

# “Aliens” in the Empire: Diversity in the American Colonies

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**An Online Professional Development Seminar**

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2008-2009

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**AMERICA *in* CLASS<sup>®</sup>**

*from the* National Humanities Center

We will begin promptly on the hour.

The silence you hear is normal.

If you do not hear anything when the images change, e-mail Caryn Koplik  
[ckoplik@nationalhumanitiescenter.org](mailto:ckoplik@nationalhumanitiescenter.org)  
for assistance.

## GOALS

- To deepen understanding of the diverse mix of people who populated colonial America
- To provide fresh primary resources and instructional approaches for use with students

# Diversity in the American Colonies

## FROM THE FORUM

### Challenges, Issues, Questions

- Who was here? What groups made up the racial, ethnic, and religious diversity of the colonies?
- How did the different groups that populated the colonies get along?
- How did they relate to the British, and how did the British relate to them?
- How much religious diversity existed in the colonies?
- To what side, Patriot or Loyalist, did the various ethnic groups in the colonies gravitate as the Revolution approached?
- To what extent did the diversity of colonial America contribute to the development of a distinctive American culture?
- What “contributions” did the various ethnic and religious groups make to the culture of the colonies?



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Director of Undergraduate Studies  
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*Interpreting a Continent: Voices from Colonial America*, co-edited with John DuVal (2009)

*The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (2006)

# Diversity in the American Colonies

Who are we talking about?

English

Dutch

German

Scot-Irish

Irish

African

Native American

French

Spanish

What are we talking about?

The meaning of the term  
“alien.”

# Two British-Americans Observe Their Neighbors



*A New Map of North America from the Latest Discoveries, 1763, detail*

**red: British territory**

**green: French territory**

**yellow: Spanish territory**

What was the status of British North America before 1763?



# Two British-Americans Observe Their Neighbors

Ethnic diversity in the American colonies, 1750s



# William Clarke, *Observations...*



Published 1755



# William Clarke, *Observations...*

“the Number of Inhabitants within all the *British Colonies in North America*, may be expected from their natural Increase (and without making any Allowance for the transplanting of Protestant Families from the [German] *Palatinate, Swiss Cantons*, and other Northern Parts of *Germany*) to amount at the end of [thirty years] to near three Millions”

## Discussion Question

- Why does Clarke think the British colonies are growing?

# William Clarke, *Observations*...

“The Advantage accruing to the Mother-Country from the great Number of Inhabitants in her Northern Colonies [i.e., mainland Atlantic colonies] will appear from the Consumption they will occasion of British Manufactures, and also of all other European Commodities in general, which last must be landed and reship’d in Great Britain (which is by the Acts of Trade made the Staple of them for all the English Colonies) before they can be imported into America”

## Discussion Questions

- According to Clarke, in what ways do the colonies benefit the empire?
- What are the “Acts of Trade” to which he refers?

# William Clarke, *Observations*...

## Discussion Questions

- What threatens here?
- What is Clarke's main point overall?
- For Clarke, who's English?
  - Who's British?
  - Who's NOT?

If France gained control of the British colonies:

“the Trade & Commerce of France, and with it her Naval Power, would increase to such a Degree of Superiority over that of Great Britain, as must entirely destroy her Commerce, reduce her from her present State of Independency to be, at last, nothing more than a Province of France”

# William Clarke, *Observations*...

## Discussion Questions

- Knowing what happened next (the Seven Years' War, the American Revolution),
- What would you say Clarke had right?
- What did he have wrong?

**Benjamin Franklin, *Observations concerning the Increase of Mankind, Peopling of Countries, &c.***



*Benjamin Franklin, 1759*

by Benjamin Wilson

Gift of Albert Henry George Grey

The White House Historical  
Association (White House  
Collection)

“if in Europe they have but 4 Births to a Marriage (many of their Marriages being late), we may here reckon 8, of which if one half grow up, and our Marriages are made, reckoning one with another at 20 Years of Age, our People must at least be doubled every 20 Years.”

