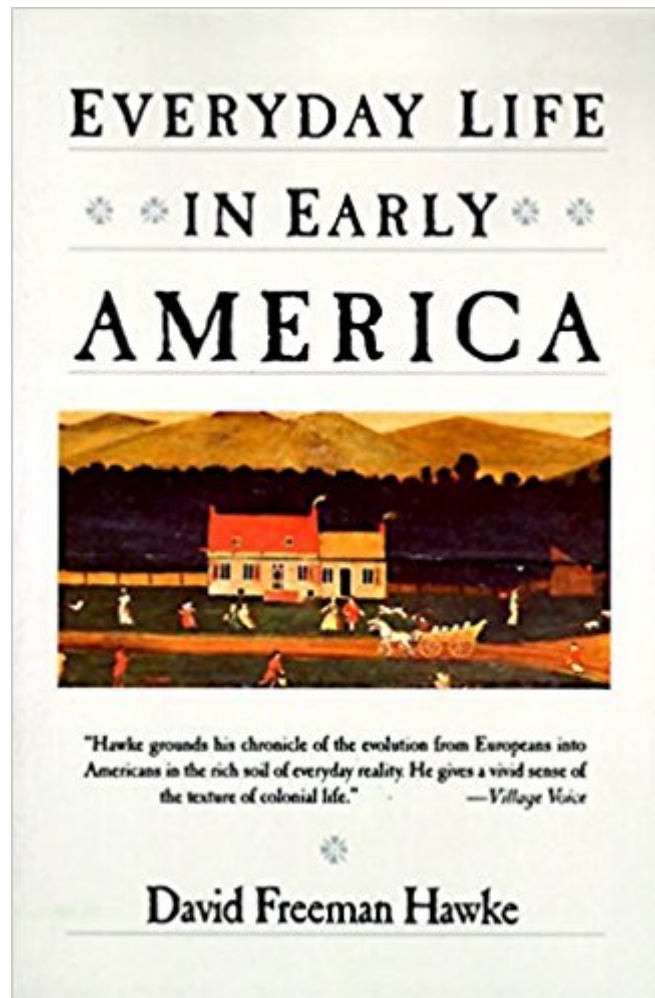




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# Everyday Life In Early America



## Synopsis

"In this clearly written volume, Hawke provides enlightening and colorful descriptions of early Colonial Americans and debunks many widely held assumptions about 17th century settlers."--Publishers Weekly

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In this clearly written volume, Hawke provides enlightening and colorful descriptions of early Colonial Americans and debunks many widely held assumptions about 17th century settlers. He argues that most pioneers were not young and that their families weren't much larger than present-day households. In addition, he states that adults lived longer than has been believed and that most early settlers were artisans and craftsmen with little knowledge of farming, although the wilderness soon forced them to adapt. Hawke includes entertaining discussions of what the first white Americans ate (for example, raccoon was served in New York). He also discusses how colonial Americans were punished for crimes and how they treated enslaved blacks and indentured servants. This book is informative but could have been more deeply researched. Copyright 1988 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I'd already had the post-Revolution and Victorian books in the "Everyday Life" series, and just bought the Westward Expansion/Civil War volume, so decided to buy the other two books in the

series. This, the first, is, sadly, a bit tedious, and that's a shame, because there are facts here I'd never read anywhere else, such as that the Pilgrims had little experience in farming; or how the amount of land a colonist had in different parts of the country determined what type of fence you would build (incidentally, "good fences make good neighbors" was a truism: if you did not have your crops properly fenced in and cattle ate them, it was your fault, not the owner of the cattle). There is a continual emphasis on the colonists' use of wood from the plentiful forests, England having nearly been deforested by that time by the regular need for wood. One of the interesting points of discussion is how the traditions of English life changed, for instance, that in England farmers lived in the village and walked to their fields every day; once in the United States they moved their homes to their fields. It's a good summary of colonial life, but rather dry. I'm glad to have it to complete the set, though.

This is a bare bones book. It just gives you the basics but it is a nice framework and if you want to read further this will give you a good timeline. I found the dynamic between the natives and the newly arrived white man interesting and also the situation with black slaves in the South. They were not treated oppressively until around 1700 when their numbers increased to the point that they became a threat. I highly recommend this book if you want just a taste of what life was like during this period.

I needed this book for a class and at the time i couldnt afford to buy all my books in new condition so i decided to go with a used one from . I could not be any happier with my desicion. When i opened the book up, because it was used it was filled with notes on the margins which helped out a lot. I know maybe i just got lucky but it still deserves a perfect review.

The only genuine problem with this excellent book is that it does not compare favorably with some of the other books in this series. For instance, if one turns to this after reading Schlereth's amazing *VICTORIAN AMERICA*, one is scaled down the book seems in comparison. This is not the fault of author David Hawke. The problem is the paucity of details in everyday life in 17th century America compared to the late 19th. Unfortunately for Hawke, the life of Americans in the 17th century was rudimentary and, of necessity, simple. What makes *VICTORIAN AMERICA* such a delight is the almost overwhelmingly amount of delicious detail. Nonetheless, life in 17th century colonial America is apt to be less familiar to most readers than that of late 19th century America, and this book performs an enormous service in providing a concise, well-written overview of what that life was like.

Hawke is especially good at exploding various myths that have evolved over the years concerning colonial life. Unlike the later volumes in the series, Hawke deals, by dint of necessity, of the larger historical situation. Some of the topics that Hawke takes up include the structure of towns and villages, the nature of farms and the crops grown, houses and the types of objects found within them, the health of the settlers and treatment of illness, social stratification, indentured servitude and slavery, relations with Native Americans, and various superstitions. If the book was somewhat less exhilarating than some of the later books in the series, it nonetheless is quite informative. I highly recommend it to anyone wishing to learn more about the nuts and bolts of colonial life.

I read this book after reading *The Reshaping of Everyday Life: 1790-1840* (Everyday Life in America) and *Home Life in Colonial Days*. All the books had a little over-lap but each book had slightly different focus, information and detail. I enjoyed this book very much; the chapters are as follows: *O Strange New World* > *Who came and Why They Came* - *What They Brought With Them* - *What They Found* *Settling In* *The Farm* *The House* *The Home* *Health* *The Rhythms of Life* *Manners and Morals* *Red, White and Black* *War* *Beyond the Farm* *Wonders of the Invisible World* *Toward the Eighteenth Century* This book has a lot of super quotes - it was very thesis-like in that the introduction had 2 quotes, one from *The Waning of the Middle Ages* and the other from *In Small Things Forgotten: An Archaeology of Early American Life* and then the author's final paragraph from the introduction really set the tone for the book: "Although relics from the past do survive, the everyday life of seventeenth-century Americans differed drastically from ours. As Fernand Braudel, like Deetz, reminds us to comprehend it we must 'strip ourselves in imagination of all the surroundings of our own lives.' The journey backward, he adds 'is a journey to another planet, another human universe.'" And this author really hits a home run showing how different life was and giving us a full understanding of the frame of mind of people then, and what was going on in history and around them and all that created them; a super dramaturgy of the times.

One of several excellent books I have bought and read to learn some insight into just how comfortable and easy MY day to day life really is.

Excellent service and excellent book!! Thank you so much!!

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