



Cherokee Treaty of Long Island, 1777

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

What is a treaty?

How does the process of negotiation allow two groups in conflict to find peace?

Standards

Social Studies

I.1.1, I.1.3, I.1.4, I.1.5, I.1.6, I.1.7, I.1.8, I.1.9, I.1.10

3&5.B.1.1, 3-5.B.1.2

3.C&G.1.1, 3-4.C&G.1.2, 5.C&G.2.1

5.E.1.2

3&5.G.1.1, 3-5.G.1.2, 3.G.1-3

3-5.H.1.1, 3-5.H.1.2, 3-5.H.1.3, 4-5.H.1.4, 3-5.H.1.5, 3-5.H.1.6

English Language Arts

RI.3-5.1, RI.3-5.2, RI.3-5.3, RI.3-5.4, RI.3-5.5, RI.3-5.10

RF.3-5.2, RF.3-5.4, RF.3-5.5

W.3-5.1, W.3-5.2

SL.3-5.1, SL.3-5.2

L.3-5.1, L.3-5.2, L.3-5.3, L.3-5.4, L.3-5.6

Visual Arts

4-5.V.2.2, 3-4.V.2.3, 3-4.V.3.1, 5.V.3.2

3-5.CX.1.1, 3.CX.1.2, 3-5.CX.1.5, 3-4.CX.2.2

Objectives

At the end of this lesson, the students will be able to:

- Understand the conflict over westward settlement and North Carolina's relationship with the Cherokee by studying the perspectives of both Cherokee and early state leaders.
- Compose a list of actions that promote peace and friendship.
- Learn more about the Cherokee tribe, its traditional and current lands, and that people of the Eastern Band still live in Western N.C.

Content

The Proclamation of 1763 failed to discourage colonization of land beyond the ridge of the Appalachian Mountains. Having been treated unfairly in earlier treaties, the Cherokee distrusted state leaders when they arrived at Long Island in 1777. Two years earlier, a land transaction took place between the Transylvania Company, owned by a North Carolinian, and the Cherokee people. After negotiations, the company claimed 20 million acres of Cherokee land, which included parts of Virginia, Tennessee (then North Carolina), and Kentucky. In exchange, the Cherokees received five wagon loads of trade goods. Many Cherokee leaders denied the terms and legality of the 1775 transaction. Those at Long Island in 1777 argued that the earlier agreement was for a lease only.

In 1776, young Cherokee warriors, led by Dragging Canoe, acted against the injustice of earlier treaties and waged war on White settlements. State governments of the Carolinas and Virginia then retaliated with force. State soldiers killed Cherokee warriors and burned over 50 Cherokee villages and crops. Scottish traders working for the British crown in the backcountry were also involved. They tried to persuade the Cherokee to build alliances with Appalachian-region tribes. That way, many tribes could side with the British and fight the new states.

Wanting peace, the Cherokee leaders ceded land to the states in the Treaty of Long Island. Although the peace the treaty established did not last, it halted British efforts at a large American Indian alliance against the states and established the Cherokees' neutrality in the Revolution. The result was that the states' military could focus on fighting British forces in the Piedmont and Coastal Plain.

Primary Sources

Treaty of Long Island on the Holston, 1777, Governors' office records, council papers, 67.1.11, State Archives of N.C. digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/proceedings-of-the-treaty-of-the-long-island-of-holston-river-with-choerokee-nations-avery-treaty/6153047?item=6153049

John Collett, J. Bayly, and S. Hooper, “**A Compleat Map of North-Carolina from an Actual Survey**,” MC.150.1770c, State Archives of N.C.; also North Carolina Maps, dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/ncmaps/id/467/rec/2

Maps of Cherokee Territory: C.C. Boyce, “**Map of the Former Territorial Limits of the Cherokee...**” (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution – Bureau of Ethnology, 1884) Library of Congress, G3861.E1 1884.R6TIL, loc.gov/resource/g3861e.np000155/; U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, “**Qualla and 3200 Acre Tracts, Cherokee Indian Reservation, North Carolina, 1937,**” UNC collection, C970.03 G46e, dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/ncmaps/id/892/rec/4

Secondary Source & Transcription

Archibald Henderson, “The Treaty of Long Island of Holston, July 1777,” *North Carolina Historical Review*, V8:1, January 1931, full transcription of original treaty pp. 58-116.

