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TITLE

Trouble on the Penobscot: The Revolution in Maine

GRADE LEVEL

7-8

TIME ALLOTMENT

OVERVIEW

The video looks at the American Revolution in Maine, with a particular emphasis on the Penobscot Expedition. By focusing on a recent archaeological find, the video takes us from present-day historical analysis to the events of the past. The story uses the well-known general history of the Revolution as background while offering details on events in Maine. This offers an excellent opportunity to discuss the process of studying history and to explore Maine's role in the American Revolution.

SUBJECT MATTER

Social Studies, History,

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Place the events in Maine within the larger context of the American Revolution.
- Use historical documents to explore Maine's role in the Revolution.
- Understand what archaeological evidence and material culture can tell us about history.
- Create a Web site about the Penobscot Expedition using historic source documents about the event.
- Process information found in written sources, on the Web, and in the video into a thesis statement and project.

STANDARDS

Grades 5-8

HISTORY

A. CHRONOLOGY

Students will use the chronology of history and major eras to demonstrate the relationships of events and people. Students will be able to:

2. Identify the sequence of major events and people in the history of Maine, the United States, and selected world civilizations.

C. HISTORICAL INQUIRY, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

Students will learn to evaluate resource material such as documents, artifacts, maps, artworks, and literature, and to make judgments about the perspectives of the authors and their credibility when interpreting current historical events. Students will be able to:

2. Explain why historical accounts of the same event sometimes differ and relate this explanation to the evidence presented by the author or the point of view of the author.
5. Formulate historical questions based on examination of primary and secondary sources including documents, eyewitness accounts, letters and diaries, artifacts, real or simulated historical sites, charts, graphs, diagrams, and written texts.

ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS

D. INFORMATIONAL TEXTS

Students will apply reading, listening, and viewing strategies to informational texts across all areas of curriculum. Students will be able to:

2. Identify useful information organizing strategies.
5. Produce and support generalizations acquired from informational text.

H. RESEARCH-RELATED WRITING AND SPEAKING

Students will work, write, and speak effectively when doing research in all content areas. Students will be able to:

7. Use search engines and other Internet resources to collect information for research topics.
8. Make limited but effective use of primary sources when researching topics.
9. Explain the importance of primary sources in evaluating the validity and reliability of collected information.

MEDIA COMPONENTS

Video

Home: The Story of Maine “The Penobscot Expedition and the Revolution” (MPBN, 2004)

Internet

A Short History of the Penobscot Expedition

A brief overview of this American Revolution event in Maine.

<http://members.tripod.com/penobscot1779/PE%20history.htm>

Timeline of the American Revolutionary War

A year-by-year timeline of events before, during and after the War.

<http://www.ushistory.org/march/timeline.htm>

Maine Memory Network

Maine’s online repository for historic sources documents.

<http://www.mainememory.net/home.shtml>.

1. [Stephen Hall writes about the disaster of the Penobscot Expedition](#)
2. [Peleg Wadsworth letter to his wife, Betsey, about the Penobscot Expedition, July 31, 1779](#)

3. [Letter from John Campbell to Sir Henry Clinton about Peleg Wadsworth's escape](#)

MATERIALS

Laptop computer for each student with Macjournal and Internet connection

PREP FOR TEACHERS

Preview the video and note the stop cues.

Preview each Web site

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

Divide the class into groups of two. Give each group an “artifact.” This is an object that you bring to class for this project. These can be anything from home, found objects, antiques, broken items or foreign objects. Suggestions:

Bean pot

Fountain pen

Wooden snowshoe

Broken shovel or tool

Apron

Old medicine bottle

Hole punch

Broken pottery

Rusted hinge

Ask each group to analyze their “artifact” using the **Artifact Analysis Worksheet**.

Ask each group to join two other groups to form six. Each group should share their artifact and analysis with the other two groups. Encourage discussion about how to study a culture or history using objects. Is it possible to study a people without reading about them? What can you tell about people from just their stuff? Is the study of archaeology just for learning about ancient cultures or can you use it to learn about more recent occurrences in history?

LEARNING ACTIVITY

Step one:

Inform the students that this lesson is about the American Revolution in Maine. They'll be viewing a video that uses both archaeology and history to study the American Revolution in Maine. In particular, the video looks at the Penobscot Expedition and its affect on the war and on the Maine people.

Direct the students to read an overview of the Penobscot Expedition at <http://members.tripod.com/penobscot1779/PE%20history.htm>. This will give them some background and location information about the event, and will help them understand the

video better. Give students a **Focus for Media Interaction** by instructing them to complete the **Penobscot Expedition Worksheet**. Discuss questions when they finish reading.

