



Pennsylvania Capitol Preservation Committee  
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## THE FOUNDING OF THE STATE OF LIBERTY SPIRITUAL

*Violet Oakley's Studies for the Governor's Reception Room  
Murals – Pennsylvania Capitol Building: A Brief History*

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*Violet Oakley's Studies for the Governor's Reception Room  
Murals – Pennsylvania State Capitol: A Brief History*



*Study of Penn's Vision*



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## CAPITOL PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

The Capitol Preservation Committee is an independent Commonwealth Committee established by the General Assembly in 1982 for the purpose of coordinating and overseeing programs to conserve, restore, preserve, and maintain the Pennsylvania State Capitol and its historic contents for all future time.

The Capitol Preservation Committee consists of fourteen members who are appointed by officials of the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial branches of Commonwealth's government, or who hold membership by virtue of office. This Committee meets regularly in Harrisburg to make decisions concerning the ongoing restoration and preservation programs.

In creating the Committee, the Legislature provided for the establishment of a "Capitol Restoration Trust Fund," which may receive both public funds and contributions from the private sector. This fund is independent of the Commonwealth General Fund and is used for the procurement of lost Capitol artifacts.

We invite you to visit our State Capitol and walk these majestic and historic halls filled with beautiful murals, sculpture, and marble from around the world. The Capitol Preservation Committee is proud to be part of preserving this great edifice for future generations.

Representative Paul I. Clymer, Chairman  
Ruthann Hubbert Kemper, Executive Director

### **T**HIS BOOKLET WAS UNDERTAKEN

in honor of Capitol artist Violet Oakley and the amazing discovery of her original studies for the Governor's Reception Room murals in 2004. In addition to providing a brief history about the murals, this booklet contains the actual text written by Violet and published in her book, "The Holy Experiment: Our Heritage from William Penn 1655-1944," where she describes the murals in the series.

*Violet Oakley*



### Mural One (Photograph)



Panel A: *William Tyndale Printing his Translation of the Bible into English, at Cologne, 1525.*

Panel B: *Smuggling the First Volumes of the New Testament into England, 1526.*

**W**ILLIAM TYNDALE PRINTING HIS TRANSLATION OF the Bible into English, at Cologne, 1525. He is pointing to the words on a page just printed: “Yea, the time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth GOD service.”

**H**E was the first to supply England with the printed English Bible, although it was not entirely completed until after his execution. THE Coat of Arms in the corner of the design is that of Magdalen College, Oxford, where Tyndale had studied the original Hebrew and Greek from which his translation was taken direct, Wycliffe’s and others having been translated from the Latin.

“**T**HE genius of Tyndale shows itself in the fact that he was able to couch his translation in a language perfectly understood of the people yet full of beauty and dignity. If the language of our Authorized Version has deeply affected our English prose, it is to Tyndale that the praise is due. He formed the mould which subsequent revisors did but modify.”

**S**MUGGLING THE FIRST VOLUMES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT into ENGLAND, 1526, concealed in bales of merchandise.

## THE GOVERNOR’S RECEPTION ROOM MURALS

**W**HEN JOSEPH M. HUSTON (1866-1940) WON THE 1901 Capitol design competition, this energetic young architect was determined to distinguish his building from other state capitols.

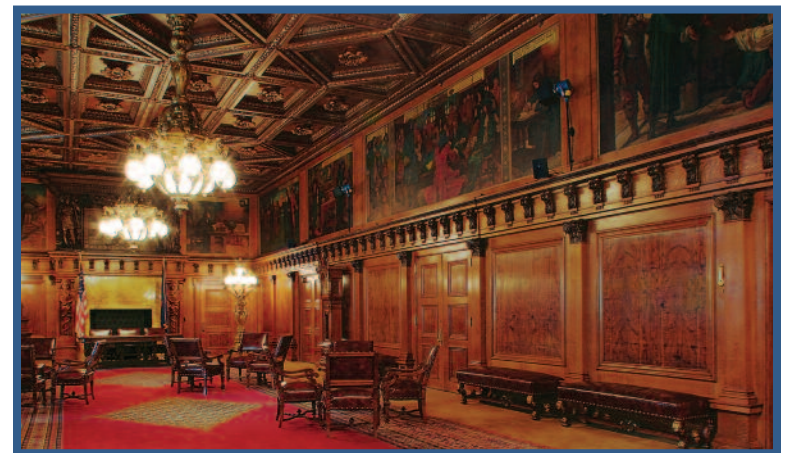
His goal was to make Pennsylvania’s Capitol a “Palace of Art,” a building that would represent a unity of renaissance art and architecture—an American masterpiece expressing the state’s history and industrial might.



