



The Middle Colonies

Read Aloud

The word was out. All over Europe, people were reading William Penn's advertisements for a colony called Pennsylvania. Here "the Air is sweet and clear," the ads said. Who was William Penn? Could his promises be believed?



Focus Activity

READ TO LEARN

How did William Penn help to build the colony of Pennsylvania?

VOCABULARY

- Conestoga

PEOPLE

- King Charles II
- William Penn

PLACES

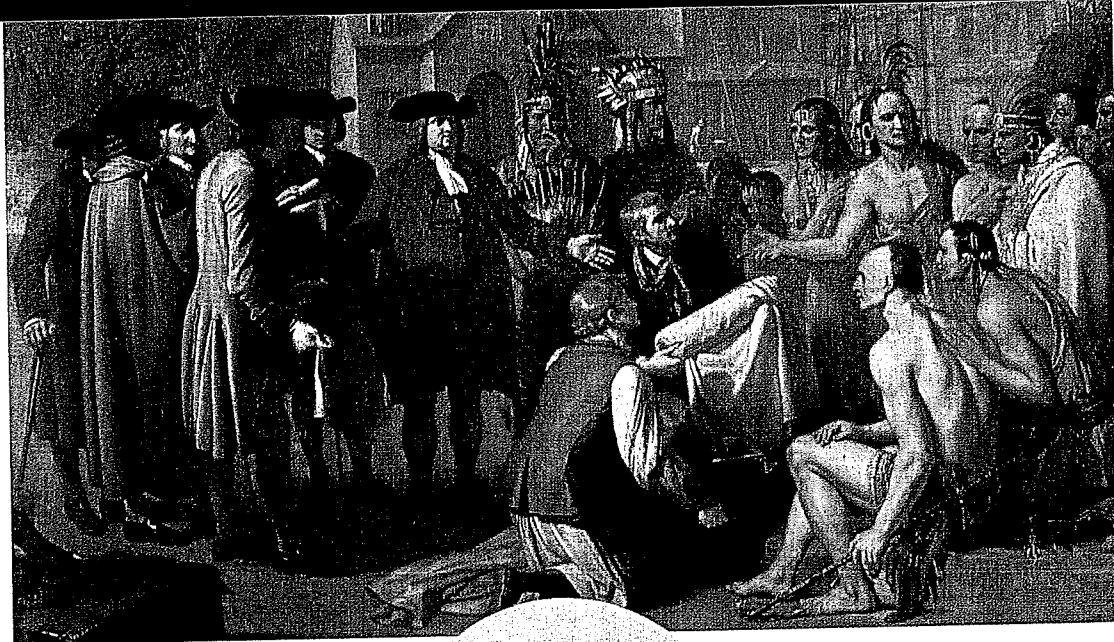
- New Netherland
- New Amsterdam
- New York
- New York City
- New Jersey
- Pennsylvania
- Delaware
- Middle Colonies
- Philadelphia

THE BIG PICTURE

In the middle 1600s, the Dutch founded the colony of New Netherland. Henry Hudson had first claimed this area along the Hudson River for the Dutch in 1609. They bought Manhattan Island from the Mannahata and built a port there that became a center of trade. They called it New Amsterdam.

In 1664 King Charles II of England wanted to make New Netherland an English colony. New Amsterdam's leader, Peter Stuyvesant, protested. He was so unpopular that the English were able to take all of New Netherland without firing a shot.

The English renamed New Netherland New York for King Charles's brother, the Duke of York. New Amsterdam was renamed New York City. Later the Duke gave part of New York to Lord John Berkeley and Sir George Carteret. This land became the English colony of New Jersey. By 1704 Pennsylvania, Delaware, New York, and New Jersey had become the English Middle Colonies.



William Penn (left) made a treaty with the Lenape (above).

