



HOME

The Story of Maine

## Early Maine Settlers Fight for Liberty, Justice, and Land!

Teaching Unit for Grades 7 - 8

**TIME ALLOTMENT** 4 class periods of 40 minutes each (and 1 homework survey)

**OVERVIEW** This HOME episode, *Land of Liberty*, examines the conflict between Maine settlers who believed that after the Revolutionary War, land would be cheap or free and major landowners such as Henry Knox who, through political savvy, managed to lay claim to vast areas of Maine territory. The landowners attempted to survey large tracts of land and collect money from the cash-poor settlers, who had struggled to create homesteads on the harsh Maine landscape. In reaction to such demands, many settlers resisted by forming groups known as Liberty Men, later called White Indians. These groups, having little or no political power, took it upon themselves to confront and intimidate land surveyors and officials who tried to collect payment for the land. At the same time, nontraditional, evangelical religious figures rose on the Maine frontier to validate the struggles of the settler-farmers and served as spokesmen for their cause.

**SUBJECT MATTER** Social studies, Maine history,

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES** By the end of this teaching unit, students will:

- Understand the history of land acquisition on the Maine frontier.
- Identify key figures in the struggle to settle land disputes in Maine.
- Analyze the cause-and-effect dynamics of organized resistance.
- Use historical documents to discern point of view and motive.
- Create a historical persona and defend this character's point of view.



Maine Public Broadcasting Network



Elsie Viles

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## CONNECTIONS TO STANDARDS

### Maine State Learning Results (Grades 5 - 8)

<p><b>SOCIAL STUDIES</b></p> <p><b>History</b></p> <p><b>A. Chronology:</b> Students will use the chronology of history and major eras to demonstrate the relationships between events and people. Students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the sequence of major events and people in the history of Maine, the United States, and selected world civilizations.</li> </ol> <p><b>C. Historical Inquiry, Analysis, and Interpretation:</b> 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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>Formulate historical questions based on examination of primary and secondary sources including</li> </ol>	<p>documents, eyewitness accounts, letters and diaries, artifacts, real or simulated historical sites, charts, graphs, diagrams, and written texts.</p> <p><b>Civics and Government</b></p> <p><b>C. Personal and Consumer Economics:</b> Fundamental Principles of Government and Constitutions: Students will understand the constitutional principles and democratic foundations of the political institutions of the United States. Students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain the meaning and importance of fundamental principles of American constitutional democracy.</li> <li>Explain the importance, in a pluralistic society, of having certain shared political values and principles.</li> </ol>	<p>5. Produce and support generalizations acquired from informational text.</p> <p><b>G. Stylistic and Rhetorical Aspects of Writing and Speaking:</b> Students will use stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing and speaking to explore ideas, to present lines of thought, to represent and reflect on human experience, and to communicate feelings, knowledge, and opinions. Students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver oral presentations that use a variety of strategies of address.</li> </ol> <p><b>H. Research-related Writing and Speaking:</b> Students will work, write, and speak effectively when doing research in all content areas. Students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use search engines and other Internet resources to collect information for research topics.</li> <li>Make limited but effective use of primary sources when researching topics.</li> <li>Explain the importance of primary sources in evaluating the validity and reliability of collected information.</li> </ol>
	<p><b>ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS</b></p> <p><b>D. Informational Texts:</b> Students will apply reading, listening, and viewing strategies to informational texts across all areas of the curriculum. Students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify useful information-organizing strategies.</li> </ol>	

