

Curriculum Unit Introduction:

Title of Unit: Building a Nation from the Wild Frontiers

Vital Theme of the Unit: America's Declaration of Independence and Nation Building.

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Grade Level: Secondary (High School)

Number of Lessons in the Unit: 2 **Time Needed to Complete Unit:** 2-3 Class Periods

Curriculum Standards Addressed—List:

Technology Used: None

Introduction:

This unit will cover the beginning of a new nation and the American Revolution. This particular part of the unit will cover the Declaration of Independence and its importance in forming a new nation. The unit is broken down into two lessons one which the student will actually breakdown and discuss the Declaration of Independence using a text discussion worksheet and teacher discussion. The second lesson will be an activity that will help the student to understand the fears and thoughts that the colonials had to think about prior to and during their break from England.

The development of a nation required a different breed of people, as these people would be called upon to forge a new form of government and nation in a land that was still wild and untamed in parts and in others, still controlled by the most powerful army of the time in others. These people had to be visionaries, and they could not be afraid to take on hard tasks. A frontiersman was needed; someone who would go out into the wilds and carve out a new country. The person needed a great deal of knowledge and education, not just the type of education one would get from school but an education that one received from hard work at trying to make a living and surviving the wilds of the frontier. The colonies were on the verge of an all out revolution and a new experiment at building a nation was about to take place; not only was a nation being born, but a new breed of people was being created, as well. This new breed of people would be the ones that defined how Americans would be looked upon for the entirety of the nation's existence. David Burford and John Sevier were both men of adventure, intelligence, ingenuity, and prosperity. These two men understood what it would take to start a new country and a new breed of people. They met this challenge aggressively in their private lives as frontiersmen, as prosperous business owners, and as politicians establishing this new political system we call democracy.

This new breed of people had to be different from the original gentleman adventurers who settled Jamestown colony back in 1607. The new country required a different type of gentleman; one that was sophisticated but that was also not afraid to work hard to make sure that success was reached in the task that was being performed. John Sevier and David Burford both exhibited these qualities in their lives. John Sevier was actually born to a planter family on the frontier of Virginia. Sevier had an excellent

pedigree with the blood of the French Navarre's pulsing through his veins (Gilmore, 1997). Sevier's family line would help him to secure his place in history as one of the great men who forged a new nation and breed of people out of an untamed wilderness. Sevier received a good education. As a young child he was taught at home, but after an Indian War broke out on the frontier the family moved to Fredericksburg and John went to school there for several years (Gilmore, 1997). The education John received helped him to become a leader of the people on the frontier. During the Revolutionary War Sevier was one of the leaders of a group of frontiersmen, called the over-mountain men. This group of frontiersmen marched more than two hundred miles over mountains and defeated the British at King's Mountain, helping to establish an American victory during the Revolution (Gilmore, 1997). David Burford did not have the same old country aristocratic blood in his veins that pulsated through John Sevier. Burford was born the son of a Baptist church minister on the frontier in North Carolina. Education was not a priority for the Buford family, as David only went to school for about six months. Buford and his family were brave in settling this new nation with their move to Tennessee where Buford's father was the first register of Smith County around 1799. Burford did help in defense of the new nation during the War of 1812 when he was commissioned as a 2nd lieutenant and was placed in charge of a post at Carthage, Tennessee (Biographical Note at Special Collections). Burford was a major in the state militia and was the quartermaster of Fort Pickering, where he was provided a keelboat to transport soldiers to New Orleans (Burford Letter Dated Sept. 8, 1814). Men who could forge a new nation out of the wilderness and defend it from hostile forces both here and abroad were needed to create this new nation. Burford and Sevier both were men of this

caliber. Although, these two men did not have similar rising and family lives, both of them were able to forge out a new nation in this frontier wilderness.

