



Original Article

Literary and Historical Notes of Pennsylvania Colony: A Model of Multicultural Society

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Abstract: American society's multicultural nature stems from its diverse ethnicities, cultures, religions, and denominations underpinned by democratic principles as the foundation of its sociopolitical system. This diversity is not a spontaneous occurrence but the result of a long historical process dating back to the colonial era. The Pennsylvania colony is considered one of the significant contributors to early American multicultural society. This study examines the strategies employed by William Penn, the colony's proprietor, to establish Pennsylvania's multicultural foundation. Utilizing Nash Smith's interdisciplinary approach, which combines historical and literary perspectives, this research identifies three key strategies implemented by Penn to foster equal relationships through friendship: incorporating a tolerance clause in the First Frame of Government, which served as the colony's constitution, and recognizing the life and liberty of each ethnic group. The first strategy aimed to persuade various ethnic groups, particularly Native Americans, to coexist peacefully with European settlers, as illustrated in the poem "Treaty of Penn." The second strategy provides a legal framework to ensure mutual trust among all inhabitants. The third strategy represented the practical application of the second strategy and demonstrated William Penn's commitment, as evidenced in a letter he wrote in London before founding the Pennsylvania colony. These strategies were rooted in Penn's Quaker beliefs, which emphasized the equality of all human beings, regardless of race, gender, nationality, religion, language, or other differences.

Keywords: Multi-Culture, Society, Quakers, Strategy, Pennsylvania, Colony, Interdisciplinary



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1. Introduction

Multicultural is a word that modifies a condition or fact of plurality in society due to having several distinct cultures, different ethnic groups, several religions, or many denominations. This word has gained popularity since the mid-twentieth century as a substituting word for 'plural' that appeared before. In this regard, once a society shows a

multicultural fact, it has applied and acknowledged concepts of diversity, equality, and or democracy as cornerstones of its existence because the indispensable requisite to attain such a society is through adopting human rights principles. In this regard, each entity of the society may have the same right, duty, and opportunity in any form to exist, grow up, and contribute to the sustainability of multicultural facts (Suparlan, 2004). This concept applies to the real condition of the United States ever since it has existed as a nation-state as what is truly seen through its national motto, *e pluribus unum*. Discussing the United States as a nation or big "institutionalized" society with its everlasting multicultural fact, this initially happened or was triggered by the appearance of this country as a New World. The Europeans were to be visited and dwelled as pioneered by the Puritans in the first settlement era in the 1620s. Besides, it was also encouraged by a sort of down-to-earth official policies undergone by several colonies in the colonial era. Many different groups of people were allowed to freely come, migrate, and settle as part of entities within the territory of those colonies. One of the colonies that underwent this policy mode was the Pennsylvania colony.

This colony was founded in 1681 after the Penns, especially William Penn's father, Admiral Penn, got a charter from King Charles II. This King had debt before, and he paid it with that charter stating that Admiral Penn was given an authority to own territory as a proprietor of it in America and its name was taken from this proprietor (Pennsylvania). Penn refers to the name of Admiral Penn and Sylvania refers to the condition of the area having many forests (Daniel, 1958). His son, William Penn, a Quaker, inherited this territory. William Penn took charge with or became a real proprietor for that territory. Quaker is another name for 'Society of Friends, one of the Christian denominations founded by George Fox in England in 1647 and got its development in the United States (Fox, 2021); (Maclear, 1970). Becoming a Quaker influenced William Penn to find a system of government in this colony. Quakerism concretely teaches that all human beings are equal regardless of natural differences such as ethnicity, nation, race, sex, the color of skin, etc. This concept is taken from its core doctrine of the Inner Light, saying that each person has the same potency to contact God – the Inner Light -- in his or her heart. So, all men, especially the Quakers, should spread away a universal grace to all people (Roslewicz, 1999).

Regarding this belief, William Penn then applied his conviction to find the colony's system, the 'Holy Experiment' (Daniel, 1958). This term signifies an ideal government concept in that area that was fully built based on the Quakerism doctrines. This concept extended Penn's dream to have a peaceful, democratic, and multicultural society in that colony. The Puritans also developed this ideal concept when they founded the Massachusetts colony. They founded the first colony with a concept known as 'A City Upon Hill,' by which the Puritans were fully inspired to establish the Massachusetts system based on Christian doctrines. Therefore, this study intends to dig out further some concrete strategies by William Penn in the sense of his Holy Experiment when founding Pennsylvania; what did William Penn think and do to apply his dream? To what extent the Quakerism doctrines did influence William Penn's concept? In this sense, in order to find a more reliable analysis, this study uses some personal writings of William Penn as primary data besides being supported by historical and literary ones.

