

Using a 1739 Household Inventory to Learn about Colonial Life

Eve Zeese

NEH Deerfield MA July 2017

OVERVIEW: In this lesson students will use the 1739 household inventory from the Isaac Royall house to

1-learn how historical research works

Types of documents historians use, making a hypothesis and looking for support from primary source materials

2-learn about life in the Massachusetts colony in 1739

3-entice students to learn about this time period

LEARNING OUTCOMES: After completing this lesson students will know that

- by 1739, the wealthiest colonists owned a variety of possessions which came from many parts of the world

-enslaved people were considered property and listed with the animals

- enslaved people often lived and worked in the same room

-inventories were often taken for legal reasons, for example, upon the homeowner's death or to sell goods to pay debts

-some of the differences in our homes today and colonial homes

This lesson also allows students to practice using historical thinking skills, make inferences and use historical documentation to back them up.

GRADE LEVEL: This lesson is designed for use with my 7th graders but I think it is adaptable to other grade levels.

TIME PERIOD: 42-minute period

STANDARDS: Grade 7: Social Studies Practices

A. Gathering, Interpreting and Using Evidence

5. Make inferences and draw general conclusions from evidence.

C. Comparison and Contextualization

5. Connect historical developments to specific circumstances of time and place and to broader regional, national, or global processes.

Classroom Set Up and Materials: The classroom should be set up for the students to work in groups of 3. Materials should be provided for each group. In addition to the materials attached to this lesson you will need a copy of the 1739 Inventory of the Isaac Royall House.

PROCEDURES:

Anticipatory Set: Students will be given a picture of a modern-day house which looks like it belongs to someone wealthy. They will be asked to brainstorm a quick inventory of the contents of the house by room and then we will have a quick share.

Activity:

Ask students how they think the contents of a rich person's house in 1739 would be different than a rich person's house today. Have a quick class discussion. Explain that our guesses are similar to a historian's hypothesis. How might we find support for our hypothesis as to what would be contained in a colonial house inventory?

Pass out the 1739 inventory to students and have them compare it to their guesses/hypothesis. Explain to students that standards of spelling were different and that they should try to sound out words they don't recognize to infer their meaning.

Students work on the activity using the worksheet provided and the Isaac Royall House Inventory from 1739.

Whole Class Discussion: discuss what students have inferred and share out. Might be best to have each group report on a different section of the house and discuss as a whole class.

Exit Ticket: I found a modified type of exit ticket on google images, an exit tweet. I think that might be fun to use. Topics for the tweet could be things they found memorable or surprising or questions they still have.

Names: _____

OPENING ASSIGNMENT



Imagine that the family that lives in the above house has gone bankrupt (they've run out of money) and since they haven't been able to pay their bills, the places they owe money to are going to be allowed to sell all of their assets to raise the money to pay the debts.

The bankruptcy court has ordered that an inventory be taken of the property in the house and its approximate value so that it can be sold. What type of property would you expect to find on the inventory? List your ideas in the chart below by room:

Formal Living Room	Formal Dining Room	Home Office	Family Room	Kitchen

Master Bedroom	Bedroom 2	Bedroom 3	Guest Bedroom	Other:

Names: _____

What can we learn about colonial life from a household inventory?



This is the house of Isaac Royall, outside of Boston, Massachusetts.

When Isaac Royall, Sr. died, his son, Isaac Royall, Jr. inherited the house and its contents.

Royall lived in the house with his wife,

2 daughters and their servants shown below.

When Isaac Royall, Sr. died an inventory was taken of all of the property in the 2 buildings. What kind of property do you think they owned? Brainstorm and put some guesses in the appropriate boxes below.



Small Front Room (Best Room)	Large Front Room	Dining Room	Master Bedroom (Marble Chamber)	Bedroom 2 (Blew Chamber)

Bedroom 3 (Green Chamber)	Kitchen	Spinning Room (Garrat)	Back Foyer (Front Garrat)	Livestock (Living Property)

Now use the inventory to see what the household contents actually were in 1739. Read through the inventory and fill in the following information:

Best Room, Front Room, Dining Room: What questions do you have about this room's contents?

What can you infer about the Royall family or colonial life based on the contents of this room?

Did anything in these contents surprise you?

