

# My House, Farmhouse

Home Life Today and in the Colonial Period



The Wyckoff Farmhouse is the oldest house in New York City. It was built circa 1652, which makes the house over 360 years old. The Wyckoff family came to the new world from Germany and the Netherlands and lived in the house with their 11 children. The father, Pieter, and mother, Greitje, would have spoken Dutch at home. All 13 family members lived together in the small house. The boys helped the father work on the farm—planting the seeds, tilling the fields and harvesting the crops which he needed to feed the family and sell in local markets. The girls would help the mother around the house—tending the kitchen-garden, cooking meals, spinning wool, and cleaning the house.

**BRAINSTORM:** Students can work with partners or on their own to brainstorm ideas about the differences between home life today and in the colonial period.

- What things do you have in your own home that you don't expect to see at the Wyckoff Farmhouse?

Examples: *computer, light bulbs, indoor bathroom*

- What might you find at the Wyckoff Farmhouse that you do not have in your home today?

Examples: *butter churn, fireplace*

**MAKE A CHART:** Come together as a group and chart out some of the responses. What answers did many students have in common? What objects might they have used in colonial times to substitute for things we use today?

My House 2015	The Wyckoff House 1652
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <i>Computer</i></li><li>○ <i>Light bulbs</i></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <i>Butter churn</i></li><li>○ <i>fireplace</i></li></ul>



**BE A DETECTIVE:** Come to the Wyckoff Farmhouse Museum prepared with one item from each list. These are your clues to look for when you arrive on your field trip. Look for these items inside the house to confirm or deny your hypotheses about what life was like over 360 years ago in New Netherland.