### **Discussion Question**

- What is Franklin saying about population in the colonies versus Europe?



“This Million doubling, suppose but once in 25 Years, will in another Century be more than the People of England, and the greatest Number of Englishmen will be on this Side [of] the Water. What an Accession of Power to the British Empire by Sea as well as Land! What Increase of Trade and Navigation! How important an Affair then to Britain is the present Treaty for settling the Bounds between her Colonies and the French, and how careful should she be to secure Room enough, since on the Room depends so much the Increase of her People?”

### **Discussion Questions**

- What will happen?
- What will it require?

“why should the Palatine [German] Boors be suffered to swarm into our Settlements, and by herding together establish their Language and Manners to the Exclusion of ours? Why should Pennsylvania, founded by the English, become a Colony of Aliens, who will shortly be so numerous as to Germanize us instead of our Anglifying them, and will never adopt our Language or Customs, any more than they can acquire our Complexion.”

### **Discussion Questions**

- Who is an “alien” to Franklin?
- Why?
- What sort of language does Franklin use to describe “aliens”?
- Are Franklin’s definitions the same as Clarke’s?

“Which leads me to add one Remark: That the Number of purely white People in the World is proportionably very small. All Africa is black or tawny. Asia chiefly tawny. America (exclusive of the Newcomers) wholly so. And in Europe, the Spaniards, Italians, French, Russians and Swedes, are generally of what we call a swarthy Complexion, as are the Germans also, the Saxons only excepted, who with the English make the principal Body of White People on the Face of the Earth. I could wish their Numbers were increased. And while we are, as I may call it, Scouring our Planet by clearing America of Woods and so making this Side of our Globe reflect a brighter Light to the Eyes of Inhabitants in Mars or Venus, why should we in the Sight of Superior Beings, darken its People? why increase the Sons of Africa by Planting them in America, where we have so fair an Opportunity, by excluding all Blacks and Tawneys, of increasing the lovely White and Red? But perhaps I am partial to the Complexion of my Country, for such Kind of Partiality is natural to Mankind.”

## Discussion Questions

- What is Franklin’s argument here?
- Are you surprised to read such an argument from Franklin that sounds more like an early 20th-century scientific racist?
- Does he back off a bit at the end of this quotation?



J. Carwitham, *A View of FORT GEORGE with the CITY of NEW YORK from the S. W.*, hand-colored engraving, ca. 1731-1736



# Sarah Kemble Knight, *Travel journal*



Sarah Kemble Knight (1666-1727)

Traveled from Boston to New  
York City, 1704-05

Diary of her journey published in  
1825

“The English go very fashionable in their dress. But the Dutch, especially the middling sort, differ from our women, in their habit go loose, wear French muches which are like a Cap and a headband in one, leaving their ears bare, which are set out with Jewels of a large size and many in number. And their fingers hoop’t with Rings, some with large stones in them of many Colors as were their pendants in their ears, which You should see very old women wear as well as Young.”

### Discussion Questions

- What did Knight observe?
- What did she think about the differences?
- Do you think female and male travelers saw different things?



# Dr. Alexander Hamilton, *Itinerarium*

Dr. Alexander  
Hamilton, 1715-1756

*Itinerarium*,  
Travel diary of a  
journey from  
Maryland to Boston,  
published in 1744.



“there have been a great number of Dutch here, tho’ now their language and customs begin pretty much to wear out, and would very soon die were it not for a parcel of Dutch domines [teachers] here, who, in the education of their children, endeavour to preserve the Dutch customs as much as possible.”

### Discussion Questions

- Were the Dutch “aliens”?
- Does the experience of the Dutch confirm or contradict Franklin’s fears about immigration?

“They have very bad water in the city, most of it being hard and brackish. Ever since the negro conspiracy, certain people have been appointed to sell water in the streets, which they carry on a sledge in great casks and bring it from the best springs about the city, for it was when the negroes went for tea water that they held their cabals and consultations, and therefore they have a law now that no negro shall be seen upon the streets without a lanthorn [lantern] after dark.”

