

"Land and Work in Carolina" teaching strategies

BY PAULINE S. JOHNSON

These suggested teaching strategies, designed to accompany the article “Land and Work in Carolina¹,” will enable students to understand the concept of feudalism and its impact on the systems of labor and land ownership in colonial North Carolina. The activities may be used independently of each other or together.

Feudal origins activity

Students will be amazed that the feudal system had such an impact on colonial North Carolina. A review of some of the basic principles of this period will be helpful as the students read the primary sources in this section.

STUDENT HANDOUTS

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ACTIVITY

1. Have students look at the feudal triangle diagram to help them recall what they have learned about the feudal system.
2. Have students use the feudal graphic organizer to determine how feudal classes provided for those above and below them in the societal hierarchy.
3. After students have reviewed the feudal concepts, have them go back and locate the examples of feudalism in the early Carolinian documents from this module:
 - The Charter of Carolina (1663)²
 - A Declaration and Proposals of the Lords Proprietors of Carolina (1663)³

- The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina (1669)⁴
4. Ask students why they believe the documents were written in feudal language.
 - In what ways did a feudal system benefit the Lords Proprietors?
 - Are there any ways that it could benefit settlers?

Critical thinking activity: Towards a “modern” world

Eighth graders are beginning to think critically. The decline of feudalism presents an excellent subject that will allow students to use higher orders of thinking as they look for connections and causes and effects. The following questions may be presented in a discussion format or in written form:

- Why did feudalism decline?
- Why was the rise of towns one of the causes?
- How was commerce both a cause and effect of the decline of feudalism?
- Why did banking start?
- Why did the practice of quitrents develop?
- Aside from business or products, why else might rulers need money? (For this question you may consider leading students to the cost of warfare. Since nations were using armies and navies instead of service of vassals, what expenses developed?)

Understanding headrights: Old and new in Carolina

1. Have students explain headrights in their own words. Why might the Proprietors have encouraged giving away land to settlers?
2. Have students refer to “A Declaration and Proposals of the Lords Proprietors of Carolina (1663)⁵.” Ask them to read section seven, about establishing headright grants. Give them the following scenarios and have them determine how many acres each would receive:
 - A man moves to Carolina with his wife and seven children. He takes with him four male servants and two female servants. The head of the household has sufficient guns and ammunition to arm himself and his male servants. *360 acres*
 - An indentured servant has fulfilled his indenture. He marries a young servant who has also completed her indenture. *16 acres*
 - A widower moves to Carolina, bringing with him one male servant. He has as two guns and sufficient ammunition. *150 acres*
3. Although voting was still restricted to landowners, proportionally why would there have been many more voters in Carolina than in England? How did policies of the Lords Proprietors ensure that this would be true? *Students should recognize that the headright system enabled more people to own land.*

4. You might ask the students to wrestle with the idea that although it was advantageous for the Lords Proprietors to encourage settlement and land ownership so that they could collect quitrents, they were also setting up a society in which many more men could become politically active than would have been possible in England.
 - How could people who would have been considered peasants in England become powerful landowners in America?
 - How did the blurring of class and rank have an impact in colonial life?
 - How could this political opportunity and power become an issue in the later years of the colonial period?
 - Could these policies have been influential as the colonies eventually sought independence from Great Britain?
5. Why, ultimately, did a feudal society not succeed in the Carolina colony and the rest of the early American colonies?

Graphic organizer activity: Free and unfree labor

1. Have students complete the graphic organizer below about labor in Carolina.
2. After the students have completed the graphic organizer, ask them how each of these categories of labor aided in the development of Carolina.

FREE AND UNFREE LABOR IN CAROLINA

Labor	Free or unfree	Definition	Typical type of work	Positives and negatives	
				Positives (compensation)	Negatives
Apprentices					
Indentured servants					
Slaves					

FREE AND UNFREE LABOR IN CAROLINA (TEACHER GUIDE)

Labor	Free or unfree	Definition	Typical type of work	Positives and negatives	
				Positives (compensation)	Negatives
Apprentices	Free after a period of time, usually seven years.	Apprenticeship is a system of training craftsmen or skilled workers, began (typically) at age 14.	Apprenticeship was just about the only way someone could learn a craft such as blacksmithing, carpentry, shoemaking, or printing.	Received clothes, food, shelter; learned a craft or trade.	Could be treated cruelly, had to stay for seven years.
Indentured servants	Free after a period of time, usually five to seven years.	Men in England paid transportation costs of poorer men and women. They were bound to work the land, during which time they were not free to leave their master or disobey him.	Indentured servants in North Carolina usually worked on farms.	Received clothes, food, shelter; could finish their indenture and become free; could earn land, clothes, and tools at that time.	Were often treated cruelly, work was difficult, hours long, had to work for five to seven years.
Slaves	Not free.	Slaves were slaves for life, the phrase "chattel slavery" means slaves were personal possessions, and the children of slaves became slaves.	All kinds of labor including housework; many worked in agriculture.	Received clothes, food, shelter.	Could be bought and sold, often treated cruelly, were slaves for life, work was difficult, hours long (students could have many more).

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Notes

1. See <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-colonial/1.10>.
2. See <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-colonial/1.4>.
3. See <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-colonial/1.6>.
4. See <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-colonial/1.9>.
5. See <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-colonial/1.6>.

About the author

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I am currently the Director of a Teaching American History Grant for Buncombe County Schools, Asheville City Schools, and Madison County Schools. I have taught history and English in the seventh and eighth grades for over twenty-six years at Reynolds Middle School in Asheville, North Carolina. I am currently doing adjunct work for Mars Hill College and Western Carolina University. I have a Masters Degree from Western Carolina University and am Nationally Board Certified in Early Adolescence/Social Studies-History. I am certified to teach K–12 and I also have Academically-Intellectually Gifted certification.