

## TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT

### *Lesson Title – Bacon's in the Fire*

Grade - 7

Length of class period – 45 minutes

Inquiry – (What essential question are students answering, what problem are they solving, or what decision are they making?)

Why did Nathaniel Bacon set Virginia on fire?

Objectives (What content and skills do you expect students to learn from this lesson?)

1. Students will recognize the grievances of Bacon and his followers
2. Students will learn of Governor Berkeley's response
3. Students will weigh the evidence of each side

Materials (What primary sources or local resources are the basis for this lesson?) – (please attach)

Primary documents left by each man outlining the rebels' grievance and the governor's response. Available on [http://odur.let.rug.nl/%7Eusa/D/#1651-1700/bacon\\_rebel.htm](http://odur.let.rug.nl/%7Eusa/D/#1651-1700/bacon_rebel.htm)

## **The Declaracon of the People.**

1. For haveing upon specious pretences of publiqe works raised greate unjust taxes upon the Comonality for the advancement of private favorites and other sinister ends, but noe visible effects in any measure adequate, For not haveing dureing this long time of his Gouvernement in any measure advanced this hopefull Colony either by fortificacons Townes or Trade.
2. For haveing abused and rendred contemptable the Magistrates of Justice, by advanceing to places of Judicature, scandalous and Ignorant favorites.
3. For haveing wronged his Majesties prerogative and interest, by assumeing Monopoly of the Beaver trade, and for haveing in that unjust gaine betrayed and sold his Majesties Country and the lives of his loyall subjects, to the barbarous heathen.
4. For haveing, protected, favoured, and Imboldned the Indians against his Majesties loyall subjects, never contriveing, requireing, or appointing any due or proper meanes of sattisfaction for their many Invasions, robbories, and murthers comitted upon us
5. For haveing when the Army of English, was just upon the track of those Indians, who now in all places burne, spoyle, murther and when we might with ease have destroyed them: who then were in open hostility, for then haveing expressly countermanded, and sent back our Army, by passing his word for the peaceable demeanour of the said Indians, who imediately prosecuted their evill intentions, comitting horred murthers and robberies in all places, being protected by the said ingagement and word past of him the said Sir William Berkeley, haveing ruined and laid desolate a greate part of his Majesties Country, and have now drawne themselves into such obscure and remote places, and are by their success soe imboldned and confirmed, by their confederacy soe strengthened that the cryes of blood are in all places, and the terror, and constimation of the

## **Governor William Berkely on Bacon's Rebellion**

*(19 May 1676)*

\*\*\* [Quote](#) \* [Context](#) \*\*\*

### **The declaration and Remonstrance of Sir William Berkeley his most sacred Majesties Governor and Captain Generall of Virginia**

Sheweth That about the yeare 1660 CoII. Mathews the then Governor dyed and then in consideration of the service I had don the Country, in defending them from, and destroying great numbers of the Indians, without the loss of three men, in all the time that warr lasted, and in contemplation of the equall and uncorrupt Justice I had distributed to all men, Not onely the Assembly but the unanimous votes of all the Country, concurred to make me Governor in a time, when if the Rebels in England had prevailed, I had certainly dyed for accepting itt, `twas Gentlemen an unfortunate Love, shewed to me, for to shew myselfe gratefull for this, I was willing to accept of this Gouvernement againe, when by my gracious Kings favour I might have had other places much more proffitable, and lesse toylesome then this hath beene. Since that time that I returned into the Country, I call the great God Judge of all things in heaven and earth to wittness, that I doe not know of any thing relative to this

Country wherein I have acted unjustly, corruptly, or negligently in distributeing equall Justice to all men, and takeing all possible care to preserve their proprietys, and defend the from their barbarous enimies.

But for all this, perhapps I have erred in things I know not of, if I have I am soe conscious of humane frailty, and my owne defects, that I will not onely acknowledge them, but repent of, and amend them, and not like the Rebell Bacon persist in an error, onely because I have comitted itt, and tells me in diverse of his Letters that itt is not for his honnor to confess a fault, but I am of opinion that itt is onely for divells to be incorrigable, and men of principles like the worst of divells, and these he hath, if truth be reported to me, of diverse of his ex pressions of Atheisme, tending to take away all Religion and Laws.