The new nation needed men who were prosperous in their business ventures. The nation would not be able to prosper if the people did not have the entrepreneurial skills needed to make a new business prosper. Burford and Sevier both were successful businessmen in their lives as frontiersmen. Sevier showed the business skills that it would take to make this new nation prosper, when at the age of eighteen he took a wife and started the town of Newmarket, Virginia. This town was about six miles from the plantation where Sevier grew up. Sevier built several log structures, including a warehouse and a fort-like building for protection. The warehouse included a store where Sevier sold such items as dry goods and groceries. Sevier's town was a market center for all of the plantations in the area. He also attracted business from the local Native American population (Gilmore, 1997). Burford learned business from an early age. Instead of schooling Burford, learned the art of tanning. When he moved to Tennessee he established his own tanyard in the city of Carthage. Burford associated himself with people in the mercantile business and agriculture businesses, such as tobacco trade and raising horses. Burford owned a farm in Dixon Springs where he raised his horses and grew his produce. Burford's biggest business was as a slave trade speculator. He spent large amounts of his time in correspondence with Jourdan Saunders discussing the slave trade business. Yet, slave trade was not the only business that caught Burford's eye. Burford also discussed the sugar and cotton crops with Mr. Saunders (Burford Letter, November 17, 1829). Business prosperity played a large role in defining this new breed

of person in this new nation. If the people of this new nation could not be prosperous in their business adventures, then how would the nation as a whole ever survive?

The formation of a new country required a new political system be established. The new nation required the men who ran it to be willing to take risks and chances. The political system established in the United States was similar to but unlike any other in the world at that time. John Sevier was the type of man that was needed to establish a new political system in a newly formed country. Sevier started his political career as a young man, when he established a town called Newmarket (Gilmore, 1997) Sevier then proceeded to gain more experience in government as he moved with his family around 1771 to the Watauga area and became active in the Watauga Association (Driver, 1932). While at Watauga Sevier was named as a member of the court and a commissioner. Sevier was elected as the first and only governor to the State of Franklin in March of 1785. Franklin was a new state that was carved out of the far western parts of North Carolina and southwestern parts of Virginia. This new state ended in 1788 after Sevier's governorship ended (Turner, 1910). The failure of the State of Franklin was not the end of Sevier's political career, for in the same year that the State of Franklin failed Sevier was elected to be a representative in the North Carolina Congress. Sevier gave up his congressional seat in 1789 after North Carolina finally gave some of its western territory for the formation of a new state (Driver, 1932). Tennessee was trying to become a state in 1796 with the election of its legislature and its first governor in John Sevier. Tennessee was admitted as a state in 1796 and Sevier served as governor until 1801. A frontier state such as Tennessee saw Sevier having to deal with the problems of Native Americans in the western part of the state. A militia in Tennessee was to be formed and

used in case of trouble with the Native Americans. Sevier was given specific instructions in a letter by the Secretary of War that the militia would not be paid unless Sevier went through the Secretary and the President ordered the mobilization (Sevier letter dating June 23,1796). Sevier served as governor of Tennessee again from 1803 to 1809.

Burford's political career was later in the history of this new nation. He started out serving as the sheriff of Smith County in Tennessee in 1825 and served in the Tennessee State senate from 1829-1835. Although Burford's political career did not match that of Sevier, he still played a pivotal point in the politics of a nation that was barely 50 years old.

This experiment of government and nation building needed a different breed of person to make it work. These people must be hard working, prosperous, educated men that were not afraid to take risks and to accept failure if it was dealt to them. The nation found this in many of the early leaders of the country. Men such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Ben Franklin were all great leaders and statesmen for this new land. However, it took some men who were less well known such as David Burford and John Sevier to help forge this new nation out of the wilderness lands that was the United States. The breed of person that became these first leaders is still seen in America today, as it is the only remaining super power in the world. A new form of frontiersmen is always trying to explore and settle new areas, such as Mars and the Moon. American businessmen lead the world in production and manufacturing, while the central hub for the new global economy is located at Wall St. in New York City. The world political arena is held at the United Nations complex in New York with the United States taking on lead roles all across the globe in trying to secure democracy for less fortunate people.

This new breed of people started by Sevier and Burford are what we call today
Americans.

Bibliography

David Burford Papers, University of Tennessee Special Collections, MS0935

Driver, Carl Samuel. *John Sevier: Pioneer of the Old Southwest*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1932.

