

Ordinance Prohibiting Freeman & Private Traders from coming with their Vessels Within the Limits of the Colony Oct. 10th, 1642

- New Netherland
- Trade
- Mercantilism
- Colonization

- Close Reading
- Reading for Tone
- Cause and Affect
- Economics and Economic Systems

Middle & High School
Level

- How Patroonships were governed
- Trade between Europeans and Native Americans
- Mercantilist restrictions on trade and the enforcement of licensure

Essential Question:
What impact did private trading have on New Netherland's economy?

Historical Context:

The Patroonship of Rensselaerswyck encompassed modern day Rensselaer and Albany counties. Patroons were granted special permissions to fund settlements, or patroonships, in New Netherland by the Dutch West India Company's charter of Freedoms and Exemptions. In addition to Company laws, patroonships had their own judicial systems. This ordinance comes from Rensselaerswyck's secretary, Arendt Van Curler, nephew of the colony's Patroon, Kiliaen Van Rensselaer. This ordinance responds to an increase in trade between non-Dutch sailors visiting New Netherland and the Dutch and Native Americans living near Fort Orange. Traders mainly exchanged furs, the staple product sought after by the Dutch West India Company, as a way to make ends meet. As a result of private trading, the DWIC was unable to collect export duties, leaving the company with little revenue to pay for its public investments in the colony. Traders also exchanged alcohol with Native Americans which the company viewed as a threat to public safety and worsened their relationship with the Iroquois, New Netherland's primary suppliers of beaver furs.

Document Analysis:

1. [The teacher can introduce this lesson through a review of the previous lesson on the Charter of the West India Company, or can teach this independently.] If taught independently, introduce the lesson through a bell-ringer activity. Instruct students to analyze a map of New Netherland <https://www.newnetherlandinstitute.org/history-and-heritage/digital-exhibitions/new-netherland-legacy/a-cultural-survival/>.
2. Instruct students to identify what they see on the map and then to interpret what their observations might tell them about life in New Netherland. Students should take note of the major rivers, frame their responses to help them understand that the Hudson and Mohawk rivers facilitated trade with Native Americans by asking students how a settler might travel from one end of the colony to the other. [For example, Fort Amsterdam to Fort Orange or Fort Nassau to Schenectady etc.]
3. Once students address trade in any way, introduce and read aloud the Oct. 10th, 1642 ordinance once to class and instruct students to follow along silently.
4. Following the introduction, organize the students into groups and assign students the following roles: questioner, clarifier, and summarizer. Individual roles can be given to pairs as well when necessary. Next, assign each group a specific section of the ordinance.
5. Instruct the groups to read over their assigned section as the questioner will develop questions for their group members regarding the basics of the readings. The clarifiers will then lead the group in answering those questions. Lastly, the summarizer will lead the group in determining the answers to the guided questions accompanying their section of the ordinance.
6. Following the reciprocal teaching exercise, reconvene class and call on each group to share their summary of each section.
7. Instruct each group to shorten their summaries into 1-2 sentences. Then call on each group to write their summaries on the board in order to create a summary paragraph of the entire document.
8. Ask students a follow-up question “why might private trading be so frequent in New Netherland?” Have students write their responses on scrap paper to be turned in as an exit ticket to be reviewed during the next class.

Optional Extension Activity:

The following activity could be completed in order to extend students’ thinking and encourage them to make connections.

Assign every student the role of “predictor.” For a short homework assignment, instruct students to write a 1-2 sentence prediction of what they think might happen as a result of the ordinance passed on Oct. 10th, 1642.

Ordinance of the Colony of Rensselaerswyck Prohibiting Freeman and Private Traders from Coming with their Vessels Within the Limits of the Colony. October 10th, 1642. A.J.F. Van Laer, Van Rensselaer Bowier Manuscripts: Being the Letters of Kiliaen Van Rensselaer, 1630-1643, and Other Documents Relating to the Colony of Rensselaerswyck. Albany: University of the State of New York, 1908.

...As we are noticing every day many abuses, frauds and misdemeanors, which originate entirely from the sailing up and down of the vessels of the freemen and the private trade which they carry on in the colony, whereby not only is the honorable patroon wronged in his jurisdiction but also the inhabitants greatly impoverished...

...as furthermore, we not only hear rumors but are well assured that they supply the Indians with powder, lead and firearms and incite the inhabitants of the colony to such trade, which not only strengthens the savages and imperils our lives but heaps contempt and ridicule on the good intentions of the honorable West India Company and practically annuls their ordinance, all of which are things of very serious consequence...

...therefore, we have ordered and decreed, as we hereby do order and decree, that hereafter (without prejudice to the jurisdiction of the honorable Chartered West India Company) no one of the freemen and private traders, whatever his rank or condition may be or under whatever pretext he shall do so, shall undertake to enter the limits of the colony with any vessel, on forfeiture of ship and lading and on pain of peremptory punishment at the discretion of the court....

...And if any one obtains license from the honorable officer to come with a vessel for the service of the honorable patroon, such skipper on his arrival in the colony shall not be allowed to unload any goods or to let any one come on board before his vessel has been inspected by the officer and he has handed in his bill of lading. In the same way such skipper shall not be allowed to sail and leave the colony without similar inspection and permission from the officer; everything subject to fine as above. We enjoin and command every one whom it may concern to govern himself accordingly. Therefore, let every one take heed and guard himself against loss. Done in council the 10th of October 1642 in the colony of Rensselaerswyck.

By order of the honorable commissioners and councilors of this colony of Rensselaerswyck.

To my knowledge,

Arendt Van Curler, Secretary

[Endorsed] Publication concerning vessels.

Vocabulary:

Misdemeanor: a minor crime **Vessel:** ship, watercraft

Patroon: Wealthy Dutch landowners and investors in New Netherland.

Jurisdiction: the authority to interpret and apply law **Imperil:** to jeopardize or risk

Ridicule: to put down or insult **Annul:** cancel **Ordinance:** law or regulation

Decree: an order of law **Forfeiture:** a loss due to a broken contract or agreement

License: permission granted by the government **Skipper:** captain of a small ship