

## The Economic Contributions of the Skilled Enslaved People at Philipsburg Manor

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This lesson is intended for a high school class using the People Not Property website (<https://peoplenotproperty.hudsonvalley.org/>). As noted in People Not Property, “Slavery was crucial to the economic development of the American colonies, the history of the enslaved people in the North has long been neglected.” During this lesson, students will explore the important role that skilled enslaved people played in the economy of Philipsburg Manor, and the unfair practice of not receiving compensation for their valuable contributions to the economic success of the family.

The lesson is set up for the students to complete their answers on the accompanying Guided Notes Sheet. The overarching goal of this lesson is to understand that enslaved individuals were people and not property who contributed to the economic success of their enslavers.

### **Objective: How did the enslaved population contribute to the economy at Philipsburg Manor?**

#### **Do now:**

On the Guided Notes Sheet, students will write down some words they think of when they hear the words *slavery* or *enslaved person*, as well as some places they associate with enslaved people.

#### **Procedure**

##### **Setting the Stage**

##### **Part One**

1. To provide students with background knowledge of the enslaved population at Philipsburg Manor, as a whole class, students will watch the introductory video [Introduction: Stories of Slavery in the Colonial North | People Not Property](#).
2. Students will then share their responses to the following quote. (Please note that the word *negro* is used, but this word is not used in current-day conversation.) Place answers on the Guided Notes Sheet.

**“It is by negroes that I finde my cheivest proffitt. All other trade I only look upon as by the by.”** Frederick Philpse to Captain Samuel Burgess (1695)

- a. What does “cheivest proffitt” mean?
- b. Do you think that the profit was shared with the enslaved people?
- c. The skilled labor of the enslaved people contributed to the economy of Philipsburg Manor, yet the enslaved people were not compensated for their labor. They were not seen as humans, but as property. What do you think this did to the well-being of the enslaved people? How could this impact their role in their families or the community?

1. As a whole class, we will go over the answers to the above questions.

## **Part Two**

### **Role of the skilled enslaved people at Philipsburg Manor with a focus on Caesar, the skilled miller**

Students will watch each segment on their own and complete a See, Think, Wonder based on the videos. Please see the attached article for a description of a See, Think, Wonder. (<https://pz.harvard.edu/resources/see-think-wonder>). Students will also describe the relationship between Caesar and his apprentice.

### **The Miller and His Apprentice [The Miller and His Apprentice|People Not Property](#)**

#### **Caesar's Skills**

[Caesar's Skills |People Not Property](#)

#### **Recognition for Caesar**

[Recognition for Caesar |People Not Property](#)

**Students will share their answers to the See, Think, Wonder in whole-class discussion, which will then lead them into the following activity.**

The common misconception of slavery during the colonial period is that it existed only in the South. The labor and skills of enslaved people made their enslavers very wealthy. Sadly, the skills of Caesar the miller benefitted his enslaver and not Caesar. After viewing the videos and holding our class discussions, explain the role of enslaved people in the North, particularly at Philipsburg Manor. Write a one-paragraph explanation of the role of Caesar at Philipsburg Manor including his skills and the lack of compensation for his labor. Include how Caesar contributed to the community of enslaved workers as well.

## **Part Three**

To instill the fact that the enslaved were considered property, students will read the probate document to show them that upon the death of the enslaver, the enslaved were often sold.

Students will look at the following documents and answer the questions on the Guided Answer Sheet.

Document 1: Inventory of all Singular the goods, Rights Chattels & Credits of the Estate of Mr. Adolph Philipse Deceased

And

Document 2: 1750 year of transition

## **Part Four**

In groups, students will be asked to discuss the following questions and place their answers on their Guided Reading Sheet:

1. Why do you think Caesar should be recognized?
2. How should Caesar be recognized?

## **Closure**

After completing parts one through four of the lesson, students will revisit the Do now to see how their answers have changed.

On their Guided Notes Sheet, they will again write down some words they think of when they hear the words *enslaved person*, and write down some places they associate with enslaved people.

Students will then explain how their list is different, how they would describe the experience of an enslaved person in the Colonial North and how this lesson helped them to see that the enslaved persons are people and not property. A whole-class discussion will follow to discuss student answers.

## **HW**

“Recognition for Caesar”

We have examined the important role Caesar played in the economy of Philipsburg Manor. Your task is to create a monument, sign, marker, or another visual of your choice to show Caesar’s contributions to Philipsburg Manor so that his life, history and legacy live on for future generations. Write a two- to three-paragraph description of the monument and include the role of Caesar at Philipsburg Manor, including his skills and lack of payment or compensation for his services.

## **Standards:**

### **Hard History Framework 6-12**

4.A. Enslaved labor was essential to the economy of all colonies in North America. Enslaved people produced the major agricultural and mineral exports of the colonial era, including tobacco, rice, sugar, indigo, silver and gold.

9.A. While the work of enslaved people varied widely across North America, most enslaved people lived in small households in close proximity to their enslavers. They labored to maintain their enslavers’ families, houses and farms. This included tasks such as cooking, child care and cleaning.

9.B. Enslaved people were often highly skilled, using training and knowledge from their home cultures while acquiring new abilities.

### **NYS History Frameworks**

11.1 b A number of factors influenced colonial economic development, social structures, and labor systems, causing variation by region. Students will examine the impacts of geographic factors on patterns of settlement and the development of colonial economic systems.

Students will examine the factors influencing variations in colonial social structures and labor systems.

Students will analyze slavery as a deeply established component of the colonial economic system and social structure, indentured servitude versus slavery, the increased concentration of slaves in the South, and the development of slavery as a racial institution.

Students will place all answers on the attached Guided Notes Sheet. Place answers to the questions in this lesson on the Guided Notes Sheet found here:

[Guided Notes Sheet](#)