

2 The Middle Colonies

**BEFORE
YOU
READ**

Reading Focus

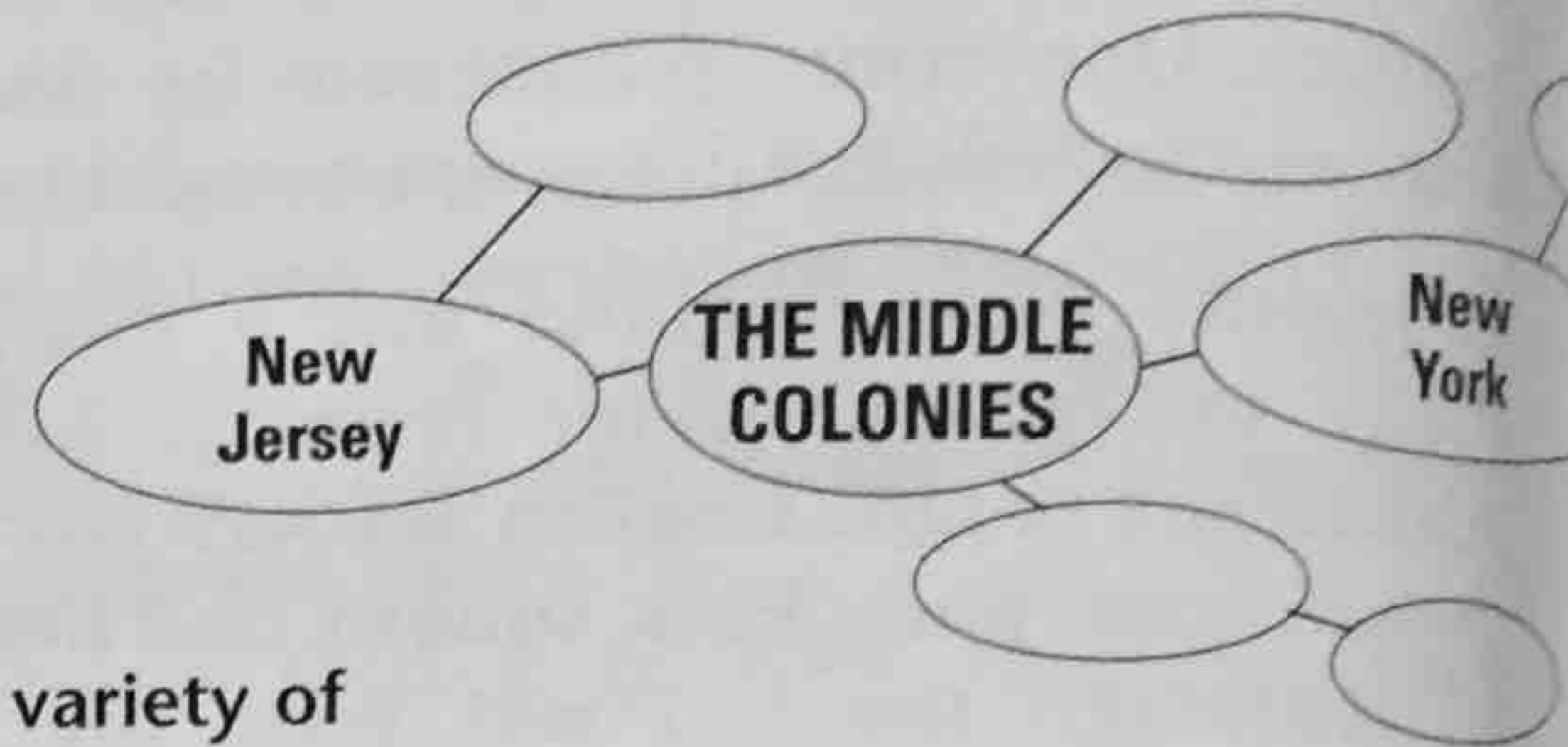
- Why did the colony of New Netherland become the colony of New York?
- Why did New Jersey separate from New York?
- How was Pennsylvania founded?
- What was life like in the Middle Colonies?

Key Terms

patroon
proprietary colony
royal colony
Quakers
Pennsylvania Dutch
cash crop

Taking Notes

Copy the concept web below. As you read, fill in the blank ovals with important facts about the settlement of the Middle Colonies. Add as many ovals as you need.



