

Mapping a Nation: Shaping the Early American Republic

Guiding Questions

- Do you think the lack of clarity of early maps helped colonizers expand and lay claim to lands they did not own?
 - How did this occur?
- Why do you think the Native Americans helped colonizers create these maps?
 - Do you think the colonizers were honest with them about their work? Did the colonial settlers say they were going to steal these lands?
- How did these maps create a sense of national identity for settlers?
 - Did these maps mostly exclude Indigenous peoples from the national identity?
- Which maps show a bias from the maker?
- Describe the different roles involved in the eighteenth century map making process.
 - What education was needed to create a map?
 - Who did European naturalists rely on for information?
- What was the role of maps in the American Revolution?
 - Did the lack of detailed maps hinder either side when planning attacks and defenses?

Classroom Activities

- Make a map of your room, house, neighborhood, or town.
 - How did you decide what to include?
- Compare and contrast early European made maps to early American made maps of North America and the United States. Identify the changing boundaries and scale of the land (i.e. the size of continents based off of where the map maker lived), as well as names and markers (pay close attention to Indigenous names given on these maps).