

Coming to America in Colonial Days: 1607-1776

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My name is Erin Bellis and I am an 8th grade student from Rombout Middle School in Beacon, New York. I am writing about how groups and individuals came to the lands that are now part of the United States from the dates of 1607 to 1776. I am writing this essay because if it was not for all these people coming over from England, we probably would not be here as the strong country that we are today. Wouldn't it be neat to be related to one of these brave, heroic people? Well, I am!! I am about to tell you about the life of John Pidcock, one of my ancestors that went on this adventure.

The Pidcocks originated in Bakewell and Matlock in central Derbyshire between Manchester and Sheffield near the center of England. Thomas Pidcock, one of John Pidcock's ancestors immigrated to Ireland in 1648. It was during that time that Cromwell invaded Ireland. Later John Pidcock was found at Bucks County, Pennsylvania. John was referred to as "that Irish immigrant".

When John Pidcock came over from England, he travelled on a ship called the "Friends Adventure" which took sail from London in 1679 in hopes to find the Barbados and other parts of America. John Pidcock landed on the shores of the Delaware River.

In 1684, he had established a home and life in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, now known as the lands of Washington Crossing Park. He lived by the mouth of the creek which is now named after him, "Pidcock Creek". When John Pidcock settled on the land, he found and became close friends to the Lenni-Lenape Indians who occupied the vicinity. John Pidcock set up a trading post and built an abode exactly where the Thompson-Neely house is now standing.

The Thompson-Neely house was built originally by John Pidcock in 1702. It was later added on by other men. The Thompson-Neely house is a historical land mark: and was where General George Washington made his decision to cross the Delaware River on December 25, 1776, when he surprisingly attacked the Hessian soldiers, known as the Battle of Trenton. The Thompson-Neely house now stands as a three part house, the middle section, which is the original part, was built by John Pidcock. John Pidcock and his family remained on the land (and house) which consisted of 505 acres until 1740 when it was sold to John Simpson.

John Pidcock led an interesting life. He was a frontiersman who hunted and traded with his neighbors, the Lenni-Lenape Indians. They had many great experiences together. John Pidcock married an Indian maiden and was welcomed into the tribe with no problems. Even though there is no record of their marriage, we are led to believe they were married by the Indian ways. It is known that Pidcock married an Indian maiden named Ankey. Together he and his wife had five (5) children named Emanuel, Benjamin, John Jr., Stephen and Robert Pidcock.

All the children were raised by Pidcock and Ankey in the middle part of the Thompson-Neely house. Raising five children was not easy. They only had one big room in which

they cooked, ate, did school work and slept in. It was made of stone which was found around by the creek bed. Their fireplace had to go twenty-four hours a day because that was the only means of having heat and the only means of doing all their baking.

John Pidcock died in 1735 and was buried on Bowmans' Hill, where a plaque reads: "Here lie buried Johnathon and his wife Ankey and other members of the Pidcock Family". It is known that he came here from England and settled on the Delaware River. He lived with or near the Lenni-Lenape Indians. He traded and learned different things from them. His work was admired as an architect when he built the middle portion of the Thompson-Neely house in Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

Today a plaque stands in the spot that John Pidcock settled.

It reads as follows:

*"On this spot
on a tract of land
of 505 acres called
by the Indians
Win-Na-Haw-Caw-Chunk
JOHN PIDCOCK
the first settler
built mills and
established a trading
post with the Indians
in 1684."*

On the Thompson-Neely house, a plaque exists crediting John Pidcock for his architectural abilities and reads as follows:

*"The central portion of this house was built by John Pidcock
in 1702, and has been preserved as a type of earliest Pennsylvania
architecture and masonry"*

Although it is not stated as fact, I think John Pidcock felt scared at first when he was coming to the new land. Scared of what might happen or what he might find. When he reached the new land, he found friends. The Indians were his friends, although other men disagreed with John Pidcock having a friendship with the Indians. John Pidcock treated them as any other neighbors. After he married Ankey, the Indian maiden, he began to learn different trades and different ways of planting and harvesting crops. He remained friends with the Indians. I think every Thanksgiving was great for them. John Pidcock taught the Indians what he knew and they did the same in return!!

John Pidcock faced many problems and tragedies but remained strong and stood up for his rights, his family and the Indians. John Pidcock was a great man and I am more than proud to have him as my ancestor.