Main Idea The Middle Colonies attracted a wide variety of immigrants who settled on farms and in the cities of Philadelphia and New York.



**AS YOU
READ**

A chair from colonial Philadelphia

Draw Inferences Why might different styles of furniture have been available in the Middle Colonies?

Setting the Scene A doctor from the colony of Maryland traveled north to Philadelphia in the summer of 1744. Dr. Hamilton kept his eyes open to see how the customs in that city differed from those of Maryland. Merchants opened for business much earlier, he discovered: at five in the morning. For dinner at a tavern, Hamilton sat around a single large table with 24 other diners. Unfortunately, the “great hall [was] well stocked with flies,” he complained.

However, what most surprised Hamilton was the variety of people at the table:

“I dined at a tavern with a very mixed company of different nations and religions. There were Scots, English, Dutch, Germans, and Irish. There were Roman Catholics, Church [of England] men, Presbyterians, Quakers, . . . Moravians . . . and one Jew.”

—Alexander Hamilton, *Itinerarium*, 1744

By 1700, England had four colonies in the region south of New England. These colonies became known as the Middle Colonies because they were located between New England and the Southern Colonies. As Dr. Hamilton observed, the Middle Colonies had a much greater mix of people than either New England or the Southern Colonies.

New Netherland Becomes New York

As you have read, the Dutch set up the colony of New Netherland along the Hudson River. In the colony’s early years, settlers traded with Indians for furs and built the settlement of New Amsterdam into a thriving port. Since beaver skins were very valuable, most people came to the colonies to trade furs.

To encourage farming in New Netherland, Dutch officials granted large parcels of land to a few rich families. A single land grant could stretch for miles. Indeed, one grant was as big as Rhode Island! Owners of these huge estates were called **patroons**. In return for the grant, each patroon promised to settle at least 50 European farm families on the land. Few farmers wanted to work for the patroons, however. Patroons had great power and could charge whatever rents they pleased.

Most settlers lived in the trading center of New Amsterdam. They came from all over Europe. Many were attracted by the chance to practice their religion freely. African slaves were in demand as well. In the early years they made up more than a quarter of the population of the town.

Dutch colonists were mainly Protestants who belonged to the Dutch Reformed Church. Still, they permitted members of other religions—including Roman Catholics, French Protestants, and Jews—to buy land. “People do not seem concerned what religion their neighbor is,” wrote a shocked visitor from Virginia. “Indeed, they do not seem to care if he has any religion at all.”

By 1664, the rivalry between England and the Netherlands for trade and colonies was at its height. In August of that year, English warships entered New Amsterdam’s harbor. Peter Stuyvesant (STI vuh sehnt), the governor of New Netherland, swore to defend the city. However, he had few weapons and little gunpowder. Also, Stuyvesant had made himself so unpopular with his harsh rule and heavy taxes that the colonists refused to help him. In the end, he surrendered without firing a shot.

King Charles II of England then gave New Netherland to his brother, the Duke of York. He renamed the colony New York in the duke’s honor.

New Jersey Separates From New York

At the time of the English takeover, New York stretched as far south as the Delaware River. The Duke of York decided that the colony was too big to govern easily. He gave some of the land to friends, Lord Berkeley and Sir George Carteret. They set up a proprietary (proh PRI uh tehr ee) colony, which they called New Jersey, in 1664.

In setting up a **proprietary colony**, the king gave land to one or more people in return for a yearly payment. These proprietors were free to divide the land and rent it to others. They made laws for the colony but had to respect the rights of colonists under English law.

Like New York, New Jersey had fertile farmland and a wealth of other resources that attracted people from many lands. Settlers came from Finland, Ireland, Scotland, Germany, and Sweden. There were also English and Dutch settlers who moved there from the colony of New York. In addition, some New England colonists, hoping to find better farmland, chose to relocate to New Jersey.

In 1702, New Jersey became a **royal colony**, which is a colony under the direct control of the English crown. The colony’s charter protected religious freedom and the rights of an assembly that voted on local matters.

