

## THE MIDDLE COLONIES

### I. Characteristics of the Middle Colonies: NY, PA, NJ, DE

- A. Excellent land for farming: region became known as the "bread colonies" for exports of grain; also grew fruits and vegetables.
- B. Three rivers -- Susquehanna, Delaware, and Hudson -- tapped fur trade in the interior and exploration into the backcountry.
- C. Less aristocratic than New England and the Southern colonies (except N.Y.)  
-- Land holdings intermediate in size
- D. Fewer industries than New England; more than in the South
  - 1. Shipbuilding and lumbering also important (but not as large-scale as New England)
  - 2. Shipping and commerce
- E. Population more ethnically mixed; religiously tolerant; democratically controlled  
-- Yet, much factional conflict among groups.

### II. New York

- A. Rise of the Dutch in North America
  - 1. **Henry Hudson**, Englishman employed by D.E.I. Co., sailed into Delaware & NY bays in 1609 and traveled up Hudson River in hoping to find short-cut through the continent.
  - 2. **New Netherlands** founded in 1623-1624 in Hudson River by **Peter Minuit**
    - a. Est. by Dutch West India Company for quick-profit fur trade
    - b. Manhattan Island -- about 22,000 acres -- bought from Indians for about \$30  
-- The tribe that sold the land didn't own it but Dutch lay claim anyway.
  - 3. **New Amsterdam** -- later NYC -- founded as a company town -- sea port.
    - a. City run by and for the Dutch Co., in the interest of the stock-holders
    - b. Little religious toleration, free speech, or democratic practices.
    - c. **Patroonship** -- Aristocratic structure
      - i. Vast feudal estates granted to promoters who would settle 50 persons on them. (One in Albany larger than Rhode Island!)
      - ii. After repeated protests, a semirepresentative body was finally granted.
    - d. Cosmopolitan town: 1640's -- 18 different languages existed
- B. Fall of New Netherlands
  - 1. Indians, in retaliation for Dutch violence, massacred settlers.  
-- Wall built as a defense; today's Wall Street
  - 2. New England hostile to growth of New Netherlands; saw Dutch as a threat.
  - 3. Swedes trespassed on Dutch lands on the Delaware River
    - a. Est. New Sweden bet. 1638-1655, during golden age of Sweden following the 30 Years' War when King Gustavus Adolphus fought for Protestantism
    - b. 1655, Dutch force led by **Peter Stuyvesant**, ended Swedish rule;
    - c. Swedish colonists were absorbed by New Netherlands.
  - 4. 1664, Charles II ordered English troops to remove the Dutch from New Netherlands
    - a. **Peter Stuyvesant** forced to surrender w/o firing a shot.
    - b. Charles' brother, the Duke of York who was granted the area prior to the battle.
    - c. British gained the important Hudson Harbor and River.
    - d. British controlled one continuous stretch of land from Maine to Carolinas

5. Name of colony changed to **New York**.

6. Dutch cultural influence

- a. Easter eggs, Santa Claus, waffles, sauerkraut, bowling, sleighing, skating & golf
- b. Knickerbocker themes developed by Washington Irving in 19th c.

D. **New York Chapter of Liberties** (1683)

1. Granted freedom of religion to all Christians and gave all freeholders the right to vote.  
-- Long Islanders had refused to pay their taxes to protest lack of elected assembly.
2. Important as a step leading to eventual democracy in New York.
3. Limitations:
  - a. Much land in the hands of a few landowners or speculators.
  - b. New York retained feudalistic traits more than any other colony in the North.

E. New York became a Royal colony in 1685 when its proprietor, James II, became king.

F. New York flourished under English rule, profiting from trade with Iroquois, & attracting settlers who expanded agricultural base.

G. Autocratic character

1. Discouraged many Europeans from coming to N.Y.; retarded growth
2. **Leisler's rebellion** in NYC from 1689-1691 (see Zinn, Ch. 3)
  - a. Vestiges of patroonships & aristocratic suppression led to discontent as huge estates were parceled out to upper-class whites, crowding out poor farmers
  - b. Combination of poor whites and farmers led by Jacob Leisler, a disgruntled German merchant.
  - c. Inspired by the "Glorious Revolution" & overthrow of Dominion of New England.
  - d. Revolt failed, Leisler hanged, parceling out of huge estates continued.

III. **Pennsylvania** (founded 1681)

A. **Quakers** in England emerged during mid-1600's (Religious Society of Friends)

1. Non-conformist in nature: more radical rebels against authority than the Puritans.
  - a. Refused to support est. Church of England with taxes
  - b. Built simple meeting houses w/o paid clergy and spoke up when moved during services
  - c. Took no oaths. Jesus: "Swear not at all"
  - d. Made no deference to authority figures
  - e. Pacifists: Refused military service; advocated passive resistance
2. Simple and democratic; sought religious and civic freedom.
3. Believed in an "inner light," not scripture or bishop and they challenged the very social order by insisting that all men were equal in the eyes of God.  
-- Had no elaborate church, nor a minister, but allowed all who were moved by the spirit to speak.
4. Persecuted because they were seen by authorities as dangerous to society.

B. **William Penn**

1. 1681, secured an immense grant from the king in return for \$ owed to his father.
2. Primary motive or founding colony: Haven for Quakers
3. Secondary motives: Experiment with liberal ideas in gov't while making a profit.

-- "**Holy Experiment**" -- Religious toleration among many denominations.