*Architect Joseph M. Huston*

In 1902 Huston asked Violet Oakley (1874-1961) to paint thirteen murals for the **GOVERNOR’S RECEPTION ROOM.**

He believed that choosing Oakley would “act as an encouragement of women and the State.” In fact, this prominent project signified a milestone in the history of American art, for it was the largest public commission given to a woman in the country up to that time. In addition, it allowed Oakley to transcend the conventional roles of women painters as either portrait or genre painters, and to pursue



*Governor’s Reception Room, Pennsylvania State Capitol*



### Study for Mural Two

Panel A: *The Burning of the Books at Oxford, 1526.*

Panel B: *Execution of William Tyndale: "Lord, open the King of England's eyes, 1536."*

Framed: 43 1/2" x 24 1/2" · Unframed: 35 1/2" x 17 1/2"

**T**HE BURNING OF THE BOOKS AT OXFORD IN THE attempt to stop thereby "The New Learning;" 1526.

THE · BIBLE, preserved through the centuries by the devout and patient hands of the Monks --- Scribes and Illuminators --- was a Book of the greatest beauty, of necessity very costly; rare compared with what was made possible by the invention of Printing, which increased at once the production and dissemination of the Latin Vulgate. The authorities in England, opposed to Tyndale personally as a heretic, distrusted the genuineness of his work and condemned the book to be burned because of suspected errors in the translation.

THE Coat of Arms on the left is that of Oxford University --- "Deus illuminatio mea"; on the right that of Christ Church, the College founded by Cardinal Wolsey, where the burning of the books took place. It was afterward William Penn's own College.

EXECUTION of WILLIAM TYNDALE at Vilvorde, 1536. He had been arrested at the instance of Henry VIII, and his last words were: "Lord, open the Kind of England's eyes!" (He was strangled at the stake, and his body burned.)

a successful career in the prestigious, but overwhelmingly masculine, field of mural decoration.

Oakley received a great deal of publicity throughout her work on the Governor's Reception Room. The Capitol murals won her the Gold Medal of Honor from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1905, making her the first woman to receive this distinction.



*Violet Oakley, c. 1902*

### DISCOVERING OAKLEY'S ORIGINAL STUDIES

**T**HE CAPITOL PRESERVATION COMMITTEE FIRST learned of the existence of Oakley's paintings in 2004 when a representative from the organization Initiatives of Change, who owned the paintings, contacted the Committee. Initiatives of Change is an international organization devoted to human rights and social justice issues. Throughout her lifetime Oakley was an avid supporter of these causes and during the 1930s she had donated her original studies to Frank Buchman, founder of the Oxford Group (which later became



*Mountain House - Caux, Switzerland*

Initiates of Change). The studies were housed at Oxford Group's London headquarters, prior to being relocated to **MOUNTAIN HOUSE**, the organization's conference center in Caux, Switzerland.



### Study for Mural Three



Panel A: *Answer to Tyndale's Prayer: Henry VIII granting permission for the Bible to be read, 1537.*

Panel B: *Condemnation of Anne Askew of heresy, 1546.*

Framed: 24 3/4" x 44" · Unframed: 17 3/4" x 36"

**T**HE ANSWER TO TYNDALE'S PRAYER: HENRY VIII granting permission for the complete translation "to be sold and read of every person without danger of any ordinance hitherto granted to the contrary, . . . set forth with the King's most gracious Licence." 1537.

**A**NNE ASKEW BEFORE THE LORD CHANCELLOR, condemned by the State, under Church of England authority, to be burned for Heresy --- refusing to recant --- saying "Rather Deathe than false to Faythe." 1546.

SHE was selected as a type of the Women who were ready to die for what they believed to be TRUTH. According to tradition she was the great-grandmother of Margaret Askew Fell who became the wife of the Founder of the Quakers --- GEORGE FOX. It was from her that Margaret Fox was supposed to have inherited her marvellous spirit of endurance under persecution.