An American Profile



Peter Stuyvesant

1610?–1672

When Peter Stuyvesant arrived in New Amsterdam in 1647, the town was in chaos. “I shall govern you as a father his children,” he told the colonists. On his orders, roaming pigs were fenced in. Outdoor toilets were removed from public streets. A new police force patrolled the town after dark. With his big sword, heavy mustache, and silver-tipped wooden leg, Stuyvesant was a commanding sight. Many colonists disliked him. They said he dressed like a one-legged peacock and that he ruled them like the czar of Russia. Even so, Stuyvesant restored law and order in New Amsterdam.

How does your town or county protect the health and safety of its citizens?

Find Main Ideas List the subheads under The Founding of Pennsylvania. As you read, list one or two facts about each subhead.

The Founding of Pennsylvania

West of New Jersey, William Penn founded the colony of Pennsylvania in 1681. Penn came from a wealthy English family and was a personal friend of King Charles II. At age 22, however, Penn shocked family and friends by joining the **Quakers**, one of the most despised religious groups in England.

The Quakers Like Pilgrims and Puritans, Quakers were Protestant reformers. Their reforms went further than those of other groups, however. Quakers believed that all people—men and women, nobles and commoners—were equal in God’s sight. They allowed women to preach in public and refused to bow or remove their hats in the presence of nobles. Quakers spoke out against all war and refused to serve in the army.

To most English people, Quaker beliefs seemed wicked. In both England and New England, Quakers were arrested, fined, or even hanged for their ideas. Penn became convinced that the Quakers must leave England. He turned to the king for help.

Charles II issued a royal charter naming Penn proprietor of a large tract of land in North America. The king named the new colony Pennsylvania, or Penn’s woodlands.

A Policy of Fairness Penn thought of his colony as a “holy experiment.” He wanted it to be a model of religious freedom, peace, and Christian living. Protestants, Catholics, and Jews went to Pennsylvania to escape persecution. Later, English officials forced Penn to turn away Catholic and Jewish settlers.

Penn’s Quaker beliefs led him to speak out for fair treatment of Native Americans. Penn believed that the land in North America belonged to the Indians. He insisted that settlers should pay for the land. Native Americans respected him for this policy. As a result, Pennsylvania colonists enjoyed many years of peace with their Indian neighbors. One settler remarked, “as Penn treated the Indians with extraordinary humanity, they became civil and loving to us.”

The Colony Grows Penn sent pamphlets describing his colony all over Europe. Soon, settlers from England, Scotland, Wales, the Netherlands, France, and Germany began to cross the Atlantic Ocean to Pennsylvania.

Among the new arrivals were large numbers of German-speaking Protestants. They became known as **Pennsylvania Dutch** because people could not pronounce the word Deutsch (DOICH), which means German. African slaves were also brought to Pennsylvania. They made up about one-third of all immigrants to the colony between 1730 and 1750. Most stayed in Philadelphia, working as laborers.

Penn carefully planned a capital city along the Delaware River. He named it Philadelphia, a Greek word meaning “brotherly love.” Philadelphia grew quickly. By 1710, a visitor wrote that it was “the most noble, large, and well-built city I have seen.”

Delaware For a time, Pennsylvania included some lands along the lower Delaware River. The region was known as Pennsylvania’s Lower Counties.

Primary Source

A Letter to the Native Americans

Before he would allow people to settle his colony, William Penn insisted on establishing good relations with the Native Americans. He wrote this letter:

“The king of the country where I live hath given me a great province, but I desire to enjoy it with your love and consent, that we may always live together as neighbors and friends, else what would the great God say to us, who hath made us not to devour and destroy one another, but live soberly and kindly together in the world. . . .”

—William Penn, Letter to the Indians, 1681

Analyzing Primary Sources
How does Penn explain his belief about living peacefully with Native Americans?

Settlers in the Lower Counties did not want to send delegates to a distant assembly in Philadelphia. In 1701, Penn allowed them to elect their own assembly. Later, in 1704, the Lower Counties would break away to form the colony of Delaware.

Life in the Middle Colonies

The majority of the people made their living by farming. Farmers found more favorable conditions in the Middle Colonies than in New England. The broad Hudson and Delaware river valleys were rich and fertile. Winters were milder than in New England, and the growing season lasted longer.

