



NEWS FROM

Hemispheres

THE INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH CONSORTIUM
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

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IN THIS ISSUE: Looking at Commodities across Time and Space

For centuries, different cultures around the world have interacted through trade, migration, exploration, conquest, and forces of social mobility. But how can we track this contact and understand its effects? How has it influenced our daily lives? And how can we present it in the classroom?

This summer, Hemispheres began work on its newest curriculum unit, *Explorers, Traders, and Immigrants: Tracking the Cultural and Social Impacts of the Global Commodity Trade*. Inspired by the 2004 Hemispheres Summer Institute for teachers, which explored cultural contact by looking at the food we eat, *Explorers, Traders, and Immigrants* examines eight global commodities from their points of origin and the social, cultural, political, and economic changes they wrought along their way. Each case study covers the initial discovery of and/or access to a commodity, its progress from local good to international trade, the ramifications of large-scale production, and the drama of its boom-and-bust cycles through the years. Designed to address TEKS Social Studies standards that cover spatial and cultural diffusion, the unit draws on primary source readings, images, and maps so that students can both track and assess commodities as they have traveled the world.

For this issue of *News from Hemispheres*, we have selected comparative documents from four case studies in the unit. Each document is laid out in DBQ fashion, so that students can cite, interpret, and evaluate sources; consider point of view; and use historical evidence to develop and support a thesis. The document-based question precedes each set of documents.

In addition to responding to specific questions about each commodity, students can compare commodities by placing the following set of questions and their answers into a graphic organizer:

- (1) What role did _____ play in people's lives?
- (2) How were people's lives affected by _____?
- (3) To what extent has _____ been harmful or beneficial to society?

It is our hope that, with *Explorers, Traders, and Immigrants*, students will be able to better appreciate the long-term effects of intercultural contact and population movements by relating them to the presence of various commodities that they see and use every day.

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Chocolate

Cacao Moves from New World to Europe

Today chocolate is available to the masses: it's in every supermarket and convenience store and it costs very little. To what extent has the history of chocolate been a history of use by the upper classes versus mass consumption?

Use the information and documents below, in addition to your knowledge of history, to construct your response.

The word “cacao” can be traced as far back as the Olmec civilization, which dates to 1000 B.C.E. in Mexico. The Olmecs were probably the first to grow cacao (the large pods whose seeds are used to make chocolate) and to process it for consumption. Their process was passed down to the Maya, whose ancestors were in the region around the same time as the Olmecs. The Maya used cacao to make a drink served on special occasions. Once the Aztecs entered the area, around 1300 C.E., they also began to use cacao.

Although Europeans' first descriptions of chocolate were not positive, the bitter drink eventually won them over. Chocolate traveled to Spain with the returning explorers. In the 1500s, the Spanish were the first to add sugar, a very expensive ingredient at the time, to chocolate—sugar made the drink even more appealing. At first the Spanish controlled the distribution of cacao because they controlled the plantations in Mexico, but chocolate's popularity spread to Italy, France, and England by the late 1600s.

DOCUMENT 1 SPANISH MANUSCRIPT LETTER ABOUT THE MAYA, 1595

The form of the marriage is: the bride gives the bridegroom a small stool painted in colors, and also gives him five grains of cacao, and says to him, “These I give thee as a sign that I accept thee as my husband.” And he also gives her some new skirts and another five grains of cacao, saying the same thing.

DOCUMENT 2 RULING MADE BY JUDGE GÓMEZ DE SANTILLÁN, NEW SPAIN, 1545

PRICE LIST FOR TLAXCALA, MEXICO:

One good turkey hen is worth 100 full cacao beans, or 120 shrunken cacao beans.

A hare or forest rabbit is worth 100 cacao beans each.

A small rabbit is worth 30.

A chicken egg is worth 2 cacao beans.

An avocado newly picked is worth 3 cacao beans; when an avocado is fully ripe it will be equivalent to one cacao bean.

One large tomato will be equivalent to a cacao bean.

A newly picked prickly pear cactus fruit is equivalent to one cacao bean; when fully ripe, two cactus fruit (for a cacao bean).

Chopped firewood is equivalent to 1 cacao bean.