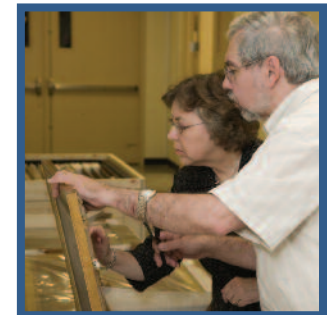
HER friends and her accusers alike unite in a futile attempt to save her from this fiery trial.

As significant artifacts of Pennsylvania's history, the Capitol Preservation Committee approved the procurement of the paintings for \$50,000 in October 2004. Funding was allocated from the Capitol Restoration Trust Fund—a separate fund in the State Treasury administered by the Committee that is comprised of donations from private individuals and organizations along with proceeds from the sale of Committee ornaments and publications.

The amazing paintings are the original oil studies that Violet Oakley submitted for approval of her subject matter to the Capitol Building Commission before painting the murals in the Governor's Reception Room. They were evaluated for their content, style, scale, and depiction of subject/topic/theme. After gaining approvals from architect Huston and the Commission, Violet began work on the actual murals.

The studies were exhibited by Violet in multiple art institutions along with her "Holy Experiment" portfolio in the U.S. and throughout Europe, including Geneva and London. She presented these paintings as a means to promote William Penn's vision for an international community and an international court of justice in his designs for a peaceful world. The paintings still have labels on the oak frames that show they were exhibited at the 100th Anniversary of the Lewis & Clark Exhibition (1905) and the Philadelphia Sesquicentennial Exposition (1926).

Because the paintings are portable, after undergoing a process of **CONSERVATION CLEANING AND REPAIR**, the Committee has made these amazing works of art available for loan to outside venues. This is a unique opportunity for those who perhaps cannot visit the Capitol in Harrisburg, to see a piece of Pennsylvania history in person.



*Examining paintings before conservation cleaning and repair*



### Study for Mural Four

*Culmination of Intolerance & Persecution in Civil War: Rise of the Puritan Idea, 1642.*

Framed: 25" x 39" · Unframed: 17 3/4" x 31"



## CULMINATION OF INTOLERANCE AND PERSECUTION in the Civil War: development of the PURITAN IDEA.

IN his *Life of George Fox*, Thomas Hodgkin writes, that when George Fox was in his eighteenth year, "the latent strength of Puritanism was about to manifest itself both on the battle-field and in the Houses of Parliament. Along the road within a mile of the home of this Shepherd of Leicestershire may have ridden both Cavaliers and Roundheads toward the Battle-field of Marston Moor. . . . Yet the future Quaker Apostle dwelt mostly in a sphere apart, very little influenced by other men of his stirring generation. . . . The Bible seems to have been his only Literature. . . . The history of his own soul, his struggles with the Power of Darkness, his reachings forth after the Light and Peace of GOD seem to have absorbed all his thoughts, and the thunder-storms of War and Revolution crashed round him unheeded. Yet the miseries and distractions of the great Civil War struck their own harshly jarring note on the Divine Harmony for which he longed. At this, as well as some later periods, his words remind us of a man of whom he probably never heard --- Girolomo Savonarola. . . ."

## MASTERPIECES OF ARTISTIC INGENUITY

**A**RCHITECT JOSEPH HUSTON WAS EXTREMELY attentive to all details of his design for the Capitol. He even went so far as to suggest themes for the artists' subject matter. Huston thought the art in the Governor's Reception Room should focus on freedom, the struggle of the soul to achieve freedom, or perhaps the history of the state and the period of colonization.

With these subjects in mind, Violet Oakley traveled to Europe in March 1903. Beginning her research in Italy, she studied and attempted to emulate the colors and styles of the Italian masters. While Italy's art shaped her choice of colors and technique, Oakley then traveled to England to gain perspective on the life and formative years of William Penn. Once settled in London, she frequented the libraries, cathedrals, and galleries where she could learn more about how Penn lived, what influenced his ideological development, and what promoted his far-reaching vision on American soil.

During this time Oakley wrote to Huston that it was not the romance of the state or of colonization that needed to be emblazoned on the walls of the Governor's Reception Room—it was Penn's ideas of religious freedom and pacifism. Violet's argument must have impressed Joseph Huston, as he spent considerable time convincing the Capitol Building Commission of the soundness of Violet's proposal, to which they finally agreed.

