

1682

William Penn  
arrives in  
Philadelphia

1730s

The Great Awakening  
spreads through the  
colonies**WHAT TO KNOW**

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

- ✓ Understand the importance of religion to life in the Middle Colonies.
- ✓ Identify the significance and leaders of the Great Awakening.

**VOCABULARY**

**diversity** p. 251

**immigrant** p. 251

**Great Awakening** p. 252

**religious toleration** p. 252

**militia** p. 254

**PEOPLE**

George Whitefield  
Jonathan Edwards  
Benjamin Franklin

**PLACES**

Philadelphia  
New York City

**SUMMARIZE**

California  
Standards

HSS 5.4, 5.4.2, 5.4.3,  
5.4.4, 5.4.6

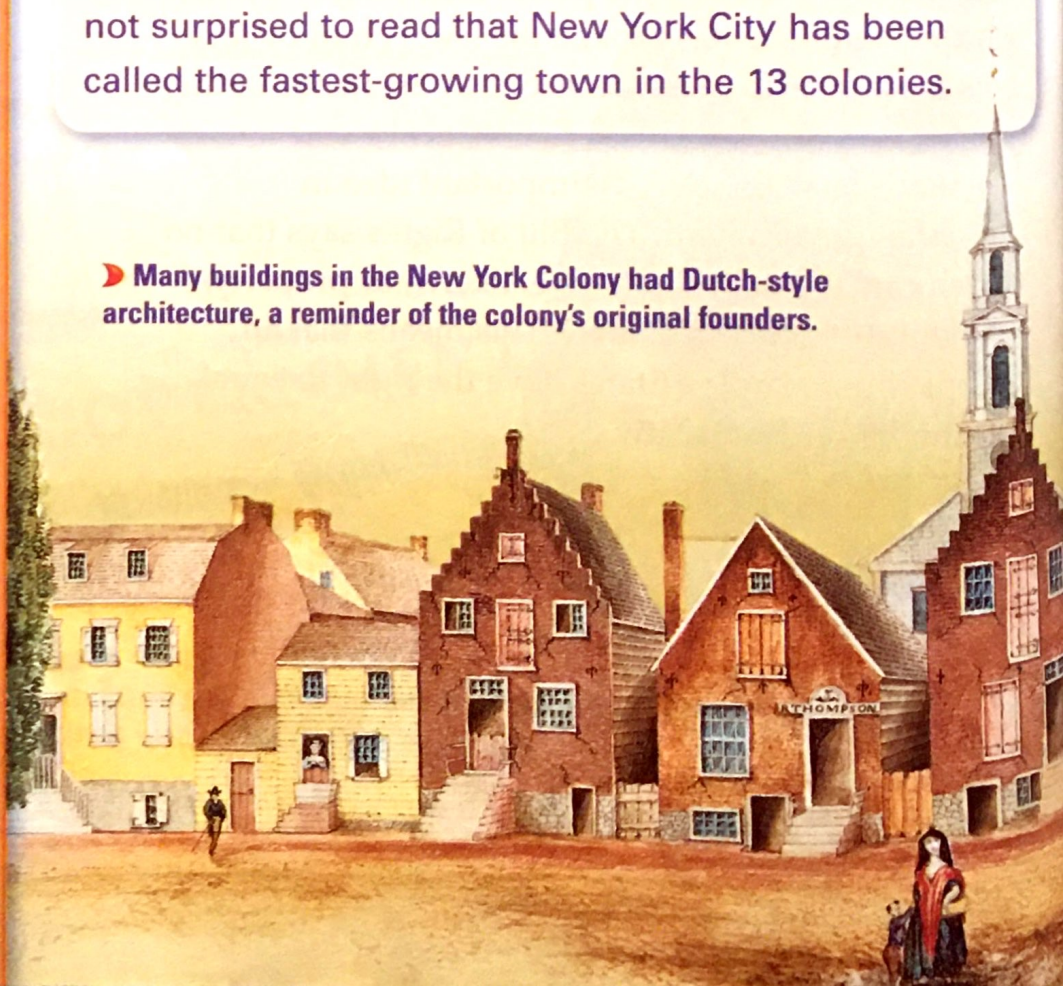
# Life in the Middle Colonies

## YOU ARE THERE

It's a sunny day in 1699. You're hungry after a morning stroll around the city. You decide to stop for lunch at the White Lion Tavern, where English merchants gather to make deals and gossip.

