

Access-Legality: How has the door opened and closed?

Essential questions:

How have attitudes and policies towards immigrants changed over the years?
In what ways have different groups been excluded and why?

This lesson will introduce students to different ideas about immigration and is appropriate for units on: immigration and contemporary issues.

Lesson One: Introduction

What messages has this country sent to immigrants?

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I. Opening Activity

1. Emma Lazarus poem engraved on the Statue of Liberty
2. Contemporary cartoon, “Welcome Immigrants,” from Walt Handelsman at *Newsday*
3. Contemporary cartoon, “As long as they pay taxes, learn the language, etc.,” by Jim Borgman.
4. Historical cartoon from *Puck* magazine: “Welcome to all”
Have the groups spend 10 minutes answering the question:
“What’s the message?”

II. Full Discussion

Ask each member of each group to present his or her answers and to discuss them with the whole class. (This works much better if you can project the images on the board.)

Divide the messages: INCLUSION vs. EXCLUSION

Ask the students: What determines each of these messages?

Laws
Attitudes
Economics
History

Homework: Read Document 5

“Peter Stuyvesant, New Netherland and the Fight for Religious Freedom”

III. Individual Activity: Mixed Messages in New Netherland

Why did Jews come to New Amsterdam even though the governor was hostile to them?

Summary of activity

Each Student should get a copy of Document 5 (a description of the situation), a map and Document 6, 7, or 8. Each student should read and interpret his or her document individually and the each group will share its findings.

Simple role play: Divide the class up into groups of three. Each group will include one of the following roles:

- A spokesperson for Peter Stuyvesant (Document 6)
- A representative of the Dutch West India Company (Document 7)
- A representative of the Jews of the Netherlands.(Document 8)

Questions and Vocabulary

Document 6 (Stuyvesant): List two reasons Stuyvesant gives for wanting to expel the Jews.

Vocabulary: usury, magistrates, indigence, blasphemers

Document 7 (Dutch West India Reply): What two reasons does the Dutch West India company give to allow the Jews to stay?

Vocabulary: effectuate, apostille.

Document 8 Petition of the Jewish Nation in the Netherlands to the Directors of the Dutch West India Company, 1655.

Finally, each group will write a short skit that dramatizes the conversation between the refugees, Stuyvesant, and the company.

IV. Closing Questions

What factors determined Stuyvesant's attitude towards the Jews?

Why did the Dutch West India Company object to his plan to exclude the Jews?

Does religion and prejudice continue to play a role in immigration policy? Explain

Lesson 2: Religious freedom — the Flushing Remonstrance and its Legacy

I. Introductory Activity

Writing prompt

“List the different religions that exist in your neighborhood.”

“Describe a time when you witnessed someone being ridiculed or criticized because of his or her religious beliefs. Why do you think people act like this? Have you ever acted like this? Why or Why not?”

Discussion

Invite students to share their responses with the class.

Ask the students to imagine what would happen if the Governor told the residents of a neighborhood that they were to expel all members of a certain religion. The students will probably recognize that this would be illegal.

Ask the students: Is religious freedom an important value in this country? Discuss.

Review prior knowledge: Who was the 17th-century governor of what is now New York State from 1647 to 1664? How did he feel about religious freedom? What would you do if you lived in the Dutch colony and the governor ordered you to expel all members of a certain religion?

II. Explain the activity

Ask students to look at an example of citizens who stood up to Peter Stuyvesant and said “No, we will not exclude people because of their religion.” Each group should read a quotation from “The Flushing Remonstrance,” put it in their own words, and then share it with the class.

III. Group work

Each group gets a different excerpt from Document 9 along with historical background:

1. This document has already been translated from Dutch to 17th-century English. Now, express it in modern language.
2. What is the main idea of “The Flushing Remonstrance?” What reason do the authors give for their position?

