

TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT

Lesson Title – Indentured Servitude of Native Americans in Southern New England

Grade – High School

Length of class period – Two 45-minute class periods

Inquiry –

1. Did indentured servitude constitute slavery considering the conditions and prejudices through which Native Americans endure?
2. How were Native Americans forced into debt and servitude?
3. What impact did racial prejudices have?

Objectives

1. Ability to read/understand/utilize information from tables and graphs.
2. Ability to for a cogent argument and write persuasively.
3. Understand how Native Americans of Southern New England were forced into a cycle of indebtedness that was virtually impossible to escape.

Materials

Primary sources attached.

Activities

Day 1-

In pairs students will read the attached documents and answer the corresponding questions

Day 2-

1. Have a whole-class discussion of findings from Day 1
2. In pairs students will discuss whether or not the indentured servitude of Native Americans in Southern New England constitutes slavery in preparation for their essay.

Homework- Write a persuasive essay on whether or not the indentured servitude of Native Americans in Southern New England constituted slavery.

How will you assess what student learned during this lesson?

Students will be assessed informally through their participation in group work, whole class work, and through questioning by the teacher.

Students will be assessed formally through the written essay.

Connecticut Framework Performance Standards –

1.8- Describe the interactions between citizens and their government in the making and implementation of laws: # 38- Analyze laws that have been modified to meet society's changing values and needs.

1.9- Understand the rights and responsibilities of citizens: #43- Give examples of how individuals or groups have worked to expand or limit citizens' rights in the United States and other nations.

2.2- Interpret information from a variety of primary and secondary sources including electronic media.

Documents A, B, and C

1. What type of items did American Indians most often purchase from these stores? _____

2. Why did American Indians have to make these purchases? _____

3. What do the columns "money" and "legal costs" indicate about the American Indian experience?

4. When an American Indian went into debt they worked to make up their debt. How would this impact their ability to produce their own food? Explain. _____

5. Analyze the long-term impact of these purchases and indebtedness on the American Indians in the region. _____

Document D

1. Besides working it off themselves, what else did debtors have to do to make up their debts?

2. According to Hawley, how easy was it to get out of debt? What did he say? _____

3. According to Hawley, what often happened to the men who labored to pay off their debts?

Document F

1. How did the period of indenture (binding) compare between the different groups? _____

2. Describe the various teaching and training given to the different youths. _____

3. How would these different levels of teaching and training impact the lives of the indentured servants? _____

4. Do you believe that these different levels impact the nature and “fairness” of the indenture? Explain.

Document G

1. How did the courts extend the periods of servitude for American Indians and African Americans?

2. How much longer would it take Native Americans to work off their debt than whites? _____

3. How would this impact the indentured servant’s ability to prosper economically? Explain. _____

Source A

TABLE 1
MARTHA'S VINEYARD INDIAN CREDIT PURCHASES IN
COLONIAL STORES, 1730-1810
(each item as % of total from that store)

Merchant (Years)	Money ^a	Cloth, Clothing, & Sewing	Food	Legal	Livestock	Tools
		Items		Costs ^b		
J. Allen (1732-52)	28%	16%	25%	9%	0.05%	4%
J. Sumner (1749-52)	6%	63%	4%	5%	0%	9%
P. Norton (1759-65)	4%	86%	0%	0%	10%	0%
B. Norton (1768-69)	23%	13%	7%	0%	0%	6%
M. Mayhew (1781-84)	22%	13%	26%	22%	0%	0%
W. Mayhew (1793-1801)	24%	22%	10%	0%	0%	3%
D. Look (1799-1804)	27%	46%	9%	6%	0%	1%

	Building	Domestic	Liquor	Tobacco
	Materials	Items ^c		Services ^d
J. Allen (1732-52)	7%	3%	5%	0.05%
J. Sumner (1749-52)	0%	12%	1%	0%
P. Norton (1759-65)	0%	0%	0%	0%
B. Norton (1768-69)	3%	4%	43%	1%
M. Mayhew (1781-84)	0%	3%	9%	3%
W. Mayhew (1793-1801)	0%	18%	3%	17%
D. Look (1799-1804)	0%	1%	0%	6%

SOURCES: Account Books of John Allen (1732-52), John Sumner (1749-52), Peter Norton (1759-65), Beriah Norton (1768-69), Matthew Mayhew (1781-84), William Mayhew (1793-1801), and David Look (1799-1803, 1800-1804), located at the Martha's Vineyard Historical Society; Dukes County Court Files, B4, Dukes County Superior Court, Edgartown, Mass.

^aIncludes money borrowed and forwarded to other individual accounts.

^bIncludes drawing up writs and deeds as well as payment of fines.

^cIncludes bottles, ladles, earthen ware, jugs, combs, bags.

^dIncludes medical care, shoe repair, agricultural jobs like plowing, and transportation costs such as ferry tolls.

