

Title: Whiskey Rebellion

Historical Background: During President George Washington's administration many farmers on the frontier of Pennsylvania had concerns regarding one of their main sources of income- corn. To lower the cost of shipping the corn across the Appalachian Mountains the farmers processed the corn into whiskey. There are multiple reasons the rebellion took place. One of the main is an excise tax imposed on whiskey by the Washington administration. Underlying causes were attacks by raiding Indians on the frontier settlements, and lack of navigation rights on the Spanish controlled Ohio River. These factors escalated when tax collectors attempted to collect on the whiskey. This upset farmers along Appalachia from Georgia to Pennsylvania. At one point settlers in western Pennsylvania considered creating a new state Westsylvania. The settlers along the frontier did not feel represented or protected by the newly formed government. This uprising was the culmination of sentiments among Pennsylvania farmers and commonly referred to as the Whiskey Rebellion in our textbooks.

Correlation to the NYS 7/8 Social Studies Core Curriculum:

Unit Five: Life in the New Nation

I. New Government in Operation

Suggested Timeframe: This lesson should take one class period.

Materials/Resources:

- Five artifacts for use in a Suchman Activity:
 - #1: Physical Map of Pennsylvania (access at https://www.maps.com/ref_map.aspx?cid=680,692,785,1238&pid=12693)
 - #2: Quote from Thomas Slaughter (attached)
 - #3: Quote from Washington's Proclamation of August 7, 1794 (attached)
 - #4: Quote about the cause of the Whisky Rebellion (attached)
 - #5: Quote from a western Pennsylvania farmer (attached)
- Summary of Whiskey Rebellion (access at <http://www.nps.gov/archive/frhi/whiskreb.htm>)
- Artifact Data Collection Sheet (attached)
- Student Self Assessment (attached)

Student Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Examine the following quotes, pictures, cartoons, and maps to synthesize that colonial farmers protested an excise tax on whiskey.
- Determine whether or not the colonial farmers were acting with justification to protest the tax.
- Determine if George Washington was justified in calling out the militia to put down the rebellion.
- Create a news article either criticizing the actions of the rebellion or the actions of George Washington.
- Include reasons for the rebellion within the news article and connect to the result of the rebellion.

Teaching Strategies, Procedures and Methodologies:

1. Prior to class, print out copies of the artifacts; each group will receive one copy of each artifact. Separate your copies of the artifacts into separate groups; you should have six different piles of facts. Each of these piles should have the correct number of copies so that each of the groups of students gets one copy at a time. You might want to provide each student in the class with a copy of the Summary of the Whiskey Rebellion for their own reference.
2. As the class begins, create groups of 3-5 students.

3. The method to be employed by the teacher is known as a Suchman Activity. After class has been broken into groups explain to the students they are about to embark on a fact-finding mission. Their job is to determine what caused this historical event, where it took place and how it might have impacted the United States.
4. Each group of students will be handed each of the artifacts one at a time starting with artifact #1. After each group has been handed the artifact they are to study it (2-5 min). After studying the artifact each group can ask only one “yes” or “no” question to the teacher regarding the artifact as a way of deciphering the historical event.
5. On the artifact data collection sheet each group can take notes to help focus their ideas on the historical event based on the questions that have been asked by all of the groups.
6. Follow steps 3 – 5 until you complete Artifact 5. After you have given the students artifacts 1-5, ask students within their groups to formulate a hypothesis as to what the historical event was.(on the bottom of the artifact data collection sheet)(5min)
7. Have students share their hypothesis by asking one student from each group to write it on the board. When all hypotheses are on the board, ask the students if they know what this specific event was. Ideally, the students will have concluded that this was a rebellion regarding a tax on whiskey that occurred in Pennsylvania.
8. Pass out the summary of the Whiskey Rebellion reproduced from the National Parks Service site at <http://www.nps.gov/archive/frhi/whiskreb.htm>. Read this short summary of the Whiskey Rebellion with the class. If you have a block schedule you can have the students read out loud; if you are short on time consider reading the summary to the class.

Evaluation /Assessment: Throughout the Suchman Activity, the teacher has been able to walk around from group to group keeping students on task. To evaluate the activity, ask students to spend the remaining minutes of class to begin writing a newspaper article that either criticizes the actions of the rebellion or the actions of George Washington.