Where does this event fit in the timeline of the Revolution? The Penobscot Expedition occurred in July of 1779. What else was happening in the colonies? Using a computer and LCD projector, go to the Timeline of the American Revolutionary War <http://www.ushistory.org/march/timeline.htm> and look for the Penobscot Expedition. Discuss why it doesn't appear on this timeline. What else is happening at the same time? When did all the famous events of the war – Paul Revere's Ride, the Boston Tea Party, Battle of Bunker Hill – take place? The Penobscot Expedition is much later in the war and comes at the end of Massachusetts' participation. Remember, Maine is a part of Massachusetts at this point and this is important in the video.

Step Two:

Explain that an artifact from the Revolution was found in the Penobscot River in the early 1990's and the MPBN video looks at how this artifact figures in the Penobscot Expedition. Give the class a **Focus for Media Interaction** by asking them to note what this artifact is and why it was lying in the Penobscot River.

START the video at the beginning. STOP when the narrator says, "Colonial Americans rebel against what they perceive as British tyranny."

Class discussion:

1. Discuss how the gun from the Penobscot Expedition was found in the River.
2. What was wrong with the gun?
 - It was defective when it was built – too thick on one side; a piece of ammunition was stuck in the middle.
3. How did the historians know that a piece of ammunition was stuck in the barrel of the gun?
 - Answer: x-ray

Step Three:

While many colonists supported and participated in the rebellion against Britain, some did not. They were called Loyalists or Tories. Give the class a **Focus for Media Interaction**: Why did some colonists remain loyal to Britain during the Revolution?

RESUME the video. STOP the video when the speaker says, "But, to Loyalists, he's still our King and it's not to us to separate ourselves from him."

Class discussion:

1. Why did Loyalists support the British during the war?
 - Had given an oath before God and felt they couldn't break it.
 - Felt the Americans couldn't win.
 - Were afraid of being a traitor to Britain. The punishments were harsh.

- Equated the French Catholics with the devil and the Americans allied with France during the Revolution.
2. Why did they think the Americans couldn't win?
 - Leaders had little military experience versus a great military power.
 - Very disorganized with no central power.
 3. Does anyone think they would have been a Loyalist during the Revolution?

Step Four:

The Penobscot Expedition is known as one of the greatest disasters of the Revolution. Give the students a **Focus for Media Interaction**: Why was the Expedition such a disaster for the Americans?

RESUME the video. STOP the video at the AUDIO CUE when the narrator says, "On a desperate flight from the British fleet, the Americans deliberately burn and sink 35 of their own ships, and throw an untold number of munitions overboard to keep them out of British hands."

Class discussion:

1. Why was the Penobscot Expedition such a disaster for the Americans?
 - Poor, inexperienced leadership leads to several bad decisions.
 - Fewer ships and supplies.
 - Poorly-trained and inexperienced troops.
 - Troops were either too young or too old because most other men were already fighting in the army elsewhere.
2. Why do you think they were using the defective gun?
 - The archaeologist will answer in the next segment. Ask the students to analyze what they've learned and make a guess.

Step Five:

Give the students a **Focus for Media Interaction**: The Penobscot Expedition was a notable failure of the Revolution, how does the burst gun illustrate this?

RESUME the final part of the video. STOP at the end.

Class discussion:

1. Why were the Americans using a defective gun
 - The speaker says they were desperate. He means that they had to use every resource they had at their disposal – defective or not. They were low on supplies, money and skilled people so they used whatever weapons they had available to them.
2. What does this tell us about the Penobscot Expedition?
 - The effort was a poorly run, chaotic affair. The Americans had inexperienced men and poor information. The gun is not responsible for the failure, but is illustrative because it shows how ill-prepared this expedition was.
3. What was the final outcome for Maine and Massachusetts?

- The Penobscot Expedition knocked Massachusetts out of the war because of the tremendous losses left them low on money and resources.
- It sets the stage for Maine statehood and separation from Massachusetts because the Commonwealth could not protect Maine any longer.

CULMINATING ACTIVITY

Instructions for students:

Knowing now that the Penobscot Expedition was a failure, read the following accounts and put them in the context of what you know. Gather in groups of 2 or 3 and discuss what the documents tell us about the event.

- Do you think these people knew how badly the Penobscot Expedition was going for the Patriots?
- Does anything in these documents contradict or support what you learned in the video?
- Is there anything in these letters that relate to faulty equipment or inexperienced soldiers?