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- MPBN video *Land of Liberty* from the series *HOME: The Story of Maine*
- The Maine Memory Network <http://www.mainememory.net>
- General Knox Museum <http://www.generalknoxmuseum.org/montpelier.html>
- The Davistown Museum <http://www.davistownmuseum.org/TDMhistory.htm>
- Free Internet Link Publishing <http://www.portaportal.com>
- The Maine Memory Network <http://www.mainememory.net>
- To retrieve the following documents, go to Search. Then, in the Keyword Search box, type in the document numbers listed below:
  - #7197.pdf A letter written in 1808 from Joseph Chandler, a surveyor for the Kennebec Proprietors, expressing how he fears for his life when out surveying lands.
  - #7198.pdf A letter from Charles Vaughan to Kennebec proprietors, regarding the anger of the squatters living on the lands being surveyed.
  - #7200.pdf A letter from Kennebec proprietor Charles Vaughn to the other owners of the Waldo Patent, describing troubles with squatters (whom he refers to as disguised Indians).
  - #7286.pdf A deed showing the transfer of land in Cape Elizabeth.
- Large map of Maine
- Transcript of the video *Land of Liberty* (available at <http://www.mpbn.net/hometsom/index.html>)
- Desktop computer(s) or student laptop(s) with Internet connection
- *Finding Katahdin: An Exploration of Maine's Past* by Amy Hassinger (University of Maine Press, Orono, 2001), pages 128-136
- (optional) *Liberty Men and Great Proprietors: The Revolutionary Settlement on the Maine Frontier, 1760-1820* by Alan Taylor (University of North Carolina Press, 1990)
- Copies of each of the following reproducible handouts (1 per student):
  - Student Handout 1: Brief Family or Guardian Survey
  - Student Handout 2: *Finding Katahdin* Questions

## PREP FOR TEACHERS

1. Before teaching the lesson, photocopy and distribute Student Handout 1: Brief Family or Guardian Survey to students. Assign the survey as homework. This will help personalize the lesson that follows and will pique students' curiosity about the topic.
2. Read pages 128-136 in *Finding Katahdin*. Copy packets of this segment of the book for each group of four in your class.
3. Photocopy Student Handout 2: *Finding Katahdin* Questions.
4. Go to <http://www.portaportal.com> and register to make your own free research link page for your students. (You can post research links there for the culminating activity in this teaching unit.)
5. Preview the video and note the cue points (described later in this teaching unit).
6. Either bookmark individual machines, or (with 1:1 computing) have students bookmark the Internet sites posted on your Portaportal for this lesson.

7. (**Optional**) For background information, read *Liberty Men and Great Proprietors: The Revolutionary Settlement on the Maine Frontier, 1760-1820* by Alan Taylor. This can be found at the Maine State Library in Augusta. The book provides rich information that can help you and your students prepare for role-playing in the culminating debate.

## INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

### DAY 1

(**Note:** This activity may actually take more than one class period, depending on the skill level of your individual class.)

**Step 1** Begin the activity by reviewing Student Handout 1: Brief Family or Guardian Survey with the class (students should have previously filled this out with their families at home). On the board or on chart paper, create a timeline that records the dates when students' families migrated to Maine. Have a class discussion about how these dates may or may not coincide with major events in the history of Maine. Tell the students that they will be examining the migration of early settlers to Maine, and that they will specifically be focusing on the issues around land ownership in Maine following the Revolutionary War.

**Step 2** Divide the class into cooperative groups of four. Have each group select a reader, someone who will read aloud as the others follow along. (**Note:** You may choose to assign additional cooperative roles such as a recorder, timekeeper, etc.) Next, distribute one copy of the *Finding Katahdin* reading packet (pp.128-136) and one copy of Student Handout 2: *Finding Katahdin* Questions to each group.

Explain to students that this reading covers the journal entries of William Allen, Jr., and Nathan Barlow. The entries provide a good introduction to the hardships endured by the early settlers who were trying to clear land and establish homes on the harsh Maine frontier.

Allow enough time for student groups to read the packet and to answer the questions on Student Handout 2 together.

**Step 3** After students have finished the reading and the handout, have the groups take turns reporting their answers to the questions about *Finding Katahdin*. For example, Group 1 could present their answers to questions 1, 3, and 8; group 2 could present their answers to questions 4, 6, and 9, and so on.

**Step 4** Explain that during the next class, students will be viewing a video titled *HOME: The Story of Maine – Land of Liberty*. They will be learning more about the early settlers in Maine and about the proprietors (landowners) who demanded payment for their lands.