Group 1: (Reason: fear of damnation)

Group 2: (Reason: our own religious / moral values)

Group 3: (Reason: You have nothing to be scared of, since government and the majority religion are strong and secure)

Group 4: (Reason: the tolerance of the Netherlands should extend to the New Netherland.)

Group 5: (Reason: the laws of God and good government command us to be good to all men)

3. How do you think Peter Stuyvesant would respond to this?
4. Each group will write down their answers and share them with the class for discussion.

Document 1

The New Colossus

by Emma Lazarus

1883

(engraved on the Statue of Liberty)

Vocabulary: brazen, astride, beacon

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"



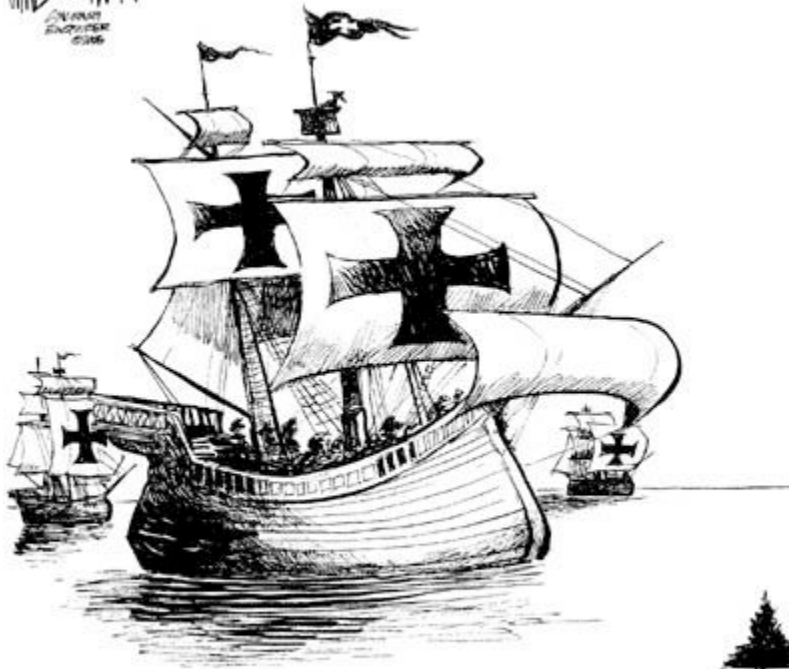
"New York - Welcome to the land of freedom - An ocean steamer passing the Statue of Liberty: Scene on the steerage deck."

Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper

July 2, 1887

Document 2
by Jim Borgman
"Cincinnati Enquirer"
04/11/2006

JIM BORGMAN
CINCINNATI ENQUIRER
4/11/06



"I'M OKAY WITH IT AS LONG AS THEY PAY US TAXES, LEARN OUR LANGUAGE AND DO THE JOBS WE AMERICANS DON'T WANT TO DO."

Document 3
"America's Mixed Message. . ."
by Walt Handelsman
Newsday
2007



AMERICA'S MIXED MESSAGE...