2. Theoretical Approach of The Study

This study tries to apply an interdisciplinary theory as a main approach in its discussion. This theory practically leads a writer to have several perspectives from some disciplines. This concept is in line with Henry Nash Smith's interdisciplinary theory, which said that the best thing we can do, in my opinion, is to conceive. American Studies is a collaboration among men working from within existing academic disciplines but attempting to widen the boundaries imposed by conventional methods of inquiry. It implied a sustained effort of the student of literature to consider sociological, historical, and anthropological data and methods and the sociologist or the historian to take account of the data and methods of scholarship in the fields of the arts (Brøgger, 1980). So, those perspectives that may appear in this study are at least historical and literary. Again, these perspectives are intertwined in showing any fact related to the problem formulation previously mentioned to be broken down in the analysis of this study.

3. William Penn's Strategies to Found Pennsylvania

Any European to be considered when intending to dwell in the New World early is an effective strategy. Why so? That era was still the sense of wilderness era where no definite rule of law encompassed the social system. The concept of Spenser's *Survival of the Fittest* was still clearly applied in almost all parts of the New World. If one was stronger, he or she could live and control the land. The stronger he was, the more dominant he would be. The two opposite powers showed this in that era: the Indians as the land's native and the Europeans as the colonials. The Europeans used their physical and intelligence powers to conquer the Indian and annex and occupy their lands. So, physical conflicts or wars undeniably occur between both sides. Unlike most Europeans, William Penn, who had to oversee the big territory in the New World, thought to find another strategy to avoid any physical conflict, especially with the Indians and could run his governmental system and process in peace. In this case, there are at least three ways that can be seen as Penn's strategies to find his colony; namely: (1) by promoting an equal relation through friendship, (2) by providing a clause of

toleration in the First Frame of Government serving as a constitution of the colony, and (3) by acknowledging each ethnic group's life and liberty.

4. Equality through Friendship

William Penn first expressed this concept through his letter when he was still in England. It was written on the 18th of 8th Month, 1681 dealing with William Penn's personal invitation to the Indians, Delaware Indians, also called Leni Lenape Indians, to live in the territory of Pennsylvania as friends and or neighbors. Here, becoming a friend logically needs a prerequisite fact; each side must see the other side in equality, not in a subordinated or oppressed situation. Besides, the sense of equality may also grow a sense of mutual respect and mutual understanding towards the differences had by one another. There is no patron-client relation, but both sides appear to have a sense of informality and intimacy. Such an ideal concept is seen through the expressions of his letter from line 1 to line 8, as quoted below:

My Friends, there is one great God and power that hath made the world and all things therein, to whom you and I, and all people owe their being and well-being, and to whom you and I one day give an account for all that we don in the world. Now this great God hath been pleased to make me concerned in your parts of the world. The King of the country where I live hath given me a great province, but I desire to enjoy it with your love and consent, that we may always live together as neighbors and friends, else what would the great God say to us, who hath made us not to devour and destroy one another. (<http://theology.ed.edu/people/document/william penn.pdf>)

Through the quotation above, this letter implies a personal commitment of William Penn to the Indians. His commitment is to make a relationship as a friend or neighbor. This commitment, in this case, is clearly shown through the lines of the letter as quoted: "I desire to enjoy it with your love and consent, that we may always live together as neighbors and friends". The relationship between both sides would be conducted in the sense of friendship. There was a spirit of friendliness, mutual respect, and mutual trust in their position and life, so it was not allowed to harm and destroy one another. Of course, this could happen. As Penn said, the relationship was done based on Love and Consent illuminated by the power of God.

When they had relation physically, the commitment was shown especially by William Penn as the proprietor of the Pennsylvania colony. The spirit of friendship brought Penn to the Indians' sites to re-confirm his above commitment expressed through the letter. William Penn made a treaty with the Indians known as the (Du Ponceau & Fisher, 1836) Treaty held at the village of (Du Ponceau & Fisher, 1836). Elizabeth Chandler vividly depicts both sides' physical contact through her poem entitled The Treaty of Penn. In this poem, both William Penn and the Indian Chief did an intensive dialogue to obtain an agreement on the formerly mentioned commitment. In the first stanza, the Indian Chief starts his dialogue by asking Penn, as a representative of the white men in general, whether Penn has the same attitude and character as the former white men, who once also stated a commitment to good friendship and brotherhood. Still, they broke the commitment and committed massive murders of the Indians in the end.