Violet returned home to Philadelphia in September 1903 and immediately began work on expanding the studies that she had formulated in England, and also settled on a name for the series of murals, "The Founding of the State of Liberty Spiritual," thus "Representing the Triumph of the Idea of Liberty of Conscience in the Holy Experiment of Pennsylvania." According to her plans, each mural would depict important events leading up to the Reformation that



### Study for Mural Five

*George Fox on his Mount of Vision, 1652.*

Framed: 27" x 25 1/2" · Unframed: 19 3/4" x 17 1/4"

“THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS.”  
George Fox on his Mount of Vision, lifted above the material interpretation of CHRIST and The CHURCH. An example of unlettered Inspiration --- 1652.

WILLIAM PENN thus writes of him: “In 1652, he being in his usual retirement, his mind exercised towards the Lord, upon a very high Mountain, he had a Vision of the great work of GOD in the Earth, and of the way he was to go forth in a public ministry, to begin it. He saw people, as thick as motes in the Sun, that should in time be brought home to the Lord, that there might be but ‘One Shepherd and One Sheepfold in all the Earth.’

“There his eye was directed northward, beholding a great people that should receive him and his Message in those parts. Upon this Mountain he was moved of the Lord to sound out His great and notable DAY, as if he had been in a great auditory, and from thence went North as the Lord had shown him.”

“LET the inhabitants of the Rock sing, let them shout from the top of the Mountains.”

influenced the religious upheaval and affected the life of William Penn. The paintings would take a historical rather than an allegorical approach, supplemented with illuminated text worked into the designs, affirming what the viewer saw and adding to the detail. She would limit her mural cycle to events that influenced Quaker ideology and Penn’s life before he reached America. The last panel in the series would show William Penn aboard his ship, the *Welcome*, at the moment he first laid eyes on his new home.

Although the murals were completed in time for the Capitol’s dedication on October 4, 1906, construction delays made it impossible for them to be installed in time for the ceremony. However, on November 24 thousands of people assembled to witness their unveiling. Newspapers around the state covered the dedication of these important murals. The Pennsylvania Railroad ran special reduced-rate excursion trains to see the new Capitol and Oakley’s murals.

Following the murals’ installation, newspapers and magazines across the nation commented on the beauty of Oakley’s creation. Talcott Williams, editor of the *Philadelphia Press*, perhaps best captured what he saw in the Reception Room murals: “No American artist, and few artists anywhere have had a commission so precisely suited to their genius and their ability as Miss Oakley. The great wall picture is done so rarely and its difficulty so great, that one can count on the fingers of one hand all who have been successful on this crucial task... **THIS GREAT ACHIEVEMENT WILL GROW WITH EVERY YEAR IT IS SEEN AND STUDIED.**”

In addition to her work in the Governor’s Reception Room, Oakley later obtained the commission to paint murals for the Senate and Supreme Court Chambers. These murals were originally assigned to Edwin Austin Abbey prior to his untimely death in 1911. Oakley painted a total of **FORTY-THREE MURALS** for the Pennsylvania Capitol Building.



### Study for Mural Six

*William Penn, student at Christ Church, Oxford, 1660.*

Framed: 27" x 25" · Unframed: 20" x 17 1/2"



**W**ILLIAM PENN STUDENT AT CHRIST-CHURCH, Oxford, 1660, stirred by his own VISION of LIGHT, and consecrated to GOD’S service. He believed that the seal of Divinity had been put upon him. In the centre of the Light are the words: “He shall build MY CITY and he shall let go MY CAPTIVES.”

LATER in life, when writing of Pennsylvania, he said: “I had an Opening of Joy as to these parts when a Lad at Oxford.”

FROM time to time, from the days of his early childhood, he had had these experiences, when alone in his room in deep meditation, of a sense of Inner Comfort and Light, and at the same time an Outer Light filled the room: he was distinctly conscious of the Being of GOD and that the soul of Man could hold Communion with HIM.

“BEHOLD, I stand at the Door and Knock. If any Man hear MY VOICE and open the Door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with ME.”

## A LIFETIME PURSUIT OF PEACE

**T**HROUGHOUT HER LIFE, VIOLET OAKLEY DEDICATED herself and her work to the goal of world peace and justice. In keeping with this tireless endeavor, she created many books and portfolios expounding upon this theme. Many of the publications Violet gave to the League of Nations Library are now part of their permanent Archives Historical Collection.

