It is also stated in "Trumbull's History of Connecticut." That, in 1640, a company of persons sent out one Captain Nathaniel Turner, who purchased for thirty pounds sterling a large tract of land on both banks of the Delaware, and erected trading-houses, and planted a colony of fifty families upon it. These accounts are, however, received with much doubt.‡

Jealousies had long existed between the Dutch and the New Englanders, and the latter had formed a plan in 1653 for driving the former from the continent. The applied to Cromwell for assistance, which, for some reason, was not given; but, under Charles the Second, the plan was carried into execution.

On the 29th of March, 1664, the King granted the James, Duke of York, the territory occupied by the Dutch; and soon after Colonel Richard Nichols, and others, with three ships, carrying one hundred and thirty guns, and a force of six hundred men, who were joined on their arrival by reinforcements from New England, appeared in the Bay of Manhattan (New Your), and summoned the doughty Dutch Governor to surrender.

To this formidable armament Stuyvesant could offer no Effectual resistance, and, after several days of negotiation, in which he obtained tolerable terms, the Governor surrendered, and with Manhattan fell all the Dutch Possessions. It was accomplished without bloodshed, and gradually the civil administration of the affairs was transferred to the English.

War between England and Holland followed, and in July, 1673, a Dutch Squadron recaptured New York without opposition; but at the treaty of Westminster, in 1674, the Dutch gave it up to the English. Sir Edmund Andross was appointed Governor of the British territories in America, which position he held until 1681-82.

In June, 1664, the Duke of York granted to John, Lord Berkeley, and Sir George Carteret, the province of New Jersey. Liberal laws were enacted, granting entire religious toleration, and immigration was invited. The province began to be settled rapidly, and numerous town to spring up. Lord Berkeley, in 1675, sold his interests in the province to John Fenwick, in trust for Edward Byllinge. Both these men were members of the society founded by George Fox, and familiarly known as Quakers.

Fenwick settled with hi family, in the beginning of 1676, at a point called Oijitsessing of Hog Creek, now Salem.

Troubles arose between Governor Andross and Fenwick, concerning the latter's proprietary rights. Byllinge became involved pecuniarily, and conveyed his interests to William Penn, Gawen Lawrie, and Nicholas Lucas, in trust for his creditors.

In June, 1677, a colony of about two hundred and fifty Quakers, formed a settlement at a place which they called Beverly, afterwards Buellington, and which is not known as Burlington.

‡ Gordon's early History of Pennsylvania.