

If These Monuments Could Talk:

The Whiskey Rebellion, Popular Rights, and the Meaning of the First Amendment

February 24, 2018

Resources Referenced Throughout:

- [Slide Presentations](#)
- [Worksheets](#)
- [Primary Source Set](#)

9:00 TPS Overview and Introductions

9:15 The Stripling Inquiry Model

[Stripling Model Graphic](#)

Lesson Plan ([attached below](#)): An application of the Stripling Inquiry Model

Wonder: Inquiry Activity 3-2-1 Bridge (*worksheet*)

Prompt: What is a Monument?

Slide Presentation: What is a Monument?

9:40 **Investigate** Topic 1: The Tax

Inquiry Activity: Library of Congress Analysis Tool

[Teachers Guide to Analyzing Newspapers](#)

[Online Student Analysis Tool](#)

Primary Source Set (p. 2-3): "1792 Meeting in Pittsburgh" (Bradford attended)

Slide Presentation: The Excise Tax, the Constitution, and the First Amendment

Reflect: Was the federal government justified in taxing whiskey?

Construct: Student Work Samples and Q & A

10:30 Break

10:40 **Investigate** Topic 2: The Spark

Inquiry Activity: Corroboration

Teachers Guide to Analyzing [Newspaper Articles](#), [Photographs and Prints](#) and [Books and other Printed Texts](#)

Primary Source Set (p. 4-6):

- *p. 4-5* "The Burning of Neville's House" July 25, 1794 Newspaper Account and Transcript
- *p. 6* "Counsel Before the Attack at Gen. Neville's House" A linocut print by J. Howard Iams 1933
- *p. 28* Devens' Book page 163, column 2. The attack on John Neville's House

Slide Presentation: The Spark

Reflect: (*Worksheets, p.7*)

What were the differences between John Neville and Oliver Miller?

Construct: Student Work Samples/T-Charts and Q&A

11:30 **Investigate** Topic 3: The Rebellion



Inquiry Activity: [Chalk Talk](#)

Primary Source Set:

- p. 7 Tarring and Feathering Image
- p. 8-9 Liberty Pole Sources
- p. 10-11 David Bradford's Letter about Parkinson's Ferry Meeting Newspaper Article and Transcript
- p. 12-13 David Bradford's Letter about Postal Theft and Meeting in Braddock's Field Newspaper Article and Transcript
- p. 14-15 Tom the Tinker Notice Newspaper Article and Transcript

Slide Presentation: The Rebellion

12:00 Lunch

Bradford House Guest Speaker: Clay Kilgore, Executive Director
Washington County Historical Society

1:00 **Investigate** Topic 3: The Rebellion (cont'd)

Reflect: Return to Chalk Talk charts

Prompt: Were the actions of the Whiskey Rebels protected by the First Amendment?

Construct: Student Work Samples/ Articles of Insurrection

1:15 **Investigate** Topic 4: The Reaction

Inquiry Activity: [Circle of Viewpoints](#)

Primary Source Set

- p. 16 The Dreadful Night (Text by Hugh Henry Brackenridge)
- p. 17-18 The Terrible Night (Linocut on paper by Iams)

Slide Presentation: The Reaction

Reflect: Student Work Samples/Timelines

Prompt: What was the significance of the different Federal reactions to the Whiskey Rebellion?

1:55 Break

2:05 **Investigate** Topic 5: Winners or Losers?