In 1922 Violet presented a copy of “**THE HOLY EXPERIMENT**” to the Library during the Washington Conference on Limitation of Armaments in Geneva. She offered the publication as a tribute to the memory of William Penn and his similar quest for freedom and acceptance. During another Disarmament Conference in 1932 she bestowed a copy of “Law Triumphant: The Opening of the Book of the Law. The Miracle of Geneva,” declaring, “This will also be the year of the celebration of 250 years since this advent of **WILLIAM PENN** to his unarmed and **HOLY EXPERIMENT IN PENNSYLVANIA**, and the 200th anniversary of the birth of Washington.”



Cover for Violet’s book, *The Holy Experiment* and a handwritten subscription.



### Study for Mural Seven

*He hears the Quaker-Preaching in the Fields, 1662.*

Framed: 43 3/4" x 24" · Unframed: 37" x 17"

**P**ENN MEETS THE QUAKER-THOUGHT IN THE FIELD –  
**P**REACHING at Oxford: He turns from the World to listen to  
 its Message.

“AND it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit  
 upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your  
 old men shall dream Dreams, your young men shall see Visions.”

PENN was entered at Christ Church in 1660 --- the year of the  
 Restoration, at the age of sixteen. In 1662 he was expelled from  
 College for attending the QUAKER MEETINGS and neglecting the  
 Chapel Services.

Again in 1939  
 Violet produced two  
 more booklets, entitled,  
 “Christ at Geneva” and  
 “Divine Presence at the  
 League of Nations,” the  
 latter of which was writ-  
 ten in both French and  
 English. Together, all of  
 these works stand as a lasting testament to Oakley’s undying  
 commitment to both knowledge and peace.



*To the Counselors of Peace is Joy, from Divine Law*

During the summer of 1948 Violet went to Caux, Switzerland to  
 attend sessions of the Moral Re-Armament Assembly (MRA), which  
 today is known as Initiatives of Change. She spent the entire summer  
 there, and while attending sessions, sketched delegates from more than  
 eighty countries. The sessions were held in Mountain House, the joint  
 international conference center for Initiatives of Change.

Initiatives of Change began as the Oxford Group. Founded by  
 Pennsylvania native **FRANK BUCHMAN**, who first reached out to  
 university students in the 1920s. His ideas took root at Oxford



*Violet Oakley and Frank Buchman*

University and in some American  
 universities, spreading into many  
 sectors and on to other continents  
 over the next decade. Alcoholics  
 Anonymous was established during  
 the 1930s as a direct result of the  
 liberating experiences, which some  
 people had found through their  
 contact with the Oxford Group. In  
 1938, as nations re-armed for war,  
 Buchman called for a ‘moral and



### Study for Mural Eight



*Admiral Sir William Penn turning his son from home because of his sympathy with the despised Sect of Quakers, 1667.*

Framed: 30" x 21" · Unframed: 26" x 17"

ADMIRAL SIR WILLIAM PENN DENOUNCING AND turning his son from Home because of his sympathy with the despised Sect of Quakers.

“FORGET also thine own People and thy Father’s House.”

ADMIRAL Penn had been most ambitious for his son, desiring that he should become a great courtier and statesman, and hold some important position under the Crown. All that the World could offer of wealth and a brilliant career was laid at his feet --- if he would but fall down and worship it; a full temptation.

Through the intercession of his Mother his Father was afterward reconciled to him.

spiritual rearmament’ to work towards a ‘hate-free, fear-free, greed-free world’. At the end of the war, under the name Moral Re-Armament (MRA), it launched a program of moral and spiritual reconstruction to foster change in private and public life, based on a change in motivation and character. Today Initiatives of Change is a network of people of different faiths devoted to human rights and social justice issues.

During his life, Buchman was decorated by seven countries, including France, Germany, Greece, Japan, and the Philippines, for his effect on their relations with other countries. Devotees to his cause included leaders around the world like Gandhi and German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer.

