



Shipping were the experiences of people who risked their lives and property to cross the Atlantic Ocean from Europe to America during the Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries. The season for passage began in early May and ended in late October with each westerly voyage from England requiring at least seven to eight weeks with good tail winds, and often ten to twelve weeks if the winds were not favorable. A typical journey for refugees fleeing religious persecution in Europe or indentured servants contracting years of labor for the cost of passage would often begin in Rotterdam or Amsterdam and then proceed to England for supplies.

Accommodations were sparse. Personal living space was limited to just barely enough room for a person to lay down to sleeping. Most ships would dock in England for several days while cargo and provisions were loaded. Passengers would spend money or eat some of what little food they had brought for the journey, only to later discover on the open sea that those few morsels would have eased the hunger that will haunt them for most of the voyage. Far too many people did not realize, nor were they prepared for the actual degree of human misery that lay before them. Sailing vessels of this period were grossly unsanitary because of the accumulation of repeated vomitings,



18th Century Sailing Ship

dysentery, sweat, mildew, and rot. The lower decks were usually filled with stench. People suffered from ill preserved food stores, constipation, headaches, infestations of lice, a multitude of maladies resulting from impure water, and of course the ubiquitous affliction of seasickness. Add to this the emotional fatigue of unrelenting weather conditions such as cold, dampness, heat, and storms that would rage for days. Passengers were repeatedly thrown against each other in step with the rhythmic pounding of each wave. Homesickness began to plague many because they remembered all too well the comfort of even the most humble dwelling. So bad did the conditions become after many weeks, that people longed to be home, if even to sleep in a barnyard. Psychological factors then begin to play through manifestations of impatience and unceasing frustration. Curses and threats of harm were frequently exchanged, and occasionally tensions escalated into brawls, even between members of the same family. They cursed and berated each other. Stole from one another. Constant anxiety for life and safety began to turn into hopelessness,

Death was a steadfast companion of both passengers and crew for many would perish. Burial at sea can be an especially difficult and trying experience. One does not have the expected proper time for remorse because the body must be cast overboard in a short period of time. The sea does not allow family members to return to an exact spot in order to grieve as is true of a land based cemetery where people can repeatedly return, where flowers can serve as a visible closure, and the certainty that graves usually remain unmolested. Death at sea can be a cruel experience. You cannot return. There is the haunting reality that the body will probably be eaten. Family members reproach each other for persuading them to make the journey. Wives reproached their husbands for children that were lost. Husbands lamented most piteously for convincing their family to make the journey. Children bemoaned parents for their helplessness. Witness accounts record unbelievable despair and misery. As more and more people die, it becomes almost impossible to console the relatives.

"Many hundred people necessarily die and perish in such misery, and must be cast into the sea, which drives their relatives or those that persuaded them to undertake the journey, to such despair that it is almost impossible to pacify or console them. In a word the sighing and crying and lamenting on board the ship continues day and night, so as to cause the hearts of even the most hardened to bleed when they hear it."

On the Misfortune of Indentured Servants, Gottlieb Mittelberger, 1754.



reams become reality with enough persistence and hard work. [William Penn](#) had a dream of establishing a Christian state in the New World, but populating his 1681 land acquisition from King Charles II of England, necessitated his finding prospective citizens who would ensure that it remained Christian. For many years, he traveled around Europe recruiting Mennonites, Pietists, and other religiously persecuted groups including [Quakers](#) (Society of Friends) from his native England. The latter gained control of the early legislature and strictly ruled the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania along spiritual principles, which received frequent protests from secularists who resented the imposition of spiritually derived laws. Governors faithful to the Proprietary Party (the William Penn family and related interests) protested the Quakers refusal to maintain a peace keeping militia because numerous Indian tribes were raiding settlements without fear of reprisal. Into this political arena came the - peace desiring - freedom loving - weary of running from authorities - Schwarzenau Brethren. Christopher Sauer immediately sided with the more kindred Quakers and unabashedly influenced their election to the legislature through the power of his press ([see complete article](#)).

William Penn was born October 14, 1644 to Admiral Sir William Penn and Margaret Jasper. His youthful life involved managing some of his fathers huge estates in Ireland. Following his conversion to Quakerism he became involved in the Quaker cause, a pursuit which landing him in jail many times for his radical advocacy for personal, property, and religious rights. Penn married Gulielma Maria Springett in 1672, and later traveled to America in the company of George Fox, the founder of Quakerism. Fox was led to believe that an inner voice which he called the 'Inner Light' was a true witness of Christ to all believers through the Holy Spirit. In 1647, he began preaching about this inner witness to a politically troubled England. As is true of so many religious movements, the appellation Quaker was a term of derision. It originated as an insult from a British judge when Fox told him that he should 'tremble at the Word of the Lord' to which the judge then called him a Quaker.

Penn called in a debt that was owed to his father by Charles II and the King of England took this opportunity to settle the matter by giving the son New World property in lieu of cash, something of which the monarch possessed in short supply. Penn had a utopian dream for this tract of land where he could establish a godly society, a "holy experiment" as he explained it to Pennsylvania land agent James Harrison. A society that would espouse virtue and serve as an example to the rest of the world. The charter became official on March 4, 1681 and deeded about 45,000 acres to Penn with almost unlimited power to rule. In August of 1682, he gained the rights to Delaware from James the Duke of York, and set about establishing a Christian State in this newly acquired territory that would additionally serve as a haven for all religiously oppressed groups, especially the industrious German Pietists and Mennonites. Penn made numerous trips into Europe in order to generate enthusiasm for his Christian experiment and

Fox accompanied him frequently. Both were successful in convincing many war weary people to emigrate to America. It is unknown if Penn or Fox had direct contact with any Brethren groups but perhaps the latter gained knowledge of the offer and were influenced by the prospect of religious freedom and cheap land, because most areas where Brethren found refuge in Europe were also some of the most impoverished.