

# EARLY COLONIAL HISTORY.

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It is well that every family that can trace its ancestry in America to the middle of the Seventeenth century—as the Shreves can do—should understand somewhat of the early colonial history of our country. The American ancestors of this family were of English and Dutch birth; Quakers in religious belief; dwellers in the colony of Rhode Island, and on Long Island, from whence they emigrated to New Jersey and there at an early period in its history they purchased large tracts of land and were known as “Planters.”

The early history of New Netherlands and New Jersey, where many of their descendants reside, and of the Quaker sect, whose religious faith many still practice in its original simplicity, should be especially interesting to their posterity.

Although repeated attempts had been made by nearly every European power, and large concessions had been offered to those risking their lives and fortunes in the interest of discoveries in the New World, from the discovery of the continent in 1492 until after 1600, no permanent colonies had been planted on our soil excepting the weak one of the Spaniards at St. Augustine. Failure was written in every instance.

Jamestown, the first permanent English colony, was planted in 1606. The Pilgrims landed on Plymouth Rock in 1620, and during the next few decades the intervening territory was settled. In 1634 Lord Baltimore planted his colony in Maryland, and the same year Roger Williams, the friend of humanity and the champion of the Indians, appeared in Rhode Island and in 1638 obtained from the natives a gift of that island, piously naming its future capital Providence.

The spirit of the age was present when the foundations of New York were laid. Every great European event affected the fortunes of America. Did a state there prosper, it sought an increase of wealth by plantations in the West. Was a sect persecuted, it escaped to the New World. The reformation, emancipating the United Provinces, led to European settlements on the Hudson. The Netherlands divide with England