Marble Chamber, Blew Chamber and Green Chamber: What questions do you have about this room's contents?

What can you infer about the Royall family or colonial life based on the contents of this room?

Did anything in these contents surprise you?

Kitchen Chamber, Spinning Garrat, Front Garra: What questions do you have about this room's contents?

What can you infer about the Royall family or colonial life based on the contents of this room?

Did anything in these contents surprise you?

Livestock/Living Property:

What can you infer about the Royall family or colonial life based on their "living property"?

Did anything here surprise you?



Today's Tweet

@

#

#



Today's Tweet

@

#

#

Document 1. An Inventory of the House of Isaac Royall, Esq^r taken by us the Subscribers this twenty-Ninth Day of July 1739 (Middlesex County Probate Court File Papers, First Ser. 1648-1871, Case #19545).

<i>Item and Location</i>	<i>Worth in £</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>In the Best Room</i>		
1 peer Looking Glass	55:0:0	
1 pr Large Sconces	60.:0:0	
A marvel [marble] table with Iron frames	35:0:0	
2 pr brass Armes @ 40/	4:0:0	
A Jappaned tea table	7:0:0	
A Sett of Cheney [china] for the Same	13:0:0	
A Large mahogeny table	10:0:0	
A Small Ditto	7:0:0	
A Doz. Of walnut Chares wth Leather bottomes	30:0:0	
A pr of brass AndIrons	3:0:0	
A fier Shovel and tonggs	1:0:0	
A Turkey Carpitt	40:0:0	255:0:0
<i>In the Front Room Next to Medford</i>		
1 peer Looking Glass	55:0:0	
1 Sconce	15:0:0	
A mahogeny tea table	3:0:0	
A parcell of Cheney for the Same	3:0:0	
A Black walnut Desk	6:0:0	
An Easey Chear Covered wth Blew	7:0:0	
Illegible	30:0:0	
A walnut Chease	2:0:0	
1 doz. Burnt Cheney plates	7:0:0	
1 doz. of blew and white Do [ditto]	6:0:0	
3 Cheney Dishes @ 60/	9:0:0	
2 Small Cheney Bowles	2:15:0	
1 Glass Decanter	:10:0	
1 Coffee mill	1:0:0	
A case of Bottles Small	1:0:0	
1 doz. burnt Cheaney plates	7:0:0	
8 Cheney Dishes @ 30/	12:0:0	
1 fruit plate	:10:0	
6 wine Glasses & nine tumblers	3:0:0	
1 Iron back	2:0:0	
5 Custard Cups	:15:0	
2 blew and white Cheney Dishes	3:0:0	
6 Cheney Salvers	3:0:0	
1 pr Brass Armes	2:0:0	
1 Glass Salver	1:10:0	183:10:0
<i>In the Dining Room</i>		
A Large Sconce	30:0:0	
A Mahogony table	8:0:0	
A Small Ditto	5:0:0	
8 Leather Chears 25/	10:0:0	
A wooden Arm Chear	:10:0	

1 pr Brass AndIrons	3:0:0	
A fier Shovel and tonggs	1:0:0	
2 pr brass arms 40/	4:0:0	
2 fowling pieces @ £7	14:0:0	
1 Iron back	2:0:0	
1 doz. of burnt Cheney plats	7:0:0	
1 Glass Decanter	:2:6	
2 Glass Salts	:8:0	
1 Tubler [tumbler]	:4:0	
1 pr of tobacco tonggs	1:0:0	86:4:6
<i>In the StarCase 1 Clock</i>	60:0:0	
<i>In the Marble Chamber</i>		
1 Sconce	30:0:0	
A crimson Silk Damask Bed wth Conterpin featherbead Bolster	200:0:0	
Blankets Sheets & pillows wth an Easey Chear of the Same & Cushing		
3 walnut Chears	7:10:0	
A Turkey Carpet	30:0:0	
1 pr brass arms	2:0:0	
A blew hair trunck	3:0:0	
A Feather Bed	10:0:0	282:10:0
<i>In the Blew Chamber</i>		
A Blew Cheney Bed wth Feather Bed	40:0:0	
1 mahogoney Chest of Draws and Chamber table	60:0:0	
1 Large Sconce	30:0:0	
1 Small Ditto	15:0:0	
2 Chairs	:10:0	145:10:0
<i>In the Green Chamber viz.</i>		
1 Large Sconce	30:0:0	
A Dressing Glass	9:0:0	
1 _____ [illegible] table	10:0:0	
A Red Cheney Bed wth feather Bed	40:0:0	
1 pr Blankets	4:0:0	
11 pr Sheets @ £5	55:0:0	
1 pr of New holland Do	12:0:0	
1 pr Old Do	3:0:0	
7 Donlap pillowbeers @ 7/	5:19:0	
6 holland Do 15/	4:10:0	
5 Blankets 20/	5:0:0	
1 Rugg 40/	2:0:0	
1 Sealskin trunck	:12:0	
1 Leather Do	:10:10	181:11:0
<i>In the Kitching Chamber</i>		
1 Looking Glass	8:0:0	
1 pr AndIrons Shovel & tonggs	2:0:0	
A Cloaths horse	1:0:0	
A Close Stool	1:10:0	
3 Chares	:10:0	

