

## Living on the Edge of Empire Lesson Plan

June 10<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> 2016

Nan Childs

The lesson below is designed for a fieldtrip that will enhance and complement a unit on the Native people of the Connecticut River Valley in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Prior to the field trip, in the classroom, students will have been exposed to the life of these peoples through literature, writing, stories, artifacts, maps, gardening, cooking and student construction of miniature models of wigwams and their encampments using natural materials. Lessons will be integrated with math, science, music and art components.

(\*Please note: This lesson is site-specific to Deerfield, MA, but most of the activities can be applied to other locations.)

### **2/3 Grade Lesson: A Sense of Place**

**Objectives:** Students will visit the Indian House Children's Museum in Old Deerfield, take a walking tour through the town and natural areas along the river and hike up the Pocumtuck Ridge to experience the place the Pocumtuck people and English settlers came to call home. The programs offered in the Indian House will focus on Native and colonial life. Children will experience a sense of place by being on the very ground where these people lived.

Half the group will do a public program with staff from the children's museum, while the other half will do a self-guided walk/lesson with the classroom teacher. The walk will be a loop route that passes through Old Deerfield, by the ancient sycamore tree, through the burial grounds and along the Deerfield River and pasture land. Along the walk, students will be engaged in "hands on" activities that will encourage their connections to the landscape. After an hour and a half, the two groups will switch places. After the classes leave Old Deerfield, the final activity will be a hike up Wequamps, or Mt. Sugarloaf!

## **1. Standing like a Tree**

Have students stand around the old sycamore tree on the green of Deerfield Common. They should pick a spot where they can see the tree from a comfortable and close location. (Looking up where they can see into the tree's majestic limbs would be one such spot.) Ask students if they think they can stand quietly, without moving for 1 minute, while you "time" them. After this 1 minute of silence, remind the children that this tree has been standing in this same spot for over 300 years! It was here on the morning of the Deerfield raid of 1704! Ask them to think about this ancient tree and all the years it has survived. Have each student generate a question for the tree? (i.e. What birds have nested in your branches? Why is your bark white? What did you see on the morning of February 29<sup>th</sup> 1704? What voices have you heard beneath your branches? Do you have any seedlings that survived over the years?) If time permits, see how many children it takes to circle the tree holding hands. Measure the circumference of the tree in centimeters and inches.

## **2. Evidence of the Past: Burial Grounds (Albany Road, Deerfield)**

Early evidence indicates that the Pocumtucks used this spot as a burial ground before the English. Along this terrace above the river, tools, fire pits, pottery, and trade goods were found dating from 3,000 years in the past to the late 17<sup>th</sup> century.

The gravestones present today represent Deerfield residence from the late 16<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. (Most are from the 1700's.) Talk briefly about the different kinds of stones that make up the headstones. (sandstone, slate, marble) Talk briefly about the engravings at the top of the headstones.

Remind the students of the proper etiquette for being in this place. (Walk, no leaning on or touching headstones.) Use the map of the Old Burying Ground to have the student pairs find. 1. A raised mound in the southeast side of the burial ground. Who was buried here? 2. Who was buried under the cedar trees in the center of the burial ground at #80. Find #133 and draw the engraving on the top of the headstone. What does it represent? Look at the other engravings on different headstones.

### **3. Basic Needs: Resources from the Land**

Pocumpetook or Pocumtuck is the Native word for the Deerfield River. It means "water that twists and turns" which gives reference to the winding pattern of the river that is swift and shallow and sandy. (From the burial grounds, the group can either take a short walk west across the soccer field to the edge of the Deerfield River or continue north, along the road towards the Channing Blake Meadow Trail. A shallow channel of the Deerfield River hugs this eastern bank under towering silver maples.)

At this point, within sight of the water, talk about the basic needs of all living things. Based on the students' previous knowledge and classroom study, ask how the Pocumtuck people and the English of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries got those needs. (Food, shelter, water, air) What were those natural resources? Why was this area such a good home to these people?

Have the students work in partners and/or small groups to search for 5 or more natural objects representative of materials that would meet those needs. They can either sketch their findings or collect things as long as they are not destroying living objects. (Nuts, berries, trees, other plant material, clay, rocks, freshwater clamshells, evidence/signs of animals, etc. are things abundant in this spot.) Gather students together and discuss their findings. (Have them record their objects on paper. See sample trail booklet attached.)

