

LESSON TITLE: ROGER WILLIAMS' ROLE IN THE PEQUOT WAR

GRADE/AUDIENCE:

- **High School**

STATE STANDARDS: Connecticut

- Content Standard 2: Local, United States And World History – Educational experiences in Grades K-12 will assure that students use historical thinking skills to study the following periodization with escalating scale of breadth and depth: United States, Connecticut and Local History – encounters of peoples from the Americas, Western Europe; European colonization and settlement [1400s-1763]; European colonization and settlement [1492-1763]; World History – emergence of the first global age [1450-1770].
- Content Standard 3: Historical Themes – demonstrate an understanding of the ways that cultural encounters and the interaction of people of different cultures in pre-modern as well as modern times have shaped new identities and ways of life; identify various parties and analyze their interest in conflicts from selected historical periods; describe, explain and analyze political, economic and social consequences that came about as the resolution of a conflict; demonstrate an understanding of the ways race, gender, ethnicity and class issues have affected individuals and societies in the past.
- Content Standard 4: Applying History – initiate questions and hypotheses about historic events they are studying; describe and analyze, using historical data and understandings, the options which are available to parties involved in contemporary conflicts or decision making; be active learners at cultural institutions such as museums and historical exhibitions; display empathy for people who have lived in the past; and describe relationships between historical subject matter and other subjects they study, current issues and personal concerns.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: At the conclusion of the lesson students will be able to

- Identify Roger Williams' role as a diplomat between the colonists, the Narragansett and the Pequot during the Pequot War.
- Describe Williams' role as an informant about the plans of the Narragansetts' perceived and actual roles in the Pequot War.
- Explain the influence of Williams in organizing Indian allies against the Pequot.
- Illustrate how Williams acted as a catalyst in encouraging the colonists to pursue the surviving Pequot and enslave or execute them.

LESSON OBJECTIVES FOR YOUR STUDENTS: At the conclusion of the lesson students will be able to:

- Explain why Roger Williams was called upon by the Massachusetts Bay authorities as an arbitrator between the colony and the Natives despite being exiled from the colony.

- Identify the role that Williams played in informing the colonial authorities of the goals and strategies of the Narragansett and Pequot in the conflict.
- Describe the methods Williams used in obtaining the alignment of the Narragansett against the Pequot.
- Indicate the tactics Williams used to form the colonists' actions pertaining to the surviving Pequot at the conclusion of the war.

COMPELLING/GUIDING QUESTIONS:

- Why was Roger Williams banished from the Massachusetts Bay Colony?
- Was Williams spying against the Narragansett and Pequot to determine their goals and strategies in the war?
- How did Williams negotiate with the Narragansett and Pequot prior to the outbreak of hostilities?
- Did Williams use false statements about the Pequot in discussions with the Narragansett? If so, why?
- At the conclusion of the war did Williams encourage or discourage the enslavement and/or execution of the surviving Pequot? Why?

DESCRIPTION OF LEARNING TASKS / ACTIVITIES:

Students read written documents alluding to Roger Williams and his role in the war (see Primary or Secondary Resources below)

Time Needed For Lesson: One week minimum

MATERIALS, RESOURCES, TECHNOLOGY NEEDED:

- Computer
- Copy of Vaughn, Alden T., "Pequots and Puritans: The Causes of the War of 1637," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (Apr., 1964), pp. 256-269. (available through JSTOR)

PRIMARY OR SECONDARY RESOURCES (WORKS CITED):

- Cramer, Clayton E., History 450, December 6, 1993 – Sonoma State University, M.A., History, 1998, "Narragansett Stalking Horse: The English Role in the Pequot War."
<http://www.claytoncramer.com/index.html>
- Mason, John "A Brief History of the Pequot War," Printed and Sold by S. Kneeland and T. Green in Queen Street, 1736. (Available on Google Books)
- Stern, Jessica R., "United States: A Key Into the Bloody Tenent of Persecution" Roger Williams: The Pequot War, And the Origins of Toleration in America," in *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Volume 9, Number 3, (Fall 2011).
- Vaughn, Alden T., "Pequots and Puritans: The Causes of the War of 1637," *The William and Mary Quarterly*," Volume 21, Number 2, (Apr., 1964), pp. 256-269
- Pequot History (revised 7.15.97) FamilyGenealogy Online
- "The Legacy of Roger Williams Study Guide: A Project Commemorating the Tercentenary of His Death,": sponsored by the Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities, 1983. (Available on Google Books)

PRIOR LEARNING, CONNECTIONS, STUDENT NEEDS OR INTERESTS, COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS:

- No prior learning is necessary.
- The relationship between Roger Williams and the Massachusetts Bay Colony, Providence Plantation and the Connecticut colonies.
- The relationship between Roger Williams and the Narragansett and Pequot.
- Students need to determine what Roger Williams' relations and views towards the various entities involved in the war were and how he dealt with each.
- Students have misconceptions concerning Native Americans and the European settlers, i.e.: the "savage," "stupid" and evil Native Americans vs the "Godly," upright and pure colonial settlers.

SUGGESTED DIFFERENTIATIONS:

- Create a chart or poster showing Williams' interactions with the Massachusetts Bay Colony's leaders, Narragansett leaders and Pequot leaders.
- Research and write a brief composition about how Williams encouraged or discouraged the participation of the Narragansett and Pequot in the war.
- Draw a picture of Williams in negotiations with the Pequot and Narragansett.
- Write a composition describing Williams' views on the treatment of the survivors of the war. Do you believe they were justified? Why or why not?
- Draw a map of Williams' travels to the territories of the Narragansett and Pequot in order to negotiate with them.

CROSS-DISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS:

- History – the Pequot War and Williams' role in it.
- Art – examine artwork of the era and today showing Roger Williams as an exile and negotiator in the war.
- Geography – Williams' travels from the Massachusetts Bay Colony to Providence Plantations after his exile from the Bay Colony to his forays into Narragansett and Pequot territories to negotiate with the Natives.
- Government – three governmental systems – the colonial, Narragansett and Pequot – were involved in all aspects of the Pequot War.
- Diplomacy – Roger Williams became a diplomat in attempting to negotiate between the parties involved.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT PROCESSES (INCLUDING STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT):

- There are many formative assessments (see Suggested Differentiations above for examples) .
- Self-Assessment – It is difficult to justify the actions of the early Europeans against the Pequot and all Native Americans from the 21st century perspective. Comparing the treatment of and dealings with the Native Americans of the 17th century to the current treatment with groups such as Al Qaida and Isis, do you think we are repeating the “sins” of the past or is the treatment justified? Why or why not?