WILLIAM PENN

- ① In 1681 King Charles II granted land in the Middle Colonies to a Quaker, William Penn. The Quakers are a religious group whose nickname comes from their belief that people should “quake before the power of the Lord.”
- ② Like the Puritans, the Quakers were often put in jail because of their religious beliefs. Penn hoped to form a colony where Quakers would be free to practice their religion.

Quaker Beliefs

- ③ The Society of Friends, as the Quakers called themselves, was started in England by George Fox in 1652. They did not need ministers, Fox said. To know God, he said, they had only to listen to His voice in their hearts.
- ④ Penn’s plans for his colony were based upon Quaker beliefs. Quakers believed people should be treated



fairly. Many were against slavery. Most treated Native Americans with respect.

The Lenape

In 1682 Penn arrived in North America with about 100 colonists. He named the colony *Pennsylvania*, which means “Penn’s Woods.” His settlement was called Philadelphia. In Greek, it means “brotherly love.”

Penn wanted the colony to be a place where people would treat each other fairly. He believed that the Lenape (LEN nah pee), also known as the Delaware, should be included in his plan. In a letter to them, Penn wrote that they could “live together as neighbors and friends.”

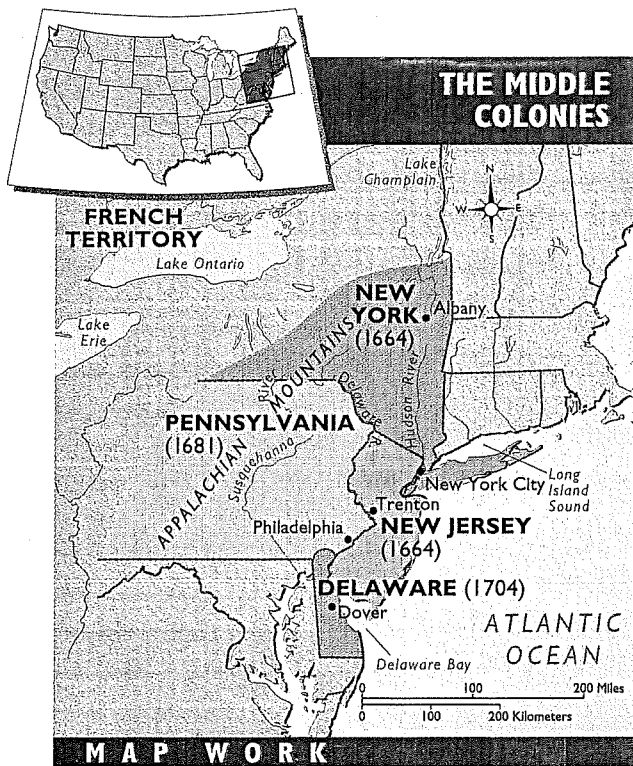
Unlike most European colonists, Penn paid the Native Americans for their land. Because of this, relations between Native Americans and the colonists in Pennsylvania stayed peaceful for many years.

THE MIDDLE COLONIES

- ① The Middle Colonies grew rapidly during the 1700s. The new colony of Delaware was started on land that had been part of Pennsylvania. In 1720 about 10,000 colonists lived in Philadelphia. By 1760 there were over 22,000, making it the largest city in the English colonies. Find Philadelphia on the map below.

Geography of the Middle Colonies

- ② The Middle Colonies reached west from the Atlantic Coastal Plain to the Appalachian Mountains. Rivers and lakes crisscrossed this region.



Some colonies were smaller than the present-day states of the same name.

1. Which city was located farthest north?
2. Which two Middle Colonies were founded first? Which one was founded last?

Colonists used the waterways to send lumber, crops, and animal furs to markets in coastal cities. New York Harbor was one of the busiest ports in the 13 English colonies.

- ③ For colonial farmers, the land was much richer in the Middle Colonies than in New England. The Middle Colonies became the main food-growing region in colonial North America. People called them the "breadbasket of the colonies."

