

New England and the Atlantic Slave Trade

Developed by: Joan O'Brien

Grade Level: 11 & 12

Content Understanding: After completing this lesson, students will understand that colonial New Englanders played a varied and active role in the African slave trade.

Skill Objectives: Introduction to a new kind of primary source- account books

Overview: Students will examine a variety of secondary and primary sources to identify the different ways that New Englanders participated in the transatlantic slave trade. A primary content objective is for the students to see the myriad ways in which New Englanders at all levels of the social scale benefitted from the trade through the purchase of slave-made products.

Materials:

- Document analysis worksheet- guiding questions for analysis of sources
<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/document.html>
- Primary sources:
 - Advertisements for runaway slaves
 - Excerpts from Elijah Williams account books:
 - “Account Book of Elijah Williams, Ledger B, Vol. 3”:
<http://www.americancenturies.mass.edu/collection/itempage.jsp?itemid=10056>
 - “Account Book of Elijah Williams, Ledger C, Vol. 4”:
<http://www.americancenturies.mass.edu/collection/itempage.jsp?itemid=10069>
 - “Pages from Elijah Williams (Old Soldier’s) Account Book, Vol. 2”:
<http://www.americancenturies.mass.edu/collection/itempage.jsp?itemid=6304>
- Secondary sources:
 - Excerpts from textbook ed. Mary Beth Norton, et al, *A People and a Nation*, Choices Program, *A Forgotten History: Slavery and the Slave Trade in New England*, Richard Melvoin, *New England Outpost: War and Society in Colonial Deerfield*

Procedure:

- Pre-reading: Provide students with a copy of the primary and secondary sources and the worksheet for homework the night before.
- In class: Students should work in pairs or groups of three to compare their analysis of the previous night’s reading. Teacher will then go over answers with students.

Teacher Comments/Adaptations: My plan is to add this to an existing unit on slavery in New England. I would like to have the specific example of Deerfield to underscore the fact that one could be far from the ports of Newport, Boston, etc., to benefit from the trade.