## Discussion Questions

- Why was there water delivery in New York by 1744?
- Were enslaved Africans “aliens”? Were they New Yorkers? According to whom?

# Peter Kalm, *Travels into North America*



Peter Kalm, 1716-1779

Swedish-Finnish explorer,  
naturalist, agricultural  
economist

Painting of Pehr Kalm, 1746

by J.G. Geitel

# Peter Kalm, *Travels into North America*

“There are several churches in the town which deserve mention.

1. The English Church [Anglican], built in the year 1695, at the west end of town, is built of stone, and has a steeple with a bell.
2. The New Dutch Church, which is likewise built of stone, is pretty large, and is provided with a steeple. It also has a clock, the only one in the town. . . .
3. The Old Dutch Church is also built of stone. It is not so large as the new one. . . .  
The men for the most part sit in the gallery, and the women below.
4. The Presbyterian Church, which is pretty large and was built but lately. It is of stone, and has a steeple and bell in it.
5. The German Lutheran Church.
6. The German Reformed Church.
7. The French Church, for Protestant refugees [Huguenots].
8. The Quakers’ Meeting House.

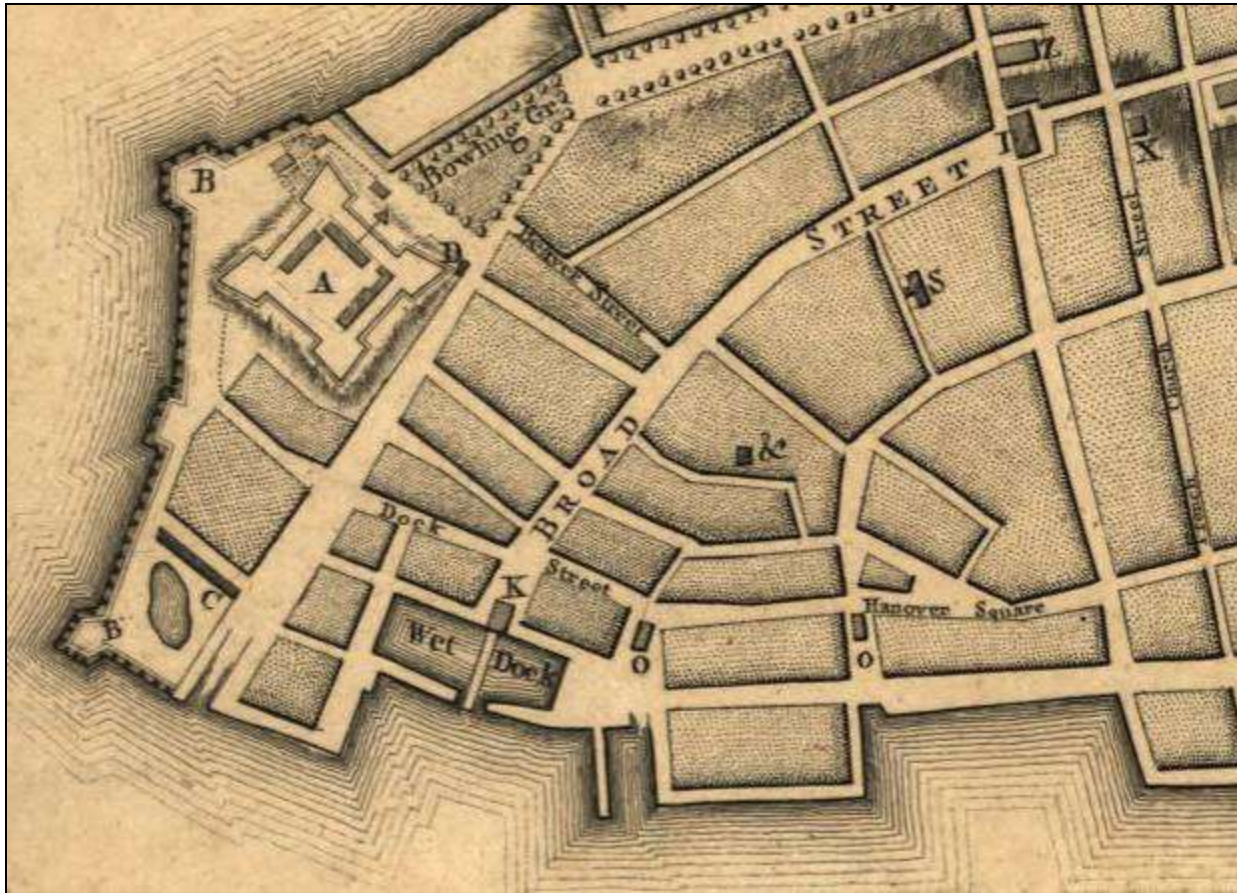
To these may be added the Jewish Synagogue which I mentioned before.”