A tamale is exchanged for a cacao bean.

DOCUMENT 3 SPANISH TILEWORK DEPICTING A CHOCOLATADA (CHOCOLATE PARTY), 1700s



DOCUMENT 4 CHARLES DICKENS'S *A TALE OF TWO CITIES*, 1859

Monseigneur was about to take his chocolate. Monseigneur could swallow a great many things with ease, and was by some few sullen minds supposed to be rather rapidly swallowing France; but, his morning's chocolate could not so much as get into the throat of Monseigneur, without the aid of four strong men besides the Cook.

Yes. It took four men, all four a-blaze with gorgeous decoration, and the Chief of them unable to exist with fewer than two gold watches in his pocket, emulative of the noble and chaste fashion set by Monseigneur, to conduct the happy chocolate to Monseigneur's lips. One lacquey carried the chocolate-pot into the sacred presence; a second, milled and frothed the chocolate with the little instrument he bore for that function; a third, presented the favoured napkin; a fourth (he of the two gold watches) poured the chocolate out. It was impossible for Monseigneur to dispense with one of these attendants on the chocolate and hold his high place under the admiring Heavens. Deep would have been the blot upon his escutcheon if his chocolate had been ignobly waited on by only three men; he must have died of two.

SOURCES

1: J. Eric Thompson, “Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Reports on the Chol Mayas,” *American Anthropologist* 40 (1938): 602.

2: Arthur J. O. Anderson, Frances Berdan, and James Lockhart, trans. and eds., *Beyond the Codices: The Nahuatl View of Colonial Mexico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 211.

3: Museu de Ceràmica, Barcelona.

4: Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities* (Philadelphia: Courage Books, 1992), 78–79.

Rice

Ancient Food Staple Feeds Royalty and Servants

Today rice is a staple all over the world; it is both a common side dish and a central part of people's diets. To what extent has the history of rice been a history of use by the upper classes versus mass consumption?

Use the information and documents below, in addition to your knowledge of history, to construct your response.

Archaeological evidence indicates that rice has been cultivated for many thousands of years. In the Spirit Cave, a late neolithic site in northern Thailand, ten-thousand-year-old containers have been found that once held rice as offerings for the spirits of the dead. Although the Yangtze River valley was long believed to have been the site of the first rice cultivations, it is now believed that rice originated in an area extending from the foothills of the Himalayas in eastern India, through Burma (Myanmar) and Thailand, and into northern Vietnam and southern China.

DOCUMENT 1 ANCIENT CHINESE LEGEND ABOUT THE ORIGIN OF RICE

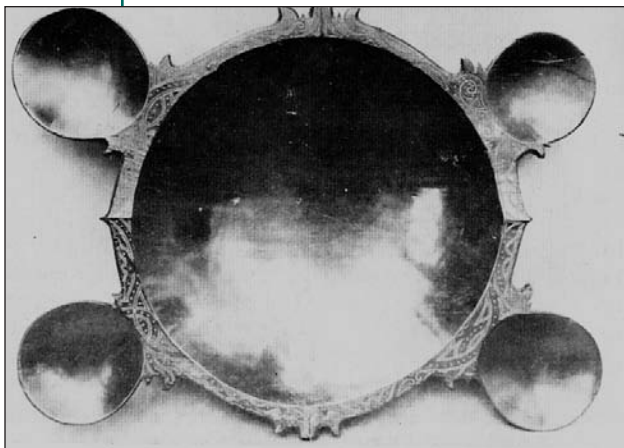
Once upon a time before the unification of the Chinese Empire, there was a village of hardworking people that suffered from many floods. The people of the village had to leave their homes and climb into the hills because the water rose to cover even the highest trees and rooftops. There they remained as flood after flood washed through the land, until they became filled with despair and worry about whether they would ever be able to return home.

Finally the floods ended and the waters drained away. The people came down from the hills only to discover that their homes were gone and that all of the plants were destroyed. There were few animals left, and the people grew

hungry and began to fear that they would starve to death.

One day, the people of the village saw a dog walking across a barren field. Hanging from the dog's tail were bunches of long, yellow seeds. The people planted these seeds and from them sprang the first rice plants. Since that time, as long as there has been rice, the people will not go hungry.

