

Session Notes

American Revolution and American People: A Comparative Inquiry

December 1, 2002: Chronological and Historiographical Overview

Neal Salisbury began with a welcome and started an introduction of all in attendance. Gave background and overview of the project.

Chronology Game (Marla Miller)

Four groups were formed and were given a series of ten events that occurred during the revolution era. The task ordered them to put the items in chronological order. The events with answers are as follows:

Resource:

1. Lord Jeffery Amherst ordered that blankets exposed to smallpox be distributed among Delaware Indians. (May 1763)
2. African Americans parade in the streets of Charleston shouting "Liberty;" fearing revolt, the town is under arms for a week. (1765)

(For more information on this subject check out: Frey, Sylvia, Water From the Rock : Black Resistance in a Revolutionary Age Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, c1991 (1935))

3. Boston Tea Party (Dec 1773)
4. Edenton Tea Party (Oct 1774) (North Carolina)
5. Paul Revere rides out of Boston to alert citizens of British troop movements. (April 1775)
6. Thomas Paine publishes Common Sense. (Jan 1776)
7. Continental Army survives harrowing winter at Valley Forge. (1778)
8. Spain enters the war. (1779)
9. The Federalist Papers are published. (1787-1788)
10. The Constitution is ratified. (1797-90)

Notice there are some very well known events and some that are rarely mentioned if at all.

Why is the chronology exercise important? The events changed and shaped others.

Option: Ask your students to form the game and pick important events and then ask why they chose such events? When you ask questions of what you want to know and your chronology changes.

Ask what is your ideal government? The founding Fathers made their ideal government.

To Re-Member the American Revolution: The Toll of the Amnesia (Joyce Berkman)

Q: Why bother teaching the revolution? What matters? What's important?

A: Empathy with decision making; exercise imagination in array of persons. How could I?

What are connective bridges for young people with past figures? What does membership in a nation mean?

Passionate engagements with specific political issues connect with or relate to today?

How does the American Revolution relate to other revolutions?

What perceptions shape our politics, eg. Revolution and origins of our perceptions ("enslave" to our perceptions)?

Was it a revolution? What is a Revolution? An ideal, non-corrupt government? What is patriotism- acts? Ideas? Were patriots and founders heroes?

What are the choices that ordinary people had to make- woman, man, African American, person of Holyoke, Married, single, poor wealthy?

Participants broke out into groups to discuss curriculums and textbooks currently in use in their own classrooms and districts. Elementary Response: Feel shackled with state frameworks. Our school never reached the Revolution.

Middle School: After 6th grade you get through Latin American and geography. I don't know if I will get to it. One text has only two paragraphs on churches, African Americans, and women in the revolution. Supplements are needed.

Resource: King George Can't You Make Them Behave? (A perspective of King George).

Teaching with Images of the Revolution (Alice Nash)

(Documentation is very important.) Important to point out what year the image was done. What are the images trying to say?

Ex: Image of George Washington-Powerful figure; George as Greek: Great thinker.

Everyone was asked to draw an image of the revolution. Everyone presented their drawing and told why they chose the image they depicted. Most responded to an image they remembered seeing, or an important event, many drew collages of events that they considered key events of the revolution.

January 5, 2002: Geo Politics with Barry O'Connell and Rosemary Agolia

The day began with a pre-workshop assessment and then Barry Introduced himself.

Working with the readings through objects with Rosemary

Participants were split into four groups to spend 45 minutes to tell a story or set of stories about the Atlantic American World between 1680- 1780, using materials handed out.

Materials:

(Land deeds, Indian corn, sugar cane, Dutch Documents)

(Wampum, Declaration of independence, Rice)

(Deer skin, gourd, menorah, Indigo)

(Beaver Pelt, Bible, Rum, Tea)

{Side Note: Objects to directly signify Africans- music instruments. Africans came to America with nothing- made a whole range of instruments-drums, pipes (flute like), Banjo with gourds. Simple instruments made with wire or strong taught twine to pluck. Made baskets right away- found mostly in the south.}

Questions to ponder: What stories do these objects tell? How do these objects make the readings come alive? How do they help describe the Atlantic World from 1680-1780? Which materials were new to your thinking?

Groups report back.

Beaver Pelt, Bible, Rum, Tea Group

- Exploitation and triangle trade
- Beaver pelt- student use to represent Native American displacement importance of NA knowledge (French)
- Rum- English wanting part of the action- trade; land.
- Tea- British monopolize economic power. {Side Note: Merchants who made money off tea trade were loyalists }
- Bible (English King James Version)- Puritans "God's chosen people"- shaped interactions.

Resource: Film – Black Robes. (Jesuits) Good source also novel same title.

Also Families from a Distant Shore.