And now I will state the Question betwixt me as a Governor and Mr. Bacon, and say that if any enimies should invade England, any Councillor Justice of peace or other inferiour officer, might raise what forces they could to protect his Majesties subjects, But I say againe, if after the Kings knowledge of this invasion, any the greatest peere of England, should raise forces against the kings prohibition this would be now, and ever was in all ages and Nations accompted treason. Nay I will goe further, that though this peere was truly zealous for the preservation of his King, and subjects, and had better and greater abillitys then all the rest of his fellow subjects, doe his King and Country service, yett if the King (though by false information) should suspect the contrary, itt were treason in this Noble peere to proceed after the King's prohibition, and for the truth of this I appeale to all the laws of England, and the Laws and constitutions of all other Nations in the world, And yett further itt is declaired by this Parliament that the takeing up Armes for the King and Parliament is treason, for the event shewed that what ever the pretence was to seduce ignorant and well affected people, yett the end was ruinous both to King and people, as this will be if not prevented, I doe therefore againe declair that Bacon proceedeing against all Laws of all Nations modern and ancient, is Rebell to his sacred Majesty and this Country, nor will I insist upon the swearing of men to live and dye togeather, which is treason by the very words of the Law.

Now my friends I have lived 34 yeares amongst you, as uncorrupt and dilligent as ever Governor was, Bacon is a man of two yeares amongst you, his person and qualities unknowne to most of you, and to all men else, by any vertuous action that ever I heard of, And that very action which he boasts of, was sickly and fooleishly, and as I am informed treacherously carried to the dishonour of the English Nation, yett in itt, he lost more men then I did in three yeares Warr, and by the grace of God will putt myselfe to the same daingers and troubles againe when I have brought Bacon to acknowledge the Laws are above him, and I doubt not but by God's assistance to have better success then Bacon hath had, the reason of my hopes are, that I will take Councill of wiser men then my selfe, but Mr. Bacon hath none about him, but the lowest of the people.

Yett I must further enlarge, that I cannot without your helpe, doe any thinge in this but dye in defence of my King, his laws, and subjects, which I will cheerefully doe, though alone I doe itt, and considering my poore fortunes, I can not leave my poore Wife and friends a better legacy then by dyeing for my King and you: for his sacred Majesty will easeily distinguish betweene Mr. Bacons actions and myne, and Kinges have long Armes, either to reward or punish.

Now after all this, if Mr. Bacon can shew one precedens or example where such actings in any Nation what ever, was approved of, I will mediate with the King and you for a pardon, and excuce for him, but I can shew him an hundred examples where

brave and great men have been put to death for gaining Victories against the Command of their Superiors.

Lastly my most assured friends I would have preserved those Indians that I knew were howlerly at our mercy, to have been our spies and intelligence, to find out our bloody enemies, but as soon as I had the least intelligence that they also were treacherous enemies, I gave out Commissions to destroy them all as the Commissions themselves will speak it.

To conclude, I have done what was possible both to friend and enemy, have granted Mr. Bacon three pardons, which he hath scornfully rejected, supposing himself stronger to subvert than I and you to maintain the Laws, by which only and God's assisting grace and mercy, all men must hope for peace and safety. I will add no more though much more is still remaining to justify me and condemn Mr. Bacon, but to desire that this declaration may be read in every County Court in the Country, and that a Court be presently called to do it, before the Assembly meet, That your approbation or dissatisfaction of this declaration may be known to all the Country, and the King's Council to whose most revered Judgments it is submitted, Given the xxixth day of May, a happy day in the xxvith year of his most sacred Majesty's Reigne, Charles the second, who God grant long and prosperously to Reigne, and let all his good subjects say Amen.

Text prepared by Garry Wiersema  
for **From Revolution to Reconstruction - an .HTML project.**  
Last update: 2003-3-6 time: 11:00  
© 1994- 2006. All rights reserved. [Department of Humanities Computing](#)

Activities (What will you and your students do during the lesson to promote learning?)

1. Divide students into six separate groups( depending on class size).
2. Three groups will have the Bacon document and three groups will have the Berkeley piece
3. The groups will locate and list four arguments provided in each document
4. Significant paragraphs will be highlighted by the teacher to facilitate using the documents

How will you assess what student learned during this lesson?

1. Teacher observation of the groups' dynamics
2. The quality of the responses based on the readings
3. The participation of the students and the level of critical thinking

Connecticut Framework Performance Standards –

Develop understandings of the cause and effect relationships in a particular historical event