DOCUMENT 2 FAMILY RICE DISH OF WOOD, KAYAN TRIBES, BORNEO, 1912



DOCUMENT 3 RECIPE FOR ISFANAKHIYA FROM THE 'ABBASSID COURT, BAGHDAD, 1226

Take fatty meat and cut it into medium-sized pieces. Slice the fresh tail and dissolve, and remove the solids. Put the meat into this oil and stir until browned. Then cover with water that has been heated separately. Add a little salt, boil and remove the foam.

Throw in a handful of chickpeas that have been soaked and peeled. Take fresh spinach, wash, remove the stems, and cut with a knife into finger-lengths. Pound it in a stone mortar and add it to the saucepan.

When nearly cooked, add dry coriander, cumin, ground pepper, mastic, small pieces of cinnamon bark and a little garlic crushed fine. Now fill with water as required, letting the water be lukewarm. When it has boiled awhile, add clean washed rice as required placing it over the fire until it is set firm and smooth. Then leave over a small flame for an hour and remove.

Meanwhile prepare red meat minced fine and make into kabobs and fry these in oil with the usual seasonings. When the concoction is ladled out, strew over it this fried meat, together with the oil as required, sprinkle with fine-ground cinnamon and serve.

DOCUMENT 4 SAMUEL GAILLARD STONEY ON CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA, 1937

On every proper Charleston dinner table [there is] a spoon that is peculiar to the town. Of massive silver, about fifteen inches long and broad in proportions, it is laid on the cloth with something of the reverential distinction that surrounds the mace in the House of Commons at Westminster. . . . If you take away the rice spoon from the Charleston dinner table, the meal that follows is not really a meal.

SOURCES

- 1: Christian Teubner, *The Rice Bible*, trans. Debra Nicol (New York: Viking, 1999), 7.
- 2: C. Hose and W. McDougal, *The Pagan Tribes of Borneo* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1912).
- 3: David Waines, *In a Caliph's Kitchen* (London: Riad El-Rayyes Books, 1989), 47.
- 4: Karen Hess, *The Carolina Rice Kitchen: The African Connection* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1992), 1.

Indigo

Producing the Best Blue

Indigo's history is a complex tale, from its initial appearance in Europe, to its large-scale production, to its eventual displacement on the market. To what extent has indigo both helped and harmed people (and, more specifically, whom has indigo harmed and whom has it helped)?

Use the information and documents below, in addition to your knowledge of history, to construct your response.

The plant *Indigofera tinctoria* was first domesticated in India during the Indus Valley period between the fourth and the second millennium B.C.E. The cultivation of indigo on a large scale started in the sixteenth century in India, particularly in the north. At this time, the Portuguese, and later the Dutch, established trade routes by sea to India, making indigo much more accessible to the average European. Until indigo, the primary European source for blue dye was the indigenous woad plant, which had been cultivated extensively in France, Germany, and England since the Roman Empire. European woad-growers and merchants saw indigo as serious competition, since it was a better dye producing deeper, more colorfast blues. Indigo, grown on colonial plantations from South Carolina to India, dominated the international market for blue dye until synthetic indigo, introduced in 1897 and produced in factories, pushed natural indigo into an irreversible decline.