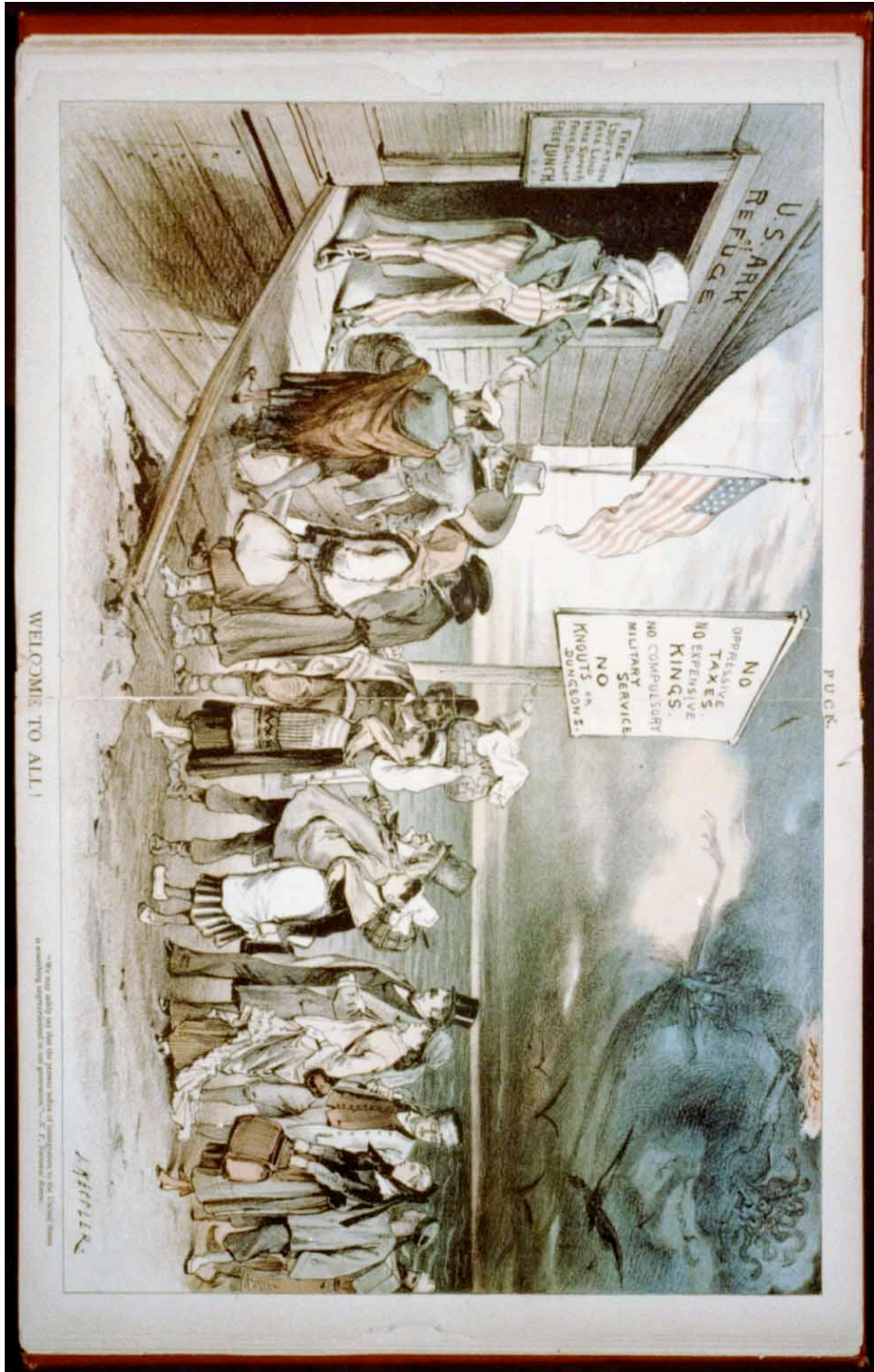
Document 4

“Welcome to All”

by J. Keppler

From *Puck* magazine, vol. VII

April 28, 1880



Document 5 Background Information

Peter Stuyvesant, New Netherland and the Fight for Religious Freedom

Peter Stuyvesant was the director-general of the Dutch colony of New Netherland, (which became New York after the British captured it in 1664). Born to a Dutch Reform Protestant minister in the Netherlands in 1610, Stuyvesant began studying at a university at the age of twenty. He then began work for the Dutch West India Company, a private company which owned and administered the Dutch colonies in the Americas. He rose quickly and at the age of thirty was acting governor of Curacao, Aruba, and Bonaire in the Caribbean off the coast of Venezuela. While governor, he led the unsuccessful attack on the Spanish island of St. Martin, when he lost part of his leg to an enemy cannonball and had to be fitted with a peg leg with silver nails driven into it. As a result, he reportedly gained the nicknames of “Peg Leg Pete” and “Old Silver Nails.”

