

Living on the Edge of Empire - Early Colonial Life in Deerfield, Massachusetts:
Building Historical Perspective Using Visuals as Primary Sources
Submitted by Donna Heidemann and David Klippert

This lesson introduces the role of the student (historian) to utilizing inquiry-based and reflective skills to gain understanding and embedded historical meaning. In a collaborative classroom environment, students will examine two individuals' experiences, individuals who lived in multicultural Deerfield during 1704. Using photographs, paintings and images as primary sources, students will work to develop "authentic" historical narratives.

Focus questions:

- ~ How is language a framer of meaning?
- ~ How is identity formed and what role does it play in the interpretation of events?
- ~ What is the role of the historian in examining and reporting on "hard history?"
- ~ How do we search for and value the experience of others?

Items needed:

- ~ Teacher's computer
- ~ LCD projector, screen and speakers
- ~ Internet access
- ~ Whiteboard and dry erase markers for Word Wall
- ~ Paper, pencils and student cellphones for potential use for photography
- ~ Word Wall

Procedure:

- ~ 90-minutes (two 45-minute class periods)

Step One: How is language a framer of meaning?

~ Prepare Word Wall by listing the following words on the whiteboard and briefly lead a discussion on how these words will help to inform and guide today's historical journey:

- | | | | |
|---------------|------------|-------------|---------------|
| 1) Massacre | - Raid | - Terrorism | - Freedom |
| 2) Redemption | - Frontier | - Empire(s) | - Colonialism |

- ~ Assign students to four random groups and break into two teams
- ~ Have team 1 research and define terms in line 1 and team 2 define the terms line 2 of the word wall
- ~ Have each team share and discuss their findings
 - How might these terms be used differently?
 - What other words could be used that carry similar meaning?
 - How can the meanings of these terms inform inquiry?

Step Two: How is identity formed and what role does it play in the interpretation of images as primary sources?

- ~ Model "how to" create an identity chart (*see appendix*):
 - Discuss with whole class: how would this particular identity (person) respond to major life events such as loss, war, and opportunity?
 - What clues and possible ideas lead us to believe so?

- How does identity shape our understanding of other points of view?

~ Assign each team a person: Parthena or Eunice. Provide background histories on each of these individuals who were present in Deerfield in 1704.

- [Parthena Link](#)
- [Eunice Link](#)

~ Ask each of the four groups in the two teams to read the histories and to create an identity chart for that one individual using key facts and inferences from the documents.

~ When finished, have “Team Parthena” meet to compare and contrast their identity charts. Do the same with “Team Eunice”.

- Have each team share their charts with the other team.
- How are these individuals similar? How are they different? Why?
- What is influencing or “coloring” each individual’s perspectives?

Step Three: What is the role of the historian in examining and reporting on “hard history?”

~ Introduce the students to the following images and lead a brief discussion to introduce the process of using images as primary sources:

- In the first two images of the Pocumtuck River Valley and the door of the “Old Indian House,” what are you seeing?
 - Be specific, using the details in these images, what information are they giving us?
 - How might they relate to Native American and British sense of value, protection, status, freedom, empire and spirituality?
- Now, take the same approach with the memorial marker (Pocumtuck plaque written by local Native American community members and the curator of Memorial Hall Museum in 1992) and the “Long Tail Blue” painting.
 - Why did we use these images versus images from the Internet?
 - Immerse yourself in the environment and take ownership of the experience.
 - What would it have been like to live on the frontier? Or in another place?
 - Do not rely on the Internet – Make your experience of history real and place yourself in the context of the times.

~ Have the two groups in each team interpret a historical impression from the view of their assigned person (Parthena or Eunice) using the information from the images.

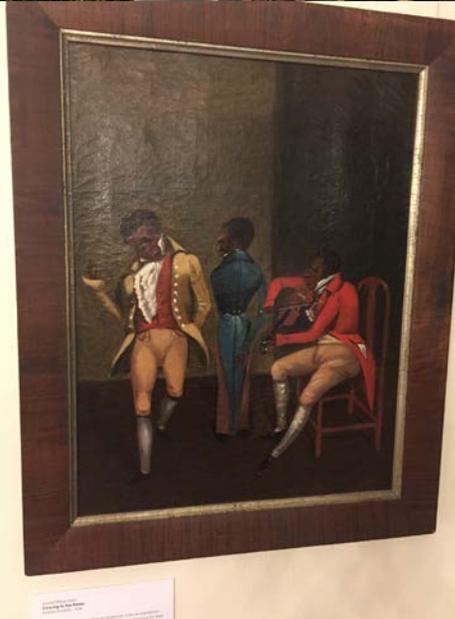
- What is going on in each picture? How would she describe what is happening around her?
- What would be of value to each of these individuals?
- Where would conflicts arise over different viewpoints?
- How might the information in these images be understood through the different lenses of Native Americans, British and the emerging slave population?
- For instance, what might modern-day descendants of the attackers of the door see? What might modern-day descendants of the people attacked and/or killed during the raid see?
- Have each student write a reflection in the form of a letter, journal entry or newspaper article from the point of view of either Eunice or Parthena.

- ~ Have each team share their perspectives, insights, reflections and ideas:
 - What would Parthena and Eunice have seen in each picture?
 - What did they value?
 - What are the similarities and differences that Parthena and Eunice share?
 - Monitor and guide the dialog to empower student discovery and learning.

~ Picture Guide: Pocumtuck Valley (Connecticut River); the door of “the Old Indian House” - owned by the Sheldon Family, damaged during the 1704 raid; memorial plaque dedicated to the Pocumtuck – written by members of the local Native American community in conjunction with the Memorial Hall Museum curator; “Long Tail Blue”- period slave painting. Each picture can be downloaded separately in order to manipulate.



IN HONOR OF THE POCUMTUCKS
 WHO SETTLED IN DEERFIELD
 ABOUT 6,000 B.C.
 IT WAS HERE THAT THEY
 HUNTED, FISHED, FARMED
 AND RAISED THEIR FAMILIES
 WITH A GREAT UNDERSTANDING
 AND RESPECT FOR THE LAND.
 FORCED OUT IN 1676,
 THIS PLAQUE IS ERECTED IN
 MEMORY OF THE POCUMTUCKS.
 1992



Step Four: As a result of open inquiry, how do we search for and value the experience of others?

~ Use of primary sources: images, music and paintings:

- [Long Tail Blue Youtube](#)
- ~ The importance of following the research and continuous learning:
 - [Long Tail Blue lyric sheet](#)
 - Ms. Heidemann and Mr. Klippert's continuous learning as a result of open inquiry and learning - we are never done learning about a situation.
- ~ Origin of the images:
 - History happens all around us, all the time - use available technology to inform your thinking.
- ~ Discuss the importance of empathetic inquiry when investigating the experience of other individuals.
- ~ Review and final lesson closure.