Inquiry Activity: [Jigsaw](#)

Teachers Guide to Analyzing [Newspaper Articles](#) and [Books and Other Printed Texts](#)

Primary Source Set:

- p. 19-20 David Bradford's Pardon Announced in Washington PA Newspaper.
- p. 21-22 Myrtles Plantation Nomination for National Register of Historic Places
- (attached) David Bradford Excerpts from Devens, *Our First Century*

2:15 *Slide Presentation:* Winners and Losers

Reflect: What role did individuals play in the Whiskey Rebellion? (*worksheets*)

Construct: Student Work Samples/epitaphs

Express: Textbook edit, final class project

Q&A

2:45 Farewell

If These Monuments Could Talk:

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Overview

Using Library of Congress and local primary sources related to Whiskey Rebellion historic sites, this inquiry unit will focus on the Essential Question: "What can Whiskey Rebellion monuments tell us?" The traditional textbook account that George Washington defeated the Whiskey Rebels and maintained a strong federal government will be compared to some local myths and memories about Washington, Hamilton, Neville, Tom the Tinker, Oliver Miller, McFarland, Bradford, Gallatin, and Brackenridge. Shadows of these people still linger near Espy House, Mingo Creek, Whiskey Point, Miller Homestead, Bradford House, Woodville, and Washington and Jefferson College.

The primary sources on this topic are extensive and such an inquiry unit can best be accomplished with cooperative learning teams that research different sources and share their evidence findings with their classmates. The sources are organized chronologically into five topics that will support the students in answering the Essential Question. Each topic includes an investigative question to focus the inquiry task and a list of key individuals and historic places that played significant roles in the Whiskey Rebellion.

Objectives

1. Analyze primary sources from both sides of the 1794 excise tax issue.
2. Write an argumentative essay to support either side of the tax issue.
3. Compare the Oliver Miller Homestead and Woodville Plantation historic sites.
4. Create a Google Doc news report of the incidents of mid-July at the Miller Homestead and Bower Hill.
5. Create an "instrument of insurrection" (a speech, a handbill, a Tom the Tinker note, or a flag) that uses digital graphics or traditional 3D art media.
6. Create a digital timeline of the federal response to the unrest in Western Pennsylvania.
7. Create an epitaph for one of the individuals discussed in the Whiskey Rebellion focusing on their participation and how the Rebellion affected them.
8. Rewrite the textbook description of the Whiskey Rebellion to more accurately reflect the primary sources analyzed.

Time Required

This unit was designed as a cooperative learning unit dividing the extensive list of primary sources among small groups of students in a ten-day timeframe of 40-minute periods.

Recommended for Grades 8th -11th

Subject/Topic

American History: The New Nation 1783 - 1815

Standards (Pennsylvania State)

Arts and Humanities

9.2.3. A. Explain the historical, cultural, and social context of an individual work in the arts.

Civics and Government

5.2.9. C. Analyze skills used to resolve conflicts in society and government.

History

8.1.9. D. Analyze and interpret historical research using primary sources.

8.2.9. A. Analyze the political and cultural contributions of individuals and groups to Pennsylvania history from 1787 to 1914.

8.2.9. B. Identify and analyze primary documents, material artifacts and historic sites important in Pennsylvania history from 1787 to 1914.

8.2.9. D. Identify and analyze conflict and cooperation among social groups and organizations in Pennsylvania history.

8.3.9. D. Identify and analyze conflict and cooperation among social groups and organizations in United States history from 1787 to 1914.

Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening

1.2.8. A. Read and understand essential content of informational texts and documents in all academic areas.

1.4.3. C. Write an opinion and support it with facts.

1.5.8. C. Write with controlled and/or subtle organization.

1.5.8. B. Write using well-developed content appropriate for the topic.

1.5.8. G. Present and/or defend written work for publication when appropriate.

1.6.8. A. Listen to others.

1.6.8. C. Speak using skills appropriate to formal speech situations.

1.6.8. D. Contribute to discussions.

1.6.8. E. Participate in small and large group discussions and presentations.

Credits

Written by Greg Giardina, 8th Grade Social Studies Teacher with support from the Teaching with Primary Sources Eastern Region coordinated by Waynesburg University (<http://tps.waynesburg.edu/tpseasternregion>).