Folder Contents

- **Glossary**
- **Background: Wampum Beads**
- **Activity: Morse Code Beads**
- **Activity: The First Birthday of the United States**
- **Reader’s Theater Script**

Supplies

- Projector (optional)
- Art supplies, including scrap paper, glue, black markers, purple markers or paint, and string
- beads in three colors, examples provided (optional supply; students can make beads)
- Pins, sticky notes, or other method to mark map
- Magnifying glasses (provided)

Lesson Preparation

- There are many options with this lesson. Please read the lesson plan and view the activities and related materials to choose the options that are best suited for you and your students.
- Print a copy of the [Glossary](#) page for your reference in discussions or to distribute to students. Consider creating your own vocabulary exercise with words from the materials that may be useful for students to learn.
- Prepare to work with 3 maps: “**A Compleat Map of North-Carolina from an Actual Survey,**” 1770, and **2 maps of Cherokee territory** (1884 & 1937). The 1770 map has been

provided as a facsimile near its original size. Plan to print the 2 maps, found in the primary sources folder, or project them for class discussion. If printing to distribute, make the appropriate number of copies for individual or group work.

- Print copies of **Activity: the 1st Birthday of the United States**, one for each student.
- Prepare to project relevant images or print **Background: Wampum** to distribute to students or groups. Decide whether to show the 7-minute video, “[How A Native American Artisan Keeps The 4,500-Year-Old Practice of Wampum Alive for the Culture](#),” about traditional and modern techniques to create wampum beads. Review information to be ready to lead discussion.
- Prepare materials for **Activity: Morse Code Beads**. Instructions may be projected or distributed as sheets for individuals or groups. Decide whether students will make beads from scrap paper or you will provide beads (of another material) so that each student has 3 colors—each with 5, 6, and 7 beads. Consider working with an art teacher for this activity.
- Prepare for the **Reader’s Theater Script**. Read it through to make sure it is appropriate for your students. Decide how to group your students and how to assign reading parts. There are **42 passages**, so it is possible for everyone to have a part. You could have 6 students read the entire script like a performance, with the rest of your class watching, or have everyone participate. Longer speeches have been broken up into smaller portions to make the reading parts easier, so there are places where the same historical figure will speak several times in a row in short passages instead of one longer one. For instance, 9 passages are from Avery’s speeches. 9 students could take 1 each and all + Sharp could represent members of the N.C. commission, or one student could portray Avery and speak all 9 parts. Decide whether to rearrange your room so that students sharing a given character’s part can sit together. This could also be powerful if you can arrange for everyone to sit in a circle so that all can see and be a part of the activity. For example, everyone reading Cherokee parts could sit on one side of the room, and State parts sitting together, etc. Print copies of the script for groups of students to share.
- If using **Exit Tickets**, print enough copies and cut into quarters for each student to have a ticket. For instance, 7 copies for 28 students. Multiple ticket options are provided in case this lesson extends multiple days.

Connecting to Background Knowledge

(5 minutes)

1. Ask: *Imagine you found a perfect spot on a beach or in a state or national park and wanted to claim it for your own. What would you be willing to do for the land?* Student answers will

vary but may include: attempt to purchase, petitioning the government or working to change laws, squatting.

2. Ask: *What wouldn't you be willing to do?* Answers will vary but may include fighting and criminal activities.
3. Share: *In 1777 there were many people in North Carolina who all wanted the same land. Let's find the land and see how they resolved their conflict over it.*

Procedure

Activity 1: Reading the Map

(20 - 30 minutes)

Ask: *North Carolina looked very different in 1770. What might have been different?*

- Display “**A Compleat Map of North-Carolina from an Actual Survey.**” Project or distribute the 2 Cherokee maps, found in the primary sources folder. If working with paper maps, move the students into pairs or small groups. On the large 1770 map, find and mark (with a pin or sticky note strip) 3 American Indian towns, as well as the Holston River and the New River Head.
- Project or distribute the 1884 “**Map of the Former Territorial Limits of the Cherokee...**” Give students time to find and discuss the Great Island of the Holston, The Watauga River and the Headwaters of the New River near the towns of Boone and Jefferson. Have them match this area to the same area on the 1770 map, using the “New River Head” to match to the Boone/ Jefferson area.
- Share: The olive green area marked #9 on the 1884 map was the land that the Cherokee ceded at the 1777 Treaty of Long Island.
- Finally, have students look at the 1937 Qualla map, showing roughly the current shape of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians’ land today. Ask: *How might the geography of the land have affected the actions that people took in the past and take today?* Discuss the drastic loss of Cherokee territory over time. Allow time for questions and reflections about the changing boundaries.

Activity 2: A String of Beads

(30-60 minutes)

Share: *In treaty discussions, leaders passed strings of beads back and forth to show offers being made, considered, and accepted or rejected.*

- Project relevant images or distribute **Background: Wampum Beads**. Emphasize that Quahog clams were a source of food, tools, and artistic medium for the community and that they can still be found today. If desired, show the 7-minute video, “**How A Native American Artisan Keeps The 4,500-Year-Old Practice of Wampum Alive for the Culture.**” This explains traditional and modern techniques to create wampum beads. Note that the artisan in the film is a member of the Narragansett nation of Rhode Island. Explain

that today the Cherokee are one of 574 federally recognized tribes and that all tribes are different even if they share cultural similarities.

