

## TAH Presentation for Nov. 12

### Peopling of America and New Jersey

#### Diversity of Population in Colonial New Jersey

First I would like to relate Professor Clemens Encounters between Europeans and Native Americans to New Jersey.

As in Mexico, Virginia and New England, New Jersey also was a site for encounters between European settlers and Native American residents. Where did they take place and how did they work out? As you explore these encounters with your students, have them discuss how the culture and goals of the Europeans and of the Native Americans led in some cases to cooperation, but in other cases to conflict and violence. What sources can you use as a basis for this discussion. A start could be the small book The Indians of New Jersey by Gregory Dowd.

In Northeastern New Jersey, the interaction was between Dutch settlers and government officials and Native Americans.

Trade early on became important to both the Dutch and the Indians. With your students explore the advantages of trade for each party and in the ways in which trade led to conflict? As the Dutch sought land in Bergen County, for food and settlement, there arose conflict between private and communal ownership of property and differing agricultural practices.

With contact misunderstandings and conflicts of interest led to a number deaths on both sides. Then Gov. Kieft in the 1640s ordered large scale massacres of Natives. He would have liked to have seen them eliminated completely. The Native Americans, though, counterattacked and drove the European settlers out of New Jersey. Kieft was recalled, and the Dutch decided to follow a more peaceful policy, which together with technological advantages, enabled them to

return to Bergen County. Smallpox and other epidemics from contact with the Europeans reduced the Native American population. This, together with decreased access to land for traditional hunting and gathering of their food supply and a diminution of the beaver for trade, resulted in the remaining, Eastern New Jersey Native Americans to migrate westward

In western New Jersey many of the same issue arose between Swedish settlers and the Native Americans, but a much smaller number of European settlers made for more accommodations with the Native Americans. However, these Indians also suffered from disease, land loss, and reduced fur bearing animals for trade, and they likewise migrated westward.

A second reflection on encounters is the revealing story of the white Indians

An insightful article by James Axtell, “The White Indians of Colonial America” relates accounts of the treatment of some European settlers who were captured by the Native Americans and incorporated into their society, and the decision of some of these whites to stay with the Natives even when they could return to white settlements. This article tells us much that was positive in the ways of the Native Americans. You can discuss with your students why numbers of adult women and young boys preferred Native American life to that in the European settlements.

Cadwallader Colden, a member of the New York Province royal council in 1747 wrote: “No arguments, no entreaties, nor tears of their friends and relations could persuade many of them to leave their new Indian friends and acquaintances. Several of them that were by the caressings of their relations persuaded to come home, in a little time grew tired of our manner of living and ran away again to the Indians and ended their days with them.”

Benjamin Franklin in 1753 wrote:”When an Indian child has been brought up among us, taught our language and habituated to our customs, yet if he goes to see his relations and makes one Indian

ramble with them, there is no persuading him ever to return. But when white persons of either sex have been taken prisoners, young, by the Indians, and lived a while among them, tho' ransomed by their friends, and treated with all imaginable tenderness to prevail with them to stay among the English, yet in a short time they become disgusted with our manner of life, and the care and pains that are necessary to support it, and take the first good opportunity of escaping again into the woods, from whence there is no reclaiming them."

Hector de Crevecoeur a few years later reported that "thousands of Europeans are Indians and we have no examples of even one of those Aborigines having from choice become Europeans."

Now to the main points of my presentation - the diversity of Europeans who settled in New Jersey.

Colonial New Jersey was one of the most ethnically diverse provinces in British North America. Diversity of population continued through the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century in New Jersey, and today the state is ranked as having the most diverse population in the nation.

In colonial North America you can look at three somewhat unique sections - the south, New England and the Middle Atlantic provinces

The South - from Maryland to Georgia - with its focus on commercial agriculture had a primarily Anglo Saxon and African slave population

New England had a relative homogeneous population of dissenting Protestants engaged in family agriculture and growing commercialism in its ports.

The Middle Atlantic Provinces had much population diversity engaged in multiple forms of agricultural and commercial acquisitiveness.

Hector de Crevecoeur reported glowingly about this region and the fact that it was settled by people from different countries and cultures. He wrote: "I could point out to you a family whose grandfather was an Englishman, whose wife was Dutch, whose son married a French Woman and whose present four sons have now four wives of different nations....Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men, whose labors and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world."

While commercialized agriculture brought wealth and power to what became the southern portion of the new United States, and while New England's culture became prominent in education, literature and religion in the new nation, it was the middle states with its diversity of people, vitality, economic aggressiveness and adaptability that would come to dominate the future of the expanding new country.

Colonial New Jersey was controlled and settled by people from three European countries, the Netherlands, Sweden and Great Britain. The settlers from these countries had varied cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Additionally, people came to New Jersey from still other countries.

The Dutch first settled Bergen County - mostly by way of New Amsterdam. The Netherlands in the 17<sup>th</sup> century had a well developed, aggressive economy. Amsterdam through trade and finance was, at this time, the world's leading capitalist city. Consequently, this city and this country drew to it ambitious and displaced people from many countries (as would commercially active London and then New York). Holland also had a relatively tolerant religious policy, especially for people from differing Protestant denominations. A considerable number among the Dutch and among those who came there from other countries, with an acquisitive outlook, saw the Dutch overseas ventures, including New Netherlands, as an opportunity for adventure and economic gain. While a good portion of the people who came from Holland, through New Amsterdam, to New Jersey were Dutch, others who came from that country and who would meld into the Jersey Dutch were French Huguenots, Walloons, Flemings, German Lutherans, Scandinavians, Polish, Italian Walensians, and Iberian Jews. After the English took control of New Netherlands in 1664 and renamed it New York, the residents of that province

continued to migrate into Bergen County, and beyond that into the Passaic and Raritan valleys, into Middlesex, Essex and Sussex counties.