While you wait for your food, you read the latest news in the papers. The Dutch wall is being torn down to make room for more houses. A new road, Wall Street, is being paved where the wall stood. You're not surprised to read that New York City has been called the fastest-growing town in the 13 colonies.

► Many buildings in the New York Colony had Dutch-style architecture, a reminder of the colony's original founders.



## Festivals

The people who settled in the Middle Colonies brought their traditions with them when they came to North America. Today, people living in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware still celebrate their heritage in local festivals. Each year, people in New Jersey watch players compete in Scottish Highland Games. At the German Festival in Kutztown, Pennsylvania, people enjoy funnel cakes and soft pretzels. In Albany, New York, people wearing Dutch costumes begin the annual Tulip Festival by sweeping local streets. Taking part in these festivals helps people preserve the area's rich heritage.



## A Mix of People

By 1700, more than 50,000 people lived in the Middle Colonies. They came from many places and backgrounds. One church minister described settlers of the Middle Colonies as a group of people thrown together from many parts of the world. Such **diversity** made the Middle Colonies an interesting place to live.

Who were the people of the Middle Colonies? At first, most were Dutch, French, Belgian, or Swedish. Then came the English Puritans and Quakers, as well as German, Irish, and Scottish settlers. Most Africans were brought to the Middle Colonies as enslaved people, but some Africans 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 diverse backgrounds could live peacefully together. The city covered a strip of land between the Schuylkill (SKOO•kuhl) and Delaware Rivers. Its busy port received many immigrants from different countries.

An **immigrant** is a person who comes into a country to make a new home there. Some immigrants left their original countries to escape war or to find religious freedom. Most immigrants wanted better economic opportunities, especially the chance to buy their own land. Many found more freedom and acceptance in the Middle Colonies than they had ever known.

### READING CHECK SUMMARIZE

**Why did immigrants come to the Middle Colonies?**

# The Great Awakening

In the 1720s, a new religious movement known as the **Great Awakening** began in the Middle Colonies. This movement changed the way that many people practiced their religion. It spread throughout the 13 colonies during the 1730s and 1740s.

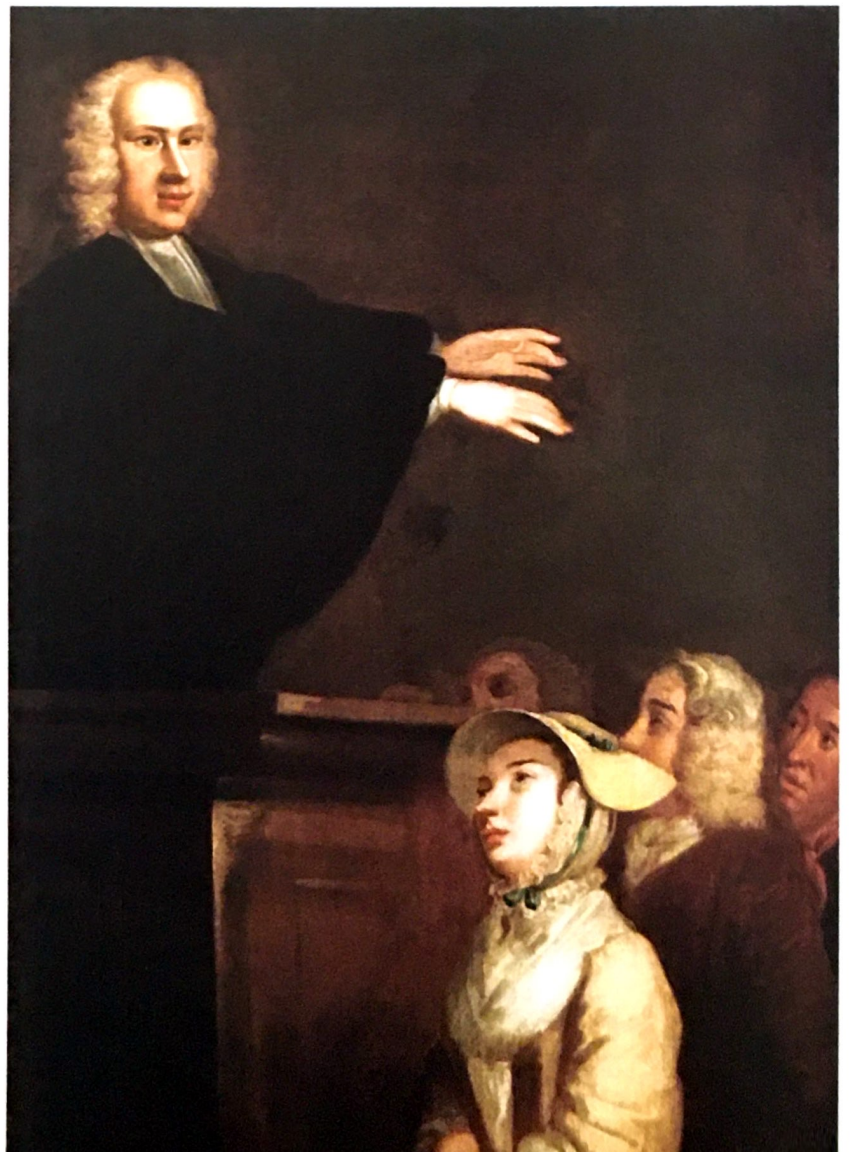
Ministers such as **George Whitefield** and **Jonathan Edwards** gave speeches that marked a change in religious ideas and practices. They often talked about people having a direct relationship with God. Not only did these ministers preach new ideas, they practiced religion differently. They would travel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