Create a Web page about the Penobscot Expedition using these three documents. Start by creating a thesis statement: the idea you want to put across to the readers. Create an outline of the information you plan to include. Give an overall, short description of the event, including key information like dates. Use examples from these documents to support your thesis point. Conduct a Web quest on Maine Memory Network and the Web to find illustrations/portraits/maps for your page. You can also make recorded versions of someone reading the letters and put the audio file on your site. Be sure to cite your sources and include a bibliography of works consulted in your research.

For added credit, create a modern map that shows the placement of the American and British forces during the fight.

- 1.1. View original documents at <http://www.mainememory.net/home.shtml>. Read the following letters (transcriptions are available at the site)
 - 1.1.1. [Stephen Hall writes about the disaster of the Penobscot Expedition](#)
 - 1.1.2. [Peleg Wadsworth letter to his wife, Betsey, about the Penobscot Expedition, July 31, 1779](#)
 - 1.1.3. [Letter from John Campbell to Sir Henry Clinton about Peleg Wadsworth's escape](#)

NOTE: Refer to the show transcript when you want to verify or check information. The transcript is the entire show in text. Read it at <http://www.mpbn.net/hometsom/programlist.html>.

CROSS-CURRICULAR EXTENSIONS

Language Arts/English & Music

Explore ballads of the Revolutionary era and write a ballad about the Penobscot Revolution. See

<http://www.georgetown.edu/faculty/bassr/heath/syllabuild/iguide/patriot.html> for more information and <http://www.mcneilmusic.com/rev.html> to hear song samples.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Visit the Maine State Museum

Augusta, Maine

The permanent exhibit, “The Struggle for Identity,” explores Maine life in the 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries. Beginning with King Phillip's War in 1675 and continuing through Maine Statehood in 1820. Contact: 207-287-2301.

Wadsworth-Longfellow House

Portland, Maine

General Peleg Wadsworth, built the house in 1785-1786, and the last person to live there was his granddaughter, Anne Longfellow Pierce. Mrs. Pierce, widowed at an early age and lived in the house until her death in 1901. Virtually all of the household items and artifacts are original to the Wadsworth and Longfellow families. Furnishings from the three generations illustrate changes in style, technology, and attitude over the 19th century. Peleg and Elizabeth Wadsworth raised ten children in the house before retiring to the family farm in Hiram, Maine, in 1807. Contact: (207) 774-1822.

Burnham Tavern Museum

Machias, Maine

Built in 1770, Burnham is the oldest building in eastern Maine. It is the only one with Revolutionary War history. It is owned and maintained (since 1910) by Hannah Weston Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution. Listed on the National Register in 1977. Contact: 207-255-4432 or Website: www.burnhamtavern.com

Invite an archaeologist into the classroom to speak about archaeology in Maine.

Contact:

- Maine State Museum at maine.museum@state.me.us.
- Maine Archaeological Society through their Web site at <http://www.mainearchsociety.org/contact.html>.
- Maine Historic Preservation Commission. Contact Leon Cranmer at Leon.Cranmer@Maine.gov.

TEACHER RESOURCES

For information about teaching archaeology in the classroom see the resources at the Society of American Archivist Web site at <http://www.saa.org/Education/index.html> or the American Anthropological Association at <http://www.aaanet.org/committees/commissions/aec/resarch.htm>.

ARTIFACT ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

1. TYPE OF ARTIFACT

Describe the material from which it was made: bone, pottery, metal, wood, stone, leather, glass, paper, cardboard, cotton, wood, plastic, other material.

2. SPECIAL QUALITIES OF THE ARTIFACT

Describe how it looks and feels: shape, color, texture, size, weight, movable parts, any decoration or special design.

3. MAKER OR CREATOR OF ARTIFACT

Look for anything printed, stamped or written on the object.

4. USES OF THE ARTIFACT

A. What might it have been used for or what does it do?

B. Who might have used it? _____

C. Gender of the user? _____

D. Age of the user? _____

E. Where might it have been used? _____

F. When might it have been used? _____

5. WHAT DOES THE ARTIFACT TELL US

A. What does it tell about technology of the time in which it was made and used?

B. What does it tell us about the life and times of the people who made it and used it?

PENOBSCOT EXPEDITION WORKSHEET

Use this worksheet to take notes while reading about the Penobscot Expedition on the Web

1. What was the Penobscot Expedition?
2. When did it occur?
3. Who was involved?
4. Were there any famous people involved?
5. Why is the event significant?