

Lesson: War and the Rise of the Cannery

Grade Level: 6-9

Time: 1-2 class periods (depending on extension activities)

Essential Question

How have history, technology, and innovation shaped the foods we eat today?

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Explain how new technologies changed the way food was preserved and transported.
- Describe how historical events contributed to the growth of Maine's wild blueberry industry.
- Place important events in chronological order and explain how they are connected.
- Explain how history influences the foods we eat today.

Extension Activities/Resources

- [Enhancing Our World](#)
- [Growing a Nation](#)
- [Recipe: Blueberry Grunt, Hardtack with Blueberries](#)

Materials

- Reading: [Before the Berries: Maine's Glacial Past](#), [People of the Dawn](#), [The Colonists](#), [War and the Rise of the Cannery](#), [From Common Land to Commodity](#)
- [Handouts-Cause and effect timeline sheets](#)
- Bag of frozen blueberries, or picture of a bag of frozen blueberries

Background

The foods we eat today are the result of thousands of years of innovation, discovery, and adaptation. In Maine, wild blueberries were once a seasonal food gathered by the Wabanaki and later by colonists. Fresh blueberries spoiled quickly, limiting when and where they could be eaten. During the late 1700s and 1800s, new inventions in food preservation—especially canning—changed that. Advances in technology, transportation, and changing markets helped transform wild blueberries from a locally gathered food into one of Maine's most important agricultural products. Through the story of blueberry grunt, students will discover that recipes are more than instructions, they represent our history.

Procedure

1. Engage (10 minutes)

Ask students:

Could this bag of frozen blueberries have existed 300 years ago?

Have them list what technological innovations were necessary to get that bag of blueberries from the field to the classroom.

2. Explore and Explain (20 minutes)

Give each student a timeline card and reading(s).

- **Ice Age and Glacial Activity:** *Before the Berries: Maine's Glacial Past, People of the Dawn*
- **Blueberry Barrens:** *Before the Berries: Maine's Glacial Past, People of the Dawn*
- **Wabanaki Foodways:** *People of the Dawn, The Colonists*
- **European Colonization:** *The Colonists, War and the Rise of the Cannery*
- **Revolutionary War:** *The Colonists, War and the Rise of the Cannery*
- **The Canning Process:** *The Colonists, War and the Rise of the Cannery*
- **The Can:** *War and the Rise of the Cannery, From Common Land to Commodity*
- **The American Civil War:** *War and the Rise of the Cannery, From Common Land to Commodity*
- **Freeman v. Underwood:** *From Common Land to Commodity*
- **Harvesting Technology:** *From Common Land to Commodity*
- **Wild Blueberry Commission:** *From Common Land to Commodity*

4. Elaborate (30 minutes)

- Have students pair up with classmates who have the same card. Ask the class to assemble the timeline. It goes in the following order:
 - **Ice Age and Glacial Activity**
 - **Blueberry Barrens**
 - **Wabanaki Foodways**
 - **European Colonization**
 - **Revolutionary War**
 - **The Canning Process**
 - **The Can**
 - **The American Civil War**
 - **Freeman v. Underwood**
 - **Harvesting Technology**
 - **Wild Blueberry Commission**

- Fix any errors in order and have students share their answers to their three questions on their timeline cards.
 - Summary, Reflection, Connection to the Future

Alternative Extension Activity (1 class period)

- Have students test Hardtack with Blueberries
- Have students make Blueberry Grunt

5. Evaluate (5–10 minutes)

Have students answer :

Which timeline stop do you think was most important?

Describe:

- **What problem did this timeline stop solve?**
- **How did it help the blueberry industry?**
- **What might have happened if this event never occurred?**

MLR Standards

Social Studies: D.1, D.2

ELA: R.4, R.6, R.11, W.1, W.3, SL.1, SL.3, L.6

