



American Colonies: The Settling of North America, Vol. 1

By Alan Taylor

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A multicultural, multinational history of colonial America from the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Internal Enemy* and *American Revolutions*

In the first volume in the Penguin History of the United States, edited by Eric Foner, Alan Taylor challenges the traditional story of colonial history by examining the many cultures that helped make America, from the native inhabitants from millennia past, through the decades of Western colonization and conquest, and across the entire continent, all the way to the Pacific coast.

Transcending the usual Anglocentric version of our colonial past, he recovers the importance of Native American tribes, African slaves, and the rival empires of France, Spain, the Netherlands, and even Russia in the colonization of North America. Moving beyond the Atlantic seaboard to examine the entire continent, *American Colonies* reveals a pivotal period in the global interaction of peoples, cultures, plants, animals, and microbes. In a vivid narrative, Taylor draws upon cutting-edge scholarship to create a timely picture of the colonial world characterized by an interplay of freedom and slavery, opportunity and loss.

"Formidable . . . provokes us to contemplate the ways in which residents of North America have dealt with diversity." -*The New York Times Book Review*

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

First in Viking's new five-volume series the Penguin History of the United States, edited by noted Columbia historian Eric Foner (Reconstruction), this book by Pulitzer Prize-winner Taylor (William Cooper's Town) challenges traditional Anglocentric interpretations of colonial history by focusing more evenly on the myriad influences on North America's development. Beginning with the Siberian migrations across the Bering Straits 15 millennia ago, Taylor lays out the complicated road map of ownership, occupation and competition involving the Native Americans, African slaves and Spanish, Dutch, French and English colonists. He covers settlement and conquest from Canada to Mexico, and from the West Indies and mainland colonies to the Pacific islands. "The colonial intermingling of peoples and of microbes, plants, and animals from different continents was unparalleled in speed and volume in global history," he writes. Taylor delves deeply into topics given scant mention in most histories: the crucial role of the West Indies in the 17th-century economy and the particular brand of brutality that supported it; cultural disparities among the many Native peoples that influenced their mutually dependent relations with the various colonizers. An extensive, chapter-by-chapter bibliography lists further reading. Even the serious student of history will find a great deal of previously obscure information, for instance that in the 18th century the Russian fur traders went much farther on North America's Pacific Coast than the explorers sent by the Russian crown. The book offers a balanced understanding of the diverse peoples and forces that converged on this continent early on and influenced the course of American history. Illus. (Nov. 12) Forecast: This bold new view of early America should be widely and well reviewed, and will attract a broad range of students of American history.

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From Library Journal

In this first book in the "Penguin History of the United States" series, Taylor (history, Univ. of California, Davis; William Cooper's Town: Power and Persuasion on the Frontier of the Early American Republic) examines American colonial history from a wide-ranging perspective. Instead of offering the traditional story of the English colonies and "American exceptionalism," Taylor examines the complex mix of peoples, events, and influences that shaped the New World. He notes that the intermingling of cultures, people, plants, and animals from different parts of the world was unparalleled in speed and volume and had devastating consequences for the environment and most of the participants. Only a very select few prospered during the 17th and 18th centuries, a period in which North America actually lost population owing to diseases, wars, and early deaths. He vividly describes the harsh realities of colonial life and examines the important roles played by French, Dutch, Spanish, Russian, and English colonists as well as Native Americans and African slaves. Well written and documented, this is recommended for academic and large public libraries. Robert Flatley, Frostburg State Univ., MD

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From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review Prizewinning historian Taylor, adding another entry in his prestigious output with this first book in the new Penguin History of the United States series, offers a work of history colored by our age of diversity. Taylor presents a continent benefiting from a plethora of cultural groups, a far cry from the conventional Anglocentric version of U.S. history. Taylor begins in 15,000 B.C. with the trans-Siberian migration across the then-dry Bering Strait to North America, and he follows these peoples through the

millennia to their transformation into the multitudinous Indian tribes. Taylor, always ready to debunk, counters the traditional image of the Indians as being respectful custodians of all in the natural world, stating that what actually moved them was a fear of the "spirits" lurking in the plants and animals that would take their revenge on the Indians if they were harmed! He expends much effort on Columbus and the early Spanish settlers in the 1500s, as well as the influence of the French and Dutch on the continent. Most interesting is the manner in which the early colonists, clueless about the natural world of their new continent, were aided by the Native Americans, as well as by, of course, the African slaves--a codependency that mirrors our own "new age" of diversity and mutual interdependence. *Allen Weakland*
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Betty Terry:

Nowadays reading books be a little more than want or need but also get a life style. This reading habit give you lot of advantages. Advantages you got of course the knowledge the particular information inside the book which improve your knowledge and information. The knowledge you get based on what kind of guide you read, if you want have more knowledge just go with training books but if you want really feel happy read one having theme for entertaining for instance comic or novel. Typically the American Colonies: The Settling of North America, Vol. 1 is kind of reserve which is giving the reader capricious experience.

Lydia Donaldson:

Spent a free time for you to be fun activity to complete! A lot of people spent their spare time with their family, or their very own friends. Usually they performing activity like watching television, gonna beach, or picnic inside park. They actually doing same every week. Do you feel it? Would you like to something different to fill your free time/ holiday? Could possibly be reading a book might be option to fill your cost-free time/ holiday. The first thing you ask may be what kinds of guide that you should read. If you want to test look for book, may be the guide untitled American Colonies: The Settling of North America, Vol. 1 can be good book to read. May be it can be best activity to you.

Ollie Brooks:

In this era which is the greater man or woman or who has ability to do something more are more precious than other. Do you want to become one of it? It is just simple way to have that. What you should do is just spending your time almost no but quite enough to possess a look at some books. One of several books in the top collection in your reading list is actually American Colonies: The Settling of North America, Vol. 1. This book that is certainly qualified as The Hungry Inclines can get you closer in turning into precious person. By looking upwards and review this guide you can get many advantages.

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