The West India Company rewarded Stuyvesant for his bravery, appointing him director-general of New Netherland. Stuyvesant ruled an amazingly diverse colony. The capital, New Amsterdam (which the British would rename New York), was composed of a narrow Dutch majority and a mixture that included French, English, Irish, Swedish and German inhabitants. Africans, who were brought as slaves, also resided there. Some of them were later given a limited amount of freedom. Stuyvesant’s predecessor estimated that at least 18 languages were spoken in New Amsterdam.

Governor Stuyvesant improved the governance and economy of New Netherland. To accomplish this, he also tried to restrict public amusements in the colony, forcing all “brewers, tapsters and innkeepers” to close at 9:00 p.m., banning the sale of liquor to Indians, and creating harsh punishments for lawbreakers. His goal was to combat “the sins, scandals, debaucheries and crimes” of the colony.

The governor took great offense at the religious diversity of the colony. The Dutch Reformed Church was the established religion of the Netherlands, but custom allowed other religious groups to worship in private. Stuyvesant’s loyalty to the Reformed Church led him to interpret Dutch law more strictly than his predecessor and to suppress all other religions in the colony. His zeal would come into conflict with the diversity of the colony and its need for growth.

Stuyvesant and the Jews

After unsuccessfully banning Lutherans, mostly German and Swedish immigrants, from organizing their own church he turned his eye to New Amsterdam’s newest group, Portuguese Jews. Portugal had expelled its Jews or forced them to convert in 1497. Many converts secretly retained their Jewish religion (crypto-Jews). This was a serious crime in Portugal, which could lead to a trial by the Inquisition of the Catholic Church and an *auto da fe* (trial by fire). Some of these crypto-Jews went to the Portuguese colony Pernambuco, Brazil, and became openly Jewish when the Dutch took over the colony in 1630. They were joined by Dutch Jews, whose ancestors had also fled Spain and Portugal rather than face forced conversion. (Jews from Spain and Portugal are known as Sephardic Jews. Sephardic derives from the Hebrew word for Spain.)

In 1654, the Portuguese retook Pernambuco and the Jews fled, fearing the Inquisition. Twenty three of these Jews arrived as refugees to the Dutch colonial settlement of New Amsterdam.

Stuyvesant, the Quakers and the Flushing Remonstrance

In 1657, a boatload of English Quakers arrived in New Amsterdam. Quakers (also known as the Society of Friends) were a Christian group who believed that there is something of God in every person and each person could encounter God directly. George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, said God did not want churches and rejected their authority. Quakers refused to take their hats off or kneel before kings, bishops, judges and other officials. They rejected luxury and displays of wealth, including elegant clothing or jewelry. Quaker worship also embodied the ideals of equality. In Quaker meetings, ministers did not lead prayers. Instead, members prayed in silence as a group. When moved, any member of the congregation could speak. They are also historically pacifist and have refused to fight in wars. Their belief in equality led the Quakers to be the first religious group in Europe and the Americas to oppose slavery. Unlike Jews and Lutherans, Quakers actively converted people threatening the stability of the colony and the authority of the Dutch Reformed Church.

Not surprisingly, given his intolerance for Lutherans and Jews, Stuyvesant was not pleased when four Quakers arrived in New Amsterdam. To stop the influx of Quakers and the possible conversion of the colony's population, Stuyvesant issued a proclamation ordering the confiscation of any ship bringing a Quaker into New Netherland and large fines against any individual harboring them. In response to Stuyvesant's repression of Quakers, 31 residents of Flushing, Queens, signed a protest on December 27, 1657, calling for religious tolerance. Known as the Flushing Remonstrance, it is one of the earliest calls for religious freedom in North America.

