

TITLE

A New Life: Colonial settlement in 17th Century Maine

GRADE LEVEL

7-8

TIME ALLOTMENT

2 one-hour class periods plus homework

OVERVIEW

Early explorers to North America came from all over the world. Many were looking for economic opportunity and financial gain; others were hired by governments to map uncharted territories. New England as a region and Maine in particular, showed great promise for financial gain through natural resources. European countries raced to map and lay claim to the region, though of course, the Native Americans were already living here. Large pine forests, accessible waterways and abundant fish and fur attracted Europeans to Maine almost immediately. Crowded conditions and unemployment led them to seek opportunity in the New World despite the fact that Maine held none of the conveniences they knew at home: houses, stores, factories and government. What did they find when they arrived? How did their new life differ from their old and how did they make a living here?

This plan is designed to inform students about early settlement in Maine, while putting the details in the context of greater U.S. and world history. Use this exercise when teaching colonial American history or Maine history.

SUBJECT MATTER

Social Studies, History, Economics

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Gain an understanding of life in 17th century Maine.
- Learn who lived in Maine during the 17th century.
- Learn what types of work people did in the 17th century.
- Understand why people chose to live and work here.
- Understand how early settlement in Maine differed from those in other parts of New England.

STANDARDS

Grades 5-8

History

A. CHRONOLOGY

1. Describe the effects of historical changes on daily life.
2. Identify the sequence of major events and people in the history of Maine, the United States, and selected world civilizations.

B. HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE, CONCEPTS, AND PATTERNS

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the causes and effects of major events in United States history and the connections to Maine history with an emphasis on events up to 1877, including but not limited to: C?

Geography

B. HUMAN INTERACTION WITH ENVIRONMENTS

1. Analyze how technology shapes the physical and human characteristics of places and regions, including Maine.
2. Explain patterns of migration throughout the world.

Economics

B. ECONOMIC SYSTEMS OF THE UNITED STATES

5. Describe the roles and contributions of the principal contributors to the economy (e.g., laborers, investors, entrepreneurs, managers).

MEDIA COMPONENTS

Video

Home: The Story of Maine “Rolling Back the Frontier” (MPBN)

Internet

Timeline from the Home Web site at Maine PBS.

<http://www.mpbn.net/hometsom/timelines/1600s1.html>

Transcript of the video, “Rolling Back the Frontier.”

<http://www.mpbn.net/hometsom/index.html>

Merriam-Webster Dictionary

<http://www.m-w.com/home.htm>

MATERIALS

White or Black board

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

This activity is meant to introduce students to some of the key terms necessary to understanding this lesson and 17th century life in Maine:

Frontier

Natural Resources

Encourage students to take notes throughout the lesson so that they can use their notes for the final assignment. They can write down each Focus question you ask, but also encourage them to note anything that interests them. They can use their laptops and Macjournal for note taking.

Begin a discussion about colonial America and encourage students to take notes as necessary. What do the students know about the European settlers and why they came? What was life like for them and what were major events in early American history? Explain that while many colonial settlers did come to the North America for religious freedom, most of the Europeans who came to Maine were looking for economic opportunity. While a part of New England, Maine is different than settlements in New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Use the overview description to provide more background. (NOTE: You may wish to mention that 17th century means the 1600's and that the two terms are used interchangeably)

Write this definition on the board:

Frontier -- The part of a country which forms the border of its' settled or inhabited regions.

Ask the class how this word applies to U.S. history. Does it only apply to westward expansion? Ask the students how they think the word "frontier" might apply to Maine and discuss as a class. Cue the video to the beginning of Home: The Story of Maine. Start at the beginning just after the introduction. Give the students a Focus for Media Interaction by asking them where the frontier in New England was in the 17th century. Who was living here?

Stop the video at the Visual Cue of Indians in canoes approaching a large ship. The speaker says, "As soon as they met them they understood these were humans, but humans of an unusual sort."

Discuss the different notions of where the frontier was. (Woods vs. Ocean). If you look at the definition, what does frontier mean in this context?

- That people are living near the water
- The population is relatively small
- They are facing situations that are absolutely new to them and may present danger
- They have no idea what is on the other side of that border

Ask the students if there are any unknown frontiers left for humans to explore. Space would be an apt comparison. Ask them why we need to explore space

- To find other life
- To find other places for humans to live
- To find resources that can lead to business opportunity

Suggest that living in colonial Maine may have been just as foreign and just as scary as living on Mars might be to us. No familiar homes, no stores filled with the things they needed, no way to know if they were going to be safe from day to day.

