

William Penn's First Charter to Pa.

The following is taken from a pamphlet prepared by Albert Cook Myers and gives the story of "William Penn's First Charter to the People of Pennsylvania, April 25, 1682." On the first page is a reproduction of the signatures of the witnesses to the execution of the Charter. They are Christopher Taylor, Charles Lloyd, William Gibson, Richard Davies, Thomas Rudyard, James Claypoole, Francis Plumstead, Thomas Barker, Philip Ford, Edward Prichard and Andrew Sowle, with two persons not Friends—Nicholas More who was already a prominent Pennsylvanian and Harbert Springett, a first cousin of Gulielma M. Penn. The signing took place in George Yard, Lombard Street, London.

"The Charter, which without doubt was carried to Pennsylvania on the ship *Welcome* by Proprietor Penn on his first arrival in the fall of 1682, was confirmed, together with the Laws agreed upon in England, at the first legislative Assembly, held at Chester, Pennsylvania, in early December, 1682. The Pennsylvania settlers, however, lived but a short time under their first Charter from the Proprietor. In actual practice some of the provisions of the document proving unsuited to the needs of the colonists, Penn, in conference with the representatives of the people, revised it, signing a second Charter to the Province at Philadelphia, April 2, 1683. On that occasion, in the presence of the Provincial Council and the Assembly, the old Charter was returned to him with 'y^e hearty thanks of y^e whole house.' The presumption is that this superseded first Charter of 1682 was carried back to England on the ship *Endeavour* by Penn on his return sailing in August, 1684.

"From that time there is a hiatus of a century and a half in its history. Then, in April, 1861, it reappears as an exhibit at the Society of Antiquaries in London as the property of a member, Richard Almack, of Melford, near Sudbury, in Suffolk. He had known of it for 25 years, and had received it by bequest from a brother antiquary, William Dalton, who died in his 94th year. An earlier owner is said to have been the noted Norfolk antiquary, Sir John Fenn (1739-1794).

"In 1893 it was acquired from Mr. Almack's son, Henry H. Almack, of Melford, through an English Quaker bookseller, Henry T. Wake, of Fritchley, Derbyshire, for £320, by Dr. Edward Maris, an Orthodox Quaker of Philadelphia. It was purchased in April, 1902, from the latter's estate, for \$5000, by a Philadelphia collector, George C. Thomas, whose heirs disposed of it at auction in that city, November 18, 1924. It was bought for \$21,500 by a New York dealer, Gabriel Wells. From him it was purchased, December 27, 1924, for \$25,000, as a gift to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for preservation with similar historical records in the State's archives at Harrisburg, this amount being raised by popular subscription from several thousand individuals and institutions through the efforts of the *Public Ledger*, of Philadelphia.

"ALBERT COOK MYERS."