DOCUMENT 1 DECREE ISSUED IN DRESDEN, GERMANY, 1650

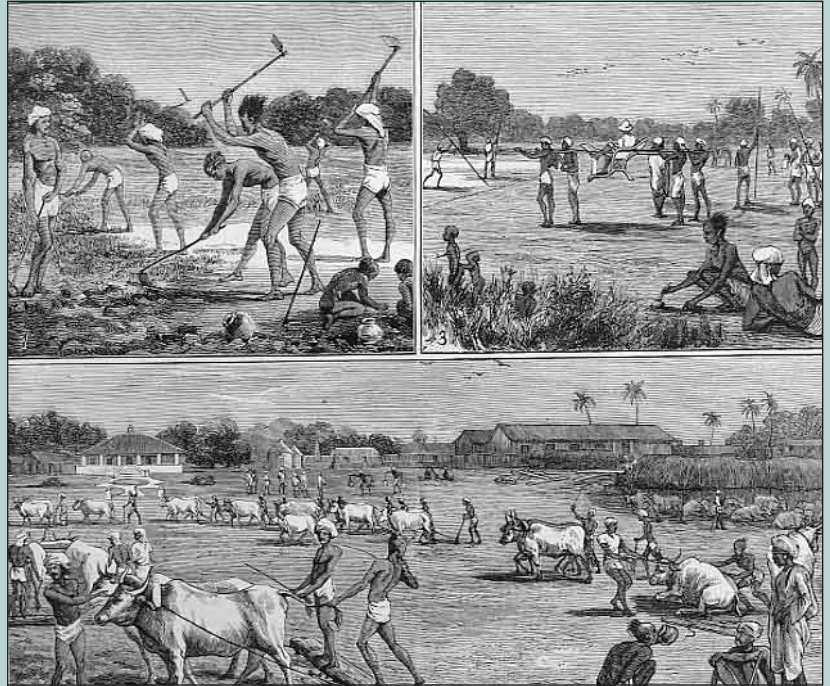
By the Grace of God . . . it is known to each and all of you that our province of Thuringia has been blessed by the Almighty above all other countries and provinces with the Woad Plant . . . Cloths and other fabrics of good quality were dyed [in woad], everyone being satisfied with both their quality and durability. On the other hand there is clear proof that indigo not only readily loses its colour but also corrodes clothes and other fabrics, thus causing serious loss to many worthy persons . . .

We therefore command you . . . to prohibit under pain of confiscation, the sale of any cloths and other similar articles which are not dyed with Woad, but other injurious dyes . . . We also publish this express Commination that, if any person shall deal in such deceptive dyes or other similar wares or import the same, we shall severely punish him . . .

DOCUMENT 2 AFRICAN-AMERICAN SOLDIER JAMES ROBERTS IN HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY, 1858

Jack Gillespie went to the eastern shore of Maryland, to buy up more slaves, leaving his brother James Gillespie to take care of the plantation till he returned, Mr. Coonrood being the overseer. Jack Gillespie gave Coonrood orders not to whip Joe, his waiting servant. On the Sabbath morning after Gillespie went away, Coonrood ordered all the hands to the lower plantation, to work in the rice and indigo. He there commenced to whip Joe early in the morning, and whipped him all day, every few hours . . .

From fifty to sixty hands work in the indigo factory; and such is the effect of the indigo upon the lungs of the laborers, that they never live over seven years. Every one that runs away, and is caught is put in the indigo fields, which are hedged all around, so that they cannot escape again.



DOCUMENT 3
THE GRAPHIC, BRITISH ILLUSTRATED
NEWSPAPER, SHOWING INDIGO CULTIVATION
IN TIRHUT, BENGAL, 1881 [ABOVE]

DOCUMENT 4 H. E. SCHUNK'S PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS TO THE SOCIETY OF CHEMICAL INDUSTRY, 1897

To replace a manufacture depending on an interesting organic process carried on under healthy conditions in the open air, a manufacture which brings wealth into poor districts, and introduces system and order and civilization among uncultured people, by one carried on perchance in some dingy sepulchral cave in a chemical works by some fixed and unalterable process, might . . . be a doubtful advantage.

SOURCES

- 1: Jamieson Hurry, *The Woad Plant and Its Dye* (London: Oxford University Press, 1930), 268-71.
- 2: James Roberts, *The Narrative of James Roberts a Soldier under Gen. Washington in the Revolutionary War, and Under Gen. Jackson at the Battle of New Orleans, in the War of 1812: "a Battle Which Cost Me a Limb, Some Blood, and Almost My Life"* (Chicago, 1858), 24, 28.
- 3: http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00routesdata/1800_1899/dailylife_drawings/ilnviews/ilnviews.html.
- 4: Jenny Balfour-Paul, *Indigo* (London: British Museum Press, 1998), 81.

Fur started as a cold-weather necessity, but became an expensive commodity, inspiring both desire and greed. To what extent did the fur industry affect both the Russian empire and the native populations?

Use the information and documents below, in addition to your knowledge of history, to construct your response.

