



Teaching with Historic Places Lesson Plan

Vinegar Hill: Fact or Fiction?

School: Veterans Memorial School
Subject: Social Studies

Contributors: Melita Davis
Grade: 4

Introduction:

In the Saugus Community there are many stories and legends regarding our history. Some of these legends have been passed down through generations without proof of their authenticity. However, many of these intriguing stories have been substantiated to be accurate through historical findings. The lesson is taught in two parts. This is **Part 2: Saugus Native Americans**.

Objectives:

- The students will identify two facts regarding Native American presence in early Saugus History.

Materials:

- Map of Saugus neighborhoods (included in part 1)
- Map of the Vinegar Hills of Saugus (included)
- Timeline (included)

Vocabulary:

legend: a traditional tale that (although unauthenticated) is often treated as historical.

fact: something that is indisputably true.

fiction: stories depicting imaginary people, places, and/or events.

rhyolite: a fine-grained rock of volcanic origins.¹



Rhyolite samples found on Vinegar Hill.

¹ The rhyolite picture is courtesy of the University of Massachusetts Amherst and is used here with permission.



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archaeology: the study of humanity's past through the excavation of sites and analysis of items found.

archaeologist: a person who studies archaeology.

artifacts: human-made items.

projectile points: the hand-made missile tips from weapons like bows and atlatls.²

cores: the piece of stone left over after chunks have been removed to make projectile points or hammerstones.

hammerstones: stones that have been hand-fashioned into tools that can be used much as a modern day hammer.

archaeology sites: locations being worked by archaeologists and/or known to contain interesting artifacts.

subsurface: the layers below the surface of the ground that archaeologists dig into when excavating sites.



Some Native American Artifacts found on Vinegar Hill.

Activities:

- Introduce archeology vocabulary.
- Present an overhead view of Saugus Timeline.
- Review Saugus Neighborhood map and compare it with the map of Vinegar Hill.
- Hold a class discussion regarding Vinegar Hill as a residential construction site.
- Record archeological findings at Vinegar Hill in student booklets.

Native American Facts:

North America was already inhabited when the European colonists arrived. The Native North Americans (American Indians) had already built villages. Each Indian nation had its own territory, customs, style of dress, and language. They survived by hunting, fishing, and planting gardens. They made necessities out of wood, hide, bone, and shells.

Native American villages were small because too many people would use up the food. Each village grew enough food necessary to survive. Each Native American tribe relied on the land, seasons, weather and trading with each other to survive.

² The picture of projectile points and hammerstones is courtesy of the University of Massachusetts Amherst and is used here with permission.



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The colonists in the New World had never lived on a farm before. When they arrived they did not plant gardens right away. Most often they spent their time looking for gold or treasure from the new land. They would have disputes over who was in charge of the settlement.

Finally, the settlers were forced to work. Leaders such as John Smith, needed to demand that work be shared among the people. It was not unusual that many colonist settlements failed when all of the people did not take on their share of the work.

Native North Americans taught the colonists how to survive. They taught them to plant corn and maize. Corn was dried and the kernels were ground into cornmeal for bread. They were taught to use the husks to feed the animals, to burn in the fireplace for warmth, or they could be used to stuff a mattress.

The Native Americans also showed the settlers new crops such as pumpkin, beans, gourds, and squash, all plants that grow quickly. They learned to put a piece of dead fish into the garden when planting seeds. Decaying fish added nutrients to the soil to make the plant grow better.

Settlers in Saugus, like all other settlers to the New World, learned to survive from the Native Americans. The earliest inhabitants of the Saugus Area were The Rumney Marsh Indians. They were members of the tribal nation Aberginians. Montowampate (1609-1633) was the Sachem of Saugus. A Sachem is a leader of the Native American tribe or territory. The English gave him the name of Sagamore James.

Sagamore James was very interested in learning the customs and lifestyle of the English settlers. He adapted many of these customs for his tribe, including their religion. It was through this mutual interest, that the early settlers learn to survive in this New World.



Viewing Vinegar Hill today.

Evidence of these early Native American tribes has been rediscovered today. Recently, developers had begun work in the Vinegar Hill section of Saugus. Background research of this area had identified Native American and historic archaeological sites to be located. Before developing and building on this site began it needed to be surveyed.



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Testing of the area was completed by the Anthropology Department of the University of Massachusetts in the Fall of 2001. Their investigation identified a strong history of Native American presence in the Vinegar Hill area.

