

Where are their Voices?

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Students will use the graphic novel *Ghost River: The Fall and Rise of the Conestoga* to give voice to Leni Lenape, Conestoga, and Moravian Indians by analyzing primary source materials from the Paxton massacres and 1764 pamphlet war. This lesson provides a pedestal for students to explore colonial bias and stereotypes. Students will use primary sources to develop an historical understanding of how local Native peoples were excluded from colonial records of the incident.

Essential Questions:

- How were the voices of local Native Americans suppressed or excluded from the 1764 pamphlet war?
- How were local Native Americans stereotyped in primary source materials?
- How do printed materials (e.g. political cartoons) compare to unprinted materials (diaries)?
- How were the Native Americans interned in Philadelphia used to sway public opinion against Paxton critics such as Benjamin Franklin and the Quakers in the Pennsylvania Assembly?
- How does *Ghost River* give voice to those Native peoples?

Objectives:

- Describe the representation of local Native Americans in primary source materials.
- Use contrasting primary and secondary sources to understand the perspectives of both colonialists and Native Americans.
- Use primary sources (a painting, political cartoon, and diary) to better understand a secondary source (*Ghost River*).
- Develop structured and coherent writing that uses textual evidence to make an argument about the Native Americans involved in the Paxton incident.

Grade Level: Grades 9 and 10

Standards:

- **CC.8.6.9-10.C:** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- **CC.8.6.9-10.H:** Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- **CC.8.5.9-10.F:** Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.
- **CC.8.5.9-10.I:** Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

Historical Background:

Excerpt from Kevin Kenny, *Peaceable Kingdom Lost*

The Paxton Boys, frontier militiamen on an unauthorized expedition, struck Conestoga Indiantown at dawn on December 14, 1763. "Fifty-seven Men, from some of our Frontier Townships, who had projected the Destruction of this little Commonwealth," Benjamin Franklin wrote in his *Narrative of the Late Massacres in Lancaster County*, "came, all well-mounted, and armed with Firelocks, Hangers [a kind of short sword] and Hatchets, having travelled through the Country in the Night, to *Conestogoe Manor*." Only six people were in the town at the time, "the rest being out among the neighboring White People, some to sell the Baskets, Brooms and Bowls they manufactured." The Paxton Boys killed these six and burned their settlement to the ground.

The Conestoga people lived on a 500-acre tract, which William Penn had set aside for them seventy years earlier, near the town of Lancaster, one hundred miles west of Philadelphia. By 1763 only twenty Conestoga people were living there—seven men, five women, and eight children.

After the murders, local magistrates removed the remaining fourteen residents to the Lancaster jail and workhouse for their safety, but on December 27 the Paxton Boys rode into that town to continue the attack they had started two weeks earlier. Fifty men, "armed as before, dismounting, went directly to the Work-house and by Violence broke open the Door," Franklin reported, "and entered with the utmost Fury in their Countenances." Within a matter of minutes they had slaughtered the fourteen individuals sheltering at the workhouse, including the eight children.

The Paxton men were fully aware of the symbolic and political significance of their actions. They murdered unarmed, peaceable Conestoga people to make the point that all Indians were the same. And they slaughtered the Conestogas on government property in broad daylight. In perpetrating the massacres, they repudiated the settlement policy of William Penn.

Excerpt from Scott Paul Gordon, *Christian Indians*

The armed frontiersmen who marched to Philadelphia in February 1764 planned to murder 140 Indians gathered in barracks in the city's Northern Liberties. Most of these Indians were Christians, having lived in the Moravian mission towns of Nain and Wechquetank in Northampton County. Provincial authorities decided to "order the Moravian Indians down to Philadelphia" in November 1763, as Governor John Penn wrote, because "the people of Northampton County ... were determined to cut them all off" (John Penn to Richard Penn). These individuals were joined by other Native Americans from Wyalusing, an Indian town on the Susquehanna River. Except for their leader, John Papunhunk, who had been converted by Moravian missionary David Zeisberger, the Wyalusing Indians were neither Moravian nor Christian. The Paxton Boys' Declaration and Remonstrance clearly identified the different groups gathered in Philadelphia: "Some of these Indians now in the Barracks of Philadelphia are confessedly a part of the Wyalusing Indians, which Tribe is now at War with us; and the others are the Moravian Indians, who [are] living amongst us under the Cloak of Friendship."

These Christian Indians were confined at the Philadelphia barracks and on Province Island from November 1763 until March 1765. Many prominent citizens visited them, including Governor John Penn and Anthony Benezet, and mobs threatened them. They tried, as much as possible, to live as a congregation as they had in Nain and Wechquetank. Moravian missionary couples, Bernhard Adam and Margaret Grube and Johann Jacob and Johanna Schmick, lived with them. The diaries kept by these missionaries record regular services, communions, lovefeasts, births, and baptisms. Sadly, these diaries are also filled with deaths and burials. Fifteen Indians died in May and June 1764, and twenty more died the next month: in all, fifty-five Moravian Indians were buried in 1764 in Philadelphia's Potter's field. The Paxton Boys did not reach the Christian Indians in February 1764, but the confinement that their threats precipitated turned out to be more deadly than their guns and sabers.