{Side Note: Caribbean Land most times Africans did not necessarily come directly from Africa. They would stop in the Caribbean where they stayed anywhere from 6mos-1.5 years and then brought to America to be sold.}

Land deeds, Indian corn, sugar cane, Dutch Documents Group

- Indian Corn- relates to NA life-ways: changes; adoptions of European trade goods. Europeans: Food, trade, land.
- Sugar cane- Used to produce rum; slaves
- Land deeds- collision of cultures; concepts of land ownership; reflects economy in open operation; European rationalization invasion.
- Dutch Maps- multi cultural *{Compare it to Indian map}*

Idea: You can ask 4th graders to make their own maps and see what they come up with.

{Side Note: Indians are not ignorant but the concept of land ownership is different to them. Indians were manipulated for example they become in debt with trade and they are then forced to sign deeds over, even if they do not have the title to such deeds (only a few Indians).}

Deerskin, Gourd, Menorah, Indigo Group

- Identity- order- place- direction.
- Gourd- Agricultural economy; cash-interior.
- Deerskin- trades-frontier-south, southwest: attempt to enslave Indians.
- Indigo-Not Native American exclusive to S. Carolina from Europe; 20% cash crop from European (European women); slaves.
- Menorah- diversity; struggles of religion and cultures.

Wampum, Declaration of Independence, Rice group

Mini series with stories of exclusion.

- Declaration of Independence- Old white men; look at exclusion for black, N. Am., women.
- Rice- Geography and economy of south; labor-slaves-40% slaves came from Charles town, SC.; African origin-need skilled African labor. *{Side Note: Wild rice is not rice but grain.}*

- Wampum- depiction in Declaration of Ind.; loss of land; problems with Indian displacement

Resource: Video SC. Public television- “With These Arms”; Rice production also element of Historic archeology.

Maps Lecture with Barry O’Connell

(Maps are way out of scale). To come to America from Africa you have to pass through the Caribbean first. Before the British could get to the Americas they had to conquer the Islands (Cape Verde, Caribbean, etc.) *{Side Note: 80 % slave purchase was done in the Caribbean due to the sugar crops}*

African American Piece

1620-Aprox 1680 virtually there was no slave trading. By 1740-18th century the number of slaves is greater than all immigrants combined in N. America in the 18th century. Therefore in 40 years the number of slaves surpassed all the years of immigration.

Tobacco was never the major money making market for slaves. There was a freeze on slave trade (?). There was an expansion of a new crop- Cotton. All of Mississippi & Louisiana (Indian Country) there are Native American groups. The cotton crop is what financed the industrial revolution, which made America a powerful nation all by the land of the NA and African labor.

Referring to a 1775 Map:

60% of S. Carolina population is African.

30-50% in N. Carolina population is African

30-50% Virginia (mountain country) is African

50-60% New York population is African.

It is impossible for the White Americans to grow up without the influence of African. So who was here during the revolution?

Where are these sources coming from? Merchant books and plantation records- because slaves were moneymakers. However the white population is what is hard to track because there were differences in the record keeping by state and town. Notice that there are large numbers of African populations in one town and not in the next. This is because of mountains, lakes, rivers, and borders of Native Am. Lands that are not showing up on the map.

It was believed that slavery was going to die, so what are we going to do with the Africans? Tobacco was a losing deal. Should we send them to the Caribbean? Or back to Africa? Make the colonists? Nobody was aware of what the cotton gin was going to do.

1790- Populations: Whites after childbirth – men lived to 43yrs, women 34yrs. (young age due to childbirth). You could think of African Americans as the wave of white conquer. When whites take over the Native American land, the Indians either move-not too far away ex: New England- move to VT and further into refuge areas of Canada or they migrate to land areas they know whites do not like (swamps) OR they go to lands that whites designated as Indian land for eternity (however that only lasts 20-60yrs.). Removal Policy.

1660 map made by Helen Horback-Tanner to depict English & Indian settlement. Whites settled all along the waterways. The settlements were completely surrounded by Indian villages (40 miles past coast Indian country) In 120 years Quebec Act was one of the 5 causes of Revolution Proclamation line, which was Indian reserve area. The British tried to keep colonies from expanding. The proclamation of this reserve was one of the big reasons for the revolution.

Westward Expansion to 1800

White people’s armed rebellions against the “Authorities” 1745-1804.

White people in the hill towns rebelled against whites in the valleys etc. Why? The valley people have best land easier time bringing crops to market didn’t have to work the land as hard because it was more fertile, etc. So you get rebellion. Ex: Shay’s rebellion against Boston and wealthy CT Valley elite. Note: As the revolution is occurring these people are against the Revolution because the war is already beginning to help the rich and elite.

Resource: Book: Becoming America: The Revolution Before 1776 by Jon Butler University Harvard Press Cambridge 2000.
Book: The Arrow over the Door by Bruchac –Fiction Native American story.