Gilmore, James Robert. *John Sevier as a Commonwealth Builder: A Sequel to the Rearguard of the Revolution*. New York: D. Appleton, 1887. Reprint, Spartanburg, S.C.: Reprint Co., 1974

Letter from War Department Dated June 23, 1796 located on Internet at <http://www.johnsevier.com/jmltr17960623.html>

Turner, Francis Marion, *Life of General John Sevier*. 1910 (reprinted by [The Overmountain Press](#), Johnson City, Tennessee, 1997)

Lesson Plan Outline

Unit: Forming a New Country

Lesson Title: Declaring Independence

Grade Level: 11th

Essential Question Related to Vital Theme:

Lesson Time: 1-2 class Periods

Curriculum Standards—List:

Technology used and how: None

Materials: Declaring Independence Worksheet

Activity Description(s) and overview of instructional strategies:

Choosing Independence Worksheet

Families can be compared to government. This simulation will allow a student to see the similarities of government and families. This exercise will also help in understanding the relationship of England with her colonies. When independence is chosen new responsibilities occur, and this exercise will help students to understand some of those new responsibilities.

Activity 1

The students must take time at the beginning of class to answer the questions listed below. When the questions are answered the teacher may have the students share their answers in groups or the teacher may lead a discussion of the questions. This exercise must be completed before you can move to any of the other activities.

1. Who makes the rules in your home?
2. Who makes the decisions?
3. What decisions are you allowed to make?
4. Is there anything you want to change about the rules or decision-making process in your family?

Activity 2

Use the same classroom structure as the questions before to answer the next questions.

1. Who provides the basic needs for your family?
2. Describe the breakdown of chores at home. What do you do?
3. Who decided how these chores would be divided?
4. Do you get an allowance or any payment for what you do?

Activity 3

Now the class must prepare for lives outside the family. The students should form committees of three to four and discuss how they would set up a home together. The teacher should try not to help the students. If enough time is given the student should cover all their possible needs and problems. There maybe a few questions to help get them started.

1. Think of all the economic and household responsibilities that you would now assume?
2. Think of new problems that might arise from living in a group and how they might be solved?

After the committees meet and report back, the teacher should lead a discussion or have the students write their response to the following two questions:

1. What are the benefits of living at home? Living on one's own?
2. Were you surprised by how many responsibilities independence gave you? Explain.

Activity 4

Read and discuss aloud the following situations.

1. You are asked to join a street gang or neighborhood club. It offers protection and/or social activities. The members pay dues, wear special jackets, and spend most of their time together. Would you join? Why? Why not? What would you gain? What would you lose?
2. You live in a dormitory at college. Meals and linen are provided, and someone cleans your room once a week. There is a curfew and house rules about noise, visitors, and drinking. You are invited to join three other girls/boys in sharing an apartment. Would you go? Why? Why not? What would you lose? What would you gain?
3. You have a choice between two classes. One has a teacher who is very strict, piles on the work, and is known to a terrible temper. He has a reputation of for getting everyone in the class to pass the state exams in that subject. The second teacher believes students should learn through trial and error and individual research. She does not prepare students in a systematic way for standardized tests. Students are responsible for taking their own notes during class and for keeping up with reading and other work. At the end of the term they must hand in a special project. Which class would you choose? Why? What would be the advantages and disadvantages of each?

Activity taken from *Breaking Away from the Textbook* by Shelly Kintisch and Wilma Cordero published by Scarecrow Education in 1993

Supporting Assignments/Homework:

Assessment:

Lesson Plan Outline

Unit: Building a Nation from the Wild Frontiers

Lesson Title: The Declaration of Independence

Grade Level: 11th

Essential Question Related to Vital Theme: What is trying to be said to the American People in the Declaration of Independence.

Lesson Time: 1-2 class Periods

Curriculum Standards—List:

Technology used and how: None

Materials: Declaring Independence Worksheet

Activity Description(s) and overview of instructional strategies:

Text Discussion Worksheet:Name: _____ Date: _____

For tomorrow you need to have read and INTERACTED WITH the following text. By INTERACTING WITH the text I mean you have to personalize it by marking your questions and reactions in the margin next to the text. Some people think of this as having a dialogue or conversation with the actual words on the page. Things you should consider doing include.

- ❖ Circling and then looking up any vocabulary words that you do not know
- ❖ Underling key phrases
- ❖ Keeping track of the story or idea as it unfolds
- ❖ Noting word patterns and repetitions or anything that strikes you as confusing or important
- ❖ Writing down questions

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IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America

When in the Course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. — Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

Supporting Assignments/Homework: This worksheet may also be used for students the night prior to discussing this topic in a Socratic Circle Setting.

Assessment: The student grade should be given based on completion of assignment and participation in the discussion that is being held.