

# What makes pennsylvania the most progressive colony history essay



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Progressive has a two-layer meaning: one refers to a liberal way of thinking, another means high-developed technology. The formation of a progressive society depends on many factors, such as religion, politics and economics. It is true that many English colonies were advanced, but Pennsylvania was the most progressive colony in America.

Religion played an important role in the early colonies. If the majority believed in one God but you did not, you would be either punished or banished. In Massachusetts, the Quakers were considered to be a group of strange and hateful people, because they thought they were filled with Holy Spirit, which was a radical belief at that time. But indeed, the Quakers were not as extreme as they seemed. They loved peace, and refused to join any form of military organization. They also showed a strong dislike towards slavery, which was prevailing in most colonies. These unorthodox but progressive beliefs led to the persecution of the Quakers. William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania, as a faithful Quaker himself, wanted to build a land for his Quakers. And this is the origin of Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania was not the only colony to pursue religious freedom. In Maryland, in 1649, the colonists adopted the Act of Toleration, which guaranteed the freedom of people who believed in Jesus. However, Pennsylvania provided the freedom of having different religions to everyone, even to the Baptists, who had been persecuted for a long time. Moreover, the only nondenominational college was built in Pennsylvania—the College of Pennsylvania, which now is called the University of Pennsylvania. And the first free library was established there, by Benjamin Franklin, who later signed the Declaration of Independence.

It was common for a colony to have religious freedom, but a colony rarely had a liberal government. Rhode Island, a free land based on religious toleration, opened its door of immigration to all. Although considered to be one of the advanced colonies, it along with other colonies, still had conflicts with Native Americans. The most famous war in Rhode Island was King Philip's War in 1675. The son of a Native American chief, Philip waged a war against the colonists, who were once treated in a friendly manner by him. In less than one year, twelve towns were destroyed and many more damaged, and Rhode Island's economy was ruined, and much of its population was killed by the angry Native Americans' warriors. This seemed like a paradox. How could a progressive colony cause such an unquenchable wrath among Native Americans? Having disagreement with Indians was prevalent at that period, however, surprisingly enough, the colonists in Pennsylvania actually enjoyed peace with Native Americans for scores of years. Led by William Penn, the Quakers made a pledge with Indians who were in the Delaware or Lenni-Lenape tribe, and which abutted the boundary of Pennsylvania. Standing in front of the chiefs without any weapons, William Penn announced that Indians and colonists were brothers and friends, because they were both born having the same nature, without regarding for the differences concerning the color of skins and hair. The unsophisticated children of nature were touched by the sincerity of William Penn, and gave up their prejudice. The Indians made an oral treaty with them, due to the respect towards Quaker's religious tendency-never had vow. And the Indians claimed that they would " live in love with William Penn and his children as long as the sun and moon gave light." As a result, the colonists in Pennsylvania and Indians enjoyed precious peace for more than seventy years. Additionally, <https://assignbuster.com/what-makes-pennsylvania-the-most-progressive-colony-history-essay/>

contributing to the noteworthy liberal politics in Pennsylvania is the Frame of Government in Pennsylvania, written by William Penn, and was presented to the Quakers in the early spring of 1683, in Philadelphia. According to the Frame of Government in Pennsylvania, all power of lawmaking belonged to the people represented by a provincial Council, or the General Assembly. It was said that “..... in form of a provincial Council and General Assembly, by whom all laws shall lie made, officers chosen, and public affairs transacted.....”. The Frame actually incorporated very progressive ideas for its time period: it emphasized the freedom of worship, and guaranteed all the traditional rights of Englishmen. From a broader perspective, the Frame of Government in Pennsylvania was an important step in American and world democracy, because it gave citizens many rights. Voltaire, the French philosopher, applauded Penn’s efforts, saying he might “ with reason, boast of having brought down upon earth the Golden Age, which in all probability, never had any real existence but in his dominions.”

The liberal government in Pennsylvania actually created a patulous atmosphere for the local agricultural economy. The fertile land gave Pennsylvania many profitable crops, like wheat, corn, rye, flax and hemp, with the assistance of a mild climate for growth and ample rainfall for irrigation. Known as “ grand article of the province”, Pennsylvania fully developed its agriculture. Besides, industry flourished “ along the colony’s swift-flowing streams that were used to power gristmills”. One of the most advanced industries in Pennsylvania was iron production. Water was essential to the process of producing iron. As a document recorded, “ Water power was used to thrust air through blast furnaces that held a combination

of iron ore, limestone and charcoal to make iron.” Thanks to the abundant mineral resources, especially charcoal, beneath Pennsylvania, the colonists were able to build their land into a trading center of iron. The area now called Berks County, which covered the Schuylkill River valley, contained the greatest number of iron works at 1630s. There was an interesting manufacture in Pennsylvania-gun. In fact, the Pennsylvania long rifle, which was an adaption of a German hunting rifle, was produced in great numbers in the Lancaster Country. In 1776, this kind of gun was duplicated in Virginia, Georgia, North Carolina and Maryland, because of its high quality. More surprisingly, a unique type of wagon was also invented and produced in Lancaster Country, called the Conestoga wagon, which was invented by Ben Garcia on December 31, 1717. It had a clever design: “ its floor curved upward to prevent the contents from tipping and shifting.” The Conestoga wagon could carry up to 12, 000 pounds of cargo, and became the prototype of the primary modern vehicle. While advanced technology sprouted in Pennsylvania, exportation also became larger. Philadelphia became the center of commerce and international trade, because of its high yield of crops and manufacturing. By 1776, the colony’s imports and exports were worth more than several million dollars. In a word, Pennsylvania’s native luxuriant soil not only allowed for rapid agricultural progress. Moreover,....., but also owned some progressive technology created by the colonists. And it was the only colony that reached the climax of ascensive self-developed economy.