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Lesson Plan
Grade level (8)

A RECRUITEMENT RALLY IN SOUTH CAROLINA September, 1780

Introduction

By September, 1780 the Revolutionary War had reached full fury in the frontier region of South Carolina. Relatively untouched in the beginning of the war, the war's most gruesome and bloodiest action would take place in this region. Whichever side could achieve an upper hand here had the best chance of overall success. Fortunately, for the Patriots, they were able to win here which set up their ultimate victory at Yorktown, Virginia in just over a year. But in the western region of South Carolina in September of 1780 that victory was much in doubt and for the people of that region choosing sides could have dangerous and even deadly consequences. There were many factors to consider when becoming either a patriot or a loyalist and in many circumstances the choice was not clear cut. One had to consider many things before making a decision: family considerations, financial, each side's relative strength in your area, the consequences of picking the losing side and the merits of the arguments both groups had, were only a few of the things that one would have to consider. Clearly it was not as easy as choosing between black and white but a complex decision that weighed heavily on the minds and hearts of the frontier people.

In this lesson, students are taught how difficult and antagonizing that decision was. In addition, they will get a feel for the heart rendering emotion, the excitement and the high drama that occurred when choosing between becoming a patriot or a loyalist. Students will be expected to do research on people who were living at the time. Explore primary documents, use debating skills, and dress and use props that were typical of the time period.

Guiding Question

In western South Carolina what were the attitudes and factors in one becoming a patriot or a loyalist and what were the motives and allegiances behind these conflicting and diverse viewpoints?

Learning Objectives

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- A) Appreciate the difficulty in choosing between a patriot or a loyalist.
- B) Understand the reasons for why individuals chose the way they did.
- C) Appreciate the danger and consequences of choosing sides.

Lesson

In this lesson students will be attending a “recruitment rally” in a fictional South Carolina town. The town has decided to hear different perspectives on which side, loyalist or patriots to choose. After hearing the different perspectives the people of the community will vote. The vote will be non-binding but the town will request, for the sake of local harmony, that whichever way the town’s vote is that all the young men will accept the results and chose to fight for the side the town has voted.

Before the class begins divide the class into thirds. One third of the class will be loyalists, another third will be patriots and the last third will be neutrals. Possible loyalists could be: Lord Cornwallis, Banastre Tarleton, James Wemyss, Christian Huck, Thomas Brown, Thomas Fletchell, William Cunningham, John Adamson, Patrick Ferguson, and the Reverend Phillip Mulkey. Possible patriots could be Dicey Langston, Jane Black Thomas, Marion Fox, Thomas Sumter, William and Martha Robertson Bratton, William Campbell, Andrew Jackson, Isaac Shelby, Watt (a slave). Possible neutrals: a slave who likes his patriot master but likes the promise of freedom offered by the British, a wife whose husband is a patriot but whose family is pro- British, a merchant whose neighbors are patriots but his business is depended on British trade, other neutrals could be the Earl of Effingham, James Allen, Richard Henderson, Patience Wright, and Ann Lee.

Of course not all of these people were in South Carolina and none attended a recruitment rally in a town at the same time. Make sure students understand this. The list does offer a good cross-section of thoughts and feelings facing the people at the time. If more representative are needed others could be added like William and Benjamin Franklin or even fictional characters could be devised that relate to the thoughts and emotions prevalent at the time.

The first thing students would do is to research the character assigned to them. They should get a working knowledge of the character’s position on being a patriot or a loyalist or why they are neutral. Next, for the patriots and loyalists they will make a poster in support of their character’s positions and on the back of the poster they will list three to five arguments, they will use at the recruitment rally to convince the people to accept their position. The neutrals will have a slightly different task at this stage. They will make a two-sided poster one supporting the loyalist and the other supporting the patriots. At the bottom of each side of the poster they will write three to five questions to ask each side during the rally.

Each student will also come up with a costume or at least a prop that their character would have worn or have while the rally is going on. This will make the activity more enjoyable for the students and make it more life-like.

Give two or three days to do the above activities, after this the students will be ready for the recruitment rally. In the front of the classroom have the loyalists set on one side and the patriots on the other side with their posters on display. The neutrals will make up the “audience”. Have either a patriot or a loyalist make an opening statement based on the arguments they created. Then let the other side make an opening statement. While this process is going on let neutrals ask questions to both sides. Also let neutrals show one side of their poster to who ever is winning the argument at the time. Ask neutrals, why

they are thinking that side is winning. Let all students have the opportunity to participate. The teacher's role is to act as moderator, making sure that the debate is going smoothly and that only one person is talking at a time. Expect the discussion to be lively as the issue was when it actually occurred. The recruitment rally should last one class period. At the end of the period have students vote on whether the town will side with the loyalist or the patriots.

Evaluation

From the beginning of the lesson tell students that participation at the recruitment rally will be a major part of their grade. Also to be included in their final grade will be an evaluation of their research, their posters, their props and costumes and their arguments (loyalists and patriots) and for the neutrals their questions.