

Recent Publications

The Province of West New Jersey, 1609-1702. A history of the origins of an American colony. By John E. Pomfret. Princeton University Press, 1956. pp. xii, 298; 1 map. (*Princeton History of New Jersey series.*) Obtainable from Oxford University Press at 40s.

It is almost part of the folklore of Quakerism east of the Atlantic that the first planting of the "Seed of Truth" in the western hemisphere began when that "second *Mayflower*", the 300-ton *Welcome*, put William Penn ashore at Newcastle on the Delaware in October, 1682. That this belief is very far from the truth is revealed by a moment's thought of the history of Friends' earlier activities on the American mainland and in the West Indian islands—of the four Quaker martyrs on Boston Common, and the perilous journeys recorded by George Fox in his *Journal*, 1671-73. Nor does this view take account of Quaker experiences and ventures in early colonial settlement. Of these, the most worth while studying were in New Jersey, raising almost every conceivable difficulty which confronted colonists, governors and proprietors. The presence of strong Quaker elements in the Jersey colonies on the east bank of the Delaware, just across from Philadelphia, gave to the whole region a community of interest and aim which augured well for the rapid development of the Quaker city.

Dr. John Pomfret, Director of the Huntington Library and member of the Friends Historical Association in America, has produced a history of the Jersey colonies from 1609 until the end of the proprietary period in 1702, and deals most satisfactorily with the many and confusing problems which the evidence raises. The Dutch and Swedish occupations lasted until 1664 when the English seized New Amsterdam and the Delaware settlements. The Delaware lands were granted by the Duke of York to Sir John Berkeley and Sir George Carteret, and the province was named Nova Caesaria or New Jersey. In the following years some English settlers moved in to lands below Newcastle. In 1674 Berkeley sold his share (the western half of the colony) to the Quakers John Fenwick and Edward Byllynge; these two quarrelled and Fenwick took a separate share of the colony and made a settlement at Salem. He conveyed the rest to William Penn and two of Byllynge's creditors; these three, together with Byllynge, made an agreement in 1676 with Sir George Carteret, the other New Jersey proprietor. This "Quintite deed" recognized the 1674 grant made by Berkeley to the Quakers, and made the formal division into East and West New Jersey which lasted until the two parts were reunited as a royal colony in 1702.

William Penn served as a trustee of West New Jersey from 1675 until 1681 and during this period about 1,400 Quakers emigrated to the province—for a door was open in the New World to a settlement guaranteeing individual liberty and freedom of conscience and worship. By the end of the century Dr. Pomfret estimates that the colony numbered some 3,500 inhabitants, with the Quakers in a

majority. The towns were in effect small villages; Salem had about 500 inhabitants, Burlington 600 and Gloucester 400, the rest were scattered on the creeks draining into the Delaware.

Quakerism and the cohesive force of the organization of Friends' meetings gave to the whole province a unity which did not break up into lawlessness or indiscipline among the colonists, even at times when the government was in dispute. Dr. Pomfret devotes a separate chapter to the Quakers, and this is suitable in a volume concerned with the history of a province of which the majority of the politically alive and the solid backbone of the colony were Friends. In 1685 the Burlington-Philadelphia Yearly Meeting was established, and there is a full story of the development of Quaker discipline comparable to that in England.

"The years before 1700 were the heyday of Quakerism along the Delaware; West Jersey was as yet a solid Quaker community, and Pennsylvania with its rapidly growing metropolis betokened the success of the Holy Experiment. The spirit of fellow-worshipping was characterized by hope and zeal" (p. 224). Yet there were difficulties even then. The Keithian controversy within the Society of Friends coincided with attacks upon the Quaker position in West Jersey and Pennsylvania and a sustained drive to get rid of all proprietary colonies. It is one of the merits of this book that it illustrates the integrative social force of religion in establishing a new community.

The book is well produced and is illustrated by a map of c. 1700. The student may regret that the index is incomplete and not always in alphabetical order, but this is only a minor blemish in a masterly study of an American colony which plays a considerable part in the history of Quakerism.

R. S. MORTIMER

William Penn: a Biography. By Catherine Owens Peare. Philadelphia and New York. J. B. Lippincott Company, 1957. pp. 448, 1 plate. \$6.00.

William Penn was one of those personalities in which everyone can see something different, and this well-documented biography of the Founder of Pennsylvania, which sets the American aspects in proper perspective, will have a useful place while we are waiting for the "perfect" biography. The historian may look askance at the "intelligent reconstructions" which abound, but he will be reassured by the solid quotations from original documents, the lengthy bibliographies, and the notes of sources which reveal the substantial foundation on which Catherine Owens Peare has constructed her book. From the opening of the first chapter, when we meet the elder Penn as a young naval captain of 23, on the deck of his command *The Fellowship* going down the Thames from Deptford, "exhilarated by new hopes and mounting opportunities" and happy in the thought of the son born to his wife in their house on Tower Hill, to the quiet death of that son after "a gradual declension" in the summer of 1718, we are carried along by a narrative which has point and interest.

English readers may well pass over some early pages where the

author details aspects of English life which have little close relevance to the subject. Terminology is loose. Phrasing is slangy—hostile judges “lick their chops”; confidence in Charles II sinks to “a new low”; and there are others like these. A few absurd statements are made—“William Laud succeeded Buckingham as Bishop of London”; “English history had ground ruthlessly on in his absence”; “Penn had come from the Cavaliers”. These unnecessary faults may cause some readers to doubt the calibre of the research which has been put into the book.

The biography gains poise as documentary evidence becomes more plentiful. The Irish journeys in 1669 and 1670, the Penn-Mead trial, travels in Holland and Germany, political interludes: all these are well covered, and interest increases as soon as one turns towards America. The reader is introduced to the difficulties which faced William Penn in establishing his colony, and in securing his position against schemers on both sides of the Atlantic.

The author is unsure in some of the emphases she lays. It is probably a mistake to make too much of William Penn as “such a close associate of the Stuarts”. A more careful reading of editorial footnotes to the sources she quotes would have convinced the author of the falsity of the story about Margaret Fox being with child in 1670. No evidence is produced to support the surprising statement that Margaret Fox had “recently lost an infant of her own” in 1673. Two Robert Barclays are confused, and this confusion is repeated in the index. Spellings of *personal* and place names are inconsistent. The index is inadequate. A family tree, a chronological table, and a more liberal sprinkling of year dates would all have helped the reader, as also would a clearer differentiation, by type or indentation, between the author’s words and quotations from other sources. Some errors of fact could well be set right in a new edition: William Penn married Hannah Callowhill at the Friars Meeting House, Bristol, not in Broadmead; King Road is ten miles from Wrington. “Will Earle Poulet whom I have been unable to identify,” p.412, looks uncommonly like John, 1st Earl Poulett, First Lord of the Treasury (1710-11) and Lord Steward of the Household (1711-14).

The constant recourse which the author has had to the original sources, and the liberal quotations from papers like the unpublished Penn-Callowhill correspondence, give this book a lasting value which outweighs these faults. Catherine Owens Peare has written a readable book which will be useful for many years to come.

R. S. MORTIMER.