

## The Middle Colonies (Mid-Atlantic 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 fruits and vegetables.
- B. Three rivers -- Susquehanna, Delaware, and Hudson -- tapped fur trade in the interior.
- 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 (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.

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### II. New York

- A. Rise & fall of the Dutch in North America
  - 1. Henry Hudson, Englishman employed by Dutch East India Co., sailed into Delaware & NY bays in 1609 and traveled up Hudson River.
  - 2. **New Netherlands** founded in 1623-1624 in Hudson River by **Peter Minuit**
    - a. Established by Dutch West India Company for quick-profit fur trade
    - b. **Manhattan Island** bought from Indians for about \$30
      - The tribe that sold the land didn't actually own it but Dutch lay claim anyway.
  - 3. **New Amsterdam** (later NYC) founded as company town/sea port
    - a. City run by DWIC, in the interest of the stock-holders
    - b. Little religious toleration, free speech, or democratic practices.
    - c. **Patroonship**: Aristocratic structure; resembled serfdom
      - i. Huge estates granted to promoters who would settle 50 persons on them.  
(One estate in Albany larger than Rhode Island!)
      - ii. After repeated protests, a semi-representative 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. Established New Sweden between 1638-1655
  - b. 1655, Dutch force led by **Peter Stuyvesant**, ended Swedish rule
  - c. Swedish colonists were absorbed by New Netherlands.
4. 1664, Charles II ordered military removal of Dutch from New Netherlands
  - a. Peter Stuyvesant forced to surrender without firing a shot.
  - b. Charles' brother, the Duke of York, given control over the area.
5. Name of colony changed to **New York**.

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

1. Granted freedom of religion to all Christians and gave all landholders suffrage.
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 (resembled southern plantation owners).

**D. NY became a royal colony in 1685 when James II became king.**

E. NY flourished under English rule, profiting from trade with Iroquois, and attracting agricultural workers.

**F. Autocratic in character**

1. Discouraged many Europeans from coming to NY; retarded growth
2. **Leisler's Rebellion** in NYC (1691) occurred in response
  - a. Remnants of patroonships led to popular 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.
  - c. Inspired by "Glorious Revolution" & overthrow of Dominion of New England.
  - d. Revolt failed, Leisler hanged, parceling out of huge estates continued.

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### III. Pennsylvania (founded 1681)

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

1. Non-conformist in nature: more radical than the Puritans in opposing authority
  - a. Refused to support Anglican Church with taxes
  - b. Did not employ a paid clergy.
  - c. Took no oaths.
  - 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 hierarchy, and saw all men as equal in God's eyes.
4. Suffered persecution in New England & other colonies for opposing authority.

#### B. William Penn

1. 1681, gained huge grant from the king in return for money 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:
  - a. Pamphlets distributed in England, Netherlands, France, & Germany.
    - Promised land, freedom of religion, and representative government.
  - b. These generous land policies attracted many immigrants
  - c. Also attracted carpenters, masons, shoemakers, and other manual workers

#### C. Pennsylvania.

1. All Swedes, Finns, and Dutch in the area were naturalized
2. Philadelphia was carefully planned
3. Penn bought land from Indians and Quakers had excellent relations with them.
4. 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

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5. By 1700, Pennsylvania was 4th largest colony (behind VA, MA, and MD)
  - a. Quakers were shrewd businessmen; exported grain & other foodstuffs
  - b. Attracted a large German population

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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.  
A. Contained large Quaker population  
B. Remained under the governor of Pennsylvania until the American Revolution

VI. Class struggles in the 17th Century  
A. Most immigrants were neither at the top or bottom of society.

1. Few class distinctions existed on the frontier
2. Upper-class pretensions were resented; egalitarian society was desired

  
B. Upper-class attempt at reproducing European stratification in America did not succeed.

1. Common people too numerous to be subjugated
2. Emerging middle class became increasingly influential
3. Democratic traditions in many colonies provided a hedge against complete upper class control.
4. 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. 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

**Note:** This sub-unit is a medium probability area for the AP exam. In the past 10 years, 3 questions have come wholly or in part from the material in this chapter. Below are some questions that will help you study the topics that have appeared on previous exams.

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## **MAJOR CONCEPTS FOR 17TH CENTURY COLONIAL AMERICA**

### **1. Why was the Protestant Reformation ultimately important to the creation of America?**

- Calvinism drove the will of the Puritans to establish 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)

### **2. How were the Puritan immigrants important to the growth of democracy in the New World?**

- Congregational church in MBC: Townhall meetings, church members could vote
- Simple manhood suffrage in Rhode Island
- Fundamental Orders in Connecticut River colony

### **3. Significance of New England Confederation?**

- First step towards colonial unity

### **4. Major effects of Dominion of New England?**

- Puritan influence permanently reduced
- Common revolutionary sentiment throughout the colonies

### **5. Similarities among all 13 colonies**

- mostly English
- possessed British freedoms
- self-government (though not all democratic)
- religious toleration (to at least some degree in each colony)
- educational opportunity (most in New England; least in South)
- economic opportunity and social self-development
- increasingly unique from the British monarchy in character

**6. Differences among the three colonial regions.**

- a. 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
- b. 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
- c. 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)

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**Terms to Know**

New Netherlands	Leisler's Rebellion
Peter Minuit	Pennsylvania
Manhattan Island	Quakers
New Amsterdam	William Penn
patroonship	"Holy Experiment"
Peter Stuyvesant	New Jersey
New York	Delaware
New York Chapter of Liberties	

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