4. Pennsylvania became best advertised of all colonies: "America's 1st advertising man"
  - a. Distributed countless pamphlets in English, Dutch, French, & German.
    - Promised land, freedom of belief and practice, and representative gov't.
  - b. Liberal land policies attracted many immigrants
  - c. Attracted carpenters, masons, shoemakers, and other manual workers

#### C. Quaker Pennsylvania and its Neighbors

1. 4,000 thousand Dutch, Swedish, English, and Welsh squatters were already scattered along the banks of the Delaware River when Penn began the colony.
  - a. Penn quickly called an assembly which passed an act that organized the three lower counties (formerly claimed by Sweden, and later incorporated as Delaware) under the control of Penn's charter.
    - All Swedes, Finns, and Dutch in the area were naturalized
  - b. Philadelphia was carefully planned
2. Penn bought land from Indians and Quakers fostered excellent relations with them.
3. Representative gov't established with landowners having voting rights.
  - a. No tax-supported state church
  - b. Freedom of worship guaranteed to all residents
  - c. No provisions for military defense; against Quaker pacifist doctrine
  - d. Quakers strongly against slavery
4. By 1700, Pennsylvania was the 4th largest colony (behind Virginia, Mass, and MD)
  - a. Quakers were shrewd businessmen; exported grain & other foodstuffs
  - b. Attracted a large German population

IV. **New Jersey** started in 1664 as Quaker settlement; 2 proprietors received area from Duke of York (the future king of England).

-- 1702, the two Jerseys were combined as a royal colony.

V. **Delaware** was granted its own assembly in 1703.

1. Harbored many Quakers associated with Penn's colony
2. Remained under the governor of Pennsylvania until the American Revolution

#### VI. Class struggles in the 17th Century

- A. Most immigrants neither at the top or bottom of society.
  1. Few class distinctions existed on the frontier
  2. Those with upper-class pretensions were resented; egalitarian society was desired
- B. Upper--class succeeded somewhat in maintaining lion's share of power though democratic forces prevented complete domination.
  1. Upper-class attempt at reproducing European stratification in America did not succeed.
    - a. Common people too numerous to be subjugated
    - b. Emerging middle class became increasingly influential
    - c. Democratic traditions in many colonies provided a hedge against complete upper class control.
  2. Rebellions against upper classes failed to topple them
    - a. Bacon's Rebellion (1676)
    - b. Leisler's Rebellion (1691)

## VII. Colonial lifestyle

A. Most colonists were farmers (about 80% by the American Revolution)

B. Roles

1. Women wove, cooked, cleaned, and cared for children

2. Men cleared land -- fenced, planted, and cropped it; cut firewood, and butchered

livestock

3. Children helped with adult tasks as well as being schooled when possible.

C. Compared to most 17th century Europeans, Americans had a higher standard of living.

1. Land was cheap, although less available in southern plantation system

2. Wages were about three times that of Europe

## MAJOR CONCEPTS FOR 17TH CENTURY COLONIAL AMERICA

**·Why was the Protestant Reformation ultimately important to the creation of America?**

-- Calvinism drove the will of the Puritans to est. a religiously pure colony in America

-- Most of early America was Protestant (except certain Catholic pockets)

-- Protestantism became one of the defining characteristics of American culture: work ethic, democratically structured churches, religious toleration among different religious groups (except some Puritans and some officials affiliated with the Anglican Church)

**·How were the Puritan immigrants important to the growth of democracy in the New World?**

-- Congregational church in MBC

-- Simple manhood suffrage in Rhode Island

-- Fundamental Orders in Connecticut River colony

**·Significance of New England Confederation?**

-- First step towards colonial unity

**·Major effects of Dominion of New England?**

-- Puritan influence permanently reduced

-- Common revolutionary sentiment throughout the colonies

**·Similarities among all 13 colonies**

-- mostly English

-- possessed Anglo-Saxon freedoms

-- self-government (though not all democratic)

- religious toleration (to at least some degree in each colony)
- educational opportunity
- provided unusual advantages for economic and social self-development
- increasingly unique from the British crown in character

**Differences among the three colonial regions.**

- **New England:** Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire

Puritan dominated in many areas, less religiously tolerant, more restrictions on civic participation, more industry, less available farm land

- **Middle Colonies:** New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware

Ethnically diverse, religiously tolerant, democratic, Quakers contributed to human freedom, farming, lumbering, ship building, shipping, trade, fur trapping

- **Southern Colonies:** Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia

Plantation economy, aristocratic, slavery, cash crops, scattered population, expansionary, some religious toleration (Church of England dominant)

**Bibliography:**

- Bailey, Thomas A., Kennedy, David M.: *The American Pageant, 10th edition*, Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath, 1994
- Bailyn, Bernard, *The Origins of American Politics*, New York: Vintage Books, 1968
- College Board, *Advanced Placement Course Description: History -- United States, European History*, College Entrance Examination Board, 1996
- Crum, John W.: *AP American History*, New York, Prentice Hall, 1993
- Foner, Eric & Garraty, John A. editors: *The Reader's Companion to American History*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1991
- Joseph, Jr., Alvin M., *500 Nations: An Illustrated History of North American Indians*, Alfred A Knopf, New York, 1994.
- Kellogg, William O., *Barron's AP United States History, 5th edition*, Hauppauge, New York: Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1996
- McDuffie, Jerome, Piggrem, Gary, Woodworth, Steven E.: *Advanced Placement Examination*, Piscataway, New Jersey: Research and Education Association, 1994
- Nash, Gary : *American Odyssey*, Lake Forest, Illinois: Glencoe, 1992
- Schultz, Constance G., *The American History Videodisc Master Guide*, Annapolis, Maryland: Instruction Resources Corporation, 1995
- Soifer, Paul & Hoffman, Abraham, *Cliff's Advanced Placement United States History Preparation Guide*, Lincoln, Nebraska: Cliff Notes, Inc., 1993
- Zinn, Howard, *A People's History of the United States*, New York: Harper and Row 1980