Vocabulary covered in the *Finding Katahdin* reading includes: *proprietors*, *surveyors*, *squatters*, *specie*, and *White Indians*. Henry Knox is also introduced.

## LEARNING ACTIVITY

## Day 2

**Step 1** Introduce the *Land of Liberty* video to the class in the following way: “After the Revolutionary War, settlers like William Allen and Nathan Barlow faced not only the physical hardships that you have just read about, but also the proprietor’s expectation that they would pay for their lands with cash. As you know, this caused great discontent among the settlers, so they decided to organize a resistance movement. They formed secret groups known as Liberty Men or White Indians.

“The video that you are about to see also tells about Evangelical preachers and how their religious beliefs and practices emerged in Maine. While we watch this film, I want you to make notes about the different people involved in this conflict. Try to understand why they thought and behaved as they did during that time period. Tomorrow, we will watch a few specific parts of the video again so that you can decide which role you want to research more in preparation for a classroom debate.”

**Step 2** Show the entire video. You may want to stop periodically to make sure that everyone is following along and taking appropriate notes.

**Step 3** After viewing the video, conduct a classroom discussion on the major ideas and key individuals involved. Be sure to emphasize the concepts of *cause and effect* as you discuss events and issues with the class. Encourage students to formulate their own questions about the different people involved in the conflict. Tell them that later they will be doing some of their own research on the key players in this story from Maine history.

## Day 3

**Step 1** Say to the class, “Today we are going to watch the video again, but this time we will focus only on specific ideas. We will eventually be participating in a classroom debate, and each of you will be representing a person involved in this dispute over land in Maine. The choices for roles are:

- a proprietor, or landowner, such as Henry Knox
- a cash-poor settler who has worked hard to settle land in Maine
- a land surveyor who has been hired by a proprietor
- an Evangelical preacher

“As we watch the video, be thinking about which part you would like to play.”

**Step 2** On chart paper or on the board, write the following: *Proprietors, White Indians, Evangelical preachers, Betterment Act.*

This vocabulary will come up during the video reinforcing the lesson from *Finding Katahdin*.

First provide students with a **Focus for Media Interaction** by asking:

- How did Henry Knox come to own the Waldo Patent if his in-laws, who formerly owned it, were Loyalists?

START the video at the point where there is a black and white portrait of Henry Knox and the narrator is saying, “Knox was commissioned a Colonel, and his political rise was underway...”

# HOME The Story of Maine

STOP the video when Allen Taylor states, "...and then saw to it that these other Loyalist heirs to the Waldo patent would transfer ownership to him."

### *Answer to the preceding question:*

- He pulled strings with the legislature and the governor of Massachusetts, and he saw to it that the other Loyalist heirs to the Waldo Patent would transfer it to him.

### **Step 3** Provide students with their next **Focus for Media Interaction** by asking:

- What was Henry Knox's plan to make a fortune?
- What good things did Henry Knox do for the Thomaston area?

START the video at the last stopping point.

STOP the video where Dyer says that the "...road from Belfast to Augusta happened because of Henry Knox."

### *Answers to the preceding questions:*

- His plan was to sell back-country lots to finance a number of businesses in Maine.
- He was involved in lime quarrying, brickmaking, shipbuilding, logging, and road building.

### **Step 4** Provide students with the next **Focus for Media Interaction** by asking:

- Where were the lands that Henry Knox controlled, and how many acres did he have?
- How did the settlers view the land, and what were they hoping to change in their lives by coming to Maine to settle?
- How were these views similar to those of the Allen family and Nathan Barlow?

START the video at the last stopping point.

STOP the video at the black-and-white drawing of surveyors trying to get money from the farmers. The narrator should be saying, "Settlers were shocked to learn that they were expected to pay for the lands."