As a member of the MRA, Violet Oakley first met Frank Buchman in 1928. He bought Violet’s **“CHRIST AT GENEVA,”** an oil painting on the subject of the League of Nations for MRA Headquarters, 45 Berkeley Square, in London. (After World War II,



Christ at Geneva by Violet Oakley



Mural Nine (Photograph)

Panel A: *Arrest while preaching at Meeting, 1670.*

Panel B: *Examination before the Lieutenant of the Tower of London.*

Panel C: *Condemned to imprisonment in Newgate, writing "The Great Case of Liberty of Conscience."*

A PENN'S ARREST WHILE PREACHING AT MEETING --- UNDER the CONVENTICLE ACTS, which made unlawful any service except that of the CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

B "I WOULD HAVE THEE AND ALL OTHER MEN TO KNOW that I scorn that Religion which is not worth suffering for, and able to sustain those that are AFFLICTED FOR IT." PENN examined by the Lieutenant of the Tower of London, condemned to imprisonment in Newgate.

C WRITING IN PRISON: "THE GREAT CASE OF LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE once more briefly debated and defended, by the authority of Reason, Scripture, and Antiquity."

IN his writings he quotes from innumerable authors of the ancient and classical world, and of later times, --- from the Saints and Sages of all Countries and Periods, in favor of Religious Liberty, to prove that

the Divine Principle of toleration has always been consonant with the wisest idea of government. It was the discovery of no one Age or People, but belonged to all who had the ability to perceive it as the Right. Throughout the darkest times of persecution the Voice of the truly great has always declared it.

AT this early stage of their growth the Quakers had no distinctive dress. In "The Fells of Swathmoor Hall" Maria Webb writes: "It does not appear that the Quakers of the Seventeenth Century contemplated any such circumstance as the establishment of a sectarian costume when they taught the necessity of avoiding the extreme changeableness and extravagance of fashion. Their testimony was to simplicity in dress . . . with the avoidance of what was calculated to foster vanity and pride. Yet, living so much apart from the Great World, as most of their descendants did, it is no matter of surprise that a peculiar costume crept in and eventually established itself."



### Study for Mural Ten



*After his own Liberation Penn seeks to free other Friends imprisoned.*

Framed: 31" x 21 1/2" · Unframed: 26 1/2" x 17 3/4"

HAVING BEEN LIBERATED THROUGH THE FORCE OF His own writings, PENN seeks to free other FRIENDS imprisoned, and makes use of the powerful influence with the Crown, inherited from his Father, to secure their liberation. Much of his fortune was spent in this work.

“BY his knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many. . . therefore will I divide him a portion with the Great.”

PENN endured his own imprisonments, as Fisher writes: “--- not merely with a Spirit that won the respect of both his followers and his enemies, but he made the imprisonment a means of advancing the Cause he had at heart.” From one of them he wrote in a letter to his father ---

“WELL, Eternity --- which is at the door --- for He that shall come will come and will not tarry --- THAT shall make amends for all.”

the United Nations emerged in the League’s place and inherited a number of agencies and organizations founded by the League with the MRA remaining a separate entity.) Violet’s studies of William Penn’s Holy Experiment were also displayed at MRA headquarters, which later relocated to Mountain House, Caux, Switzerland.

Since their creation, Oakley’s oil paintings had traveled to many states and countries, and have now come full circle. Then as now, the message of the subject matter continues to inspire and promote the countenance of peace.

### ABOUT THE ARTIST

**V**IOLET OAKLEY WAS BORN into a family of artistic tradition.



Oakley’s formal art education was rather sporadic. Although she studied at the Art Student’s League in Philadelphia, and at various institutions abroad during summer trips, the bulk of her training came from copying works of the old masters on her own.

In 1896 her family moved to Philadelphia, where she entered Howard Pyle’s illustration class at Drexel Institute. She flourished under Pyle’s tutelage and soon became one of America’s popular illustrators, designing covers for *Century Magazine*, *Collier’s Illustrated Weekly*,



*Violet Oakley, c. 1938*



### Study for Mural Eleven

*Penn's Vision: His desire was to bring out of Captivity all those who were oppressed for conscience' sake, whatever their creed or belief.*

Framed: 44" x 24 1/4" · Unframed: 37" x 17 1/2"

**P**ENN'S VISION "BEHOLD MY SERVANT WHOM I UPHOLD HE shall not fail nor be discouraged till He have set JUDGMENT in the earth...to open the Blind Eyes, to bring out the Prisoners from the Prison, and Them that sit in Darkness out of the Prison-House. Sing unto the LORD a New Song, Ye that go down to the SEA."

