

English and Indian Views on Land Ownership

Metadata

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Grade Level: 11th Grade US History

Number of class periods: 1 Period (70 minutes)

Common Core State Standards:

Standard 2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

Standard 9: Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

Lesson Overview

Essential Question: How did the English and Indians in New England view and use land differently? How did those differences lead to conflict?

Objective

After completing these lessons, students will understand the different ideas the English and the Indians had on land ownership and usage. They will understand how different views led to conflict.

Materials

Document-based question packet.

See attached handout

Procedure (Instruction and Assessment)

1. Do now: answer: What does it mean to own something? If someone else disagrees with how you are using something, do they have a right to use it? To take it away from you? (10 minutes)
2. Once students are done writing, have them share responses to the above questions. Try to have them think about specific examples and list principles and key ideas of ownership on the board as they discuss. (5 minutes)
3. Explain that students' ideas on ownership reflect the European paradigm and that most Indians had a fundamentally different view which was not as simple as saying that they did not believe in private property.
4. Distribute and introduce document-based question packet. Read the directions along with the essential question for the assignment.
5. Assign students to work on either documents 1-4 or 5-7. They will work by themselves to read and answer the questions for those documents. Students will then pair up and review answers and documents with others who read the same documents. Once completed, students will pair up with others who read the other documents and read along with and share their understandings of those documents.
6. Once students have reached a satisfactory level of understanding, have them plan out their essays and complete the DBQ essay for homework.

EQ: How did the English and Indians in New England view and use land differently? How did their different ideas lead to conflict?

Directions: Read and interpret each of the following and answer the questions that follow. Use the documents and your answers to the question to help you answer the essential question in a well organized essay.

Document 1

Adapted from Robert Cushman's Mourt's Relation, 1622

“But some will say, what right have I to live in the heathens’ country? Their land is spacious and void, they are few and do but run over the grass, as do foxes and wild beasts. They are not industrious, neither have they art, science, skill, or faculty to use either the land or the commodities of it, but all spoils, rots, and is marred for the want of manuring, gathering, ordering, etc....so it is lawful now to take a land which none useth and make use of it.”

1. According to Cushman, why were the English justified in taking the Indians’ land?

Document 2

Adapted from John Winthrop's Reasons for the Plantation in New England, 1628

Objection I: We have no justification to enter upon that Land which has been so long possessed by others.

Answer 1: That which lies common, and hath never been replenished or subdued, is free to any that possess and improve it: For God hath given to men a double right to the earth; there is a natural right, and a Civil right. The first right was natural when men held the earth in common every man sowing and feeding where he pleased: then as men and their cattle increase, they appropriated certain parcels of land by enclosing and tending and this in time gives them a civil right As for the Natives in New England, they enclose no Land, neither have any settled habitation, nor any tame cattle to improve the Land by, and so have no other but a natural right to those Countries. So as if we leave them sufficient for their use, we may lawfully take the rest, there being more then enough for them and for us.

2a. Summarize in your own words Winthrop's distinction between natural and civil right to land ownership.

b. How does Winthrop use this distinction to justify the English claims on Indian land?

Document 3

Adapted from Rev. Francis Higginson's *True Description 1629*

The Indians are not able to make use of the one fourth part of the land, neither have they any settled places, as towns to dwell in, nor any ground as they challenge for their own possession, but change their habitation from place to place.

3. What criticism does Higginson have for the Indians' use of land?

Document 4

Adapted from the Chauk deed 1667

Introduction: "In February 1667, a Pocumtuck deed was signed for land that would become the town of Deerfield, Massachusetts. A group of men from Dedham, Massachusetts, delegated John Pynchon, a well-known and powerful Englishman in Springfield, Massachusetts, to represent them in this land transfer. A sachem called Chauk or Chaque represented the Pocumtucks, the Native group whose homelands encompassed the land described in the deed."

Chauk, the sachem of the Pacomtuck has given, granted, bargained, and sold, by these present doth fully clearly and absolutely give and sell unto captain john Pynchon of Springfield for their use.

Chauk reserves liberty of fishing for ye indians in ye rivers or waters and free liberty to hunt deer or other wild creatures and to gather walnuts, chestnuts and other nuts and things and on ye commons.

4a. According to the document, how would the land in the deed be used and by whom?

b. According to the document, did the Indians expect to give up permanent use and ownership of the land? Explain.

Document 5

“Dixton Harvesters” ca. 1725, Courtesy of Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museums, Gloucestershire, UK/Bridgeman Art Library.