Many artifacts were found in this area. Archeologists found knives, hammer stones, pottery, and projectile points. From these findings, archeologists concluded that the area was occupied over 3,000 years ago. Researchers determined that the Vinegar Hills were an important source for stone for the making of tools.

Due to archeologists findings, two areas of Vinegar Hill, The Tree house Terrace and The Swamp Hallow sites were preserved. Builders were not allowed to develop on these sites because of their scientific and cultural significance in Saugus.

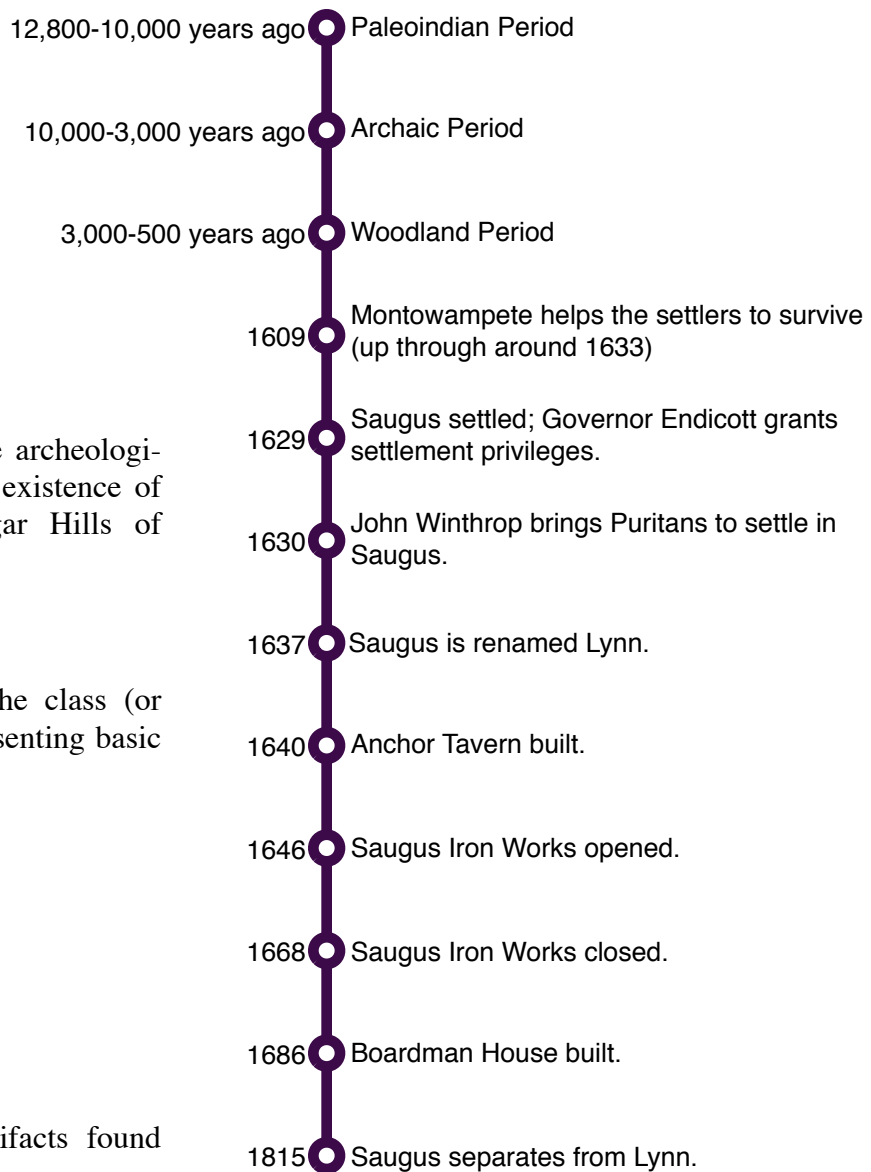
Assessment:

In student booklets, list three archeological findings that prove early existence of Native Americans in Vinegar Hills of Saugus.

Follow-Up:

Have an archeologist visit the class (or alternately show a video) presenting basic archeological methods:

1. Background Research.
2. Walkover Survey.
3. Initial subsurface survey.
4. Laboratory Analysis.
5. Report Writing.
6. Presentation of actual artifacts found on Vinegar Hills site.



A brief Saugus timeline.



Map of Vinegar Hill



This map is courtesy of the University of Massachusetts and is used here with permission.