THE DESIRE of his life was to bring out of Captivity all those who were oppressed for conscience' sake, whatever their creed or belief. He saw himself as leading the multitudes from prison --- to take them to a Land of perfect Freedom.

*Everybody's Magazine, St. Nicholas, and Woman's Home Companion.* At the same time, she also gained a reputation as a talented designer of stained glass.

Near the end of her long and dynamic life, Violet Oakley returned to the Pennsylvania State Capitol to speak about her life and work. She had spent almost twenty-five years working on paintings for the Capitol and she told the group assembled, that her life story could be viewed as the **"PILGRIMAGE OF A PAINTER SEEKING PEACE."**

"The mighty theme of the Pennsylvania paintings," she said, referring to her work in the Capitol, "propelled me irresistibly onward and still urges me on..." William Penn had a vision of a colony where all people could live in peace, she told her listeners and he achieved this goal through his own quest for peace. The quest, she explained, using her paintings as storyboards, demanded two qualities still needed today if mankind is to create and maintain peaceful society. Those qualities are vigilance and diligence. "The pilgrimage is individual," she said, reflecting on her own spiritual and professional journey, "But it cannot be achieved alone. We need the help of everyone."



*Violet sketching unknown woman, undated*



### Study for Mural Twelve

*King Charles II signs the Charter of Pennsylvania, 1681.*

Framed: 24 1/2" x 21 1/2" · Unframed: 20 1/2" x 17 1/2"



ACHIEVEMENT OF HIS PURPOSE: THE CHARTER OF Pennsylvania receives The KING'S Signature, MARCH 4th, 1681, granting to WILLIAM PENN this great tract of land almost as large as England itself, in payment of a debt of £16,000 which the Crown owed to his Father --- for assistance rendered by the Admiral in the Restoration of Charles II to the Throne.

"BY the greatness of Thine Arm they shall be as still as a stone, till Thy People pass over, O Lord, which Thou hast purchased."

PENN wrote: "I had an OPENING OF JOY as to these parts when a lad at Oxford."

In 1948 Violet received the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws from Drexel Institute of Technology. The citation states:

"Her full talent, her technical mastery, and her insight have been devoted to the portrayal of that which is noblest in mankind, particularly in her paintings where love of mankind prevails over hatred and prejudice, spiritual aspiration over material ambition, and respect for Law and Order over those emotions which would degrade mankind and destroy civilization."



*One of Violet's paint palettes*

Violet Oakley was eighty-one years old when she led eighty Philadelphians on a tour of her work in the State Capitol. That presentation on May 21, 1955, was just one of many the artist gave during her extensive, successful career. With every opportunity, she spoke of her unwavering conviction to the ideals of William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania, who she believed brought revolutionary ideas to the New World; ideas that are as relevant today as they were 300 years ago when Penn first stepped onto the land that now bears his name.



*Violet and Governor David Lawrence in the Governor's Reception Room, 1960*



### Study for Mural Thirteen

*Penn's first sight of his Promised Land, 1682.*

Framed: 24 1/2" x 21 1/2" · Unframed: 20 1/2" x 17 1/2"

**P**ENN'S FIRST SIGHT OF THE SHORES OF PENNSYLVANIA as he ascends the River --- "from whence the air smelt as sweet as a new-blown GARDEN."

"THY GOD BRINGETH THEE INTO A GOOD LAND --- of brooks of water --- of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills --- a land whose stones are Iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass."

## FROM WILLIAM PENN'S EPISTLE TO THE CHURCHES

"SEEK and YE SHALL FIND"

I TESTIFY FOR GOD.

O, IT is a travail --- a spiritual travail . . . and through this Path you must walk to the CITY OF GOD, that has eternal Foundations, if ever you will come there.

AMEN! Says one that GOD has long since mercifully favoured with His Fatherly visitation, and who was not disobedient to the Heavenly VISION and CALL; to whom the way of TRUTH is more lovely and precious than ever; and that, knowing the Beauty and Benefit of it, above all worldly treasures, has chosen it for his chiefest Joy, and therefore recommends it to thy Love and choice, because he is with great Sincerity and Affection,

THY SOUL'S  
FRIEND



### Study for Senate Mural

*The Constitutional Convention, Philadelphia May 1787.*

Oil on canvas.  
Framed: 26 1/4" x 40 1/4"

Text: "Let us raise a standard to which the wise and honest can repair --- the event is in the hand of God."