PREPARATION

Materials

- Library of Congress Analysis Tool: [Teacher Guide](#)
- [Slide Presentations](#)
 - Introduction: What is a Monument?
 - Topic 1: The Tax (Was the excise tax on whiskey fair?)
 - Topic 2: The Spark (What were the differences between John Neville and Oliver Miller?)
 - Topic 3: The Rebellion (Were the actions of the Whiskey Rebels protected by the First Amendment?)
 - Topic 4: The Reaction (What was the significance of the different Federal reactions to the Whiskey Rebellion?)
 - Topic 5: Winners? (What role did individuals play in the Whiskey Rebellion?)
- Student Worksheets
 - Standard T-Chart
 - [Primary Source Analysis Tool](#)
 - Newspaper Template (attached)
 - Blank PowerPoint (for Timeline Activity)

Resources

- [Primary Source Set](#)
 - Textbook Excerpt on Whiskey Rebellion (attached)
 - Secondary Sources (attached)
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PROCEDURE: Description of Inquiry Process

Connect

To set the stage for this inquiry, brainstorm a list of historic monuments that students have seen in their town or on vacations. After they have generated a list, share the teacher Introduction Presentation that gives a definition and some examples from the Whiskey Rebellion Primary Source Set.

Wonder and Investigate: Using featured primary sources

- Divide class into teams of 3 - 5. Ask them to name their team with an acronym that uses the initials of the team members.
- Introduce the 5 topics in this unit using the Teacher Presentations. Allow approximately 2 days per topic.
- For each topic, give each team a different primary source from the presentation to analyze using the Primary Source Analysis Student Worksheet.
- Post team worksheets in Google folders for future reference and collaboration.

Construct: Formative Performance Tasks

- **Topic 1 The Tax:** Individual students will write an argumentative essay to support either side of the tax issue.

- **Topic 2 The Spark:** Teams will create a Google Doc news report of the incidents of mid-July at the Miller Homestead and Bower Hill. (Newspaper Template)
- **Topic 3 The Rebellion:** Teams will create an “instrument of insurrection” (a speech, a handbill, a Tom the Tinker note, or a flag) that uses digital graphics or traditional 3D art media.
- **Topic 4 The Reaction:** Teams will create a timeline of the federal response to the unrest in Western Pennsylvania.

Construct: Summative Performance Task

- **Topic 5 The Winners:** Create an epitaph for one of the individuals discussed in the Whiskey Rebellion focusing on their participation and how the Rebellion affected them.

Reflect and Express

Rewrite a middle school [textbook description](#) of the Whiskey Rebellion to more accurately reflect the primary sources analyzed in this unit. Each team will write a paragraph depicting what happened during one of the five topics or phases of the Whiskey Rebellion (The Tax, The Spark, The Rebellion, The Reaction and The Winners).

EXTENSION: Taking Informed Action

Nominating a Local Historic Place: Ask each student or teams of students to select a site, building, monument, or structure in their community that could be nominated for a local, state, or national register of historic places. Have them complete the action steps needed to create a narrative about the historic significance of that place. This activity could be extended to a large, cooperative project for a nomination to have the place listed in a local, state, or national register, or for a history fair, term paper, classroom display, or videotape.

OR

Access to Power: Have students choose a current issue they wish to express an opinion about to their mayor, state governor or congressional representative, and have students show their support or disapproval by petition, letter, fax, email, telephone, or the news media.

EVALUATION

The Formative Performance Tasks listed under the Construct, Express, and Reflect sections of the Inquiry Process above can be used as formative evaluation products.

Examples of Individual Student Essays are included in the The Tax (*Presentation*). Examples of 8th grade student teamwork for creating Articles of Insurrection are included in the The Rebellion (*Presentation*). A composite class textbook revision with all team paragraphs is shown below.

The
Pittsburgh Gazette

Price Six Pence

Saturday, July 19, 1794

Volume VIII Number 29

*** Original Textbook Excerpt ***

The Whiskey Rebellion

More conflicts arose on the frontier when Congress passed a tax on American-made whiskey in March 1791. Farmers who produced small amounts of whiskey for trade argued that they could not afford the tax. After being fined for not paying the tax, farmer William Smith wrote, "I felt my blood boil." What began as the complaints of a few turned into the **Whiskey Rebellion** in 1794. Protesters refused to pay the tax and even tarred and feathered tax collectors. Some called themselves the new Sons of Liberty.