A small number of settlers from Sweden, about 300 by 1650, settled in the Delaware River Valley in West Jersey. While some were Swedes, most were actually Finns.

When England took possession of New Jersey in 1664 a considerable number of persons of English descent migrated from New England into Newark, Elizabeth and Woodbridge. These migrants would be an important part of the population of Essex, Union and Middlesex counties. Several affluent families came into Bergen and Monmouth counties from Barbados with a considerable number of African slaves.

In the 1660s control of East Jersey passed into the hands of proprietors, many of whom were Scots. Scots settled in the Raritan Valley, New Brunswick, Newark, Elizabeth, and in the capital city, Perth Amboy. English and Irish also came into the latter city. Scot Quakers came to Monmouth county.

In West Jersey the proprietors were mainly Quakers. Many English members of that harassed, religious group took up residence in that part of New Jersey. They established Burlington as their capital city. Other English and Swedes from Pennsylvania also came into West Jersey. The Jersey Swedes included Finns, Dutch, Germans and Scotch Irish

It was mostly after 1717 that the Scotch Irish came in considerable numbers to various parts of New Jersey including the Millstone, Raritan and Passaic river valleys.

Additionally, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century a limited number of Germans settled in northern Bergen and Passaic counties. A larger number came by way of Pennsylvania into Hunterdon, Sussex and Morris counties. There also were a small number of settlers from Switzerland, France, Belgium and other countries of Europe.

As slaves and as freemen, there were a considerable number of Africans in colonial New Jersey. While a few estates and some mines had a considerable number of slaves, most were in bondage in small numbers on family farms. There also were a number of freedmen. By the end of the colonial era, Bergen County had some 20% Africans in its population, the largest percentage among the counties in New Jersey. In 1800 there were 17,000 Blacks in New Jersey of which 12,00 were slaves.

The population growth for New Jersey was slow through 17<sup>th</sup> century - to 15,000 in 1701, but grew more rapidly through the 18<sup>th</sup> century with 61,000 by 1745 and 211,000 by 1800. In the first census in 1790 New Jersey 's diversity included:47% English, 17% Dutch, 10% Germans, 8% Scots, 8% Blacks, 6% Scotch Irish, 4% Swedes, 3% Irish, and 2% French

In colonial New Jersey there also was extensive diversity of religion. There were many Calvinists, often called dissenters, who on arrival adhered to ethnic congregations: The Dutch Reformed, the German Reformed, the Congregationalists among the English, the Presbyterians among the Scots, and the Huguenots among the French. Among the Germans and Swedes most were Lutheran. There also was a scattering of Roman Catholics, Methodists, Baptists, Moravians, Waldensians, and Jews.

Additionally, there was diversity of class. In general New Jersey was seen as having a population largely of middle level peoples in terms of affluence. But there were some families of wealth who consequently wielded power. Some persons related to the Proprietors received large grants of land. There were several rich planters from Barbados, a number of well to do Scots, and there were mine owners. Among the wealthy were the Alexanders, Stevens, Reads, Kingslands, Morrisises, Schyulers, Fords, and Ogdens. But there were even more who were poor. Some Scots, Scotch Irish and Germans came as indentured servants. There were landless agricultural laborers and mine and charcoal workers. While Peter Hansenclover brought more than 500 German workers, many of whom were skilled, to establish the London Company's Ringwood Iron Works

in the 1760s, the workers in the many smaller mines in Northern New Jersey and in the Pinelands were often rootless, marginal Irish, German, English, Welsh, slave and free Blacks, Scots and even a few Indians.

What issues can you discuss with your students about this pervasive, variegated diversity in colonial New Jersey? What motivated the different peoples to come to New Jersey, who encouraged them, what did they bring with them, what did they hope for? In what ways did the province benefit from diversity and to what extent did it cause problems? Why was it that the people from different national backgrounds who came through New Netherlands melded and intermarried so readily? Yet when later new groups of Germans, Scots, Scotch Irish, and New Englanders came, it took longer for integration? Was this due to the types of communities formed by the newcomers, or was it ethnic and language factors or was it because of class or religious differences? What factors led to competition and/or increased toleration among different religious groups? How did diversity and integration among the people in New Jersey follow similar or different paths during the colonial period compared with the mid-19th century, the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and today in our post World War II era?

You may also want to have your students explore with documents the early settlements in your own community or county. I will give a few examples from the Mahwah area of northern Bergen County. The first white settler was a widow, Blandina Bayard, who established an Indian trading post on the Ramapo River in 1700. She was of German parentage and her deceased husband had been Dutch. She brought her German nephew, Lucas Kiersted, to join her on the Ramapo River. He was married to a French Huguenot woman. He also joined with Peter Fauconnier and two other New York City French Huguenots and acquired from the Indians the 66 square mile Ramapo Tract extending from the New York border to Glen Rock. They brought German Palatines to the area as renters and sold tracts of land to Jersey Dutch settlers. This brought them all into conflict with the Proprietors of East Jersey who also claimed this land. Original documents for this local and New Jersey history can be found in the archives of the New Jersey Historical Society, in the Budke papers in the New York Public Library, in the Bergen County deeds office in Hackensack, in the three volumes of The Minutes of the Board of

Proprietors of the Eastern Division of New Jersey, edited by George Miller. Additionally there are several articles and books that provide secondary source material. I am sure that you can find like material through which your students can put together historical narratives for the history of their town or area of the county.

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