The Great Awakening helped bring people together, which led to greater **religious toleration**, or acceptance of religious differences. At the new revivals, or large 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, further increasing 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?

► Minister George Whitefield (right) used this movable field pulpit (below) for preaching outdoors.





► Farmers in the Middle Colonies often hired free African Americans to help tend their farms.

## Religion and Social Life

Unlike in the New England Colonies, many different religious groups lived in the Middle Colonies. Towns in these colonies 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 affected the ways in which people viewed one another. Some colonists began to think that enslaving Africans was wrong. In 1688, Quakers in Germantown,

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

The social life of colonists was as diverse as their religious beliefs. The colonists found many ways to have fun, depending on where they lived. In cities such as Philadelphia and New York City, there were dances, plays, concerts, and social clubs. Horse races were popular, as were bowling, sleigh rides, and ice-skating.

In the countryside, a barn raising was a big social event. A farm family would invite their neighbors to help them raise 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?**

# Philadelphia Grows

As proprietor of the Pennsylvania Colony, William Penn planned not only its government but also its settlements. Penn designed Philadelphia, the colony's most important city, with wide streets and many public parks. Penn wanted the city to have plenty of space for people to work and to relax.

When Penn first visited Philadelphia in 1682 it had only ten houses. Fifty years later, it had more than 11,000 residents. Over time, Philadelphia became the largest and wealthiest city in all of the 13 colonies. By 1770 it had more than 28,000 people—a small population by today's city standards but very large for that time.

As Philadelphia grew, it became the home of many famous scientists and artists. The most famous Philadelphian was **Benjamin Franklin**, who helped improve the city in many ways. Franklin set up the first trained firefighting company in the 13 colonies and raised

money to help build the city's first hospital. He set up a **militia**, or volunteer army, to protect the city and the rest of the colony. To educate others, he founded Pennsylvania's first college and first public library.

Benjamin Franklin earned his living as a printer. He printed the *Pennsylvania Gazette* newspaper. He also wrote and published *Poor Richard's Almanack*, a yearly book that had a calendar, weather forecasts, stories, jokes, and wise sayings. It was very popular and helped make Franklin a wealthy man.

