



Colonial Quest

Discover Your Place in History!



Session 4: Finding our Town's First Settlers

Focusing Question: *Who were the first people to settle here?*

Overview:

Students explore a cemetery with gravestones of the first settlers. Students gather data; connect with sites via drawing and mapping; and use these connections as a jumping off point for *Lesson 5*.

Topical understandings:

Primary sources
Data collection

Materials:

Digital Camera
Cemetery data collection form (Handout A)
Clipboard
Paper
Pencil
Chaperones

Length of time to complete: Teacher Prep + one class period

Procedures:

Teacher Preparation:

Use your town history to choose a window of time for your students to investigate. For instance, if your town was chartered in 1763, the first settlers to be buried in the cemetery will range from 1763 – 1820 or later.

Visit the cemetery and decide whether you want to pre-choose settler stones for students to find or if you want to provide them with a set of dates and let them search for settler stones (this is much more challenging). Decide how far apart you want your students to range.

Typically, it works best to have one stone for each 1 – 3 students, depending on whether they do their best work individually, working in pairs, or as trios.

1. Introduction

- Help students visualize the first settlers of the town by continuing a close read of the Mann Family Story from Session 3. Other stories to read include: Alice Dalglish, *The Courage of Sarah Noble*; Natalie Kinsey-Warnock, *The Bear that Heard Crying*
- Explain that you will be gathering evidence from primary sources—artifacts from the time when the town was first settled to find out who settled the town.

2. Gathering Evidence at the Cemetery

- Clarify that the cemetery is – for today – their “outdoor classroom.” Elicit a list of appropriate outdoor classroom behaviors, and commit to following them.
- Also clarify that a cemetery warrants other respectful behaviors. What are they?
- Clarify that this section of the cemetery is – for today – a museum of primary sources, artifacts which can help them discover the history of their town.
- Begin to walk through the cemetery.
- Model your process with the first headstone – data collection / drawing / symbol. You may wish to include measuring height / width / depth. And take photos!
- Then drop off pairs to complete the process with additional stones
- Teacher moves between groups and gathers students for reflection as they finish.

3. Drawing Conclusions

- Who are some of the characters – or people – in our town’s colonial story?
- Were there specific clues or links to important local, regional or national events (e.g. American Revolution)? Dates when things happened (e.g. First settler in 1766)? Are their clues to migration (e.g. Born in Farmington, CT)? Or to roles played in the community (Served as Deacon)?

4. Asking Questions

Students should generate 2 – 3 new questions about “their settler.”