### *Answers to the preceding questions:*

- The lands stretched from Waldoboro to what is now Bangor (over 600,000 acres). Point to a map of Maine when referring to this patent.
- The settlers viewed land ownership as a way to gain independence. They hoped to escape their wage-laboring jobs in southern New England.
- Both the Allen family and Nathan Barlow left their homes south of Maine to escape their tenant/wage earning existences. They yearned for their own land where they could be independent subsistence farmers. However, they encountered harsh conditions and they suffered for this freedom.

### **Step 5** FAST FORWARD to the point where the Evangelical preacher is saying, "...With the Lord Jesus Christ." Provide students with a **Focus for Media Interaction** by asking:

- What contributed to the spread of this new Evangelical religion?
- How was this different from the culture the settlers had left behind in Massachusetts?

START the video.

STOP when Marini says, "...So it left a religious vacuum."

*Answer to the preceding question:*

- The settlers were too poor to pay for a Congregational minister, and thus Evangelical religions – such as Methodist, Baptist, and Universalist faiths – spread to the settlements.
- Almost every town in Massachusetts had a tax-supported Congregationalist minister with a rationalist view of the Gospel. (**Note:** Students may need further discussion to understand the concept of rationalism.)

**Step 6** FAST FORWARD to the Evangelical minister with the pipe. Taylor is stating, "They are drawn to these preachers who are like themselves." Provide students with a **Focus for Media Interaction** by asking:

- Who are these Evangelical preachers?

STOP at the aerial view of the church and richly colored fall foliage.

*Answer to the preceding question:*

- The preachers are much like themselves: fellow farmers who have read the Bible and are able to express the scriptures in an emotional way.

**Step 7** FAST FORWARD to the point where Taylor states, "Well, the Congregationalists are insisting that the existing social order, which is an unequal one in which some people have more wealth..." Provide students with a **Focus for Media Interaction** by asking:

- How does the Evangelical view of the social order compare with that of the traditional Congregationalist view? (Be sure to relate these two basic differences in the understanding of social order to both Henry Knox and the settlers.)

STOP the video when Taylor states, "And they say that this kind of experience trumps anything that a Congregational minister can say."

*Answer to the preceding question:*

- According to the Congregationalist view, the existing social order is meant to be unequal. Some have more wealth and position than others; God himself ordains this. The Evangelical idea of social order focuses on the equality of mankind, which has been made known to visionary individuals such as Nathan Barlow, who claimed to have spoken directly to God.

**Step 8** Provide the next Focus for Media Interaction by asking:

- For what two reasons did the settlers engage in political dissent?
- What actions did the settlers take when provoked?

START the video at the black-and-white drawing of armed settlers. Marini is saying, "Now, they didn't actively engage in political dissent until the elite disturbed them."

STOP the video after Marini says, "When those things started to happen, the folks in the new settlements activated."

**Answer to the preceding question:**

- If they were asked to pay rent for lands of dubious title and to pay taxes for a religion they did not believe in.
- When these things happened, they would mob the homes of the proprietors and threaten Congregational ministers, driving them out of town.

**Step 9** Provide students with a Focus for Media Interaction by asking:

- How did the settlers attempt to settle the disputes legally? Why did they become frustrated with this?
- What was the Betterment Act, and how did it offer a compromise?

START the video where Taylor is saying, “The settlers would frequently send petitions to the state legislature.”

STOP the video after Taylor states, “...he could either sell the land at the wild land value, or he could buy out the settlers...”

**Answer to the preceding question:**

- The settlers tried to send petitions to the state legislators asking them to provide them with cheap or free land, but they were frustrated because they had no elected representatives to advocate for them.
- The Betterment Act stated that when a proprietor sued a settler and obtained a judgment, the jury would set a price for the value of improvements made on the farm. A price for the wild land value was set on the farm also, and the proprietor could either sell the land at wild land value or buy out the settler by paying for the improvements made on the land.

**Day 4**

With the background knowledge provided by the journal readings and the video, students will now be in a better position to examine some primary sources that support the different points of view in this conflict. The video segments viewed the day before should provide important information that the students will need to understand the motives and positions of the individuals they will be portraying in the culminating debate. Either have your students obtain the primary sources online, or you may want to have some of the documents already printed and ready for analysis.

