A BOGUS CHARGE



0. A BOGUS CHARGE - Story Preface

1. A BOGUS CHARGE

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This image depicts Penn and Mead at the Old Bailey in 1670. The illustration is from a tapestry panel.

It was September 8, 1670. William Penn was still an Englishman, living in London.

A young man, he was 26 years old. He had not yet become an American. He had not yet founded the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (Penn's Woods which he named for his famous father, <u>Admiral William Penn</u>) or the <u>City of Philadelphia</u> (Brotherly Love).

However ... he *had* already spent time in the <u>Tower of London</u> (depicted here in 1670) because the government disagreed with <u>his views</u>. (The linked mural, by Violet Oakley, is in the Supreme Court Room of the Capitol in Harrisburg). Now Penn was <u>on trial</u> for his life, charged with <u>sedition</u> against the Crown.

If found guilty, Penn would be executed.

In one of the most famous, magisterial courthouses in the world - the <u>Old Bailey</u> - Penn defended himself. It was a time when defendants charged with a crime were not ALLOWED to have a lawyer. Perhaps that is why so many defendants who stood trial at the Old Bailey ended up dead. For most, the "fix" was in long before the trial started.

And ... so it appeared for William Penn. A <u>Quaker</u>, Penn was upset with a law which made the Church of England the only place where people could worship. Called the "<u>Conventicle Act</u>," the law prohibited any "tumultuous assembly" from meeting outside the Church of England.

Challenging the law, Penn called a <u>meeting</u> at <u>Gracechurch street</u> in the City of London. He preached a sermon which resulted in a "tumultuous assembly."

He was promptly arrested.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/A-BOGUS-CHARGE-Penn-William-Jury-Goes-to-Prison

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/A-BOGUS-CHARGE-Penn-William-Jury-Goes-to-Prison

Media Stream



Portrait of William Penn

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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<u>Portrait of Admiral William Penn</u> Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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The Tower of London

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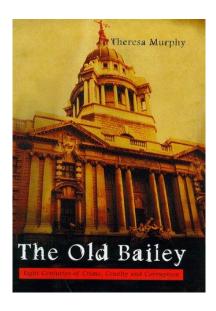
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William Penn in Prison

Image online, courtesy the <u>archstreetfriends.org</u> website.

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The Old Bailey

Image online, courtesy <u>amazon.com</u> website.

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Old Bailey Courtroom

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The Gracechurch Street Meeting

Public-domain image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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London Map Depicting Gracechurch Street

Image online, courtesy StudyMore.org.UK

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