Students will want to include:

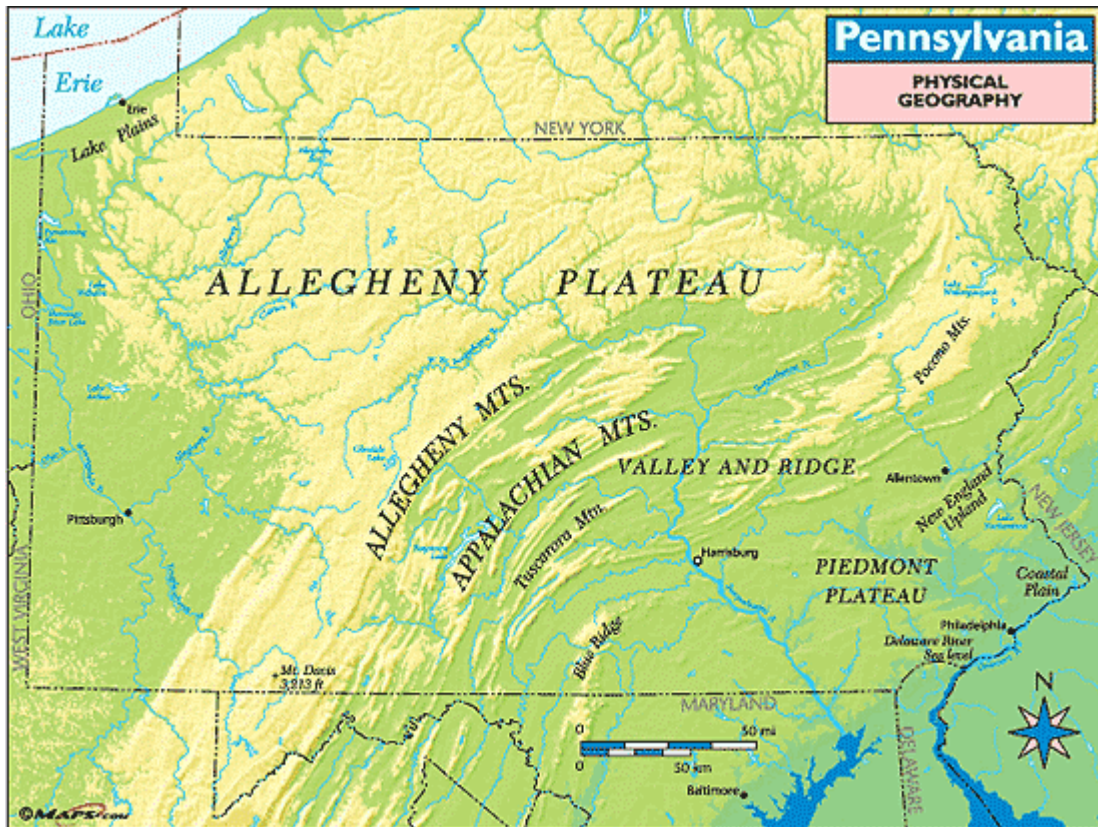
- The causes of the rebellion from farmers perspective
- Where the rebellion took place
- Actions George Washington took
- Why George Washington might have taken such an action
- If they support either the farmers or President Washington

Ask students to fill out the self-assessment form after writing their article to gauge and critique their news article

About the Author:

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Artifact #1



https://www.maps.com/ref_map.aspx?cid=680,692,785,1238&pid=12693

Artifact #2

"(It was)The single largest armed confrontation (rebellion) among American citizens between the Revolution and the Civil War"

Thomas Slaughter

Taken from the National Parks Service website at

<http://www.nps.gov/archive/frhi/whiskreb.htm>

Artifact #3

...it is in my judgment necessary under the circumstances of the case to take measures for calling forth the militia ..., and to cause the laws to be duly executed; and I have accordingly determined so to do so....

I, George Washington, President of the United States, do hereby command all persons, being insurgents ... to disperse and retire peaceably to their respective abodes (homes). And I do moreover warn all persons whomsoever against aiding, abetting, or comforting the perpetrators of the aforesaid treasonable acts; and do require all officers and other citizens, according to their respective duties and the laws of the land, to exert their utmost endeavors to prevent and suppress such dangerous proceedings.

Taken from the website of the Avalon Project of the Yale Law School at
<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/presiden/proclamations/gwproc03.htm>

Artifact #4

One of the main causes of the American Revolution also created problems after the revolution.

Artifact #5

That's the only way the crops raised in the clearings can be made portable. Grain can't be packed across the mountains, nor floated down to New Orleans -- the cost of such transportation is prohibitive. That's what all the fuss about whiskey's all about -- farmers can barrel four times as many gallons of whiskey as the number of bushels of grain they mash. And whiskey can be sold all down the rivers, or even sent to Philadelphia -- with profit!

Description of the work of Abraham Overholt, a farmer and whiskey distiller who lived in western Pennsylvania
<http://www.geocities.com/kroverholtcritchfield/OldOverholt/oldover2/oldover2.html>

Name: _____ **Artifact Data Collection Sheet**

Artifact 1

Artifact 2

Artifact 3

Artifact 4

Artifact 5

GROUP HYPOTHESIS:

Name: _____ **Student Self Assessment**

Requirements for Newspaper Article:

- 1. I have explained the causes of the rebellion from the farmer's perspective. (Provide fact from news article)**
- 2. I have identified where the rebellion took place. (Provide fact from news article)**
- 3. I explained the actions taken by George Washington. (Provide fact from news article)**
- 4. Evaluated why President Washington might have taken action against the rebellion. (Provide information from news article)**
- 5. I took a position in favor of the farmers or George Washington and explained my position. (Provide information from news article)**