**Step 1** Begin by having students rejoin their groups of four from earlier in this unit. Have teams log onto the Maine Memory Network: <http://www.mainememory.net>. Direct them to create accounts for themselves. Upon entering the site, they should click on Schools. This will take them to the exhibit page with *Finding Katahdin* resource links. Students can find the research documents listed below (described in detail in the Media Components section at the beginning of this unit) by searching the database:

- #7197.pdf (letter from Joseph Chandler, the surveyor)
- #7198.pdf (letter from Charles Vaughan to Kennebec proprietors about squatters)
- #7200.pdf (letter from Kennebec proprietor Charles Vaughn to the other patent owners about the “disguised Indians”)
- #7286.pdf (deed showing Cape Elizabeth land transfer)

Another Web site to access is <http://www.davistownmuseum.org/TDMresolves.htm>. This is the document that calls for a unified and militant back country in defiance to Major-General Henry Knox and his claim to the Waldo Patent (Knox, Lincoln, and Waldo counties), written by Samuel Ely and Elder James Davis.

Allow time for student teams to read the documents and take notes on their contents.

**Step 2** Have student groups take turns summarizing their findings for the rest of the class. Then lead a discussion about the nature of primary sources versus secondary sources. This will help prepare students as they conduct further research.

## CULMINATING ACTIVITY

### *The Debate*

**Step 1** Divide your class into 4 to 5 groups for the debate.

Introduce this final activity in the following manner:

“Students, you will be reenacting a meeting held in Augusta, Maine, in March 1810 on the east side of the Kennebec River. Farmers, proprietors, Evangelical ministers, and representatives of the Massachusetts legislature will be present to debate the Betterment Act. Each of you will choose one of these roles for further research and will represent your position in this public forum. Each individual will be allowed to express an opinion on the subject. In preparation for the public debate, it will be necessary to read and analyze both primary and secondary sources to gather the appropriate information. Keep careful records of your readings in the form of notes. Then, as a group, prepare a five-minute speech for the legislative body describing your position on the matter. On the day of the debate, make every attempt to dress in period clothes to make the occasion as realistic as possible. When the debate is finished, pass in your research notes and the final draft of your speech.”

**Step 2** On the day of the debate, you may want to film the event. Encourage parents to get involved by helping with props and costumes. Students can use the footage of the filmed debate to create iMovies for a portfolio presentation.

Students’ speeches can also be an active part of a language arts class, with students preparing final drafts with footnoting of sources.

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

- Encourage students to become involved in local government by contacting their town office and setting up appointments to meet with town officials. Attending public meetings and becoming aware of issues regarding town affairs will also help them learn more about the democratic process in action. Students should take along their laptops for note taking and then report back to the class on their findings.
- Meeting with town planners and the registrar of deeds will help students understand more about

land ownership today. They can also learn a great deal about the history of land ownership by tracing a family deed or the deed of someone else they know.

- Get students involved with your local historical society. Ask a representative from this organization to visit the classroom to share information and stories of the past.
- Visit the exhibits offered at the Maine State Museum. The exhibit “The Struggle for Identity” would be relevant, as it focuses on life in Maine during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.
- Engage students in a debate regarding Maine’s land for the future. Have a state representative visit the classroom to speak on the issue of public lands. You may also want to encourage students to e-mail legislators and organizations closely associated with this issue.





**Student Handout 2**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Finding Katahdin Questions**  
(covering pages 128-136 of the book)

1. What does the term *squatter* mean? Why did the Allen family decide to move their family from Martha's Vineyard to Maine?
2. Between 1783 and 1820, how many new settlers came to Maine?
3. How does William Allen describe his new home when he sees it for the first time? What challenges did the Allens face during the first year?
4. Who were the Kennebec proprietors, and what claim did they have on the lands in Maine?
5. Who was Henry Knox?

