Diane Werges

INDENTURED SERVANTS AND SLAVES

Essential Questions:

What are the differences and similarities between a slave and an indentured servant?

Objectives:

The students will be able to locate Europe, the British colonies, and Africa on a map as they study the movement of people (indentured servants and slaves to America)
The students will understand the differences and similarities between an indentured servant and a slave.
Students will describe ways Europeans became indentured servants.
Students will describe ways Africans became slaves.
The student will understand the difficult ocean trip from Europe for the indentured servants and the journey from Africa for slaves by using primary sources.
The student will compare the lives of slaves and indentured servants using primary sources and the historical fiction book, Molly Bannaky, by Alice Gill.

Core Conceptual Objectives:

CCO III-Geography
The student will utilize geographical tools to interpret the past and understand the present.
1.b. factors (push/pull) influence groups to settle in a given place

CCO IV-Economics
The student will identify and interpret the effects of economic needs on historical America.
1. economic decisions are based on needs and have consequences
CCO V-Cultural Awareness
The student will analyze and compare the roles of different cultures/groups and their impact on early American history.
1. groups and institutions have played an important role in American history (for example: families, religious groups, political groups, ethnic groups

Resources:
- Colonial Williamsburg Summer Institute 2007 CD
- The United States: Making a New Nation, Harcourt, Inc., 2007

Time Required: Approximately 5 class periods

Procedures:

LESSON 1 –This lesson will assess previous knowledge and what students want to know about slaves and indentured servant in colonial America.

On the first day, give each group (3-4 students) two pieces of construction paper. Have them write the word SLAVE in the middle of one sheet and the words, INDENTURED SERVANT in the middle of the other. Ask students to brainstorm all the words they think of when they hear these words. If they have difficulty, ask leading questions, such as: How do you think a slave lived? How did a person become a slave or indentured servant?

Ask students to list some questions they have about slaves and indentured servants. Have them put them aside until the end of the unit. Explain to students that they will use primary sources to answer their questions and see whether their ideas of inferences about slavery are accurate.
LESSON 2 –Students will learn the similarities and difference between indentured servants and slaves in colonial America using a Venn diagram.

During this lesson students will learn how Europeans became indentured servants. Students will learn how Africans became slaves. Students will compare the two using a Venn diagram.

Use the lessons and materials in Lesson 21 in Our Country’s History, Hands on Social Studies program by Nystrom, pages 95-100 in the Teacher’s binder. Students will use the Nystrom Atlas of Our Country’s History, map, globe, and activity sheets to learn about indentured servants and slaves.

Lesson Summary: Teach ways Europeans became indentured servants. Describe how Africans became slaves. Compare indentured servants and slaves.

Key points: (Servants agreed to work for 4-7 years in exchange for transportation to the colonies. Many different types of people became indentured servants. Slaves were brought to America against their will. Many different types of people were forced into slavery. There were slaves and indentured servants in all 13 colonies. Slaves and indentured servants both worked at the same types of jobs. Most worked without pay. Life was difficult for slaves and indentured servants. Hours were long and hard. Some masters were cruel. Some slaves and indentured servants were sold to new masters---away from their friends and family. While indentured servants were eventually freed, most slaves were not.)

In addition to the activity sheets, a Venn diagram may be presented to class on a Smartboard or overhead so the class can complete the diagram together.
Possible Venn diagram notes:

**Indentured Servants**
- Consisted of men, women, and children who did not have money for passage
- Consisted also of homeless, prisoners, or kidnapped or orphaned children
- Agreed to work without pay for the employer or a ship’s captain for the payment of the passage and provision of food, clothing, and shelter
- Free at end of contract (4-7 years)
- Possible opportunity to obtain land or material items such as clothing, hoes, corn, and land (depending upon the rules of the colony) at the end of the contract

**Slaves**
- Captured in native Africa, sold to slave traders
- Shipped to colonies and sold into slavery
- Owned as property for life with no rights
- Master could not change the status of slaves
- Were often born into slavery
- Did not understand the English language

**Similarities between slaves and indentured slaves**
- Obligated to serve a superior
- Both could be bought and sold
- Lacked proper food and clothing
- Poor housing
- Hard work
- Often died from servitude
- Punished for transgressions
- Could be hunted and punished for running away, whipped, or branded
- Could be separated from family
- The master determines the treatment of the servants
- Transported some distance from their homeland
LESSON 3-Students hear actual excerpts from journals written by an indentured slave from England and a slave from Africa. Students will develop historical empathy for these servants.

Show the eighteenth-century painting “A Storm-A Ship in Distress” by Richard Houston found on Colonial Williamsburg Teacher Institute 2007 CD on the Smartboard or overhead. Ask students to observe the picture and partner-share what they see and how they would feel if they were aboard that ship. (Possible responses: seasick, frightened, crowded, unsanitary, nervous, etc.)