President Washington saw the rebels as a threat to federal authority. Under the Constitution, Congress had the power to pass the tax. He assembled some 13,000 men from state militias. The army approached western Pennsylvania in November of 1794. By this time, most of the rebels had fled, and the Whiskey Rebellion ended without a battle.

Stuckey, Sterling and Salvucci, Linda Kerrigan. (2003) *Call to Freedom Beginning to 1877*. Austin, TX: Holt.

The Whiskey Rebellion

Written by 8-208

The Tax

The Whiskey Rebellion was one of America's first major protests as a new country. It was passed by George Washington on March 1, 1791, with its main supporters being Federalists. The tax was on domestically produced spirits, and it ended the tax on all imported spirits. The tax called for 20 cents (or more) per gallon depending on the proof. The higher the alcohol in the spirit, the more it is taxed (starting anywhere from 20-40 cents). But a huge problem with the tax was that whiskey was used as a form of trade.

A gallon of whiskey would cost about a shilling, a couple days' wages. So people who made and sold whiskey could get by in life, or maybe considered successful. However, the tax wasn't on how much someone made, they would have to pay for how much they could make. So if a farmer only made 1 barrel of whiskey per week, but had the ability to make 3 barrels a week, he would be taxed on three barrels. It really all depended on the size of the still you used. This is why much of America west of the Appalachians turned to protest and rebellion to do what they could to repeal this unfair tax.

The Spark

The first gunshots of the Whiskey Rebellion were fired at the Oliver Miller Homestead property. This all took place after Alexander Hamilton, the Secretary of the Treasury, wanted to find a way to raise money to pay off war debts. President George Washington supported this notion and it became law. A law which many people ignored. Tax collectors either were not given the amount of money due or scared off by angry farmers who owned stills. The issue came to a head when John Neville, the tax collector accompanied David Lennox, federal marshal to demand that a tax be paid and to issue a writ to James Miller to appear in court in Philadelphia. James had already sold his property and refused to pay the tax or accept the writ. His neighbors had grabbed arms and shot their guns into the air to scare the two off. The scuffle made it clear that the public did not like the tax very much.

The next day rebels showed up at John Neville's Bower Hill Mansion demanding his resignation and for Lennox to be turned over to them. Sources report that Neville's slaves fired into the rebels killing young Oliver Miller, the nephew of William Miller.

The rebels returned the following day and their leader, James McFarlane, was killed mistakenly under a flag of cease fire. The rebels then began to burn the building at Bower Hill. Both Neville and Lennox had already escaped the area.

The Rebellion

Many people were responsible for insurrection during the Whiskey Rebellion. John Holcroft who claimed to be a veteran of Shay's Rebellion was possibly Tom the Tinker who had written the articles of insurrection. With the need of a place for the protests they had decided to have the meeting house at Mingo Creek serve as location for most of the protests. David Bradford claimed to be the "leader" of the insurrectionists at Mingo Creek. Thomas Gaddis, a veteran of the Revolution, was known as a protector of Pennsylvania. Gaddis had built Fort Gaddis which was a meeting space for the rebels were they erect the liberty pole. Albert Gallatin tried to pacify radicals who had weapons in hands, by speaking of the mistake of a rebellion towards the government. Later he worked to help repeal the tax. The actions of all these people would eventually help end the whiskey tax.

The Reaction

The Federal Government believed it was forced to put down the insurrection. Washington moved over a 13,000 troops to the Espy House in Bedford. He wrote a letter to Henry Lee to take control of the army to put down the rebellion. Hamilton and Lee continued on to Pittsburgh, however Washington stayed behind. They made several arrests, but later the "criminals" were set free or pardoned.