Materials:

- *Ghost River: The Fall & Rise of the Conestoga* (print or digital edition)
- Excerpts from *Ghost River* (34-36; 45-47)
- *Franklin and the Quakers* (political cartoon and transcription)
- Excerpts from *Diary of the Indian Gemeine in the Barracks of Philadelphia* (Jan. 24- Dec. 31, 1764)

Procedure:

- 1) Warm-up: Write-Pair-Share (10 minutes)
 - a) Show image of Benjamin West's *Penn's Treaty with the Indians* (1771-72) and ask students to write and reflect on:
 - i) How are the colonists portrayed in this painting?
 - ii) How are the native peoples portrayed in this painting?
 - iii) What might have been Benjamin West's agenda for creating these portrayals?

Notes for the Teacher: *Penn's Treaty with the Indians* (1771-72) was commissioned by William Penn's son Thomas Penn. It depicts the meeting of William Penn and the Quakers, members of the Leni Lenape tribe, and merchants in Shackamaxon along the Delaware River.

- b) Divide students into pairs and have them share their responses with partners.
 - c) Reset class and ask volunteer pairs describe their responses.
 - d) Guide students to understanding about how images can shape popular understandings of peoples and histories.
 - e) Refer to image of page 46 from *Ghost River* to introduce the lesson's objective.
- 2) Guided Review: Mini-Lecture (5-10 minutes)
 - a) Review chronology of the Paxton incident using *Ghost River* and historical background excerpts.
- 3) Activity (20 minutes)
 - a) Break students into two groups based upon their original Write-Pair-Share pairings.
 - b) Group A Group will analyze the political cartoon *Franklin and the Quakers* (1764) and pages 36-40 of *Ghost River*. Students will draw connections between the political cartoon and the graphic novel using these questions:
 - i) How are Native Americans stereotyped in the political cartoon?
 - ii) Why might the voices of local Native Americans have been suppressed or excluded from the political cartoons and pamphlets that circulated in the 1764 pamphlet war?
 - iii) How does *Ghost River* give voice to those Native peoples?

Notes for the Teacher: The Paxton pamphlet war features dozens of political cartoons, pamphlets, and broadsides. Engravers like James Claypoole, who created Franklin and the Quakers, used these materials to attack their political opponents and influence popular opinion. This image depicts Benjamin Franklin conspiring with his political allies, the Quakers in the Pennsylvania Assembly, to arm their enemies, the Native American had attacked the colony during the Seven Years' War. It should be noted that the "Christian Indians" that the Paxton mob murdered (the Conestoga people) did not participate in any of that violence.

- c) The B Group will analyze excerpts from *Diary of the Indian Gemeine in the Barracks of Philadelphia* (Jan. 24- Dec. 31, 1764) and pages 36-40 of *Ghost River*. Students will draw connections between the diary and the graphic novel using these questions:
- i) How do the diaries describe the experience of Moravian Indians interned in Philadelphia? How does that experience contrast with Benjamin West's idyllic scene (*Penn's Treaty with the Indians*)?
 - ii) How do these diary entries give voice to the interned native peoples? Who gives voice to those peoples?
 - iii) How does *Ghost River* represent the experience of interned Lenape and Moravian Indians?

Notes for the Teacher: The *Diary of the Indian Gemeine in the Barracks of Philadelphia* was recorded by Moravian missionaries who accompanied the Lenape and Moravian Indians interned in Philadelphia. These excerpts are recorded in German, and they have been transcribed and translated in order to make them accessible to the students. These excerpts describe their relocation from Province Island (where the Philadelphia Airport currently resides) to the Philadelphia Barracks (in what is today Northern Liberties).

Excerpts for Analysis:

January 25: We began to settle in a bit. The things that we had left behind on Province Island came to us, although our good Indians missed many things, particularly axes, that had been stolen. In the evening, Br. Grube held a service in his own room.

February 4: Br. Neusser and Ludwig Weiss visited us. We heard a lot of bad reports. In the afternoon, Captain Schlosser came and reported to us that we should move to the second story with the soldiers, because there were no keys if the rooms should be broken into. Because the order regarding the moving of the soldiers came so late, a great confusion arose between them and our poor Indians, who were chased from one place to another, particularly when a couple shots happened outside the barracks, so that everyone got alarmed and made ready to fight. We then had our hands full with our Indians, getting them in their lodgings, and quieting them.

February 20: After the early service, first Br. Schmick and then his wife visited the Indians in their rooms, and they found several sick.

- 4) Partner & Class Discussion: (5 minutes)
 - a) Have students return to their partners from the first Write-Pair-Share exercise and share and record their responses to the two different primary source materials they examined (the diary and the political cartoon).
 - b) Ask pairs to answer a prompt and be prepared to share it with the class.
 - i) How were Native Americans represented in the two primary source documents?
 - ii) Why might be these two documents tell such a different story about the Paxton incident?
 - iii) How does *Ghost River* give Native peoples a voice?
 - c) Have volunteer pairs share their answers with the class.

Assessment: Students will conduct research on their own by using either Digital Paxton or the Ghost River digital edition to find an additional printed, manuscript, or visual record that gives voices to the Conestoga, Lenape, or Moravian Indians. Students should justify their selections by describing how their records contrast with Benjamin West's *Penn's Treaty with the Indians*.