Lesson 5:
“Diversifying British America”

Lesson Assignments

You are encouraged to be very attentive while viewing the video program. Review the video objectives and be prepared to record possible answers, in abbreviated form, as you view the video. The topics and time periods may differ somewhat from the chapters of the textbook your school system is using. Each video program chronicles a wide array of events and personalities during a specific time period of American history prior to 1877. Keep in mind that one of the overarching goals of each lesson is to help you understand how past historical events and actions by historical personalities did not occur in a vacuum, and that they are inextricably interwoven in your society today.

Activities:
Your teacher may assign one or more activities for each lesson. Refer to your course syllabus for details.

OVERVIEW

The middle colonies of New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and Pennsylvania shared some similar characteristics. Their fertile soil and expanse of land produced abundant crops, and the area became known as the "bread basket" of the English colonies. They were more ethnically mixed than the other English colonies, and they tended to be more tolerant of other religious views and ethnic groups. William Penn's actions in creating a haven for Quakers and his attempts to treat the Indians fairly are illustrative of the traits associated with the middle colonies. Land was easily obtainable and the result was that a considerable amount of economic and social democracy prevailed, though less so in aristocratic New York.

Late in the 16th century the oppressed people of the Netherlands rebelled against Catholic Spain and after protracted fighting won their independence from Spain, with the aid of Protestant England. The 17th century became the golden age in Dutch history, and the little nation of dikes and lowlands challenged English naval and commercial interests. The Dutch pursued a colonial empire, which included the rich East India Company and the less successful Dutch West India Company. The West India Company had interests in the Caribbean and in New Netherland, established in the 1620s, along the Hudson River.
New Amsterdam, later New York City, was a company town that had no toleration for religious dissenters, free speech, or democratic practices. The Dutch colony and city developed a very pronounced aristocratic tinge and vast feudal estates were created. However, New Amsterdam did attract a cosmopolitan population, as is typical of seaport towns.

Unfortunately for the Dutch colonists residing in New Amsterdam, they lay under the shadow of the English colonies to the north. They were forced to surrender to the British in 1664, and the city was renamed New York. The Dutch settlers, however, under the despotic leadership of Peter Stuyvesant, continued to exert considerable influence in the area. Stuyvesant had once remarked that his power was derived from the Dutch West India Company and God, not the people.

While few Americans had the money to buy books, or the time to read them, they were very interested in the “news.” Colonial newspapers became a powerful agency for providing the news and airing colonial grievances and rallying opposition to British control. Stuyvesant’s despotic control in the 1660’s was a marked contrast to the celebrated legal case in the 1730’s that involved John Peter Zenger, a newspaper printer in New York. Zenger had assailed William Crosby, the corrupt English royal governor of New York, and the resulting court decision was a victory for freedom of the press.

Under British control New York, along with the other middle colonies, became more ethnically and religiously diverse. The effects of this diversity played a major role in shaping the development of America.
VIDEO OBJECTIVES

The following objectives are designed to assist the viewer in identifying the most significant aspects of the video segment of this lesson. You should take succinct notes while viewing the video.

1. Compare and contrast the political, social, and economic aspects of the middle colonies with the New England and southern colonies.

2. Compare and contrast the settlement of New Amsterdam and New York under Dutch and English control.

3. Evaluate the treatment of Native Americans and African Americans in the middle colonies.

4. Analyze the role played by the following men in the settlement of the “New World”: Peter Stuyvesant, William Penn, and John Zenger.

WEB ACTIVITIES

These activities are assigned at the discretion of your teacher. They are offered as suggestions to help you learn more about the material presented in this lesson.

Activity 1: Analysis of the John Peter Zenger Trial Record

   Trial Record (Peter Zenger): http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/zenget/zengetrecord.html
b. Use the National Archives Written Document Worksheet as a guide to analyze the Trial Record (of Peter Zenger)
Activity 2: Analyzing Historical Documents Related to John Peter Zenger

a. Access and review the web sites listed in Activity 1 and the following web sites:
   - Order for the Public Burning of Zenger’s Journals:
     http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/zenger/burningorder.html
   - Exploring Constitutional Conflicts:
     http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/zenger/freespeech.htm
   - Censorship and Challenges:
     http://www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/censors.html
   - The 100 Most Frequently Challenged Books of 1990-1999:
     http://www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/top100bannedbooks.html

b. Compare and contrast the attempts to censor John Zenger’s publications with the attempts to censor the publications of one of the following:
   - Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
   - Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*
   - Harper Lee’s *To Kill A Mockingbird*
   - Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*

**PRACTICE TEST**

After watching the video and reviewing the objectives, you should be able to complete the following Practice Test. Access the Answer Key to score your answers after you have completed the Practice Test.

**Multiple Choice:**

Select the single best answer. It will be indicated if more than one answer is required.

1. The jury’s decision in the case of John Peter Zenger, a newspaper printer, was significant because:
   - A. He was found guilty.
   - B. It supported English law.
   - C. It paved the way for open public discussion.
   - D. The ruling prohibited criticism of political officials.

2. New York was:
   - A. Designed as a Quaker refuge.
   - B. A major contributor to religious toleration and political democracy.
   - C. Had an ethnically mixed population.
   - D. One of the New England colonies.
3. All of the middle colonies were:
   A. Notable for their fertile soil.
   B. Noted as religious havens.
   C. Established by join-stock companies.
   D. Noted for their ability to avoid conflict with the Native Americans.

4. The city of New Amsterdam:
   A. Was governed by Peter Stuyvesant.
   B. Encouraged Jewish settlements.
   C. Did not allow slavery or slave trade.
   D. Had no conflicts with the Native Americans.

5. Which of the following statements is accurate:
   A. Princeton University was founded in New York.
   B. William Penn discouraged settlers who settled in his colony from living in peace with the Native Americans.
   C. Diversity in the middle colonies retarded the growth of political democracy.
   D. The phrase “go-betweens” was used to describe Indian and colonial officials who helped translate and mediate conflicts between European settlers and Indians.

Essay Question:

1. Identify the political, social, and economic traits of the middle, New England, and southern colonies and indicate which traits encouraged the development of democratic ideals and which delayed the development of democratic ideals.

Answers to the Practice Test:

The correct answer is indicated first, followed by the objective (s) that correlate with the test question.

1. C: 4
2. C: 2 and 4
3. A: 3
4. A: 2 and 4
5. D: 1-2-3-4