- Project directions or distribute **Activity: Morse Code Beads**. Note: Time for this activity will depend on whether students make beads out of paper strips or purchased beads.
 - As students are working, challenge them to think about ways that they can live peacefully with the people around them.
 - Conclude the activity by asking them to share their ideas about promoting peace.

Activity 3: Treaty Negotiations

(60-75 minutes)

Share: *In 1777 leaders from the Cherokee tribe and the new states of Virginia & North Carolina came together to talk about the contested land.*

- Distribute **Activity: the 1st Anniversary of the U.S.** Allow students time to complete the worksheet. Discuss students' ideas for July 4th celebrations today.
- Move students into pre-determined groups. Distribute copies of **Reader's Theater Script**, either the whole or assigned reading parts. Note: all the words after the introductions and narrator parts were a part of the actual negotiations as recorded in 1777. Explain that, aside from edits to spelling and punctuation for clarity, the historical figures' words in the script passages match the original document.
 1. Give students time to read over their parts and to ask about any unfamiliar words. Encourage them to consider the meaning and emotion behind their part. Encourage them to project their voices and to portray the feelings they imagine for the historical figures. Where the script indicates strings of beads change hands, have students use the included examples.
 2. When finished, discuss with students their thoughts about the negotiations. Ask them to share any immediate reflections. Discuss any part that students do not understand.
 3. Reflect and Discuss:
 - *What was the attitude of each historical figure? Did this change during the negotiations?*
 - *Were the compromises even on both sides? Why or why not?*
 - *How did previous relationships affect negotiations?*

How might the circumstances of recording the treaty affect what we know about what happened there? Consider: There were more than 400 people present, interpreters translated between English and Cherokee and we have a record of the speeches because someone was there, writing this all down with quill and ink in a council house with a fire, on an island in a river in July, etc.

Exit Tickets

(5 minutes)

Multiple options for student choice, variety within the class, or to use for lessons extending multiple days. Distribute and give the students time to complete them.

- *Think about the ritual of giving a string of beads in the treaty. How do you let people know a request you have is serious?*
- *Have you ever used the term “bury the hatchet?” What was the situation? If not, imagine an instance when you might.*

Modifications

- Materials could be distributed to students needing to take notes individually, with vision issues, or who have issues focusing (even if the slides are being used collectively).
- Students could be paired with a higher-achieving or differently behaving student for extra support.
- Students could be given extension activities if they finish early or are high-achieving and need more challenging or independent work. These can be done independently or collaboratively.
- When planning reading parts for the **Reader’s Theater Script**, consider the reading level of your students. You might pair stronger readers with weaker ones, assign parts to specific students based on their reading abilities, or, if you have many strong readers, put students in groups and allow them to pick the parts they want to read. If you have many students with weaker reading abilities, you might ask parent or administrative volunteers or older students to visit your class to perform this script for your students. Your class could then watch the negotiations play out and discuss it afterwards.

Extensions

- Read more of the transcription in the article, “The Treaty of Long Island of Holston, July 1777,” and/or try transcribing from the original. Find both in the **Primary Sources** folder.
- Research the effect of the Treaty of Long Island on the Holston. The treaty claims that this will create a permanent, lasting peace. Did it? Start with NCpedia to find out and summarize your findings, www.ncpedia.org/choke/revolutionarywar.
- Watch videos documenting 21st-century Cherokee including “**We’re Still Here**,” with Principal Chief Richard Sneed of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians (start at the 1:50 minute mark), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IAty8FmMvas>. Friendship dances are still part of Cherokee culture. Watch one performed at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian in 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p9zIVjeesOU>.

Write an essay discussing one or more of these questions: *How has the resistance of the Cherokee during and after the Trail of Tears changed North Carolina? How has the role of the Cherokee changed during North Carolina history? What else do you want to know about the Cherokee?*

- Look closely at the signature pages for the Treaty of Long Island (found in the **Primary Sources** folder). The Cherokee did not yet have a written language, but each signer represented himself with a distinctive mark. Look at the variety and shapes of these marks and consider each signer's name and village. Does the mark relate to either identity? Design a mark for yourself and explain how and why you chose that mark.

Field Trip Connection

Museum of the Cherokee People, <https://motcp.org/> in Cherokee, Jackson and Swain Counties

American Indian Heritage Celebration, hosted by the North Carolina Museum of History in Raleigh ncmuseumofhistory.org/events-and-programs/festivals-and-concerts/29th-annual-american-indian-heritage-celebration

Recommended Resources

"Cherokee People in North Carolina," NCPedia, <https://www.ncpedia.org/cherokee/overview>.

"Northern Quahog," *Sea History for Kids*, <https://seahistory.org/sea-history-for-kids/quahog/>.

"Tassel, (Old)." NCPedia, <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/old-tassel>.

"How A Native American Artisan Keeps The 4,500-Year-Old Practice Of Wampum Alive for the Culture," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jd3RJ0OcJ3A>