Ask someone to define the term, “natural resources.” Inform the class that natural resources are raw materials found in nature. These materials are the basis for manufactured goods, industry and economy. Ask the class to list some of Maine’s current natural resources and the industries they support:

- Water (tourism, bottled water, fishing)
- Wood (paper, lumber)
- Fish/seafood (tourism, food industry, canning & processing)

Explain that some of these same natural resources played a very big part in attracting Europeans to Maine but for different reasons. Essentially, colonists came to an unknown place very different than their home because they believed there was economic opportunity here. Show the class Handout #1: European View of Beavers in the New World. One of the major natural resources to drive the 17th century Maine economy was beaver fur. What does this image tell us about early European views of this region? They clearly viewed the beaver as an abundant natural resource.

Give the students a Focus for Media Interaction by asking them to note the following:

1. Why was beaver fur in demand?
2. How was it acquired?
3. What was given in exchange for the pelts?
4. How part did the Pilgrims play in the fur trade?

Cue the video to the narrator as she say, “The Swedish Cavalier’s slouch hat is the height of fashion...” Play the video.

Stop the video when the speaker says, “...both sides does very well in the fur trade because I think they are really taking advantage of the other side.”

Discuss the focus questions. Show the students the Handout #2: Prices Paid for Beaver Furs. This is an early 18th century list of prices paid for beaver furs. It’s a bit later than the period covered in the video, but illustrates how important furs were to the economy here. Ask the students to consider what the beaver fur trade meant to the native peoples. An abundant resource that was of little or no value to them suddenly becomes a major source of support and gives them access to things they never knew existed: copper and cast iron pots, fish hooks, guns, spun fabric. Discuss this as a class.

LEARNING ACTIVITY

Fur is just one of the natural resources that attracted Europeans to Maine. People came to North America from all over the world, but the English and French are the Europeans that have the most influence in Maine. Tell the students that they’ll be watching segments of the video to learn about how Europeans made a life here in the 1600’s. Inform them that you’ll be asking them to answer specific questions as you go through the video and that they’ll have a related homework assignment afterwards. Inform them that they’ll complete the lesson by writing a one-page letter from the point of view of a Maine

colonist. Suggest that they make notes on colonial life as they go through the segments so that they have information with which to write the letter.

Step one:

Ask the students what they know about why Europeans came to America.

Cue the video to the Visual Cue of a crowd of people passing children onto a boat. The Narrator says, "In the early 1600's Europe's teeming populations have exhausted many natural resources..." Give the students a Focus for Media Interaction by asking them to list the reasons why Europeans came to North America.

Stop the video when you see the Visual Cue of fishing boats at a pier. The Audio Cue is the narrator saying, "...merchants began to set up seasonal fishing stations."

Discuss the Focus question.

High unemployment

Crowded living conditions

No available land

Could have own land

Fish

Fur

Timber

Lead a class discussion about why people came to this region. Are there any similarities or differences between the settlers here and those in southern New England or the East Coast of North America?

Step Two:

Where did most of 17th century Maine colonists come from? Explain to the class that while explorers from many countries came to this area, the French and the English ran the largest settled colonies.

Cue the video to the narrator as she says, "A wealthy English knight, Sir Ferdinando Gorges..." Give the students a Focus for Media Interaction by asking the students

How were the French and English different?

Where did the French live?

Stop when you hear the speaker say, "You're not going to wait for the English vessel to show up two months later."

Direct the students to the MPBN timeline for Native American culture,

<http://www.mpbn.net/hometsom/timelines/natamtimeline.html>. Instruct them to find the entry for 1616-1619. Give the students a Focus for Media Interaction by asking them to note what caused "The Great Dying," who did it affect and how many people died.

- Diseases like smallpox, whooping cough, cholera, measles and hepatitis.
- Native Americans

- 90-95% of Indians from Penobscot Bay to Cape Cod.

Discuss how an isolated population can be affected when they come into contact with new people. So far they've learned about three things that greatly impacted the Wabanaki people: disease, contact with a people they hadn't known existed and the fur trade. Think about how drastically and quickly life changed for the Wabanaki. Ask the students how they would react in a similar situation.

Step Three:

In the introduction you discussed the Maine frontier and the edge of English settlement. How does Maine settlement differ from the pilgrim settlements in Massachusetts? Why would they be different?