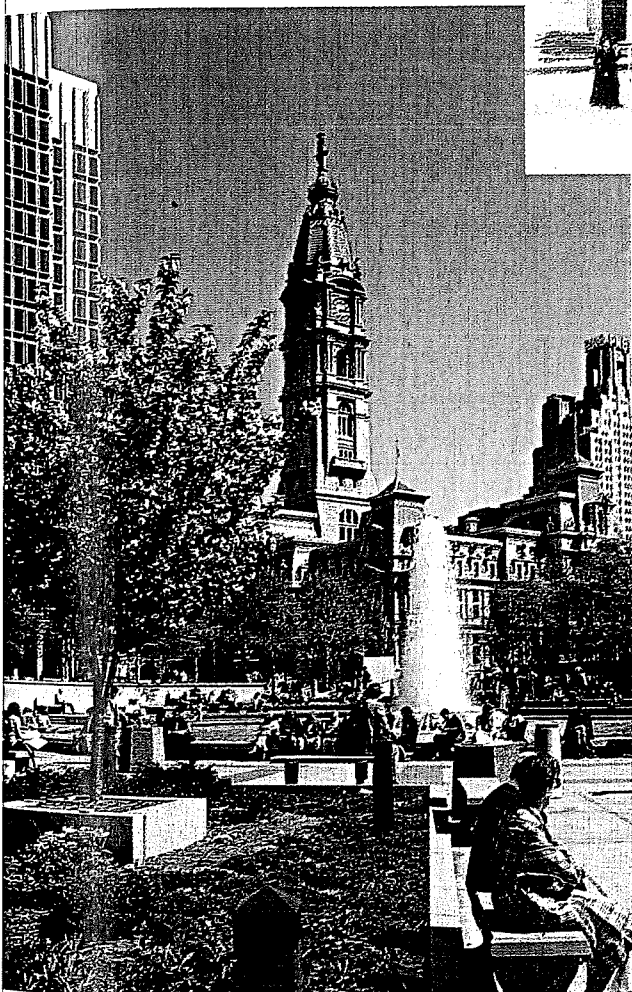
Many Different People

Colonists from all over Europe came to the Middle Colonies. Jewish people from Portugal began arriving in the late 1600s. A large number of Dutch people were already there. By the early 1700s many Germans had immigrated and become farmers. Since the German word for their language is *Deutsch* (DOYTCH), the Germans became known as the Pennsylvania Dutch. They built the first Conestoga (kahn uh STOH guh) wagons. These large wagons carried farm goods to city markets.

Another group of colonists was the Scots-Irish. They were Scottish people who lived in Northern Ireland before coming to North America.

One group that was not treated equally in the Middle Colonies was the Africans. Many of them were enslaved. Some were free, but few enjoyed the same rights that European colonists did. You will read more about Africans in the English colonies in the next chapter.

Penn's statue stands atop City Hall, one of Philadelphia's tallest buildings (below). The statue (right) was on view before being put on the building.



WHY IT MATTERS

Many different people came to the Middle Colonies. They had a wide variety of skills and trades, which helped these colonies grow.

The blending of different peoples and cultures that began in colonial times continues today. The United States has depended on the contributions made by all its people.

Reviewing Facts and Ideas

SUM IT UP

- New Netherland, a Dutch colony, became the English colony of New York in 1664.
- In 1681 William Penn founded the Pennsylvania Colony. Here Quakers and others could worship freely.
- The variety of people in the Middle Colonies helped the region succeed at farming and trading.

THINK ABOUT IT

1. How did New York and New Jersey become English colonies?
2. How did William Penn show that he wanted to treat the Native Americans with fairness?
3. **FOCUS** Describe how the Middle Colonies were different from the New England Colonies.
4. **THINKING SKILL** What beliefs were held by the Quakers? What effects did these beliefs have on William Penn's colony?
5. **WRITE** Suppose you are a Lenape. Write a short paragraph describing what you think about the colonists and their ways.