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1670 Trial of William Penn (1644-1718)

Juries decide the facts in a case. That's their job. Judges decide the law. That's their job. In a criminal case against William Penn (who later founded the American colony of Pennsylvania) tried at London's Old Bailey, in 1670, the jury decided the facts in Penn's favor. The court disagreed with the jury's decision and took drastic action against the jurors. This image depicts an early artistic impression of the jury in Penn's case.

When the jury reached its unanimous verdict, the court was shocked. "Guilty of speaking in Grace Church." That was the end of the verdict. The Lord Mayor of London shouted at the jury:

Was it not an unlawful assembly? You mean he was speaking to a tumult of people there?

No, the jury said.

No, we did not find that.

Thinking the jury would respectfully give the government an unrespectable verdict, the Lord Mayor was beyond himself. The jury (look for the amazing picture at F2 on this link) would not budge.

The court recorder said:

Gentlemen, you shall not be dismissed until you bring in a verdict which the court will accept. You shall be locked up, without meat, drink, fire and tobacco. You shall not think thus to abuse the court. We will have a verdict by the help of God or you shall starve for it.

Penn's jury was willing to starve for it.

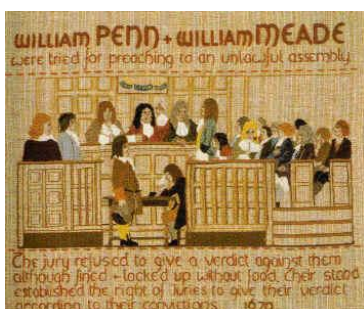
See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/A-SHOCKING-VERDICT-Penn-William-Jury-Goes-to-Prison>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

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Media Stream



The Jury in Penn's Trial

Image online, courtesy the [Quaker Tapestry Museum](http://www.quakertapestrymuseum.org/) website.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/The-Jury-in-Penn-s-Trial>