Introduction: “This scene illustrates the lifeways of many English people. The majority of the population farmed land that had been under cultivation for many centuries. In addition to growing grains such as wheat, rye and barley, they raised domestic animals and livestock including cows, pigs and sheep. These animals were valued as a source of meat, dung for fertilizer, dairy products (principally butter and cheese) as well as leather and wool.” From “English Lifeways- England, circa 1600, <http://1704.deerfield.history.museum/groups/lifeways.do?title=English>

5. Based on the image and description above, what was the ideal English use and landscape of land?

Document 6

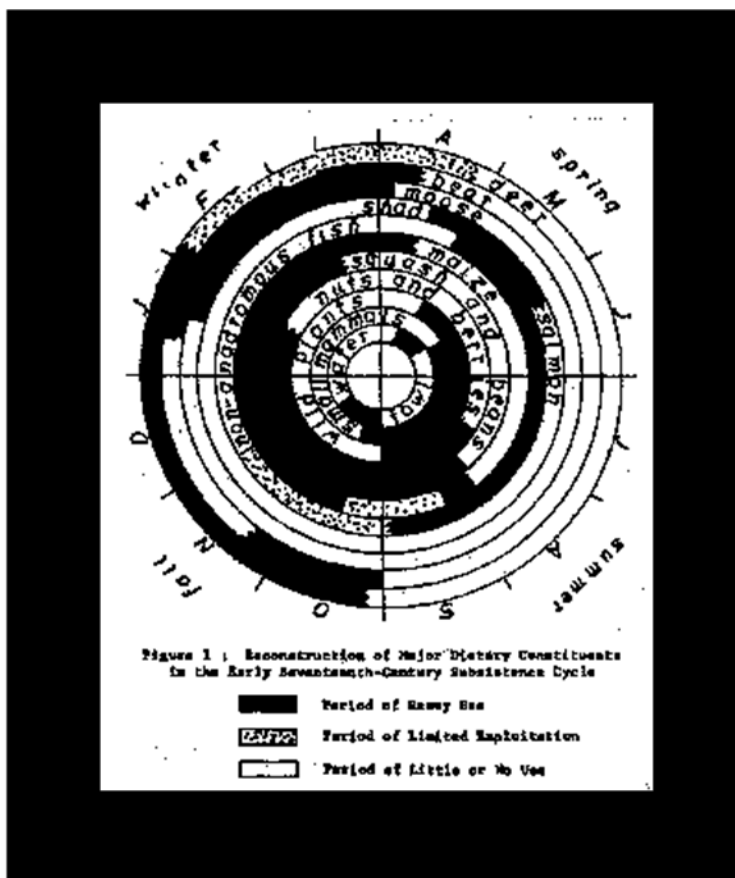
Adapted from William Cronon’s *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*

“The need for diversity and mobility led New England Indians to avoid acquiring much surplus property, confident as they were that their mobility and skill would supply any need that arose.

“What the Indians owned, or more precisely, what their villages gave them claim to—was not the land but the things that were on the land during the various seasons of the year.”

Document 6b

From PA Thomas, *In the Maelstrom of Change* 1979



6a. Based on the documents above, why did the Indians not accumulate much material goods?

b. Why did the Indians not live in settled homes?

c. How does the information in documents 6a and 6b help address Higginson's claim in Document 3 that, the Indians "change their habitation from place to place"?

Document 7

Adapted from Thomas Morton's *Description of the Indians in New England* (1637)

A Gentleman and a traveller, that had been in the parts of New England for a time, when he returned again, in his discourse of the Country, wondered, (as he said,) that the natives of the land lived so poorly in so rich a Country, like to our Beggars in England.

They supplied with all manner of needful things for the maintenance of life and livelihood. Food and clothing are the chief of all that we make true use of; and of these they find no want, but have, and may have, them in a most plentiful manner.

If our beggars of England should, with so much ease as they, furnish themselves with food at all seasons, there would not be so many starved in the streets, neither would so many gaols [jails] be stuffed, or gallouses furnished with poor wretches, as I have seen them.

They love not to be cumbered with many utensils, and although every proprietor knows his own, yet all things, (so long as they will last), are used in common amongst them: A bisket cake given to one, that one breaks it equally into so many parts as there be persons in his company, and distributes it.

According to humane reason, guided only by the light of nature, these people lead the more happy and freer life, being void of care, which torments the minds of so many Christians:

They are so loving also that they make use of those things they enjoy, (the wife only excepted,) as common goods, and are therein so compassionate that, rather than one should starve through want, they would starve all. Thus do they pass away the time merrily.

7. According to Morton, in what ways were the Indians better off than those in England?

Essay Question

Use the documents above and your own knowledge to answer: How did the English and Indians in New England view and use land differently? How did these different views lead to conflict?