

## Using Essex History Lesson Plan

### UEH Seminar Topic

The China Trade  
(November 19, 2008)

### Title

'A New Era ... in the History of our Commerce': Assessing the impact of Looking Eastward of Good Hope<sup>1</sup>

### Author

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### Grade Level

Grade 11

### Time Frame

Two 55-minute lessons

### Links to MA History and Social Studies Frameworks

USI.26 Describe the causes, course, and consequences of America's westward expansion and its growing diplomatic assertiveness.

USI.27 Explain the importance of the Transportation Revolution of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century (the building of canals, roads, bridges, turnpikes, steamboats, and railroads), including the stimulus it provided to the growth of a market economy.

USI.28 Explain the emergence and impact of the textile industry in New England and industrial growth generally throughout antebellum America.

C. the rise of a business class of merchants and manufacturers

### Essential Objectives

- Identify and explain the significance of the notion of merchants "casting their gaze eastward of Good Hope."
- Describe the 'factories' at Canton and discuss the importance of having one there with the American flag above it.
- Discuss the origins of the capital that merchants sunk into canals, railroads, and textile factories in New England in the industrialization of the region in the antebellum era.

### Essential Questions

- What was accomplished when Salem merchants reached Canton?
- To what extent did trade with the East save the nation or 'secure the blessings of liberty' for Americans?
- To what extent did the textile industry in New England have its origins in the China trade?
- To what extent did America's success depend not on resolving domestic disputes but on interaction with the global sphere?

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<sup>1</sup> Philip Chadwick Foster Smith quoting Dr. Bentley's diary in *Dr. Bentley's Salem: Diary of a Town*. Salem, MA: Essex Institute, 1977.

## Primary Sources

Cary, Emma Forbes. "Memories of Old Temple Place." 1916. Call #: China Trade Collection, Ms.N-49.76

Shipping Log of Edmund Bray's Ship *Columbus* (1826), Marblehead Historical Society

Dr. Bentley's Salem: Diary of a Town. Salem, MA: Essex Institute, 1977. Call #: 974.459D Sal.Coll

## Supplies & Equipment

- Copies of all primary sources for students (listed above)
- Equipment with which to draw (paper and colored pencils)

## Procedure

### First Lesson

- 1.) (10 minutes) Intro – Setting out the basics on the trade with China
  - In 1780s – Some in Britain aim to return Americans to serfdom; want to see them falter
  - British policy closed Caribbean to American ships; silence at a seaport – worst sign ever of major economic crisis looming
  - Major moment comes when Americans decide to 'cast gaze eastward of Good Hope' – means probing eastern waters
  - Major moment of American character-defining – engaging, adapting, taking innovative approach
  - By mid 1790s China trade was open; a success by which they 'saved the nation' (some argue); captains at the time had very political/patriotic motives – saw themselves as saving the nation and securing the "blessings of the Revolution"
  - Some argue that the day Americans landed at Canton and opened business should be celebrated as a national holiday
  - When ships returned from the east – everyone wanted to hear about it and see the objects they obtained...
  - Objects from the East – this brings us to our first activity here today with a primary source:
- 2.) (5 minutes) Distribute pages 6-7 only of Emma Forbes Cary's "Memories of Old Temple Place". Give instructions:
  - o Emma Forbes Cary is a member of a wealthy family who made money in the China Trade and then the early mill industry. What you are reading she wrote in 1916, but she is looking back. As you read her piece recording her memories, you need to think about where her family obtained various objects.

- In groups of 3-4 complete a simple chart in your notes that looks like this:

Item in the family home	Item's place of origin (make an inference / best guess)
- yellow satin	
- exquisite doll tea set	
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- You will then draw the room with objects from the East.
- 3.) (15 minutes) – Students work on task as instructed above. They first need reading time (5-7 minutes?) and then they complete the chart and make their drawings.
  - 4.) (10 minutes) – Class discussion
    - As students share answers with the class, be sure to emphasize
      - Wealth that trade with the East brought
      - Raise question – do you think these merchants who looked east ‘saved the nation?’
      - Let’s examine what a Salem diarist and pastor of the Second Congregational Church thought about this moment in US history
  - 5.) (5 min.) Distribute Document – *Dr. Bentley’s Salem: Diary of a Town* – pp. 58-62 only.
  - 6.) (10 min.) Distribute Discussion Questions (See Appendix A) Students the document and complete the questions in pairs. They might finish it for homework.

## Second Lesson

- 1.) (5-10 minutes) Yesterday we made learned about the China trade and this crucial moment when certain Americans ‘cast their gaze eastward of Good Hope’. Review questions for the students to discuss:
  - a. Why was this such a crucial moment in US History?
  - b. Why was economic crisis at hand?
  - c. How did opening trade at Canton influence daily life and objects found in homes here in Essex County?
  - d. Who went East? What happened to Edmund Bray in 1826 when he went east?
- 2.) (10 minutes) Discuss the questions in Appendix A regarding Bentley. Focus on these points:
  - a. How Bentley thinks of this moment in US History when the China trade opens
  - b. Ask students – do you think Bentley is exaggerating? Was Salem an example to the world? If so, in what ways?
  - c. How vulnerable were these Americans at sea? Even as late as 1826, Americans were facing difficulties trading with people in the East... Link to Edmund Bray
- 3.) (5 min.) Edmund Bray source – Appendix B.  
Distribute document and introduce it:
  - a. Bray is a sea captain from Marblehead; this is an excerpt from his shipping log in 1826
  - b. He’s traveled from Marblehead to the Malay Peninsula – read what happens to him and his son.
  - c. Instruct students to answer these:

- i. **Who** is involved? Note all the characters in the story.
  - ii. **When** does this occur?
  - iii. **What** is being traded?
  - iv. **What** happens?
  - v. **How** is the problem resolved?
- 4.) (10 minutes) Students work on the document and the above questions.
- 5.) (15minutes) Focus discussion on the Edmund Bray shipping log
  - a. Emphasize just **how vulnerable** these Marblehead men were in the hands of the Malays
  - b. What did the Malays ask for? (supplies, first; then \$3000)
  - c. Why were the Americans dependent on the British for help in this episode? (Englishman who knew the Malay language helps them; settles the matter)
  - d. How did Bray and his men view the Malay people? (“treacherous savages”)
  - e. YET – this was his livelihood; this trade was fueling the national economy
  - f. NB – after this voyage it appears from the log at the Marblehead Historical Society that Edmund Bray did not travel east again – can you see why?
- 6.) (10 minutes) Set students up for the assessment – Brainstorm/outline an answer to the essay question together.

### **Assessment**

Essay question:

Assess the impact of the China trade on the local and national economy during the period 1780-1830. You must refer to at least one primary document in your answer.

## Appendix A: Primary Source – D

### Vocabulary to define

- indolence
- opulence
- prowess
- adjacent
- fickle
- eulogy

Read pp. 58-62 of this source.

Then answer these discussion questions:

1. How does Bentley describe the launching of *The Grand Turk* in his diary?
2. What did the launching of this ship symbolize?
3. In his eulogy for Derby, what did Bentley say brought about a new era in the history of our commerce?
4. How has Salem been enriched and ‘become an example to the world’? An example *of what* – do you think?
5. This is a primary source embedded in a secondary source. That is, P.C.F. Smith is writing in 1977 about Bentley’s words describing Derby. How does Smith explain Bentley’s interest in local trade, commerce and prosperity in terms of his congregation and the local population?
6. In the Derby funeral oration, what does Bentley describe taking the place of the fishing industry?
7. Do the words of Bentley support the notion that the China trade ‘saved the nation’? Explain.

**Shipping Log of Edmund Bray's Ship *Columbus* (1826)**

By the 1790s and early 1800s, many Americans, especially from Boston, Salem, and Marblehead, had become quite prosperous as merchants of the globe. During and immediately following the Revolution, many families in Massachusetts suffered economically due to shortages, high inflation, and a lack of available land. In the decades between the Revolution and the War of 1812, however, prosperity returned, largely thanks to the American shipping industry and the war in Europe. (Merchants relied on neutral American ships while Europe was engaged in Napoleonic wars.) Everything from Sumatran pepper and coffee to Jamaican sugar and Malaysian molasses traveled the seas on American ships. Still, the shipping industry did not flourish without obstacles. Americans struggled to define themselves as proponents of free trade and, no longer secure under the British flag, battled state-sanctioned pirates along the Barbary Coast and elsewhere. Edmund Bray was a successful Marblehead sea captain of several ships over the years 1792-1826. In this excerpt from the shipping log of the *Columbus*, we learn of a particular difficulty these Americans encountered with the leaders on the Malay Peninsula.

Friday March 20 – This day bribed the king ... to take off pepper tomorrow. Commences pleasant, loosed and dried the sails at 9 pm; the *Restitution* with a full cargo sailed for Europe. Ends rainy.

Monday March 23 – Commences rainy. Mid-day pleasant ... received on board 431 bags of pepper; Ends squally with heavy showers of rain.

Tuesday March 24 – Commences with heavy rain at 8 AM ... away pleasant; received on board 173 bags of pepper and 2 lbs molasses for ship's stores.

Thursday March 26 – Cloudy weather throughout at 8 AM, received 22 bags of pepper by the ... at 10 AM, tremendous heavy squall passed over from S West. This day the agreement which allowed us to take off pepper 5 days is included and we are all owed to take no more except by an additional bribe.

Friday April 28 – The Capt. Went on shore in the morning to acquaint himself with the reasons of the detention of his son, but all he could learn was that if he did not meet their demand (which was \$250 – ½ lb....., 2 small casks bread, a swivel and 1000 musketballs) his son should not go on board the ship.

He was obliged to comply with their villainy his life was not safe. At 4 PM the Capt. Was permitted to return to his ship. At 5:30 PM sent on shore what they required (as above). At 7 PM the boat returned but without the Capt's son as the treacherous Malays refused to let him go short of \$3000. Expected an attack from the Malays, and got all ready to receive them.

Saturday April 29 - ...part squally, rainy weather. A ... got under way and at 8 AM came too and anchored in 9 fathom of water ... The capt. Went on board the English ship *Flora* and engaged the Capt. (who understood the Malay language) to settle the matter with the natives. He accordingly agreed to give them \$4.30 when they allowed ... to go on board. At 8 PM settled with the English Capt. And at 9 PM, got underway and ... to the S.W.ward. Ends gentle gales and cloudy weather. Thank heaven for our safe deliverance from these treacherous savages.