

Session Notes

American Revolution and American People: A Comparative Inquiry

July 10, 2002: Empire with Neal Salisbury and Robert Hansbury.

Resources:

1. Bellesiles, Michael A. Arming America: The origins of a National Gun Culture. New York 2000.
2. Gross, Robert, Minuteman and His World
3. www.common-place.org Common Place Magazine includes lesson plans for all ages.

Group response to Minuteman National Park (7/9/02).

- Presentation fantastic- map light sequence
- Linked the events together made it more understandable.
- Nice to see place first hand.
- Story of blood and guts made it serious. Tension & drama.

Would you bring class to the park?

- Yes & No- I might bring the guides to the classroom. It is too spread out with too many gaps.
- You would need to bring a small class, however the walking might take out some of the energy out of the students.
- Maybe just for the presentation.

What would you do in advance?

- Bring objects to the class and ask them what they think they might experience at the park.
- Study before we go- talk, films, books.
- Geography then and now.

Why did the Revolution occur in Concord? - What made it a target? - Why was the town such a military place?

Economic trade, Crossroad City, topography, military training

Group Activity:

Is America an empire or should it be?

Four groups representing Secretary of War, Henry Knox; Creek Indian Leader, Alexander McGillivray; The Anti-Federalist "Brutus"; and the Federalist "Publis" split up to discuss their responses based on the characters taken from the readings.

Henry Knox: Co-existence with Indians will not exist. Indian nations are foreign nations. Indians using the land well, but they possess more land than they can utilize". Don't have the resources to eliminate these Indians, but we will work it out to trade for land.

McGillivray (Southern Indian): *To Knox*: We should be treated as a sovereign nation even by your law. The land belongs to us. The use and possession of the land is important. Civilization brings people down- you should conform to be like us.

To Brutus: We have no voice on any decisions and treaties you have made. Our land can not be taken without purchase. McGillivray speaks to you for us but we do not have your language.

Anti-Federalist "Brutus": We are afraid of an empire because they acquire more land and the people get less power as those in power get stronger. I believe standing armies give more power- absolute power corrupts. It is easy to give more power while establishing but we can't take the power away. We are afraid of power of tax and central judicial power. How can the diverse geographical differences agree on one law? More distance from the power the more voices we have. How can people communicate their ideas and concerns where distance separates us? Seems that those who can assemble closely will voice the laws. Who decides what is necessary and proper? A republic should have a small territory. In a large republic the voice is sacrificed of only a few. Afraid to create something they just freed themselves from.

Federalist "Publis": Articles of confederation is not strong enough to keep us together. You should fear the British control. If we unify we can work against. We are too vulnerable to work apart. Strong navy because America can become a strong commercial & political power against others. Disagree the colonies are so different we have lots of resources that we all can use for commerce. America has a common we have things the English would like.

Group comments:

- Anything in common between Federalist and Anti-Fed? Both afraid of not having power and want to preserve what we fought for. Brutus likes Knox because he is willing to treat them as sovereign nation.
- Dangers of centralization when fighting the British but now they want it here.
- Federalist knew that commerce & trade was key to be viable with the rest of the world.
- Brutus does not win the debate over the constitution but had influence on the Bill of Rights.
- Debate- Americans are not smaller & weaker. You do not shrink when you live here.

- John Marshall's decision on the removal of Cherokee- Indians signed treaties with both British & America losing some of their sovereignty.

Group then meets in computer resource room to view web resources online.

Back in the Classroom with Robert Hansbury and Virginia Ahart

How do you see yourselves using this series in the classroom?

- I will use the themes of the American Revolution- A Revolution for who?
- Encouraged to try new things and to decorate my classroom.
- More information to expand upon the text-realization that social change takes time and that looking back is a difficult story.