PRIMARY SOURCES FROM WILLIAM PENN

*From William Penn’s Preface to The Frame of the Government of the Province of Pennsylvania in America, 1682.*

Governments, like clocks, go from the motion men give them; and as governments are made and moved by men, so by them are ruined too. Wherefore governments rather depend upon men, than men upon governments. Let men be good, and the government cannot be bad; if it be ill, they will cure it. But, if men be bad, let the government be never so good, they will endeavor to warp and spoil it to their turn.

I know some say, let us have good laws, and no matter for the men that execute them: but let them consider, that though good laws do well, good men do better: for good laws may want good men, and be abolished or evaded by ill men; but good men will never want good laws nor suffer ill ones….

**What does William Penn see as necessary for good government?**

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*Law Thirty-five from Laws Agreed Upon in England in William Penn’s The Frame of the Government of the Province of Pennsylvania in America, 1682.*

XXXV. That all persons living in this province, who confess and acknowledge the one Almighty and eternal God, to be the Creator, Upholder and Ruler of the world; and that hold themselves obliged in conscience to live peaceably and justly in civil society, shall, in no ways, be molested or prejudiced for their religious persuasion, or practice, in matters of faith and worship, nor shall they be compelled, at any time, to frequent or maintain any religious worship, place or ministry whatever.

**Who does William Penn want in his colony? How does he entice new settlers?**

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*A Letter from William Penn, Proprietary and Governor of Pennsylvania in America, to the Committee of the Free Society of Traders of that Province, residing in London*

For the Province, the general condition of it, take as follows:

I. The country itself in its soil, air, water, seasons, and produce, both natural and artificial, is not to be despised. The land contains divers sorts of earth, as sand, yellow and black, poor and rich; also gravel, both loamy and dusty; and in some places a fast fat earth, like to our best vales in England, especially by inland brooks and rivers. God in His wisdom having ordered it so, that the advantages of the country are divided, the back lands being generally three to one richer than those that lie by navigable waters. We have much of another soil, and that is a black hazel mold upon a stony or rocky bottom.

II. The air is sweet and clear, the heavens serene, like the south parts of France, rarely overcast; and woods come by numbers of people to be more cleared, that itself will refine.

III. The waters are generally good, for the rivers and brooks have mostly gravel and stony bottoms, and in number hardly credible. We have also mineral waters that operate in the same manner, not two miles from Philadelphia.

IV. For the seasons of the year, having by God’s goodness now lived over the coldest and hottest that the oldest liver in the province can remember, I can say something to an English understanding…

V. The natural produce of the country, of vegetables, is trees, fruits, plants, flowers. The trees of most note are the black walnut, cedar, cypress, chestnut, poplar, gumwood, hickory, sassafras, ash, beech; and oak of divers sorts, as red, white, and black, Spanish, chestnut, and swamp, the most durable of all; of all which there is plenty for the use of man.

The fruits that I find in the woods are the white and black mulberry, chestnut, walnut, plums, strawberries, cranberries, huckleberries, and grapes of diverse sorts. The great red grape (now ripe) called by ignorance the fox grape (because of the relish it has with unskillful palates), is in itself an extraordinary grape, and by art doubtless may be cultivated to an excellent wine…

VI. The artificial produce of the country is wheat, barley, oats, rye, peas, beans, squashes, pumpkins, watermelons, muskmelons, and all herbs and roots that our gardens in England usually bring forth….

VII. Of living creatures, fish, fowl, and the beasts of the woods, here are divers sorts, some for food and profit, and some for profit only. For food as well as profit, the elk, as big as a small ox, deer bigger than ours, beaver, raccoon, rabbits [and] squirrels, and some eat young bear, and commend it. Of fowl of the land, there is the turkey (forty and fifty pound weight), which is very great, pheasants, heath-birds, pigeons, and partridges in abundance. Of the water, the swan, goose, white and gray, brants, ducks, teal, also the snipe and curlew, and that in great numbers; but the duck and teal excel, nor so good have I ever eaten in other countries. Offish, there is the sturgeon, herring, rock, shad, catshead, sheepshead, eel, smelt, perch, roach; and in inland rivers, trout, some say salmon, above the Falls. Of shellfish, we have oysters, crabs, cockles, conches and mussels; some oysters six inches long, and one sort of cockles as big as the stewing oysters; they make a rich broth. The creatures for profit only by skin or fur, and that are natural to these parts, are the wildcat, panther, otter, wolf, fox, fisher, mink, muskrat; and of the water, the whale for oil, of which we have good store; and two companies of whalers, whose boats are built, will soon begin their work, which has the appearance of a considerable improvement; to say nothing of our reasonable hopes of good cod in the bay.

VIII. We have no want of horses, and some are very good and shapely enough….

X. The woods are adorned with lovely flowers, for color, greatness, figure, and variety. I have seen the gardens of London best stored with that sort of beauty, but think they may be improved by our woods….

XI. The NATIVES I shall consider in their persons, language, manners, religion, and government, with my sense of their original. For their persons, they are generally tall, straight, well built, and of singular proportion; they tread strong and clever, and mostly walk with a lofty chin. Of complexion, black. They grease themselves with bear’s fat clarified, and using no defense against sun or weather..

XIII. Of their customs and manners there is much to be said. I will begin with children. So soon as they are born they wash them in water, and while very young, and in cold weather to choose, they plunge them in the rivers to harden and embolden them….

XVII. If a European comes to see them, or calls for lodging at their house or wigwam, they give him the best place. If they come to visit us, they salute us with an Itah, which is as much as to say “Good be to you,” and set them down, which is mostly on the ground, close to their heels, their legs upright. [It] may be they speak not a word more. . If you give them anything to eat or drink, [that is] well, for they will not ask; and, be it little or much, if it be with kindness, they are well pleased, else they go away sullen, but say nothing….

XIX. But in liberality they excel; nothing is too good for their friend. Give them a fine gun, coat, or other thing, it may pass twenty hands before it sticks; light of heart, strong affections, but soon spent, the most merry creatures that live, [they] feast and dance perpetually; they never have much, nor want much. Wealth circulates like the blood, all parts partake; and though none shall want what another has, yet [they are] exact observers of property….

XXV. We have agreed that in all differences between us, six of each side shall end the matter. Don’t abuse them, but let them have justice, and you win them.

Your kind cordial friend, William Penn

**In the passage above, highlight the answer to these questions:**

**1.** **How is the land described?**

**2. How does he describe the climate/weather?**

**2. What are some of the author's attitudes towards the land and its resources?**

**3. What are some of these resources (animals, plants etc…)**

**4. What descriptions of Native Americans and European settlers are included in the document?**

**5. How does Penn describe the manner in which disputes are settled between colonists and Indians?**