
**Chronicles of Pennsylvania from the English Revolution
to the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, 1688-1748**

Keith Charles Penrose


Title: Chronicles of Pennsylvania from the English Revolution to the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, 1688-1748

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CHRONICLES
OF
PENNSYLVANIA

FROM THE 
ENGLISH REVOLUTION
TO THE
PEACE OF AIX-LA-CHAPELLE
1688-1748

BY
CHARLES P. KEITH
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"THE PROVINCIAL COUNCILLORS OF PENNSYLVANIA 1733-1776"
AND "THE ANCESTRY OF BENJAMIN HARRISON"

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CHAPTER XV.

THE FUNDING OF PENN'S DEBTS.

The Fords condemned by Friends' Meeting—Penn not benefited by the appropriation for his Deputy—Cost of living in Pennsylvania—Evans's rigorous treatment of Biles—The scare—Evans's immorality—The Assembly kept ignorant of the prospect of Penn's surrendering the government—Law establishing courts disallowed, because abolishing ejectment suits as "fictitious" proceedings—Quarrel over reestablishment of courts—Opponents of Penn carry election of 1706, and contend for judicial reforms—Assembly censures Logan, and appeals to Whitehead—Question as to nominations for Sheriff—Must the Speaker remain standing at conferences with the Governor?—Courts created by the Governor's ordinance—Impeachment of Logan—Failure to pass laws—Legislative rights of the Delawareans—Attempt to stop a Philadelphia sloop at New Castle—Silence of the Charter of 1701 as to trying of impeachments—Indian affairs—Further proceedings towards a sale of the government to the Crown—Penn thinks of removing Evans, and censures him—Penn's financial prospects brighten—Course of William Jr.—Renewed appeal to English Quakers by the Assembly—William Mead takes a stand—Evans prorogues new Assembly—Verdict for rent due the Fords, and imprisonment of Penn—Unsuccessful application to put Philip Ford Jr. in possession of the government—Whitehead, Mead, and Lower force the removal of Evans—"Penn Charter" school in Philadelphia—Assembly refuses money to defend against privateers—Claim that Evans should apply

receipts to the public service—The Fords accept £7600, and relinquish claim—Mortgage to Gouldney et al., advancing £6600—Short session of Assembly chosen in 1708 for each part of the dual colony—Evans marries—He prosecutes to imprisonment the surety on a marriage license bond, because marriage was not solemnized according to Church of England.

Penn appealed to the Friends' Meeting at Devonshire House, which the Fords attended; and the Meeting, in December, 1705, after several adjournments, caused by young Ford's illness, decided, that, by refusing arbitration, and persisting in proceeding in the law, Bridget Ford and her children, Philip, Ann, and Susanna, had acted contrary to Christian principles and the established good order, and that the Meeting could have no unity with them until they complied with the advice and judgment of the Meeting, and that William Penn was free to make his defence at law. Penn brought a cross bill in Chancery, and employed counsel "esteemed the top of that court" to have the amount cut down to about £4000: but, even if the debt were so reduced, the prospect of having to pay it with his other obligations was sufficiently appalling.

As assistance to Penn, which was probably the chief object, the voting of money to his Lieutenant-Governor was worse than useless. In the first place, the new tax to provide the money was as much as the inhabitants would bear at one time, and, notwithstanding the act for collecting the arrears of the tax imposed in 1700 for the Proprietary, the collection thereof in addition to this new tax was found impossible, and was not enforced; so that this source of revenue for the embarrassed Governor-in-Chief was shut off for the time being. He had hoped to have part of the proceeds of any taxation by this Assembly paid to him directly; instead of which Evans under the Act received 800*l*.