### **4. Sound Map**

Continue northeast along the Channing Blake Meadow Walk. Before the first kiosk, ask children to settle in a spot where they will do a "sound map". They should pick a comfortable spot where they have some distance from their neighbors, but are within sight of the teacher. Have them draw a small figure or put "ME" in the center of the map. Ask the children to record the source of the sounds they hear in a given time period (5 minutes or so) and write it in the right location on their map from their center position. They can write the name of the sound or draw a picture of the sound on their paper. Before they reconvene, have them circle all the sounds that could possibly have been heard if they were in this same spot more than 300 years ago. (i.e. the wind, the water, birds...) How many of their sounds

were human-made? Non-human? What other sounds might be heard in different seasons?

## 5. Reading the Landscape

The kiosk tells the geological story of Glacial Lake Hitchcock and the Rocky Hill Dam, with an illustrated map. Have students take turns reading parts of this story out loud. The story points out that they are standing in a spot that was once a huge lake 220 miles long made by melting glaciers 14,000 years ago. The lake extended from Rocky Hill, Connecticut to St. Johnsbury, Vermont. The surface of the lake reached the top of the Deerfield church steeple! Now read out loud or tell the story of Amiskwolowokoiaq-the People of the Beaver-tail Hill. Discuss. How are the two stories alike/different? The oral traditional story predates the "written, scientific" explanation of these geological features and yet the stories are strikingly similar.

For the story of the People of the Beaver-tail Hill read:

[http://1704.deerfield.history.museum/voices/transcripts/wob\\_creation.html](http://1704.deerfield.history.museum/voices/transcripts/wob_creation.html)

*I walk often through places unknown by any name or fact or event to people who live almost within calling distance of them, yet more worthy of their interest, I think, than the distant places to which they devote so much of their attention. If we were a truly civilized and indigenous people such places would be named for what is characteristic of them, they would be known and talked about, people would visit them as they now visit places of commercial entertainment, as familiarly as they visit their friends. People would walk carefully and attentively and reverently in them. There would be a lore about them that each generation would both inherit and add to. Knowledge of them would pass intimately through families and friendships. The country would be full of such places, each known and visited only by a few. The human value of the land would then come to be what humans knew about it, and wealth would no longer prey on it.*

Wendell Berry, *A Continuous Harmony*

### References:

Raid on Deerfield: The Many Stories of 1704

Website: <http://1704.deerfield.history.museum/home.do>

Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association: <http://deerfield-ma.org/>

<http://deerfield-ma.org/visit/school-programs-and-group-tours/>

Pocumtuck; a Native Homeland, Historic Deerfield Walking Tour published by Historic Deerfield, Inc.

*A Guide to the Old Burying Ground, Historic Deerfield Walking Tour*

**Social Studies Common Core Standards addressed:** 3.12 Explain how objects or artifacts of everyday life in the past tell us how ordinary people lived and how everyday life has changed. Draw on the services of the local historical society and local museums as needed. (H, G, E)

**ELA Common Core Standards addressed:** 3.2 Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.

3.3 Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

# *A Sense of Place*

*A Walk through the Native Homeland of the Pocumtucks  
Deerfield, Massachusetts*

*Fall 2016*



*Fieldtrip Booklet*

*Name* \_\_\_\_\_

## Standing like a Tree

1. Write down the question or questions you have for the old sycamore.
2. How many children does it take to circle the tree, hand to hand? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is the circumference of the tree?  
\_\_\_\_\_ inches  
\_\_\_\_\_ centimeters

## Evidence of the Past: Burial Grounds

Use the map to help you.

1. Find the raised mound in the southeast corner of the burial ground. What is thought to be buried here?
2. Who was buried under the cedar trees in the center of the burial ground at #80?
3. Find headstone #133 on the map and find it in the burial ground. Draw a sketch of the engraving on the headstone. Find a different engraving on a different headstone and draw a picture of it. Do these engravings suggest anything?


### Basic Needs: Resources from the Land

Find and draw a natural object that could be used to obtain a basic need:

Object

Basic Need

By Whom?

