

1682

William Penn arrives in Philadelphia

1720s

The Great Awakening begins in the Middle Colonies

Life in the Middle Colonies



It's a sunny morning in 1699. You decide to take a walk around **New York City**.

As you walk, you see that the Dutch wall is being torn down to make room for more houses. A new road, Wall Street, is being built where the wall stood. You're not surprised that New York City is the fastest-growing town in the English colonies.



WHAT TO KNOW

How did religious toleration help attract people of different cultures to the Middle Colonies?

VOCABULARY

diversity p. 235

immigrant p. 235

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religious toleration p. 236

militia p. 238

PEOPLE

George Whitefield
Jonathan Edwards
Benjamin Franklin

PLACES

New York City
Philadelphia



SUMMARIZE

Key Facts	Summary

A Mix of People

Settlers in the Middle Colonies came from different places and backgrounds. One church leader described them as a group of people thrown together from many parts of the world. This **diversity** made the Middle Colonies an interesting place to live.

Starting a New Life

Who were the people of the Middle Colonies? At first, most were Dutch, French, Belgian, or Swedish. Then came English Puritans and Quakers, as well as German, Irish, and Scottish settlers. Most Africans arrived in the Middle Colonies as enslaved people, but others lived and worked as free persons.

The variety of people in the Middle Colonies could be seen in the city of

Philadelphia. William Penn chose this city's name, which means "brotherly love" in Greek. Like all of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia was founded on the idea that people of different backgrounds could live peacefully together.

Immigrants from different countries came to Philadelphia. An **immigrant** is a person who comes into a country to make a new life. Some immigrants left their home countries to escape war or to find religious freedom. Other immigrants wanted better economic opportunities, including the chance to buy land and start businesses. Many found more freedom in the Middle Colonies than they had ever known.

READING CHECK SUMMARIZE

Why did immigrants come to the Middle Colonies?

ARCHITECTURE Many buildings in the New York Colony had Dutch-style architecture.



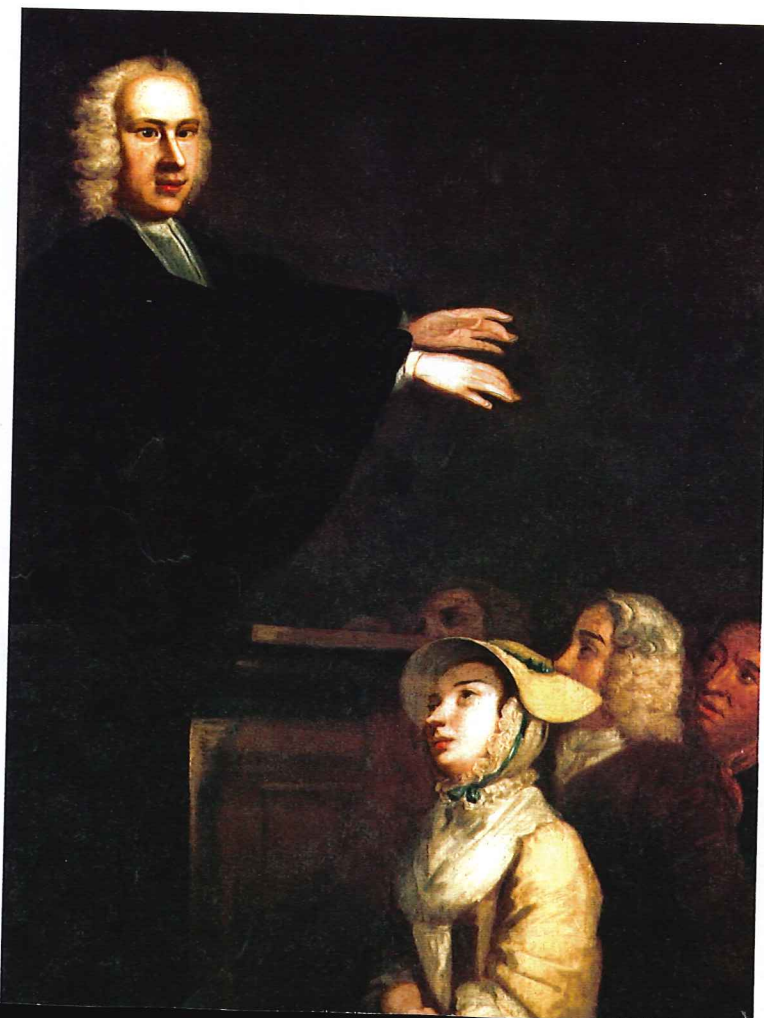
The Great Awakening

In the 1720s, a new religious movement began in the Middle Colonies. The movement was known as the **Great Awakening** because it “awakened,” or renewed, many peoples’ interest in religion. The Great Awakening also changed the way many people practiced their religion.

Religion Expands

Ministers such as **George Whitefield** and **Jonathan Edwards** gave speeches that marked a change in religious ideas and practices. They often talked about people having a direct relationship with God. Not only did these ministers preach new ideas, they practiced religion differently. They would travel long distances to give emotional speeches to people they had never met.

► **GEORGE WHITEFIELD** (right) used a movable field pulpit, such as the one below, for preaching outdoors.



The Great Awakening helped bring people together. This led to greater **religious toleration**, or acceptance of religious differences. At the new revivals, or prayer meetings, everyone was welcomed. Poor people could attend, and women played a large role in the movement. During the Great Awakening, both free and enslaved Africans participated in religious gatherings. Such equal participation was rare at this time in history.

The Great Awakening was not popular with all people, and in time, differences split the movement. This increased the diversity of religious beliefs. The number of church members in the colonies grew, as did the free exercise of religion.

READING CHECK ✎ SUMMARIZE

What was the Great Awakening?



► **FARM LIFE** Farmers in the Middle Colonies often hired free African Americans or used enslaved workers on their farms.

Religion and Social Life

Unlike the New England Colonies, the Middle Colonies were home to many different religious groups. Towns often had more than one kind of church. A Presbyterian church, for example, might be only a block away from a Quaker meetinghouse. The first Jewish synagogue in the Middle Colonies was built in New York City in 1730.

Religion was a major part of social life in the Middle Colonies. After religious services, neighbors would talk and exchange news. Religion also changed the ways people viewed one another. Because of their religious beliefs, some colonists thought enslaving Africans was wrong. In 1688, Quakers

in Germantown, Pennsylvania, became the first group to protest slavery in the English colonies.

Free Time

The social lives of colonists were as different as their religious beliefs. In cities such as Philadelphia and New York City, people went to dances, plays, concerts, and social clubs. Horse races, sleigh rides, and ice-skating were also common.

In rural areas, a barn raising was a big social event. A farm family would invite their neighbors to help them put in place the frame for a new barn. Afterward, everyone enjoyed a big meal.

READING CHECK ✎ SUMMARIZE

How did the Middle Colonies differ from the New England Colonies?