

The Middle Colonies

One American's Story

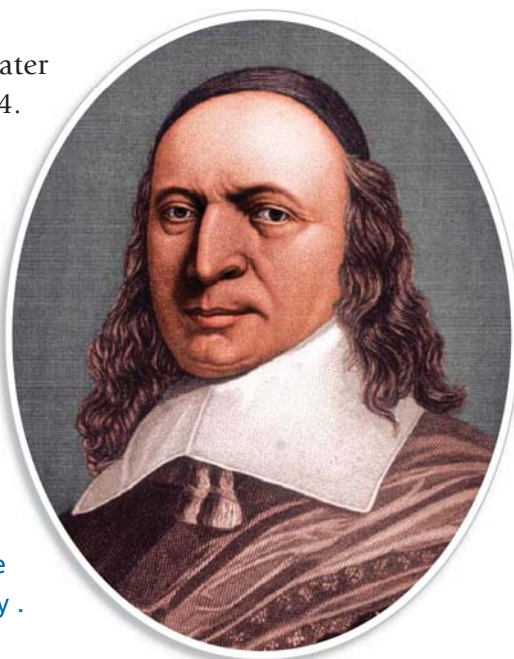
The Dutch had founded the colony of **New Netherland** (later New York) on the eastern coast of North America in 1624.

Peter Stuyvesant (STY•vuh•suhnt), the new governor, arrived in the city of New Amsterdam in May 1647. His firm leadership restored order to the wild colonial outpost. But there was one thing about the city of New Amsterdam that Stuyvesant could not control. He complained about this problem in a letter to the directors of the Dutch West India Company, who owned the colony.

PRIMARY SOURCE

“The English and French colonies are continued and populated by their own nation and countrymen and consequently bound together more firmly and united, while your Honors' colonies in New-Netherland are . . . peopled by . . . all sorts of nationalities.”

—Peter Stuyvesant, from a letter of 1661



Peter Stuyvesant

Stuyvesant was a powerful governor who usually got his way. But he was powerless to stop the growing diversity of the city that would one day be called New York. That diversity became a feature of all the Middle Colonies and one of the region's greatest strengths.

Settling the Middle Colonies

KEY QUESTION What drew settlers to the Middle Colonies?

The Middle Colonies—New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware—formed a distinct region, located between New England and the Southern Colonies. (See map on page 86.) The Hudson and Delaware rivers, which ran through the region, encouraged shipping and commerce. The Middle Colonies' rich soil and mild winters were good for farming.

Unlike New England, with its large population of English Puritans, the Middle Colonies attracted a population of great ethnic and religious diversity. This diversity began developing very early in the colony's history.