Object	Basic Need	By Whom?
<p>Example:</p>  <p>Oak tree</p>	<p>nuts for food trunk, branches, bark for shelter, firewood dugout canoes bowls</p>	<p>Pocumtucks and English</p>



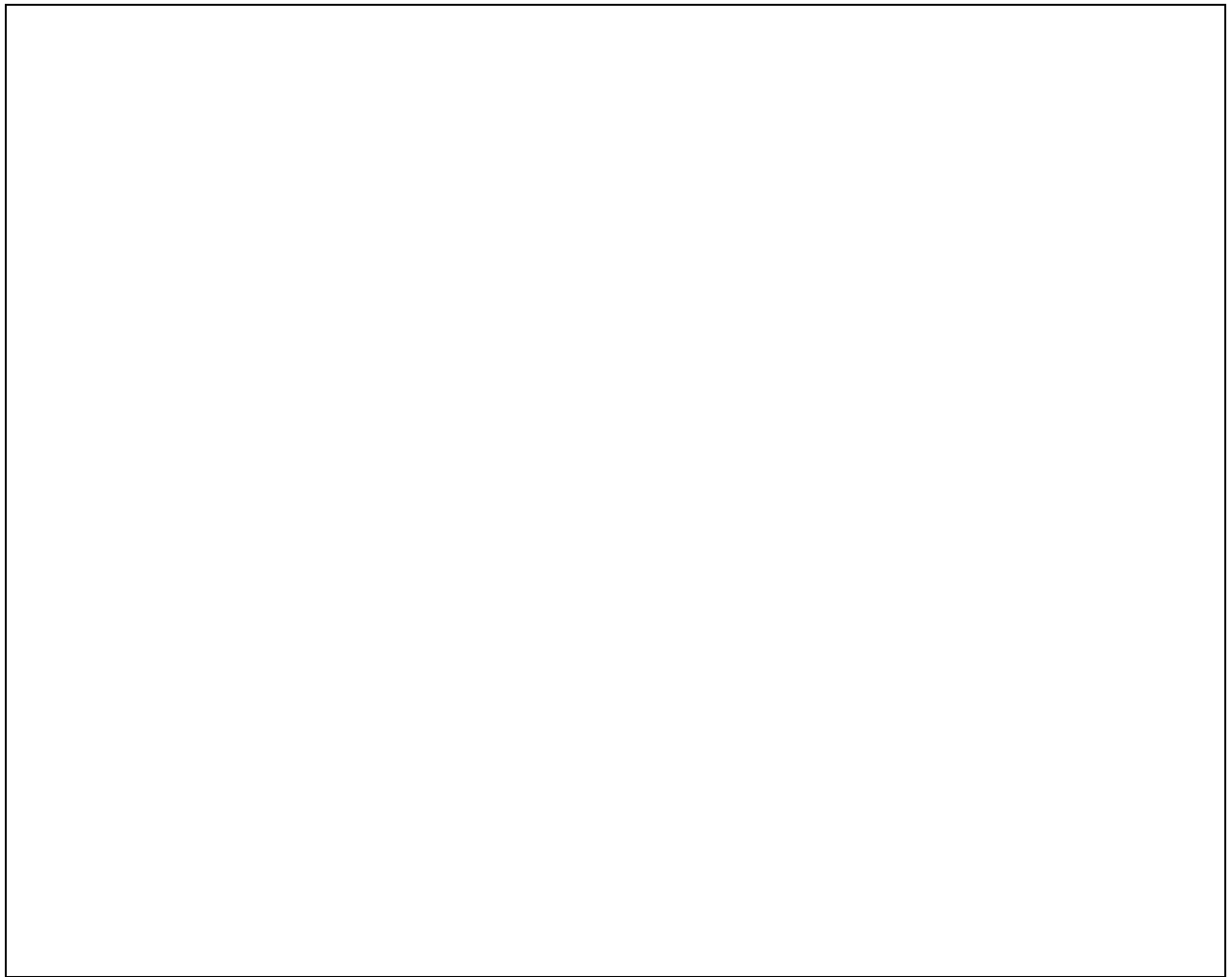
## Sound Map

ME

## Reading the Landscape

Draw a picture of the landscape around you. In your drawing include landforms older than 14,000 years!

Title of Picture \_\_\_\_\_



Entrance from  
Albany Road

Tree

1704  
MASS  
GRAVE

Map of  
OLD BURYING GROUND  
Albany Road · Deerfield, Mass.

NORTH

