

Gregg Moul

Living on the Edge of Empire Workshop 2016

Lesson #2 – *Degrees of Freedom*

Essential Questions: To what extent did New England colonial governments address the issue of African and Indian enslavement? How did they differentiate between enslavement and indentured servitude?

Objective: Students will become aware of the extent of slavery in northern states and the critical role slavery played in the economic development of the region. This is a companion lesson to my other submission, “The Chains that Bind”. Together they help unite the colonies in a mutual mercantilist acceptance of slavery and the slave trade.

Overview: Students will work in pairs to answer questions from primary source documents regarding slavery in northern colonies.

Source material:

Rules for the Society of Negroes, 1693

Newport Court Book A, Court of Special Trials, Rhode Island Judicial Records Center, May 1672

Letter from John Thaxter of Hingham

A Letter Book and Abstract of Our Services Written During the Years 1743-1751, James MacSparran

Freedom Petition, signed by Felix, 1773, Boston Athenaeum collections

Excerpts from colonial laws regarding indentured servants

Gottlieb Mittelberger – On the Misfortune Indentured Servants

Video: Dr. Ira Berlin, Gilder Lehrman website. *Societies with Slaves vs. Slave Societies*: <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/multimedia#!3269>

Questions for students:

What is the difference between indentured servitude and slavery?

Why would someone indenture oneself?

How did Puritans and other early settlers justify the enslavement of Africans and Indians?

After having watched the Ira Berlin video, explain in your own words the difference between a *slave society* and a *society that has slaves*. Which type of society is New England in the late 17th Century? What about South Carolina?

How was slavery an important part of the English Empire?

Assessment Components:

Formative: Students will complete worksheet and submit. We will review as a class and augment class notes.

Summative: Students should incorporate information into an essay on Unit Test concerning mercantilism and its role in development of the American colonies. We will certainly revisit this later as we address Jefferson's list of grievances against the Crown, and this too should influence later graded writings.