## Discussion Questions

- What do you think it meant for New York to have such a variety of churches?
- What do you think the Dutch heritage contributed to New York’s diversity?



# New Netherland to New York



## Discussion Questions

- What was 18th-century New York like?
- What would Clarke and Franklin have thought of it?

*J. Montrésor, A Plan of the City of New-York . . . , 1766*  
 detail of southern end of Manhattan Island, including Broad Street  
 and the fort of New York



# Servitude in Pennsylvania and New Jersey

**This Indenture** Witnesseth, That  
*Henry Mayer* in Consideration of *£100*  
*William* paid by *Abraham Hestant* of Bucks  
County for his Passage from Rotterdam

do with for other good Cause he ~~will~~ *Henry Mayer*  
lawfully bound and put *Agree* his, and by these Presents both bind and put *him* self  
Servant to the said *Abraham Hestant*

Executors and Assigns, from the Day of the Date hereof, for and  
during the full Term of *Three Years* from thence  
next ensuing. During all which Term, the said Servant *his* ~~shall~~ *shall* be  
Executors, or Assigns, faithfully shall serve, and that honestly, and obediently in  
all Things, as a good and dutiful Servant ought to do. AND the said *Abraham*  
*Hestant* his ~~Executors and Assigns~~, during the said  
Term, shall find and provide for the said *Henry Mayer*  
sufficient Meat, Drink, *Apparel* Wearing and Lodging, and  
at the Expiration of the said Term the said *Henry*  
*Mayer* ~~shall~~ *shall* be made free and receive from the  
said *Abraham Hestant* two ~~hats~~ *hats* of *Apparel* one  
whereof he ~~shall~~ *shall* use

AND for the true Performance hereof, both the said Parties bind themselves jointly  
unto each other by these Presents. In Witness whereof they have hereunto inter-  
changedably set their Hands and Seals. Dated the *fourth* ~~fourth~~ *fourth* Day of  
*September* in the *twelfth* ~~twelfth~~ *twelfth* Year of His Majesty's Reign,  
*Anno Domini 1738*

Scaled and Delivered in  
the Presence of  
*Henry Mayer*  
*Rich Johnson* &  
*Co*

*Henry Mayer*  
his  
*Mayer*  
Germantown  
This above was  
Duly executed by Mutual  
Consent of both Parties before  
*Me Vincent Dauter*

## Indenture Certificate

signed by Henry Mayer  
dated 1738

“When the ships have landed at Philadelphia after their long voyage, [those] who cannot pay, must remain on board the ships till they are purchased, and are released from the ships by their purchasers. The sick always fare the worst, for the healthy are naturally preferred and purchased first; and so the sick and wretched must often remain on board in front of the city for 2 or 3 weeks, and frequently die, whereas many a one, if he could pay his debt and were permitted to leave the ship immediately, might recover and remain alive.”

### Discussion Questions

- Who is Mittelberger talking about?
- Why did people find themselves in this situation?
- Why did some parents indenture their children to pay their own passage?