Stuyvesant, the Quakers and the Flushing Remonstrance

Stuyvesant responded to the Remonstrance by ordering the arrest of the Flushing officials, but his persecution of the Quakers only made them more popular. In 1662, he discovered that Quaker meetings were taking place in the home of John Bowne in Flushing.¹ Stuyvesant had Bowne arrested, taken to New Amsterdam, and then banished to the Netherlands. Bowne defended his actions before the West India Company,

For which of you, being taken by force from your wife and family without just cause would be bound from returning to them, unless upon terms to act contrary to your conscience and deny your faith and religion, yet this (in effect) do you require of me and not less.

The Company ruled in Bowne's favor in 1663, allowing him to return, informing Stuyvesant that

Although it is our anxious desire that similar and other sectarians may not be found among you, yet we doubt extremely the policy of adopting rigorous measures against them. In the youth of your existence, you ought to rather encourage than check the population of the colony. The consciences of men ought to be free and unshackled so long as they continue moderate, peaceable, inoffensive, and not hostile to the government. Such have been the maxims of prudence and toleration by which the magistrates of this city (Amsterdam) have been governed; and the consequences have been that the oppressed and

¹ The Bowne House still exists today. The oldest house in the borough of Queens, it is the home of the Bowne House Historical Society, which preserves the house as a museum.

<http://www.bownehouse.org/index.htm>

persecuted from every country have found among us an asylum from distress. Follow in the same steps, and you will be blessed.

The following year, the Duke of York, brother of England's King Charles II and later crowned King James II, would send a fleet of ships and 2000 soldiers to conquer New Netherland. Stuyvesant was prepared to fight the English, but had only 250 men to defend New Amsterdam and an insufficient supply of food to withstand a siege. Ninety three of New Amsterdam's leading men, including Stuyvesant's son, sent the director-general a petition to surrender on the generous terms offered by the English. On September 8, 1664, the West India Company's flag was lowered and New Amsterdam and New Netherland were renamed New York, in honor of the Duke of York.

Document 6

Peter Stuyvesant
Petition to Expel the Jews from New Amsterdam
September 22, 1654
(Written to the Dutch West India Company)

The Jews who have arrived would nearly all like to remain here, but learning that they (with their customary usury and deceitful trading with the Christians) were very repugnant with the inferior magistrates, as also to the people having the most affection for you; the Deaconry also fearing that owing to their present indigence they might become a charge in the coming winter, we have, for the benefit of this weak and newly developing place and the land in general, deemed it useful to require them in a friendly way to depart; praying also most seriously in this connection, for ourselves as also for the general community of your worships, that the deceitful race – such hateful enemies and blasphemers of the detraction of your worships and the dissatisfaction of your worships' most affectionate subjects.

Document 7

Dutch West India Company
Reply to Stuyvesant's Petition
(April 26, 1655)

We would have liked to effectuate and fulfill your wishes and request that the new territories should no more be allowed to be infected by people of the Jewish nation, for we foresee there from the same difficulties which you fear, but after having further weighed and considered the matter, we observe that this would be somewhat unreasonable and unfair, especially because of the considerable loss sustained by this nation, with others, in taking of Brazil, as also because of the large sums of money for which they are still indebted to the Company. Therefore after many deliberations we have finally decided and resolved to apostil upon a certain petition presented by said Portuguese Jews that these people may travel and trade to and in New Netherland and live and remain there, provided the poor among them shall not become a burden to the company or to the community, but be supported by their own nation. You will now govern yourself accordingly.

Document 8

Petition of the Jewish Nation [in the Netherlands] to the
Directors of the Dutch West India Company, 1655

1655, January To the Honorable Lords, Directors of the Char-
Petition of the tered West India Company, Chamber of the
Jewish Nation. City of Amsterdam.

The merchants of the Portuguese Nation residing in this City respectfully remonstrate to your Honors that it has come to their knowledge that your Honors raise obstacles to the giving of permits or passports to the Portuguese Jews to travel and to go to reside in New Netherland, which if persisted in will result to the great disadvantage of the Jewish nation. It also can be of no advantage to the general Company but rather damaging.

Granted that
they may re-
side and traffic,
provided they
shall not be-
come a charge
upon the dea-
conry or the
Company.

