

William Penn: Impact on Colonial America



Use the information on page 1 to answer the questions.

1. Why did the king of England’s Council give William Penn enough land to set up a colony in America?
Penn came from a powerful family. The king of England owed Penn’s deceased father a large sum of money. In 1681, the debt was repaid with a land grant in colonial America.

2. What did William Penn call his attempt to design a government based on Quaker beliefs?
a. The “Salutary Neglect” **b. The “Holy Experiment”** c. The “Society of Friends” d. The “Quaker Way”

3. England assigned the death penalty for over 200 crimes. Penn believed only murder and treason deserved the death penalty. How does this difference support what you have learned about Penn’s judicial reforms? Include evidence from the passage.
Penn’s charter guaranteed fair trial by jury and freedom from unjust imprisonment. These indicate that he cared about the rights of people accused of crimes. He also designed a prison system that emphasized reform more than punishment. In general, his system was less harsh than England’s.

4. Penn’s promise of religious freedom brought not only English, Welsh, German, and Dutch Quakers to the colony, but also Huguenots (French Protestants) and Lutherans from Catholic German states. What impact do you think this welcoming of diverse populations had on Pennsylvania?
Answers may vary.

5. How would you describe William Penn’s dealings with Native Americans?
a. Tense and dangerous **c. More cooperative and respectful than many colonial interactions**
b. Mysterious and misunderstood d. Similar to all colonial interactions with Native American groups

6. Summarize William Penn’s impact on the development of colonial America.
Answers will vary.

★ **Bonus question:**
According to Thomas Jefferson, William Penn was “the greatest law-giver the world had produced.” Do you agree? Discuss your response with a friend or classmate.