**I**N 2005 TWO OF VIOLET OAKLEY'S STUDIES THAT WERE MADE FOR THE SENATE CHAMBER IN THE PENNSYLVANIA CAPITOL WERE IDENTIFIED IN AN ARCHIVE FACILITY OF INITIATIVES OF CHANGE (IOC) IN NEW YORK. THESE PAINTINGS HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN DISPLAYED

on the salon walls at the IOC "embassy" and had a similar history as the studies from the Governor's Reception Room.

Violet Oakley was contacted by the Board of Commissioners at the Pennsylvania Capitol to paint murals for the Senate and Supreme Court Chambers left unfinished as a result of Edwin Austin Abbey's sudden death on August 1, 1911—he was the artist originally contracted for the major rooms in the Capitol. On November 14, 1911 Violet presented her studies to the Board showing what she proposed to paint for the murals in the chamber, which were favorably received. The studies were utilized in the years that followed for her private exhibitions. A record exists showing that at one point she displayed the studies at the Architectural League of New York and sometime after this event they were sent to Frank Buchman in London where they were hung in the Oxford Group headquarters. No records to date have been found as to when they traveled back to the United States where they were placed in the embassy

headquarters of Moral Re-Armament (the new name of the Oxford Group) and later headed to storage.

The Capitol Preservation Committee is indebted to Mrs. Randy Ruffin and Catherine Linton of Initiatives of Change who thankfully recognized these two studies as the works of Violet Oakley and contacted Ruthann Hubbert-Kemper, or these paintings may have been sold at auction and disappeared once again. They were purchased by the Committee utilizing donated funds and are now included in the group of studies loaned to educational institutions for exhibitional purposes, repeating their history when initially created by Violet Oakley. The paintings were unveiled on the north wall of the Senate Chamber on February 12, 1917, Lincoln's birthday.



### Study for Senate Mural

*Lincoln at Gettysburg—The Preservation of the Union.*

Oil on canvas.  
Framed: 26 1/4" x 40 1/4"

Text: "It is for us the living, rather to be dedicated to the unfinished work."

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

Initiatives of Change: <http://uk.iofc.org/>

Moral Re-Armament:  
<http://religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/moralrearm.html>

History of the movement: <http://www.caux.ch/en/urspruenge.php>

Frank Buchman – A Life: <http://www.iofc.org/fbal/>

“The Holy Experiment: A message to the world from Pennsylvania,”  
Violet Oakley, 1922

“Law Triumphant Containing the Opening of the Book of Law and  
the Miracle of Geneva,” Violet Oakley, 1933

“The Holy Experiment: Our Heritage from William Penn,”  
Violet Oakley, 1950

“Cathedral of Compassion: Dramatic Outline of the Life of Jane  
Addams,” Violet Oakley, 1955

Pennsylvania Capitol Preservation Committee:  
<http://cpc.state.pa.us/main/cpcweb/history/artists/oakley.html>

“A Sacred Challenge: Violet Oakley and the Pennsylvania Capitol  
Murals,” Pennsylvania Capitol Preservation Committee, 2002

Pictured clockwise from top right:

- Violet Oakley ca. 1938.
- Bust of Violet Oakley, 2004,  
Composite reproduction,  
Original sculpted by Michel de  
Tarnowsky (1870–1946).
- Violet Oakley and Governor  
David Lawrence in Governor’s  
Reception Room, ca. 1960.
- Violet Oakley ca. 1900.





The Pennsylvania Capitol Preservation Committee is proud to present an exclusive line of Violet Oakley gifts and collectibles, featuring:

- 🌀 *“A Sacred Challenge: Violet Oakley and the Pennsylvania Capitol Murals” Book*
- 🌀 *Progress Towards Unity Ornament*
- 🌀 *Violet Oakley Note Cards (Set of 12 in 2-pocket carrier)*
- 🌀 *Violet Oakley Murals Poster*
- 🌀 *“Divine Law” Lapel Pin*

For more information on the unique products shown here or our full line of gifts and collectibles, call 717-783-6484 or visit us online at <http://cpc.state.pa.us>. Proceeds are utilized to procure important Capitol related historic artifacts like Violet Oakley’s original studies shown in this booklet.

 NOTES