

Elaine Duckworth

July 9-14, 2017

NEH Landmarks of American History & Culture Workshops: African Americans in the Making of Early New England

Lesson Plan: Mumbet's (Elizabeth Freeman's) Path to Freedom
Grade 5

Objective 1): To incorporate Virginia Studies Standard 6 with the study of colonial slavery in the north--(VS-6 Students will demonstrate knowledge of the role of Virginia in the establishment of the new American nation by identifying the ideas of George Mason as expressed in the Virginia Declaration of Rights). Students will compare the ideas expressed in the Declaration of Independence with Article I of the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780 and discover the life story of Mumbet, an enslaved woman who lived in in the Massachusetts Bay Colony on the eve of the American Revolution.

Objective 2): Students will learn that slavery was an integral part of everyday life in early New England and synthesize what they learn about Mumbet in writing. They will interact with primary and secondary source materials to learn about slavery in colonial New England and demonstrate their knowledge of the contributions of Mumbet (Elizabeth Freeman) in writing.

Essential Question: What was slavery like in the north in the 18th century? Who was Mumbet? Why is she important in American history?

Materials and Digital Resources:

Mumbet's Declaration of Independence by Gretchen Woelfe

Reader's Theater excerpt (Act 2)

(<http://www.huntington.org/uploadedFiles/Files/PDFs/LHTHSlaveryCrisis.pdf>)

Bill of Sale for slave named Kate

(<http://www.americancenturies.mass.edu/collection/itempage.jsp?itemid=7797>)

Bill of Sale for slave named Prince

(<http://www.americancenturies.mass.edu/collection/itempage.jsp?itemid=7799>)

Negro Slavery in Old Deerfield by George Sheldon (excerpt)

(<http://www.americancenturies.mass.edu/collection/itempage.jsp?itemid=5757>)

Runaway slave advertisement in The Boston Weekly Post-Boy Newspaper

(<http://www.americancenturies.mass.edu/collection/itempage.jsp?itemid=5928>)

Mumbet artifacts at <http://www.mumbet.com/> (grave maker, portrait, gold necklace/bracelet)

Writing Rubric (<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/reader-response-hypertext-making-782.html>)

Lesson Plan Procedures:

1) Students will read excerpts of George Mason's Declaration of Rights and the Declaration of Independence prior to their study of 18th century slavery in the northern colonies. They will be familiar with the concept of individual liberty and “unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and

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the pursuit of Happiness.”

- 2) Students will read primary and secondary sources in pairs (see website at American Centuries for the bill of sale for Kate, the bill of sale for Prince, “Negro Slavery in Old Deerfield,” the runaway slave advertisement in the Boston Weekly, artifacts on the mumbet.com website (necklace/bracelet, grave marker, portrait). Partners will read and discuss each source with authentic reflection prompts (“I notice that....” “It makes me realize....” “And it makes me wonder....”) and write them. Students will take turns sharing their observations in the whole group setting with the carrier phrase “We discovered.....”
- 3) Students will read *Mumbet's Declaration of Independence* by Gretchen Woelfle and discuss her story and the significance of her new name, “Freeman”.
- 4) Students will read Article I of the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780, “All men are born free and equal, and have certain natural, essential, and unalienable rights.” They will compare these words with the Declaration of Independence written four years earlier.
- 5) The following day, students will read Act 2 of the Reader's Theater (see website below).
- 6) Teacher will reread *Mumbet's Declaration of Independence* and students will use a four-square graphic organizer to plan an essay explaining what they've learned about Mumbet. (Who was she? Where, when, how did she live? What did she do? Why is she significant? Why is Mumbet a hero?) Students will draw an illustration to accompany their final draft.
- 7) After assessing student work, the teacher should select three essays that earn the highest scores on a rubric. Those three students will read their essays to the entire student body over the intercom during morning announcements.

Reflection/Evaluation:

Students will write authentic reflections from these prompts during the partner activity:

I notice that....

And it makes me realize....

And it makes me wonder....

Students will share out to the group with an authentic reflection carrier phrase:

We discovered....

Students will compose an essay to explain Mumbet's significance in American history. It will be graded with a 6-point writing rubric (<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/reader-response-hypertext-making-782.html>).

Extension Activities:

- 1) Reader's Theater Script: *Slavery: A Crisis in the Making*
<http://www.huntington.org/uploadedFiles/Files/PDFs/LHTHSlaveryCrisis.pdf>
- 2) Take a field trip to the reconciliation statue in Richmond, and walk the slave trail along the James River.