

A

HISTORY  
OF  
PROPRIETARY GOVERNMENT  
IN  
PENNSYLVANIA

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## INTRODUCTION

THE English colonial governments were of three varieties: first, provincial establishments, the constitutions of which were outlined in the commissions and instructions given by the crown to the governors, and the assemblies of which, held under royal authority, had their share in making ordinances which were local in character and not repugnant to the laws of England; secondly, charter governments, which were in origin and nature civil corporations; thirdly, proprietary governments, which were essentially feudal principalities, upon the grantees of which were bestowed all the inferior regalities and subordinate powers of legislation which formerly belonged to the counts palatine, while provision was also made for the maintenance of sovereignty in the king, and for the realization of the objects of the grant.

From the reign of William I. dates the origin of the great palatine earldoms of England, the overlords of which exercised particular rights known as the *regalia minora*. They were the seignorial lords of the county palatine. From this relation, according to the principles of the feudal system, arose the privileges of mines, wastes, and forests, escheat, forfeiture, wardship, and jurisdiction, both civil and military. More specifically, the *regalia minora* consisted of the right to hold courts of chancery, exchequer, admiralty, wards and liveries, and all varieties of pleas therein; to receive the entire profits of these