Discuss that sea voyages were very hazardous. Some people undertook these voyages voluntarily, and others did not. Ask students to think of reasons why people would have faced the dangers of a sea voyage. (Possible reasons: adventure, promise of a better life, get out of prison, exiled from Britain, to run away, deserted of orphaned children, search of employment, etc.)

Read to the class On the Misfortune of Indentured Servants, by Gottlieb Mittelberger, an indentured servant from Europe. (CWTI CD) Have students partner-share what Gottlieb Mittelberger experienced on his voyage.

Possible observations:
- terrible misery, stench, fumes, horror, vomiting, many kinds of seasickness, fever, dysentery, headache, heat constipation, boils, scurvy, cancer, mouth-rot which all came from old food and meat and/or foul water
- hunger, thirst, frost, heat, dampness, anxiety
- lice abound, especially on sick people
- people cry and pray

Have students examine and discuss the diagram of the interior of a slave ship found in History Alive! America’s Past textbook, Chapter 8, Lessons 5 and 6, pp. 81-82. The diagram shows the inhumane, crowded conditions on slave ships. Students will read the information/take notes to learn about the Middle Passage.
Possible notes on Chapter 8-Lesson 5 and Chapter 8-Lesson 6:

- Middle Passage took 5-12 weeks
- Pairs of men chained together
- Smell and heat inside the ship was unbearable
- Ships were crawling with lice, fleas and rats
- Number of West Africans was at least 10 to 15 million
- 10-20% of them died during the voyage
- Slaves were whipped who refused to eat; forced jaws open or burned their lips with hot coals
- Sharks followed the ships, feeding on the dead who were thrown overboard

Read aloud Chapter 7 of the book, The Kidnapped Prince by Olaudah Equiano entitled “The Slave Ship.” Students will take notes about the journey using an information-gathering graphic organizer.

Possible notes:

- language was very different from any he had ever heard
- some of them thumped him and tossed him around to see if he was healthy
- many black people chained together, faces of sorrow
- overpowered by horror and he fainted
- asked if he was going to be eaten by white men
- crew took him below decks into ship’s stinking hold
- horribleness of the stench and he cried, was so sick and low that he couldn’t eat, and he wanted to die
- refused to eat, arms were held, feet tied while he was flogged
- Africans whipped for not eating
- whites acted and looked so savage
- he had never seen such cruelty
- blacks were penned up together, crowded
- open tubs for toilets, children fell into them, nearly drowning
- unfit to breathe the air
- shrieks of women and groans of dying
To conclude the lesson, have the students use their graphic organizer/notes to write a journal entry and draw a picture describing what they saw or felt as a passenger on a slave or an indentured servant ship. Student will be able to give descriptive phases and sketch a picture of a ship (interior or exterior) that might have carried servants to colonial America.

Sample responses could include: lack of privacy, seasickness, fear, inadequate food, cramped conditions, darkness, disease, rodents, odor, confinement, etc.

**Scoring Guide for Journal Entry**

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**LESSON 4-Student will compare and contrast Molly, an indentured servant, with Bannaky, a slave, after reading the historical picture book entitled Molly Bannaky by Alice Gill.**

Read Molly Bannaky, a historical picture book written by Alice McGill to the class. Have students write down notes about the main character, Molly, the indentured servant, on one side of the paper and notes about the slave, an African prince, on the other side. Have students partner-share to summarize the information they collected. Have them add any information to their list that they may not have recorded.
Possible notes include:

**Molly**
- dairy maid in England--1683
- went to court for stealing---she spilled milk
- left England as an indentured servant
- worked in the fields of Maryland for a farmer
- finished her contract of servitude in seven years
- bought slave, Bannaky to help her in the fields
- married Bannaky

**Bannaky**
- African prince who came to the colonies as a slave
- taught Molly about irrigation and crop rotation from his life in Africa
- Molly signed his freedom papers
- Molly broke colonial law by marrying a black man
- had four daughters
- Bannaky died
- grandson is Benjamin Banneker—scientist and mathematician who taught himself astronomy and surveying

Lead a discussion about this book asking the following questions: What was the historical time period? What was Molly’s social position? Why was Molly accused of stealing the Lord’s milk? Why was she indentured? What is her problem? Was Bannaky’s a normal slave experience? What was Bannaky’s background? Could a free person marry a slave? Could an indentured servant and a slave marry? What were the similarities and differences between Molly and Bannaky’s experiences as a slave and indentured servant?

The discussion will give students a better understanding and empathy of servant life from reading this true story of Molly Bannaky’s courage and determination.
Lesson 5-Assessment:

Pretend that you are a colonist in late 17th century Virginia and write a relative in England asking for advice about whether to purchase and use Africans as slaves, or to use European indentured servants. Your letter will explain the differences and similarities between the two groups of servants. You will use the friendly letter format.

Scoring Guide: Letter

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