A Seal Skin trunk 12/ a leather Do	1:4:0	
2 Negros Beds and Beding @ £4	4:0:0	
A pine table & folding Board	2:0:0	
2 brushes	:8:0	
1 doz. Diapaer table Cloths	36:0:0	
5 Do at 10/	2:10:0	
6 Breakfast Do	4:10:0	
6 Damask knapkin @ 10/	3:0:0	
9 ordinary Do 5/	2:5:0	
12 towells 5/	3:0:0	71:17:0

In the Spinning Garrat

2 Bedsteds	1:10:0	
A Spinning wheel	:15:0	
2 featherbeads Small	10:0:0	
A Negro bed Gradle @ two Blankets	3:0:0	
An Ovel Table	2:0:0	17:05:0

In the Front Garrat viz

7 blanketts	10:9:0	
1 Rugg	4:0:0	
1 Ditto	4:0:0	
1 Old Chest	:15:0	
1 Bedsted pillow & Blster	6:0:0	
1 Small Glass	1:10:0	
1 Bed and Bolster	10:0:0	
1 turkey Carpit	10:0:0	
1 Chest	2:0:0	
1 Small Bed Blanketts and Sheets	6:0:0	
1 Bedsted	1:10:0	
4 Cheers	:8:6	
1 fier Shovel and tongs	1:0:0	57:13:6

In the Kitching

A Large table	3:0:0	
A warming pan	4:0:0	
A Jack and furniture	8:0:0	
A Brass Stand for plates	2:0:0	
1 Iron Chafing Dish & Stove	1:10:0	
A Bread Baster	:8:0	
A brass Chaffin Dish	1:0:0	
A Bellmettle Kittle	3:10:0	
1 pr Bellows	:5:0	
1 pr Andirons	1:10:0	
Fier Sovell tongs, fender & Slice	1:5:0	
An Iron Dripping pan	3:0:0	
A Large Bellmettle Skellet	4:0:0	
One Iron pott & Kettle & tramle	2:0:0	
7 Brass Candlesticks & Snuffers	3:0:0	
A Brass flower Box	:8:0	
A Brass Candle Box	1:10:0	
2 tin Dish Covers 2 Cake pans 1 tin pudding pan	1:10:0	
1 Iron Skillet	:10:0	