Winners

The Whiskey Rebellion was a winning cause for some, while it was a losing cause for others. Many suffered deaths and misfortune while others got a positive outcome from the rebellion. The tax was repealed, but caused an outburst of violence. Riots and arguments raged among many. President George Washington led the militia to put down the rebellion and saved his country and show the authority of the Federal Government. Washington definitely showed signs of a winner by keeping the rebellion controlled.

Unfortunately, not all people were saved or kept unharmed. Just as there are winners, there are losers. A few of the rebels, such as Oliver Miller and Captain James McFarlane, lost because they died before the tax was repealed. Some of the leaders of the rebellion, such as David Bradford and Tom the Tinker (John Holcomb) were winners because the tax was repealed and they escaped prosecution. Some of the pacifists, like Albert Gallatin, were winners because the tax was repealed. The repealing of the tax meant peace and fewer outbursts of violence. The disagreement had finally been settled.

Suggested Resources for Teacher Use

General

- [DigitalHistory.com Chapter 5 The Whiskey Rebellion](#)
- [The Whiskey Rebellion and the New American Republic CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS FOUNDATION Bill of Rights in Action Fall 2007 \(Volume 23, No. 3\)](#)
- [Insurrection! A Short History of the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794 by Pat Swauger from the Oliver Miller Homestead Website](#)
- [ExplorePAHistory.com Chapter 4: The Whiskey Rebellion](#)
- [The Whiskey Rebellion from the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax Trade Bureau by Michael Hoover, Regulations & Rulings Division](#)
- [The Whiskey Rebellion - Monongahela Historical Society](#)
- [The Whiskey Rebellion - Friendship Hill](#)
- [The Whiskey Rebellion - This Month in Business History](#)
- [Whiskey Rebellion. By: Kyff, Robert S., American History, 10768866, Jul/Aug 94, Vol. 29, Issue 3](#)
- [The Whiskey Rebellion - H. M. Brackenridge](#)
- [Guarding the Republican Interest: The Western Pennsylvania Democratic Societies and the Excise Tax - Jeffrey A Davis](#)
- [Washington and the Whiskey Insurrection](#)
- [George Washington, Whiskey, and the Battle of Bower Hill](#)

People

- [gwpapers - 1 October 1794 - 31 March 1795](#)
- [George Washington in the Ohio Valley By Hugh Cleland - Includes Accounts of the Attack on Bower Hill](#)
- [Eyewitness 1794: The Whiskey Rebellion fails, Hugh Brackenridge survives](#)
- [Nathaniel Couch Played a Key Role in the Bethel Park Area](#)
- [Gen Gibson to Gov Mifflin on the attack of Bower Hill](#)
- [Hugh Henry Brackenridge - Our local Founding Father - Post Gazette](#)
- [Alexander Hamilton to Governor Thomas Mifflin](#)
- [David Lenox to Alexander Hamilton](#)
- [Light Horse Henry Lee and Washington County](#)
- [Neville's Enslaved Africans](#)

Places

- [Pennsylvania Ghost Towns: Uncovering the Hidden Past - Couch's Fort](#)
- [Whiskey Rebellion Historic Places - NHPR](#)
- [Jean Bonnet Tavern - History](#)
- [Espy House - Explore PA History](#)
- [Liberty Poles and the Popular Struggle for the New Republic](#)
- [The Bradford House and the Whiskey Rebellion](#)
- [Whiskey Rebellion sites tell evolving story - PPG](#)

Issues and Events

- [TPS Impact of Congress](#)
- [Explore PA History - Rebels or Resisters?](#)
- [Pennsylvania Archives - Council before the attack at General Neville's House](#)
- <https://patch.com/pennsylvania/chartiersvalley/troops-gather-on-bower-hill-for-whiskey-rebellion>
- [Guarding the Republican Interest: The Western Pennsylvania Democratic Societies and the Excise Tax Jeffrey A. Davis Bloomsburg University](#)
- [The Role of Federal Military Forces in Domestic Disorders, 1789-1878 By Robert W. Coakley](#)
- [Trial of Insurgents](#)
- [The Whiskey Rebellion Trials](#)
- [The First Presidential Pardon](#)