SOURCE B

THE NEW ENGLAND QUARTERLY

TABLE 2
MARTHA'S VINEYARD INDIAN FOOD PURCHASES
BY CREDIT FROM COLONIAL STORES, 1730-1810^a
(each item as % of total for that time period)

Date	Vegetables			Grains			Meat			
	Beans	Corn	Peas	Barley	Flour	Rye	Fish	Beef	Mutton	Pork
1730-39	0%	59%	0%	1%	0%	1%	2%	8%	10%	0%
1740-59	0%	16%	0%	2%	1%	2%	2%	5%	44%	0%
1760-79	3%	33%	2%	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%
1780-99	0%	21%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	8%	1%	6%
1800-1809	0%	15%	0%	0%	2%	9%	0%	18%	1%	2%

	Drinks		Sweeteners		Fruit ^b	Starches ^c	Spice ^d	Bis- cuits	Cheese
	Coffee	Tea	Honey	Molasses					
1730-39	0%	0%	0%	11%	2%	5%	0%	0%	2%
1740-59	0%	0%	0%	17%	2%	2%	1%	1%	0%
1760-79	3%	4%	3%	22%	17%	1%	2%	0%	0%
1780-99	4%	18%	0%	25%	7%	0%	1%	3%	1%
1800-1809	0%	16%	0%	20%	7%	0%	0%	6%	1%

SOURCES: Account Books of John Allen (1732-52), John Sumner (1749-52), Peter Norton (1759-65), Beriah Norton (1768-69), Matthew Mayhew (1781-84), William Mayhew (1793-1801), John Look (1793-1803, 1800-1804), located at the Martha's Vineyard Historical Society; Dukes County Court Files, B4, Dukes County Superior Court, Edgartown, Mass.

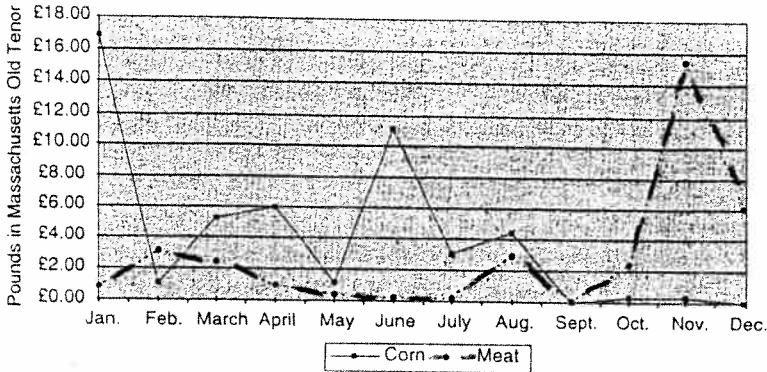
^aNo data for 1730-31, 1753-58, 1766-67, 1770-80, 1785-92, or 1805-9.

^bIncludes apples and pumpkins.

^cIncludes potatoes and rice.

Source C

FIGURE 1
INDIAN CREDIT PURCHASES OF CORN AND MEAT
ON MARTHA'S VINEYARD, BY MONTH, 1730-49



Source D
Mashpee Minister Gideon Hawley
1750

There is scarcely an Indian Boy among us not indetted to an English Master . . . their neighbors find means to involve the Indians so deeply in debt as they are obliged to make over y^e boys, if they have any, for security till payment. The case is thus, an Indian having got in debt (he hardly knows how) obliges himself to go a whaling till he answers it; and because life is uncertain, his master obliges him in his Covenant or Indenture to include his Boy, who is bound to serve in case he should die or should not take up the Indenture by such a term or should get farther in debt to him. The Indian faithfully serves his master, every season for whaling as long as he is fit for such a service (for the longer he serves, the more he is embarrassed) till finally being worn out he is turned off and becomes an object of charity. As for the boy, he is forfeited, because his father, tho' he has earned his master thousands, never was out of debt.³¹

Source E

Pauper Apprenticeship in Narragansett County 69

Table 1. Pauper apprenticeships of all children and children of color in six New England towns, New London, Connecticut, and Jamestown, Providence, South Kingstown, Warwick, and Westerly, Rhode Island.

	All Children	Children of Color
Five Year Intervals	Total	Total
1720-25	10	2
1726-30	20	13
1731-35	17	5
1736-40	16	10
1741-45	26	12
1746-50	41	18
1751-55	56	22
1756-60	50	28
1761-65	73	15
1766-70	59	16
1771-75	65	12
1776-80	71	17
1781-85	43	12
1786-90	42	10
1791-95	67	11
1796-1800	43	13
1801-05	16	11
1806-10	13	8
1811-15	18	11
1816-20	12	5
Grand Total	758	251

1783 PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION IN RHODE ISLAND

AFRICAN AMERICANS - 4.5%

INDIAN AMERICANS - 1.9%

Document G

1700-1748

Yearly value of labor produced by indentured servants in Plymouth County as determined by judges.

Native American males £ 4, 9 s, 3 d
 Native American females £ 3, 9s, 3 d
 White males/females £ 12, 4 s, 8 d

Source F
Herndon and Sekatau

Table 2. Summary of Apprenticeship Indentures.

	European American Children	Children of Color	Native American Children
Total number	507	251	155
Females	160 (31.6%)	90 (35.9%)	56 (35.7%)
Males	347 (68.4%)	161 (64.1%)	99 (64.3%)
Age at binding, girls	7.6	7.1	7.1
Age at binding, boys	10.0	8.27	7.26
Age at freedom, girls	18	18	37% bound to 21
Age at freedom, boys	21	21	23% bound to 24
Read and write (girls)	46 (28.8%)	7 (7.7%)	1 (2.2%)
Read, write, cypher (boys)	167 (48.1%)	24 (14.9%)	4 (4.8%)
Skill training, girls	10 (6.25%)	3 (3.3%)	3 (6.5%)
Skill training, boys	138 (39.8%)	9 (5.6%)	3 (3.6%)

Source: Indentures for Charlestown, Hopkinton, Jamestown, South Kingstown, Warwick, and Westerly, Rhode Island, are contained in the town council records, located in the individual town halls. Indentures for Providence, Rhode Island, are contained in the Providence Town Papers, Rhode Island Historical Society, and in the Providence town council records, Providence City Hall. Indentures for New London, Connecticut, are located in Selectmen Indentures [1740-1795], New London Town Papers 1674-1925, Box 3, Archives Record Group 62, Connecticut State Library, Hartford.