

Biographical/Historical note

The British colony of Pennsylvania was given to William Penn (1644-1718) in 1681 by Charles II of England in repayment of a debt owed his father, Sir Admiral William Penn (1621-1670). Under Penn's directive, Pennsylvania was settled by Quakers escaping religious torment in England and other European nations. Three generations of Penn descendants held proprietorship of the colony until the American Revolution, when the family was stripped of all but its privately held shares of land.

As proprietor, William Penn had full governing rights and had "much control in how land was gained and dispersed, how the city was plotted and populated, [and] how it's government, laws, [and] public institutions were set up," (University of Virginia). In 1701, a new charter of privileges was signed, giving the Assembly the right to propose new laws, not just vote on them; and allowing the Province of Pennsylvania and Delaware, a territory, to maintain separate governments. William Penn left Pennsylvania in late 1701 and supervised the governance of Pennsylvania from England until his death in 1718. Under Penn as proprietor, government officials included an appointed Governor, a 72-member Provincial Council, and the Pennsylvania Provincial Assembly.

University of Virginia. "William Penn, Visionary Proprietor." <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~cap/penn/pnhome.html> (accessed March 12, 2012).

Scope and Contents note

This collection consists of a volume recording the transactions of William Penn's proprietary government of Pennsylvania, including date, name of seller or customer, item or service, and amount paid. This volume dates from 1701 to 1704.

William Penn left Pennsylvania for the last time in October 1701, but continued to serve as proprietor until his death in 1718; although Hannah Penn served as acting proprietor from 1712 to 1718. Between 1701 and 1704, Andrew Hamilton served as deputy governor from 1701 to 1703, Edward Shippen served as president of Council from 1703 to 1704, and John Evans served as deputy governor from 1704 until 1709.

Administrative Information