“Who therefore wishes to earn his bread in a Christian and honest way, and cannot earn it in his fatherland otherwise than by the work of his hands, let him do so in his own country, and not in America.”

### **Discussion Questions**

- What advice does Mittelberger give?
- Imagine a conversation between Gottlieb Mittelberger and Benjamin Franklin: what might they say to each other?

# Maria Christina Martin's Case Before the German Society of Pennsylvania



German Society of Pennsylvania

# Maria Christina Martin's Case Before the German Society of Pennsylvania

Saturday, October 24, 1772

The Officers of the German Society met at Rudolph Burners.

Appeared Mary Christina Martin the Widow of George Martin who with his said Wife and Six Children, embarked at Rotterdam in the Ship Minerva, Captain Johnstone. Her Husband died on his Passage—She says that her Husband agreed for Nine Guineas a Freight—and that he had 40 Guineas Hollanish advanced him in Holland by Mssrs. Crauford & Co.—That at her arrival in Philadelphia, three of her Sons were sold at £30 each which is equal to £90 and her two younger Children, a Girl of 8 Years and a Boy of 4 Years old, were delivered to her Sister whose Husband gave a Note of Hand for £10, to Willing and Morris—By which Means She paid for the Freight of her Family £100—That nevertheless she being near 46 years of Age has been sold to John Brown for £22 and 6 shillings to serve him and his Assigns for 5 Years—In which Account she and her poor Orphans are greatly overcharged and prays the advice and assistance of the German Society.

## Discussion Questions

- What happened to Maria Christina Martin?
- Why did she go to the German Society of Pennsylvania?
- What do you think happened?
- What might Gottlieb Mittelberger and Benjamin Franklin have said if they heard about her case?



# The Last Speech, Confession, Birth, Parentage and Education of John Grimes



The gallows at Fort Smith served as an instrument of federal justice for twenty-three years, from 1873-1896. During those years 86 men were executed for capital offenses on the gallows.

“I JOHN GRIMES, aged Twenty-two Years, was born in the West of Ireland, in a small Village, of low, mean [poor] Parents, who had neither Ability nor Opportunity to give me any Education, so that from my Infancy I was brought up to Idleness and thieving, which, instead of being corrected in me, was rather encouraged . . .”

## Discussion Questions

- What kind of a document is this? What purposes did it serve?
- What do we learn about John Grimes from it?
- How does it explain his descent into crime?
- What do we learn about “aliens” in the empire?
- What sort of “alien” would Franklin say Grimes was?



# Scots-Irish in South Carolina



Herman Moll, Carolina, 1732, detail including Charles Town and Craven County, South Carolina

# Robert Witherspoon, memoir of 1734

“We were then put on board an open boat with tools and a years provision and one still mill for each family. They allowed each person over sixteen one ax, a broad ax, one narrow hoe. Our provisions consisted of indian corn, rice, wheaten flour, beef[,] pork, rum and salt we were much distressed in this part of our passage as it was the dead of winter and we were exposed to the inclemency of the weather day and night and what added to the grief of all pious persons on board was the Atheistical blasphemous mouths of our patrons.”

## Discussion Questions

- How did the Witherspoon family find themselves in such conditions so far from home?
- How did they fare from here?
- Were they better off in South Carolina than they would have been in Scotland?  
Than in Pennsylvania?
- Was Robert Witherspoon an “alien”?

# An African in New England

TO BE SOLD, on board the  
Ship *Bance-Island*, on tuesday the 6th  
of *May* next, at *Ashley-Ferry*; a choice  
cargo of about 250 fine healthy

**NEGROES,**

just arrived from the  
Windward & Rice Coast.

—The utmost care has  
already been taken, and

shall be continued, to keep them free from  
the least danger of being infected with the  
SMALL-POX, no boat having been on  
board, and all other communication with  
people from *Charles-Town* prevented.