Forward to the Audio Cue of, "The Pilgrims really don't threaten the Indians..." The Visual Cue is re-enactors rowing a boat. Give the students a Focus for Media Interaction by asking them to note the differences between Maine settlements and those in southern New England and Massachusetts.

Pause when you see a color map of houses along a river and the narrator says, "In 1639, Sir Ferdinando Gorges..." Keep the visual on the screen and inform the students that this is a 17th century map. Point out that the homes are all built along the water. Give the students another Focus for Media Interaction by asking them to note how people settled and how they traveled. Resume the video.

Stop when the speaker says, "...was like having an oceanfront home."

Discuss why it was important to settle near the water:

- Fish as food source
- Water for cooking
- Bathing
- Travel
- Water for livestock
- Put out fires
- Water provides power for sawmill

Ask them if they understood the term "Proprietary Colony." This means that one person or one group of people is given ownership of a piece of land. They then sell or lease plots of land to settlers who improve the land and live there. Rather than dealing directly with the government when buying land, the settlers purchased plots from the proprietors.

Step Four:

Narrator, "In order to heat their homes for the winter..." Give the students a Focus for Media Interaction by asking them to list all of the jobs and work they hear mentioned. Ask them to also note any tasks that could be done by women or children.

Stop when the speaker says, "...that's going to fuel the drive of Maine's economy throughout the colonial period."

Talk about gender. Ask the students to list some of the jobs they've heard about so far:

Midwife
Fisherman
Farmer
Fur trader
Merchant
Soldier

Discuss who does these jobs – men or women; young or old. In some cases there may be more than one task to a job. Ask the students to think about the components of farming:

Feeding animals
Slaughtering animals
Collecting eggs
Growing food
Preserving food
Tending to sick animals

Could women or children do any of these tasks? Was it necessary for everyone to work in order to survive? Did people make a wage or work for salary or did they work to provide the necessities for the family?

How does a barter and trade economy work? For more information, direct the students to the Money in North American History Web site, <http://www.ex.ac.uk/~RDavies/arian/northamerica.html>. Instruct the students to read the section called, "Forms of Money in use in the American Colonies" and give them a Focus for Media Interaction by asking them to list three things used as currency. Ask them not to list coins and paper money, but things that we don't typically think of as money.

Discuss the article. How does a barter economy work? Can you trade services instead of concrete goods? For example, could you provide medical services in exchange for corn?

Step Five:

Ask anyone if they know when Maine became a state. It separated from Massachusetts in 1820 but that's 200 years after the time featured in the video. During this early settlement, Maine was a separate province. What happened to bring it under the jurisdiction of Massachusetts? Give the students a Focus for Media Interaction by instructing them to listen for how Maine became a part of Massachusetts and when this happened. Begin at the Audio Cue of. "In the mid-1600's approximately 5,000 English colonists..."

Stop when the speaker says, "they can come in and control the region and with it control the natural resources."

The Usurpation of Maine – southwestern Maine was annexed by the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1652. What does “usurpation” mean? Ask the students to look it up in the Merriam-Webster online dictionary at <http://www.m-w.com/home.htm>.

Ask the students why Massachusetts wants to control Maine territory: natural resources.

CULMINATING ACTIVITY

Homework

Based on the video and class discussion, each student should write a one-page letter as if they were a newly-arrived English settler in the 1600’s. The letter can be to anyone at home, a request for funds or lands, a plan for a business. Distribute the Homework Exercise: A Letter Home. This lists the instructions and criteria for each letter.

For more information, students may use the Web resources available at Home: The Story of Maine. A 17th century timeline is available at <http://www.mpbn.net/hometsom/timelines/1600s1.html>, and a transcript of the program is available at <http://www.mpbn.net/hometsom/index.html>.

CROSS-CURRICULAR EXTENSIONS

English

Create a play about life on the Maine frontier. Create a drama around the hardships of daily life, relationships between the groups of people and the fear of the unknown.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Invite an archaeologist in to the classroom to discuss how archaeological sites and objects contribute to our understanding of Maine History. Contact the Maine Archaeological Society through their Web site <http://www.mpbn.net/hometsom/index.html>.

Home work exercise: A Letter Home

Include each of these criteria in a one-page letter. The letter should be written as if you were a 17th century Maine colonist. The letter can be to anyone at home, a request for funds or lands, a plan for a business.