down, and half of the balance of the tax, and half of the 600*l.* or 700*l.* expected to come annually for three years from the impost. Moreover the Assembly of the Lower Counties voted 200*l.* to him. Penn thought that Evans, particularly if he kept the fines payable to the Governor, and took perquisites, ought to hand over everything else in excess of the sum which Penn first allowed him. Penn saw no need for his Lieutenant-Governor to entertain all strangers, or, when a bachelor, even to keep house. The original agreement had been vague, perhaps unavoidably, but rather strangely vague even as to whether the allowance until provision by the Assembly was to be in sterling or money of the Province. Logan thought that it would be fair for Evans to get, through Penn or otherwise, fully 300*l.* Penna. money of the office, and even 500*l.*, if the receipts, including everything, amounted to that, any surplus to be Penn's. The joint housekeeping had been paid for by Logan out of Penn's money. Logan said that they had lived as cheaply as possible, with only two dishes of meat a day, except on a few occasions, with one man, as caterer and butler, and one girl, as cook. The whole expense for the two years had been 600*l.* Penna., running highest, of course, during the five months of William Penn Jr's stay. Evans now coming into funds by the Assemblies' appropriations, Logan asked him for reimbursement to the extent of his share of said past expense. Evans insisted that such share could only be a credit against Penn's debt to him of 200*l.* per annum for two years, that the Assemblies' appropriations were not to be deemed to include a provision for any part of that time, and that the license fees, ship's register fees, &c. should not be brought into the account. We can not say that Evans's contention was unjustifiable. Thinking of what he had paid or released at the time of his appointment, he or his cousin Peter Evans declared him yet out of pocket :

£500 by the Lieutenant-Governorship, and he withdrew from the Clark house, and took up his residence at an old log house near Shackamaxon. After he had been Deputy four years and a half, getting no further appropriation, he stated his receipts to have been less than 1800*l.*, in other words less than 400*l.* for each year.

Another indication of the cost of living is given in Logan's letter of 9ber, 1705, saying that all things were dear in Philadelphia, and forwarding the complaint of the *incognito* daughter of an earl (see chapter on the People) that she could not keep a maid on the allowance of £40 stg. a year, paying about 30 pounds (currency or sterling not stated, but probably currency) for her own board and lodging at Robert Assheton's. So "Mary Phillips," i.e. Lady Newcomen, asked that her note to Capt. Finney for £40 stg., he having lent her 60*l.* Penna. money, be paid over and above her allowance, and that the allowance be raised to £50 stg., to which she would confine her expenses. The statements of Evans in August, 1708, that, by the rate of exchange, 400 Pennsylvania pounds were only 250 pounds sterling, and that all European goods cost nearly twice as much, even in sterling, in Pennsylvania as in England, are probably true for several years before and afterwards.

Having very docilely, during two years, followed in public acts the judgment of those upon whom Penn relied, Evans, contemporaneously with the preference given to the Lieutenant-Governor's tax over that for the Proprietary, and the disagreement with Logan as to the expenses, began to be independent and, moreover, secretive and plotting. Evans's conduct during a recess of the Assembly chosen in 1705 turned against him most of the colonists, at least of Pennsylvania proper, his Councillors as well as the other faction.

Biles having been called before the Yearly Meeting of 1705, and induced to acknowledge his fault in speak-

ing disrespectfully of the Lieutenant-Governor as a mere boy, and so forth, it was felt that Evans could well forego the collection of the damages judicially awarded: and this Assembly, controlled, as it was, by Penn's friends, and of which Biles was not a member, asked Evans to be satisfied with the submission made by Biles, and to desist from further proceedings. Shippen, Carpenter, Hill, and Norris were the persons sent to intercede, and they obtained Evans's assurances that nothing would be done without prior notice to them. So Biles came one day into town. Evans, meeting him in a tavern, shook hands with him, but at once got a writ to arrest him for the debt, and, although writing to Shippen and others in ostensible pursuance of the promise, had Biles in custody before they could receive the letter. They and Logan pleaded with Evans in vain: Biles was put in prison. Quaker women of Philadelphia undertook to see that he was wanting nothing; but he was in durance a month. Only upon Logan giving notice that he was writing to Penn, and would lay the matter before him, and, moreover, convincing Evans that Biles would never pay the sum, and that the People's representatives would never grant another penny to Evans, if he persisted, did Evans take Biles out of prison, doing so when going with the Judges of the Provincial Court to New Castle, and giving Biles the honor of accompanying on horseback the party as far as the ferry over the Schuylkill. This amends to him did not greatly appease the public.

The scare concocted by Evans, although claimed by him to have been similar to what was frequently done in the West Indies, would have been unworthy of even a younger man, and certainly justified Biles in his disrespectful remarks aforesaid. Evans concocted—perhaps we may say forged—a letter purporting to come from Gov. Seymour of Maryland, announcing the appearance of a French fleet off the coast, and also ar-