*Austin, Laurens, & Appleby.*

N. B. Full one Half of the above Negroes have had the  
SMALL-POX in their own Country.



Slave Advertisement,  
Charleston,  
South Carolina, 1780s



# Venture Smith's Account of Slavery and Freedom

“I am now sixty-nine years old. Though once straight and tall, measuring without shoes six feet one inch and an half, and every way well proportioned, I am now bowed down with age and hardship. My strength which was once equal if not superior to any man whom I have ever seen, is now enfeebled so that life is a burden, and it is with fatigue that I can walk a couple of miles, stooping over my staff. . . . But amidst all my griefs and pains, I have many consolations; Meg, the wife of my youth, whom I married for love, and bought with my money, is still alive. My freedom is a privilege which nothing else can equal. Notwithstanding all the losses I have suffered by fire, by the injustice of knaves, by the cruelty and oppression of false hearted friends, and the perfidy of my own countrymen whom I have assisted and redeemed from bondage, I am now possessed of more than one hundred acres of land, and three habitable dwelling houses. It gives me joy to think that I have and that I deserve so good a character, especially for truth and integrity..”

## Discussion Questions

- How does Smith's life compare to that of indentured servants?
- To other people enslaved in the 18th century?
- How did slaves fit into the landscape of subjects and aliens?

# They're All Aliens to Us



Cartoonist Robert Freeman

from *Indians in American History*, ed. Hoxie & Iverson

## Montagnais Indians on Their First Encounter with the French

“his grandmother took pleasure describing the Indians’ astonishment when they saw the first French ship arrive. They thought it must be a moving island. They didn’t know what to make of the big sails that made it move. Their surprise redoubled when they saw all the men on deck. The women started getting the houses ready, which is what they customarily do when new guests arrive, and four Indian canoes risked going out to meet the ship. They invited the Frenchmen to come to the cabins they had prepared for them, but they could not understand each other. The Frenchmen gave them a barrel of hardtack, but when they took it home and tried it, they didn’t like it and threw it into the water.”

### Discussion Questions

- Who were the aliens in this story?
- How did the Montagnais Indians react to them?



## Pontiac's Speech to an Ottawa, Potawatomi, and Huron Audience



No authentic images of Pontiac are known to exist. This artistic interpretation was painted by John Mix Stanley.

“The land where you live—I made it for you and not for other people. Why do you put up with the Whites on your lands? Is it because you can't get along without them? I know that the people you call the Children of your Great Father supply your needs, but if you were not evil, as you are, you would do without them and you could live just as you lived before you met them. Before the people you call your Brothers came to your lands, didn't you live by the bow and arrow? You didn't need guns or powder or those other things. Nevertheless, you caught animals to eat and dressed in their skins, but when I saw you giving yourselves to evil, I withdrew the animals into the depths of the forests so that you would need your Brothers to supply your needs and clothe yourselves. All you have to do is become good and do what I want and I will send the animals back for you to live on.”

## Discussion Questions

- Who is speaking here?
- What problems does he address?
- What solutions does he give?
- How do his solutions compare to those of Franklin?

“America is chiefly occupied by Indians, who subsist mostly by Hunting. . . . having large Tracks, [the Indians] were easily prevail’d on to part with Portions of Territory to the Newcomers, who did not much interfere with the Natives in Hunting and furnish’d them with many Things they wanted.”

### **Discussion Questions**

- What is Franklin’s point here?
- How would Pontiac have responded?

# Diversity in the American Colonies

## FROM THE FORUM Challenges, Issues, Questions

- Who was here? What groups made up the racial, ethnic, and religious diversity of the colonies?
- How did the different groups that populated the colonies get along?
- How did they relate to the British, and how did the British relate to them?
- How much religious diversity existed in the colonies?
- To what side, Patriot or Loyalist, did the various ethnic groups in the colonies gravitate as the Revolution approached?
- To what extent did the diversity of colonial America contribute to the development of a distinctive American culture?
- What “contributions” did the various ethnic and religious groups make to the culture of the colonies?

Final slide.

Thank You