1. Who you are and your work or role in the community.
2. Where you came from.
3. What was the first thing you did when you arrived?
4. How does your family support itself?
5. How you are adjusting to your new life?
6. Why you came to Maine.

*Note: parts of this region were called the Province of Mayne.

7. What are the resources that you are using to live and work?
8. Why is Maine a good place to be and what makes it different from other places in North America?
9. Who are the other people you encounter in your community?

Handout #1 European View of Beavers in the New World

Handout #2: Prices Paid for Beaver Furs
Focus questions for “Rolling Back the
Frontier” Teacher Answer Sheet

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

Definition of “frontier”

The part of a country which forms the border of its' settled or inhabited regions.

1. Where was the frontier of English settlement in the 17th century?

Maine

2. Who was living here?

Europeans and Indians

Definition of “natural resources”

Raw materials found in nature. These materials are the basis for manufactured goods, industry and economy.

3. Why was beaver fur in demand?

Swedish Cavalier's slouch hat is fashionable in Europe during the 1600's

4. How was it acquired?

Through trade with Indians

5. What was given in exchange for the pelts?

European goods: guns, steel goods like knives and fish hooks, cookware, fabrics, sometimes liquor.

6. How part did the Pilgrims play in the fur trade?

They established fur trading posts in Maine, especially along the Kennebec River. They were here to take advantage of the natural resources, specifically beaver fur.

LEARNING ACTIVITY

Step one:

7. List the reasons why Europeans came to North America.

High unemployment

No available land

Economic opportunity

Step two:

8. How were the French and English different?

The French were here primarily to extract resources. They did not bring families. They obtained fish and fur and took them home. Occasionally, they cohabitated with the Wabanaki and typically had good relationships with the Native Americans.

The English brought families and created settlements. They lived separately from the Indians and often had poor relations with the native peoples.

9. Where did the French live?
Acadia
10. What caused “The Great Dying?”
Diseases like smallpox, cholera, hepatitis, measles, and whooping cough.
11. Who did it affect?
Maine Indians, the Wabanaki people
12. How many people died?
90-95% of the native people between Penobscot Bay and Cape Cod.

Step three:

13. Differences between Maine settlements and those in southern New England and Massachusetts.
People in Maine were not farming and had no need for land until later. This need for land and displacement of Native Americans caused conflict. This conflict occurred in southern New England first.
14. How did people settle here?
*In ribbon-like settlements on the water.
50-acre plots*
15. How did they travel?
By water

Definition of “proprietary colony”

This means that one person or one group of people is given ownership of a piece of land. They then sell or lease plots of land to settlers who improve the land and live there. Rather than dealing directly with the government when buying land, the settlers purchased plots from the proprietors.

Step four:

16. Jobs and work mentioned in the video
*Fisherman
Farmer
Midwife
Trader*
17. Ask them to also note any tasks that could be done by women or children.
*Farm related jobs
Collecting eggs
Milking a cow
Feeding animals
Cooking and preserving food that comes from
Farming*

Fishing
Hunting
Medical needs
Childbirth
Illness
Wounds

Step five:

18. How did Maine become a part of Massachusetts?

Massachusetts usurpation or annexation of Maine: they threaten to use military force unless the English colonies in Maine become a district of Massachusetts. They remain part of Massachusetts until 1820.

19. When did this happen?

1652

20. Why did this happen?

Massachusetts Bay Colony wanted to control the natural resources

Definition of “usurpation”

Rubric for Letter Writing Exercise

4
Letter clearly relates points from the video and class discussion to the experiences of the character
Makes an informative connection to the events of the time
Contains interesting word choice
Has correct grammar and spelling and appropriate format
Has clear connection to the video and class discussion with supporting details
Made use of online resources to provide extra information in the letter
3
Letter relates some points from the video and class discussion to the experiences of the character
Makes some connection to the events of the time
Contains some interesting word choices
Has mostly correct grammar and spelling and appropriate format
Has a connection to the video and class discussion with supporting details
2
Letter mentions some points made in the video or class discussion
Makes little connection to the events of the time
Contains one or two interesting word choices
Has noticeable errors in grammar and spelling and inappropriate format
Has a connection to the video or class discussion with limited support
1
Letter doesn't use any points from the video or class discussion
Makes no connection to the events of the time
Missing interesting word choices
Errors with grammar and spelling interfere with meaning; inappropriate format
Needs a connection to the video or class discussion