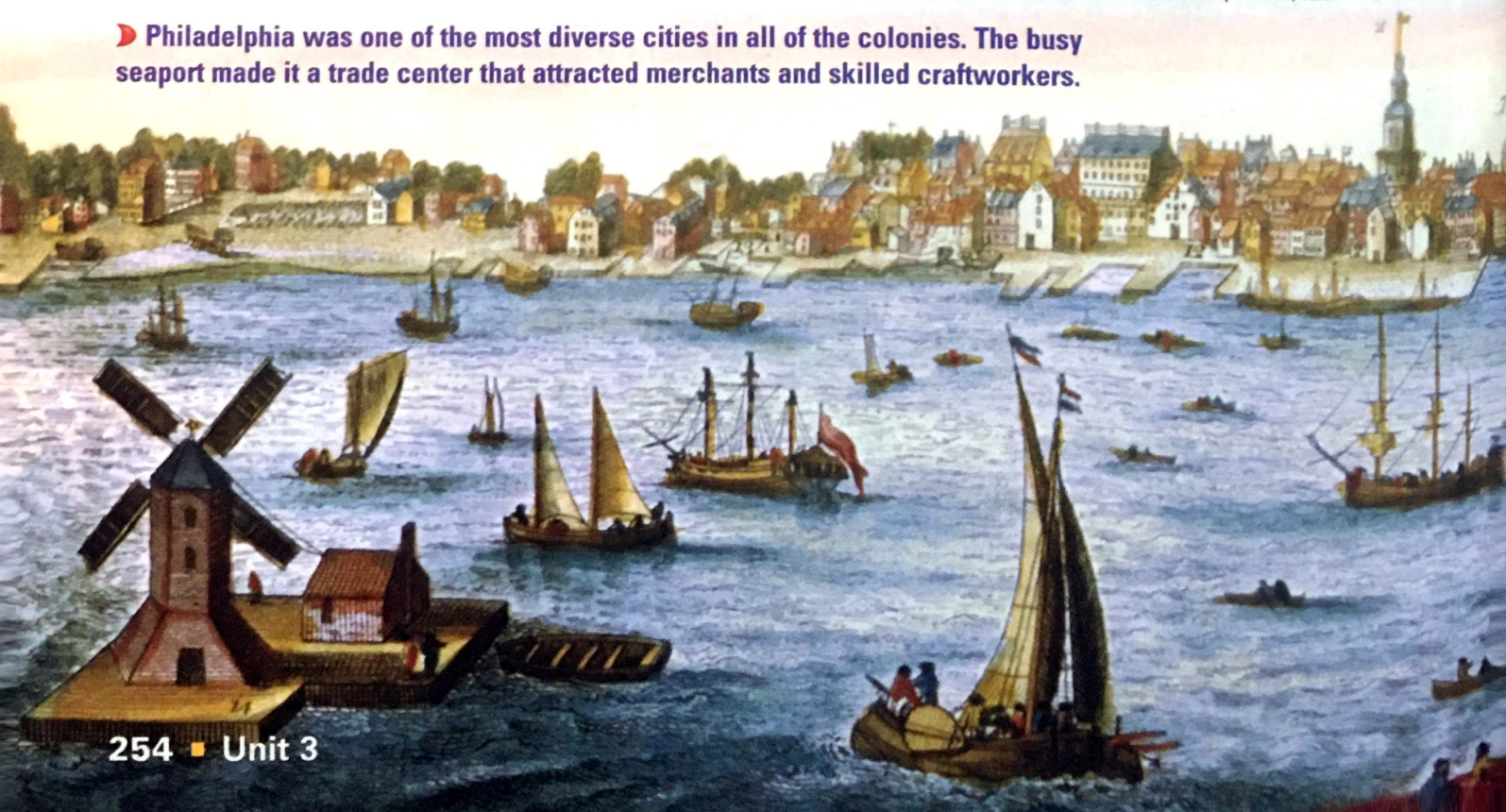
Philadelphians wondered where Franklin found the time to do so much. He was a printer, a writer, a scientist, and an inventor. He also became a leader in the colony's government. It seems that Franklin followed his own almanac's advice: "Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise."\*

## READING CHECK SUMMARIZE

**What were some of the ways in which Benjamin Franklin improved the city of Philadelphia?**

\*Benjamin Franklin. *Poor Richard's Almanack*. Peter Pauper Press, 1980.

**► Philadelphia was one of the most diverse cities in all of the colonies. The busy seaport made it a trade center that attracted merchants and skilled craftworkers.**






► Benjamin Franklin (above left) helped establish a hospital (above right) and a fire company in Philadelphia.

## Summary


The Middle Colonies were home to a mix of people, cultures, and religions. The Great Awakening added to the region's diversity. Philadelphia was the center of culture and the largest city in the Middle Colonies.



## REVIEW

1.  How did religious toleration help attract people of different cultures to the Middle Colonies?
2. Write a sentence about **diversity** in the Middle Colonies, using the term **immigrant**.
3. When did the Great Awakening take place, and who were some of its leaders?

### CRITICAL THINKING

4. **Make It Relevant** If you lived in the Middle Colonies, would you want to live in a city or a farming community? Explain your choice.
5. **ANALYZE SKILL** Why do you think the Great Awakening had such a strong effect on religious life in the colonies?
6.  **Write a Narrative** Write a story about life in early Philadelphia. Be sure to describe the city's location, people, and businesses in your story.

7.  **FOCUS SKILL SUMMARIZE**  
On a separate sheet of paper, copy and complete this graphic organizer.

Key Fact

Key Fact

Summary

Philadelphia attracted many diverse people.