A Thriving Economy in the Eastern Counties On such promising land, farmers in the eastern counties of the Middle Colonies cleared their fields. They raised wheat, barley, and rye. These were **cash crops**, or crops that are sold for money at market. In fact, the Middle Colonies exported so much grain that they became known as the Breadbasket Colonies.

Farmers of the Middle Colonies also raised herds of cattle and pigs. Every year, they sent tons of beef, pork, and butter to the ports of New York and Philadelphia. From there, the goods went by ship to New England and the South or to the West Indies, England, and other parts of Europe.

Farms in the Middle Colonies were generally larger than those in New England. Landowners hired workers to help with the planting, harvesting, and other tasks. Enslaved African Americans worked on a few large farms. However, most workers were farmhands who worked alongside the families that owned the land.

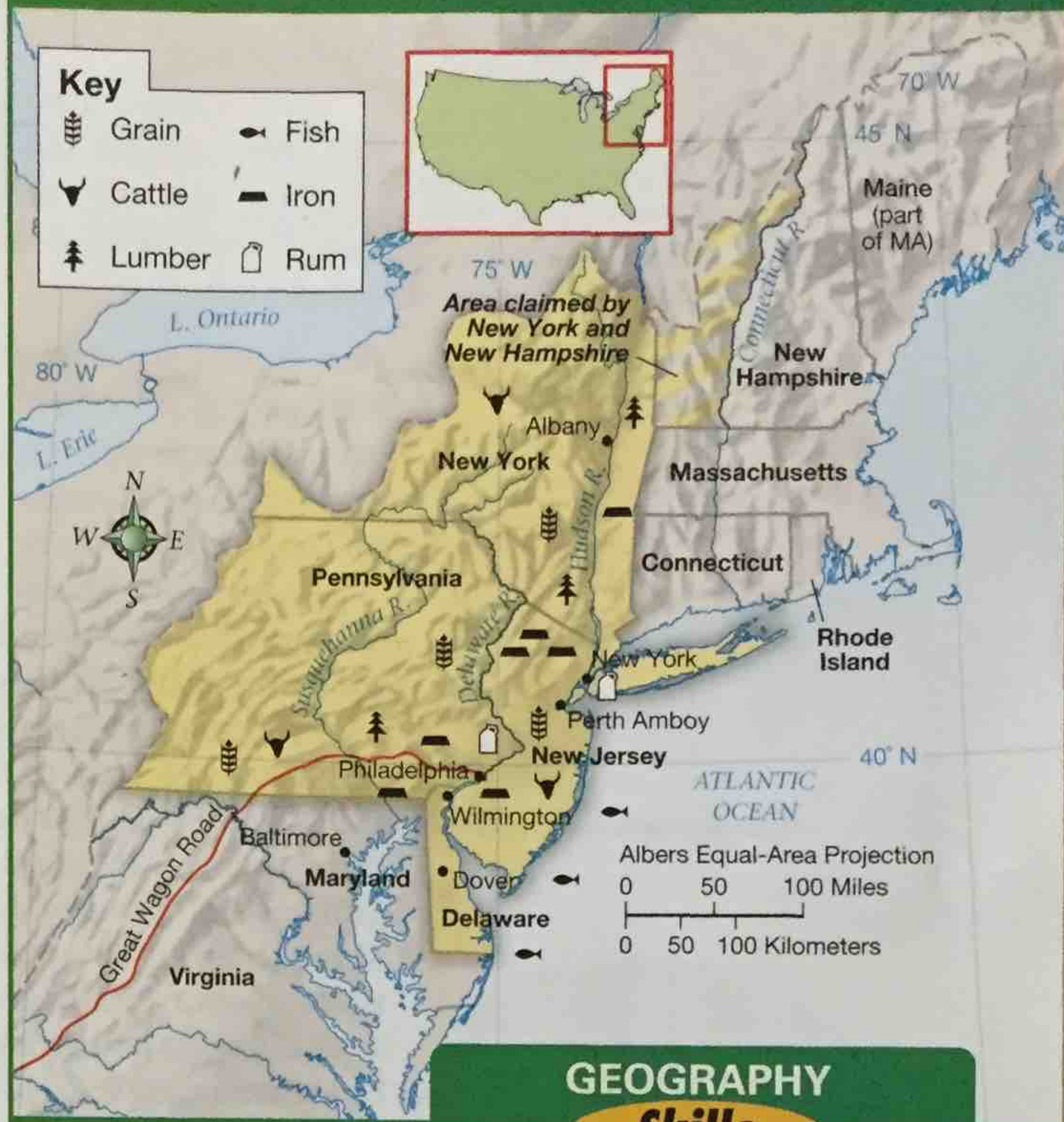
Aside from farmers, there were also skilled artisans in the Middle Colonies. Encouraged by William Penn, skilled German craftsmen set up shop in Pennsylvania. In time, the colony became a center of manufacturing and crafts. One visitor reported that workshops turned out "hardware, clocks, watches, locks, guns, flints, glass, stoneware, nails, [and] paper."

