

## Delaware Recommended Curriculum

**Lesson Title:** Delaware Public Archives- Property (Lesson G)

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**District:** Red Clay Consolidated School District

**Content Area:** Social Studies (History)

**Grade Level:** Grades 4-5

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### Summary of Lesson

In this lesson, students will view and analyze the 1785 Inventory of Robert Burton (Sussex County), draw conclusions of how the principle of property has changed over time by comparing the inventory of Robert Burton to a post-civil war inventory.

### Resources Needed:

- Copies of Handout 1: Bedroom Inventory
- Copies of Handout 2: I notice/I Wonder
- Copies of Source 1(Transcription): Robert Burton's Inventory (1785)
- Digital Resources:
  - Source 1: Robert Burton's Inventory (1785)

## Stage 1 – Desired Results

What students will know, do, and understand

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### Delaware Content Standards

**History Anchor Standard Two: Students will gather, examine, and analyze historical data [Analysis].**

**4-5a:** Students will draw historical conclusions and construct historical accounts from primary and secondary source materials. **Grade 5**

### Big Ideas

Property, draw conclusions.

### Lesson Essential Questions

How has the idea of property changed over time?

What conclusions can be drawn from looking at primary source materials?

### Knowledge and Skills

Students will know...

- the definition of property
- what an inventory is

Students will be able to...

- analyze primary source materials
- draw historical conclusions

## Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence

Evidence that will be collected to determine whether or not Desired Results are achieved

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### Assessment

What conclusions can be drawn about slavery? Give examples from the documents to support your answer.

### Rubric

2= response gives a relevant and/or accurate conclusion and uses examples from the document to support the explanation.

1= response gives a relevant and/or accurate conclusion, but fails to use examples from the document to support the explanation.

or

response uses examples from the documents, but fails to draw a relevant conclusion.

## Stage 3 – Learning Plan

(Design learning activities to align with Stage 1 and Stage 2 expectations)

### Instructional Strategies

#### Procedures

- I. **Warm-Up (developing context):** Tell students today that they are going to take an inventory of their bedroom. Explain that an inventory is a detailed list, or record, of items in one's possession. Pass out the worksheet (Handout 1) and instruct the students to write down seven items they own with the approximate values written next to them.

Discuss the idea of property with the class. Explain to students that the seven items they wrote down are their personal property, or things that they own.

Ask students to star the item that is most valuable on their list. Have students share their reasoning with the class.

- II. **Think-Pair-Share:** Ask students to think about how an inventory list might be different if a person was living in 1785, or colonial times. Students may struggle with identifying items. Mention to students that this time period is over 200 years ago, think about what people might have owned that is different from today. Ask students what item might be considered most valuable to a person in 1785, or colonial times. Have students share their ideas with the class.
- III. **Analyzing a Source:** Tell students that in this lesson they are going to view an inventory of Robert Burton from 1785. Explain that he was a Delaware resident living in Sussex County. This inventory showed the property Robert owned at the time of his death. The three columns on the right side of the sheet represent the appraised value of each item. At the time of Burton's death (1785) the English monetary system was still being used. In order from left to right the columns represent pounds, shillings, and pence (these denominations are listed greatest value to least value).
  - a. Give each pair of students a document transcription of Robert Burton's Inventory (Source 1) and complete the "I notice/I wonder" chart (Handout 2). Students will write down what they notice about the inventory; for example: specific items on the inventory, and what they are wondering about the inventory.
  - b. Discuss the students' "I notice/I wonder" charts noting any similarities or differences in their findings and answer any student questions they may have about the document.
  - c. The following points are key ideas the students should gather from the documents. If students do not point these out in the class discussion, use the following questions as talking points to help students draw conclusions.
    - i. Direct students' attention to the end of the inventory, lead students to understand that people are listed on this inventory

- and these people are slaves that Robert Burton owned as part of his property. Tell students that legally, African-American slaves were considered their owner's property.
- ii. Ask students to look at the value amounts listed next to the slaves, and to draw conclusions about how valuable the slaves were. Students may notice that different slaves are worth different values, i.e., age.
  - iii. Compare the value of slaves to the value of other items on the inventory, helping students draw the conclusion that slaves were considered extremely valuable property

**IV. Assessment:** What conclusions can be drawn about slavery? Give examples from the documents to support your answer.

### **Background Information**

#### PROPERTY

Legally, African-American slaves were considered their owner's property - extremely valuable property. Note the high appraisal value of the slaves in the inventory. Like any other commodity, slaves could be bought and sold. Although Robert Burton died without a will, other slave owners would will their slaves to their heirs. In a number of instances, this practice would break up a family because members of the enslaved African-American family would be divided among the heirs of the slave owner's family. Enslaved families could also be broken up when individual members were sold to pay debts incurred by the slave owner's family. Slave owners could also free their slaves through their will.

#### ROBERT BURTON

Robert Burton was a Sussex County farmer who owned a farm in the area southwest of Lewes. He died in 1785 (age unknown) without leaving a will to determine how his property and belongings were to be divided. When an individual dies without a will it is known as "dying intestate". At the time of his death, Burton left a widow named Ann and four children - Joshua, Nancy, William, and Mary. When his widow Ann died in 1790 several of the slaves mentioned in this inventory were also found in the inventory of her goods.

#### INVENTORY OF ROBERT BURTON (1785)

This inventory is part of the probate file of Robert Burton (Robert Burton, 1785 - 1796, Sussex County Probates, Series Number 4545.9). Probate is the process used to settle the estate of a deceased person. Probate records are documents generated as part of this process. These records may contain a will, letters of administration, inventories, administration or executor's accounts, as well as other legal documents that may pertain to the settlement of the estate. The inventory appraisal was carried out by Burton Waples and William Burton, Jr. as part of the probate process. The three columns on the right side of the sheet represent the appraised value of each item. At the time of Burton's death (1785) the English monetary system was still being used. In order from left to right the columns represent pounds, shillings, and pence.