There are many of the nation who have lost their possessions at Pernambuco and have arrived from there in great poverty, and part of them have been dispersed here and there.

So that your petitioners had to expend large sums of money for their necessaries of life, and through lack of opportunity all cannot remain here to live. And as they cannot

go to Spain or Portugal because of the Inquisition, a great part of the aforesaid people must in time be obliged to depart for other territories of their High Mightinesses the States-General and their Companies, in order there, through their labor and efforts, to be able to exist under the protection of the administrators of your Honorable Directors, observing and obeying your Honors' orders and commands.

It is well known to your Honors that the Jewish nation in Brazil have at all times been faithful and have striven to guard and maintain that place, risking for that purpose their possessions and their blood.

Yonder land is extensive and spacious. The more of loyal people that go to live there, the better it is in regard to the population of the country as in regard to the payment of various excises and taxes which may be imposed there, and in regard to the increase of trade, and also to the importation of all the necessaries that may be sent there.

Your Honors should also consider that the Honorable Lords, the Burgomasters of the City and the Honorable High Illustrious Mighty Lords, the States-General, have in political matters always protected and considered the Jewish nation as upon the same footing as all the inhabitants and burghers. Also it is conditioned in the treaty of perpetual peace with the King of Spain that the Jewish nation shall also enjoy the same liberty as all other inhabitants of these lands.

Your Honors should also please consider that many of the Jewish nation are principal shareholders in the Company. They have always striven their best for the Company, and many of their nation have lost immense and great capital in its shares and obligations.

The Company has by a general resolution consented that those who wish to populate the Colony shall enjoy certain districts of land gratis. Why should now certain subjects of this State not be allowed to travel thither and live there? The French consent

that the Portuguese Jews may traffic and live in Martinique, Christopher and others of their territories, whither also some have gone from here, as your Honors know. The English also consent at the present time that the Portuguese and Jewish nation may go from London and settle at Barbados, whither also some have gone.

As foreign nations consent that the Jewish nation may go to live and trade in their territories, how can your Honors forbid the same and refuse transportation to this Portuguese nation who reside here and have been settled here well on to about sixty years, many also being born here and confirmed burghers, and this to a land that needs people for its increase?

Therefore the petitioners request, for the reasons given above (as also others which they omit to avoid prolixity), that your Honors be pleased not to exclude but to grant the Jewish nation passage to and residence in that country; otherwise this would result in a great prejudice to their reputation. Also that by an Apostille and Act the Jewish nation be permitted, together with other inhabitants, to travel, live and traffic there, and with them enjoy liberty on condition of contributing like others, &c. Which doing, &c.¹¹

Document 9

Excerpts from the Flushing Remonstrance, December 27, 1657

Group 1:

You have been pleased to send unto us a certain prohibition or command that we should not receive or entertain any of those people called Quakers because they are supposed to be, by some, seducers of the people. For our part we cannot condemn them in this case, neither can we stretch out our hands against them, for out of Christ God is a consuming fire, and it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Group 2:

Wee desire therefore in this case not to judge least we be judged, neither to condemn least we be condemned, but rather let every man stand or fall to his own Master. We are bound by the law to do good unto all men, especially to those of the household of faith.

Group 3:

And for those jealousies and suspicions which some have of them, that they are destructive unto Magistracy and Ministry, that cannot be, for the Magistrate hath his sword in his hand and the Minister hath the sword in his hand...

Group 4:

The law of love, peace and liberty in the states extending to Jews, Turks and Egyptians, as they are considered sons of Adam, which is the glory of the outward state of Holland, so love, peace and liberty, extending to all in Christ Jesus, condemns hatred, war and bondage.

Group 5:

Therefore if any of these said persons come in love unto us, we cannot in conscience lay violent hands upon them, but give them free egress and regress unto our Town, and houses, as God shall persuade our consciences, for we are bound by the law of God and man to doe good unto all men and evil to no man.

Document 10
New Netherland