Settlers in the Delaware River valley profited from the region's rich deposits of iron ore. Heating the ore in furnaces, they purified it and then hammered it into nails, tools, and parts for guns.

Middle Colony Homes Because houses tended to be far apart in the Middle Colonies, towns were less important than in New England. Counties, rather than villages, became centers of local government.

The different groups who settled the Middle Colonies had their own favorite ways of building. Swedish settlers introduced log cabins to the Americas. The Dutch used red bricks to build narrow, high-walled

The Middle Colonies



GEOGRAPHY Skills

The Middle Colonies were located to the south and west of New England and north of the Southern Colonies.

- Location** On the map, locate: (a) New York, (b) New Jersey, (c) Pennsylvania, (d) Delaware, (e) Hudson River, (f) Philadelphia, (g) Great Wagon Road.
- Movement** Identify two ways settlers could have traveled inland from the Atlantic coast.
- Critical Thinking Analyzing Information** Based on the map, why do you think Philadelphia would become a major trading center?

houses. German settlers developed a wood-burning stove that heated a home better than a fireplace, which let blasts of cold air leak down the chimney.

Everyone in a household had a job to do. Households were self-sufficient, which meant that everything needed for survival—food, clothing, and any other items—was made at home. As one farmer said, “Nothing to wear, eat, or drink was purchased, as my farm provided all.”

The Backcountry In the 1700s, thousands of German and Scotch-Irish settlers arrived in Philadelphia. From there, they traveled west into the backcountry, the area of land along the eastern slopes of the Appalachian Mountains. Settlers followed an old Iroquois trail that became known as the Great Wagon Road.

Although settlers planned to follow farming methods they had used in Europe, they found the challenge of farming the backcountry more difficult than they had thought it would be. To farm the backcountry, settlers had to clear thick forests. From Indians, settlers learned how to use knots from pine trees as candles to light their homes. They made wooden dishes from logs, gathered honey from hollows in trees, and hunted wild animals for food. German gunsmiths developed a lightweight rifle for use in forests. Sharpshooters boasted that the “Pennsylvania rifle” could hit a rattlesnake between the eyes at 100 yards.

Many of the settlers who arrived in the backcountry moved onto Indian lands. “The Indians . . . are alarmed at the swarm of strangers,” one Pennsylvania official reported. “We are afraid of a [fight] between them for the [colonists] are very rough to them.” On more than one occasion, disputes between settlers and Indians resulted in violence.

AFTER
YOU
READ

Section 2 Assessment

Recall

1. **Identify** Explain the significance of (a) Peter Stuyvesant, (b) William Penn, (c) Quakers, (d) Pennsylvania Dutch.
2. **Define** (a) patroon, (b) proprietary colony, (c) royal colony, (d) cash crop.

Comprehension

3. How did New Netherland become New York?
4. Why did New Jersey become a proprietary colony?
5. Why did the Quakers settle Pennsylvania?
6. How did life in the Middle Colonies differ from life in the backcountry?

Critical Thinking and Writing

7. **Exploring the Main Idea** Review the Main Idea statement at the beginning of this section. Then, write a paragraph explaining why settlers were attracted to the Middle Colonies.
8. **Comparing** (a) How was Penn’s “holy experiment” like the Puritan idea of setting an example for the world? (b) How was it different?

ACTIVITY



Take It to the NET **Connecting to Today**

Descendants of the Pennsylvania Dutch still live in Pennsylvania today. Use the Internet to find out about the Pennsylvania Dutch. Write a brief report or create a short Powerpoint presentation describing how and where they live. Visit *The American Nation* section of www.phschool.com for help in completing the activity.