In cold, sparsely populated areas where animals were plentiful, trapping was a traditional activity and fur clothing was common. Closer to towns and cities where land had been cleared and animals were more scarce, fur became a luxury item. A network of trade developed, bringing pelts from remote areas, where members of native tribes trapped the animals, to the cities. At each stage the price increased as traders added their profit, so by the time a supply of fur was received in Moscow, the finest pelts could command a small fortune.

In the mid-1500s, as Russia expanded its territory, the Stroganov family set up outposts east of the Ural Mountains where they traded European goods to the natives in exchange for furs. Relations with the native populations and the Khan of Sibir were not always smooth, and in the 1580s the Stroganovs enlisted the aid of a band of Cossacks to conquer the Khan. Once the Khan was defeated, Siberia was open to further exploration and exploitation.

**DOCUMENT 1
DESCRIPTION OF THE RUSSIAN EXPANSION
INTO SIBERIA FROM LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
WEB SITE, 2007**

Commercial activity, spurred by traders and trappers as well as merchants such as the Stroganovs, soon established a permanent Russian presence in Siberia. The snowy and seemingly endless expanses of wilderness contained many fur-bearing species of great value in European markets. Indeed, the pelt of the sable became the symbol for the immense wealth of Siberia and continued to draw Russians to their eastern borderlands for centuries.

Fur Russian Empire Expands

As Russian *promyshlenniki* (frontiersmen) followed in pursuit of fur, they inevitably moved east on the tributaries of the great Siberian rivers (which flow north to the Arctic Ocean) and crossed the Eurasian continent . . .

**DOCUMENT 2
SIBERIAN NATIVES PAYING REQUIRED TRIBUTE TO RUSSIA IN PAINTING BY NN KAZARIN
(1842–1908)**



**DOCUMENT 3
NATURALIST STEPAN PETROVICH
KRASHENINNIKOV ON SABLE HUNTING, 1740**

To anyone who has not participated in a sable hunt and has frequented none but inhabited places, it is difficult, if not impossible, to describe all of the noteworthy circumstances of the catching of sables [*Martes zibellina*], for they do not live near settlements but in remote places, on high mountains, and in dense forests; they flee from people, so that in many places where they were once numerous not a trace of them is found on account of human settlement. Before the land of Siberia had been brought under Russian rule, and only pagans [non-Orthodox natives] controlled it, sables abounded throughout Siberia and especially along the Lena River, as confirmed by longtime residents there . . . But now both here and all along

the Lena River there is already no sable hunting whatsoever, and this can be said of all of Siberia's inhabited places.

**DOCUMENT 4
NINETEENTH-CENTURY NATURALIST EDWARD
NELSON DESCRIBES RUSSIAN EXPANSION
IN THE ALEUTIAN ISLANDS (ALASKA)**

When Bering and his party first explored the Aleutian Islands, they found the Sea Otters so numerous that the Aleuts wore long mantles made of their skins

and a scrap of old iron was enough to secure the finest skin. In 1840 Veniaminov wrote that the Sea Otters in these islands are distinguished above everything on account of their great value and small numbers. There was a time when they were killed in thousands, now only by hundreds. There are plenty of places where before there were great numbers of Sea Otters; now not one is to be seen or found . . .

There is little doubt that in the course of a few years under the present regulations and mode of hunting, this valuable animal will be exterminated, and in place of affording the Aleuts a livelihood will leave them dependent upon the Government.

SOURCES

1: Library of Congress Global Gateway, "Meeting of Frontiers: Exploration—The Russian Discovery of Siberia," <http://international.loc.gov/intldl/mtfhtml/mfdiscrvy/discsib.html>.

2: Library of Congress Global Gateway, "Meeting of Frontiers: Exploration—The Russian Discovery of Siberia," <http://international.loc.gov/intldl/mtfhtml/mfhome.html>.

3: S. P. Krasheninnikov, "Opisaniye zemli Kamchatki [A Description of the Land of Kamchatka]," trans. James R. Gibson, *Polar Geography*, 28:2, April-June 2004.

4: Arctic Studies Center, http://www.mnh.si.edu/ARCTIC/html/sea_otter.html.

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