*I have seen the white chieftains, but proudly they stood;
Though they called us their brethren, they thirst for our blood:
With the peace belt of wampum, they stretched forth one,
With the other, they wielded the death-doing brand.
On their lip was calumet – war on their brow;
But thine scowls not with hatred – a chieftain art thou? --*
(http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/poetical_works_chandler)

The second stanza answers the Chief's question about the first one. Penn's answer is very firm that he is much different from the former white people and he, together with his people, will not repeat what the former did to the Indians. Penn is not a hypocrite who, on one side, offers a friendship, but on the other side he murders the Indians, as reflected in the line: "they called us their brethren, they thirst for our blood". Again, in this case, Penn confirms his commitment that he builds his government based on the love that implicates the presence of friends in social life, with no intention of dominating the other side. To make it clearer, here is the following quotation of the second stanza, showing Penn's answer:

*My friends, whom I govern with fatherly hand;
We worship the spirit who rules from above,
Our watchword is peace, and our motto is love,
We fight not, we war not, for life or for land
And the weapons of death never darken our hand.
Will we, for our friends and our brethren receive;
But we will not deprive you, by force or by fraud,
Of the land that yourselves and your fathers have trod.*
(http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/poetical_works_chandler)

As depicted in the poem to William Penn, his commitment was to treat them as friends and promise them not to deprive their own lives. William Penn, in this case, did not want to annex and occupy inhumanly the lands that belonged to the Indians. Interestingly, something must be noted here concerning the poem's writing by its poet, Elizabeth Chandler. This poem serves as an expression of the poet's admiration to the figure of William Penn, either as a European man or as a Quaker. Why so? It happens because, as Elizabeth Chandler sensed, the contact was conducted due to the spirit of humanism, egalitarianism, and universalism embedded in William Penn's way of thinking through which he had started the establishment of Pennsylvania with a soft strategy in the sense of recognizing the presence of Indians' lives.

5. Formulation of Toleration Clause

The next strategy done by William Penn was formulating a constitution for the Pennsylvania colony. The constitution was called the First Frame of Government which William Penn himself wrote in 1682. It was officially applied on April 25, 1682. The constitution is "the supreme law" of the colony, where any policy and rules of the game would be fully based on that constitution. One of the explicit clauses regulated and explicitly mentioned in the constitution is the rule for toleration. Toleration or tolerance is the "quality of tolerating opinions, beliefs, customs, behavior, etc. different from one's own" (Hornby & Cowie, 1977). William Penn formulated about the toleration clause as seen in the following quotation from the First Frame of Government:

To all Persons, ...I, the said William Penn, have declared, granted, and confirmed, and by these presents, for me, my heirs and assigns, do declare, grant, and confirm unto all the freemen, planters and adventures of, in and to the said province, these liberties, franchises, and properties, to be held, enjoyed and kept by the freemen, planters, and inhabitants of the said province of Pennsylvania forever.
(<http://www.lonang.com/exlibris/organic/168-fgp.htm>)

It is seen from this quotation that William Penn declared and granted the opportunities for all people (the freemen, planters, and adventurers) to come and live in the territory of the Pennsylvania colony as part of the colonies' entities. In this case, William Penn also gave them kind liberty to conduct their own lives as free as they wished to have, as seen in the line: "these liberties, franchises, and properties, to be held, enjoyed and kept by the freemen, planters, and inhabitants of the said province of Pennsylvania forever". Besides, this concept was not merely seen in the First Frame of Government, but William Penn also showed it in his letter he once wrote in London, England. The statement mentioned in the letter is seen in line 11-14. The concept of the quotation above is as follows:

I am very sensible of the unkindness and injustice that hath been too much exercised toward you by the people of these parts of the world, who sought themselves, and to make great advantage by you, rather than examples of justice and goodness unto you, which I hear hath been matter of trouble to you, and caused great grudging and animosities...
(<http://theology.ed.edu/people/document/william penn.pdf>)

The two quotations signify how William Penn, as an official leader of the colony known as a pious man to his conviction, wished to be a just person or in neutral position to all people. In their cultures there, including the Indian and the Blacks' lives. He did not want to show his favoritism to a certain group of people, or he did not wish to act as a 'more favorable' policy to one group of people and act as a 'less favorable' policy to another group. He enforced the strength of social justice or the toleration clause on everyone in his colony. Concretely, all ethnic groups, religions and denominations could live in the territory and be guaranteed by the constitution. Along with this fact, William Penn showed his vision to illustrate the pluralistic and multicultural society in that colony. There was a sense of equality and non-discrimination within it. This fact is then quite wrapped up with an explicit statement referring to the toleration clause as written in the constitution, the First Frame of Government, as follows:

XXXV. *That all persons living in this province. shall, in no ways, be molested or prejudiced for their religious persuasion, or practice, in matters of faith and worship, nor shall they be compelled, at any time, to frequent or maintain any religious worship, place or ministry whatever.*
XXXVI. *That, according to the good example of the primitive Christians, and the case of the creation, every first day of the week, called the Lord's day, people shall abstain from their common daily labor, that they may the better dispose themselves to worship God according to their understandings."*

<http://theology.ed.edu/people/document/williampenn.pdf>

Hence, due to this policy, the first thing seen as an empirical impact of this concept was the number of immigrants coming to the area increased significantly. The multicultural fact happened in the territory where there were the Indians, the Black people, English, Irish, Germans, Catholics, Jews, and an assortment of Protestant sects, including Dunkers, Guguenots, Lutherans, Mennonites, Moravians, Pietists, and Schwenkfelders existing in that territory. They all lived peacefully and equally. Or human rights principles were the basic foundation of their lives. In this regard, William Penn had enforced the presence of a toleration clause in the sense of human rights principles as the compass of social and political systems in the place. The clause was in the sense of "sumum ius suma iuria" (Ahmad, 2007). Indeed, the government of Pennsylvania could apply a sort of justice and thus facilitate the democratic reconstruction and peace process. Finally, due to the policies conducted by Hamm, (2003) commented that it was the first time that white people in the colonies had organized to defend the Indians or the Native Americans' rights.

6. Respect for Life and Liberty

The rights to life and liberty are the two forms of unalienable rights all human beings have. These two rights, besides the pursuit of happiness, were explicitly formulated by Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence (1776), as quoted below:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that their Creator endows them with certain unalienable Rights that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government...(Cottrell et al., 1992)

Far from formulating human rights as a basic notion for establishing the United States as a nation-state, this concept was conducted in the Pennsylvania colony. The concept functioned to strengthen and guarantee the existence of a multicultural society in the territory. In this case, William Penn can be said as a pioneer to have contributed to the presence of human rights applications in the United States; admitted or not, this is the real fact. The respect for life and liberty is the empirical form or continuance of the concept formulated explicitly in the constitution. The first frame of government (1682), as mentioned before, i.e., "I, the said William Penn, have declared, granted, and confirmed, and by these presents, for me, my heirs and assigns, do declare, grant, and confirm unto all the freemen, planters and adventures. To the said province, these liberties, franchises, and properties, to be held, enjoyed and kept by the freemen, planters, and inhabitants of the said province of Pennsylvania forever" (<http://www.lonang.com/exlibris/organic/168-fgp.htm>)

On account of this formulation, the first thing to do to express William Penn's respect for life and liberty after starting to do his job as a definitive leader of the Pennsylvania colony was to approach the Indians whether or not they sold their lands to William Penn. Unlike the other groups of white people, he did not annex and do a kind of physical conflict with the Indians, though he had a right to do such a thing since he was assigned by the King's charter to have the land. Why did William Penn do so? It is because he was a real pacifist. He avoids a kind of war but spreads a non-violent virtue to all people, including the Indians in the colony. Besides, as mentioned before, William Penn had a vision based on human rights principles. Here, William Penn positioned the Indians as subjects, not as an object, so there was a sense of equality between both sides.

The pacifist effort conducted by the proprietor of Pennsylvania upon buying the Indians' lands was also a manifestation of the previous commitment he once formulated in his first letter, written in London 18th of 8th Month, 1681. William Penn expressed his wish to live with the Indians as a friend and a neighbor through that letter. A kind of mutual respect, mutual trust, and informality or intimacy was built during physical contact with the territory. He said: "I desire to enjoy it with your love and consent, that we may always live together as neighbors and friends, else what would the great God say to us, who hath made us not to devour and destroy one another" (<http://theology.ed.edu/people/document/williampenn.pdf>). Therefore, in the spirit of soft strategy, this method was effective: the Indians were willing to sell their lands and avoided physical conflict, although at last, he was the winner of this course. To make it clearer, William Penn's success in buying the Indians' lands is depicted in Figure 1 below:



Figure 1. Map of the Indians' Lands

Source: <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~cap/penn/pnbib.html>