2 Grid Irons		1:5:0	
1 Spitt and wheele		:15:0	
A Brass Skimmer & Ladle		1:0:0	
6 Chairs @ 3/6		1:1:0	
1 pr Small Stillards		:10:0	
1 Copper Kettle wth ? @ 5/		11:10:0	
1 Brass Do 39/		6:0:0	
1 Large Iron Do		4:0:0	
1 Small Iron pott		:6:0	
2 Iron tramells @ 15/		1:10:0	
1 frying pan		1:5:0	
1 Iron Kittle		1:0:0	
1 Churn		1:0:0	
A parcell of tub tables & stools and other wooden ware		5:0:0	
1 pr Andirons & tongs & Slice		3:0:0	
A watering pot		:15:0	
18 milk pans		:18:0	
5 Negroes Beds and beding		15:0:0	
115lb petwer @ 4/6		25:17:6	
1 Iron bar		:15:0	124:17:6
60 g/w oz of plate @ 30/		g14:5:0 ?	
<i>A Cattalogue of Books</i>			
Echards History of England	1 Vol.	2:0:0	
Rapins Do	2	12:0:0	
Chambers Dictionary	2	20:0:0	
Tilotsons work	3	10:0:0	
Mall's Gephay	1	3:0:0	
Burnits History	2	8:0:0	
Locks Works	3	8:0:0	
History of Knights of Malta	2	1:10:0	
Priallaves (?) works	2	2:0:0	
Taylors Life and Deth of the Holey Jesus	1	3:0:0	
Falthams Resolves		:12:0	
Tacitus	2	1:5:0	
Province Lawbook		1:10:0	
Brunetts History of Reformation	2	1:5:0	
Tryall of Earl Macklesfield		1:0:0	
Lawrances Agrivelture (agriculture)		:15:0	
Duke of Malboroughs Life	3	1:16:0	
Spences Morralls		1:0:0	
Spectacle of Nature	3	1:16:0	
Ground Reson of the Christian Religion		:12:0	
Defence of Christianity		:10:0	
Vindication of Do	2	1:10:0	
Doctr. Souths Works	6	5:0:0	
Establishment of Brittany among ye Gauls	2	1:0:0	
History of the Revolutions of ye Roman Republik		1:10:0	
2			
History of ye Revolution of Portugal		:12:0	
Shakespars works	3	3:0:0	
Religious Phylosophers	1 & 3	1:10:0	
Life and History of Lewis 14 th	2	1:10:0	

Doct. Bulls works	2	1:10:0	
Bradleys agraculture	4	2:8:0	
Sr. Wm. Temples Letters to ye king	3	1:0:0	
Reign of Queen Ann		:12:0	
Mortimors art of Husbandry		:10:0	
Travels of Robert Mordeu		:10:0	
Boerhaves Elements of Chemistry	3	2:0:0	
Gazettien		:15:0	
Wilson's Trigonometry		:10:0	
Euclids Elements		1:0:0	
Princes Crenology	2	:12:0	
Catos Letters	4	2:0:0	
Phillips way of teaching		:6:0	
Ancient and Modern Languages		:10:0	
Life of Doct. Ball		:5:0	
Roman History	5	3:10:0	
Clarindon History of Civil Wars	6	6:0:0	
Present State of Grate Britiane	2	:18:0	
History of Europe		:10:0	
Boxsters Infant Baptism		:3:0	
History of Europe in 1705		:15:0	
Continuation of morning Exersise		:15:0	
Littletons Dictionary		2:10:0	
Work of the Auther of the hole Duty of man		4:0:0	
County Justice		1:0:0	
Hugh Grotious on War & Peace		:6:0	
Shaftsburys works	3	3:0:0	136:0:0
Cattle			
20 Cows @ £10		200:0:0	
2 bulls	8	16:0:0	
1 Steere		12:0:0	
2 Yoak Oxen	28	56:0:0	
2 heffers	7	14:0:0	
4 Calves	2	8:0:0	
A mair & 2 colts		20:0:0	
5 score Sheep @ 18		90:0:0	
1 Cart horse	16	16:0:0	
14 Swine	2	28:0:0	
4 Coach horses		200:0:0	
A Chariot and 2 pr harnesses		300:0:0	
2 Carts		12:0:0	
9 Negro Men named Fortune Barron Peter Ned house Peter Robin		900:0:0	
Quamino Cuffe Smith Phillip			
4 Negro Women named Ruth Trace Sue & Jonto		300:0:0	2172:0:0
Dwelling house			
		4000:0:0	
Out Kitching		200:0:0	
Pidgen house		50:0:0	
Cornhouse		100:0:0	
Coach house and Stable		200:0:0	
2 old Barns		100:0:0	
1 New barn		200:0:0	

1 Old Do	60:0:0	
Clevelands house & Barn	600:0:0	
2 Small Do of Cleavland	500:0:0	
532 Acres of Land @ £35	18620:0:0	
42 Acres of wood Land	600:0:0	
13 Acres Do @ £12	156:0:0	25,386:0:0
1 large Boat	50:0:0	
1 Garding Stone	6:0:0	