The next strategy as a form of respect for life and liberty was that William Penn gave freedom to all people or the inhabitants in holding their lives and liberties, particularly in freedom of embracing their religions and traditions. As mentioned before, there was not only Quakerism living in that place but also the faith and practice of other religions or denominations held by Mennonites, Anabaptism, Moravians, Brethren heir. The original faith of the Blacks and the Indians, who white people mostly assumed to be heathens. Upon this fact, Howard Yoder commented this, in the sense of the Holy Experiment application as follows:

The popular understanding by Americans, including legal and political historians, concerning rootage of religious liberty in the 1789 Bill of Rights, undervalues the extent to which the pioneering of William Penn followed up by a century's experience of the middle colonies was indispensable to make that commitment possible

<http://theology.nd.edu/people/document/william penn.pdf>

The differences between the lives of the people living in the territory do not matter to him. The difference was a part of his life and his job was to guarantee the existence of some conditions. In this case, he was aware that one of the aims of building the institutional state is to guarantee the presence of human people's liberties or civil rights (Götte et al., 2001); (Loe, 2006). William Penn showed this point through his intermingling with the Indians in which they made a kind of agreement before, as he said as follows:

We have agreed, that in all Differences between us, six of each side shall end the matter: Don't abuse them, but let them have justice, and you win them...
(Pearce, 1950).

Furthermore, William Penn also recognized or acknowledged the variety or diversity of lives in that colony, particularly the acknowledgment of the Indians' lives. This form of his recognition is seen in his other letter written in 1683 entitling Letter from William Penn to the Committee of the Free Society of Traders. What he said concerning this item is as follows:

Their diet is maize, or Indian corn, divers ways prepared: sometimes roasted in the ashes, sometimes beaten and boyled with water, which they call homine; they also make cakes, not unpleasant to eat: they have likewise several sorts of beans and pease that are good nourishment...(West & Pearce, 1965).

From that short quotation, William Penn presented his own experience due to his intermingling with the Indians. He recognized the modes of the Indians' lives or traditions. He did as a leader because he just got along with them without intending to banish the different traditions. One thing to be noted related to William Penn's ability to get along with the Indians, despite their differences, is that he could render a sense of friendship with love and kind-heartedness to them. This sense can be seen through his conduct and attitudes, including his words, toward them during the intermingling. This fact is vividly mentioned his second letter, as quoted below:

When the Purchase was agreed, great Promises past between us of Kindness and good Neighborhood, and that the Indians and English must live in love, as long as the Sun gave light. Which done, another made a Speech to the Indians, in the Name of all the Sachamakers or kings, first to tell them what was done; next, to charge and command them. To Love the Christians, and particularly live in peace with me...(West & Pearce, 1965).

Finally, along with these attitudes and policies as parts of his whole strategies in founding the Pennsylvania colony so that it existed in peace, William Penn can be called one of the great heroes of the human rights and a pioneer of the spirit and view of multiculturalism in the United States. This notion follows a statement mentioned by Jim Powell through his paper entitled "William Penn, America's First Great Champion for Liberty and Peace", as seen in the first paragraph. The statement is quoted below:

William Penn was the first great hero of American society. During the late seventeenth century, when Protestants persecuted Catholics, Catholic persecuted Protestants, and both persecuted Quakers and Jews, Penn established an American sanctuary which protected freedom of conscience. Almost everywhere else, colonists stole land from the Indians, but Penn traveled unarmed among the Indians and negotiated peaceful purchases. He insisted that women deserved equal rights with men. He gave Pennsylvania a written constitution which limited the power of government, provided a humane penal code, and guaranteed many fundamental liberties (<http://www.quaker.org/wmpenn.htm>)

7. Conclusion

William Penn was a Quaker born in England but gained popularity in the United States. Quakerism greatly influenced him to be a popular figure in the New World since, in this case, he practiced his conviction of Quakerism when founding and presiding Pennsylvania colony. One of the great values to be practical in his strategy in founding the colony that was taken from Quakerism is the concept of universalism. Along with this concept, he then looked at the existence of the Indians and other groups of people as potential parts of his colony to get its progress, not as parts of the obstacles. Besides, still in the influence of his conviction, he then formulated several down-to-earth strategies to smoothly found the colony as those were depicted through his actions and conceptions, namely: (i) by promoting an equal relation through friendship, (ii) by providing a clause of toleration in the First Frame of Government serving as a constitution of the colony, and (iii) by acknowledging each ethnic group's life and liberty. Therefore, William Penn finally appeared to be a great hero in creating a multicultural society in Pennsylvania as an initial step or model for the next multicultural form of the United States, besides pioneering to presentation of human rights principles. In this sense, Pennsylvania had emerged as an initial melting pot of the United States. It is a sort of his contribution to American society, admitted or not.

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