The Blacksmith in Society

Lesson Plan #1- Economic Incentives for Industrial Development

Teacher Background

The reading for Lesson Plan #1 indicates that blacksmiths were a vital part of early communities. At least one town offered property as an enticement, hoping to attract a skilled and able blacksmith. The conditions, as presented, tell us that a centrally located blacksmith shop was beneficial to the community and that community officials believed the blacksmith's services would be needed indefinitely.

Striking similarities exist between the offer made by the town of Derby to John Smith, and economic incentives offered by communities to modern corporations. Students will have the opportunity to think about what they already know about colonial artisans, read the primary document and compare current events. This will show how some basic economic strategies have remained constant through the centuries.

Goal

After comparing incentives offered to an 18th century blacksmith with incentives offered to modern corporations, students will understand how economic strategies are used to encourage industrial and community growth.

Objectives

- Show how attracting craftsmen/industries can improve the quality of life and enhance community growth.
- Demonstrate how basic economic strategies change little over time.
- Increase student awareness of the possible shortcomings that can be generated when specific individuals or businesses are recruited into an area
- Introduce students to current events.

This activity addresses the following Maryland Learning Outcomes

For Grades 4 and 5

#1 Social Studies Skills

Students will demonstrate an understanding of historical and current events using chronological and spatial thinking, develop historical interpretations, and frame questions that include collecting and evaluating information from primary and secondary sources.

- Apply and organize information specific to social studies disciplines by reading, asking questions, and observing. (MLO 1.2)

#2 History

Students will examine significant ideas, beliefs, and themes; organize patterns and events; and analyze how individuals and societies have changed over time in Maryland, the United States, and the world.

- Analyze the social and religious composition of early settlers, their motives for migration, and difficulties they encountered, with particular attention to the early settlements of Maryland. (MLO 2.2)

#3 Geography

Students will use geographic concepts and processes to examine the role of culture, technology, and the environment in the location and distribution of human activities and spatial connections throughout time.

- Describe causes and consequences of migration to and within Maryland and the United States. (MLO 3.6)
- Identify ways and reasons why people adapt to and modify the natural environment with technology, and analyze consequences of the modifications. (MLO 3.8)

For Grades 6-8

#1 Social Studies Skills

Students will demonstrate an understanding of historical and current events using chronological and spatial thinking, develop historical interpretations, and frame questions that include collecting and evaluating information from primary and secondary sources.

- Apply and organize information specific to social studies disciplines by reading, asking questions, and observing. (MLO 1.2)

#2 History

Students will examine significant ideas, beliefs, and themes; organize patterns and events; and analyze how individuals and societies have changed over time in Maryland, the United States, and the world.

- Analyze the social and religious composition of early settlers, their motives for migration, and difficulties they encountered, with particular attention to the early settlements of Maryland. (MLO 2.2)
- Analyze views, lives, and contributions of significant people of the Revolutionary period. (MLO 2.7)

#3 Geography

Students will use geographic concepts and processes to examine the role of culture, technology, and the environment in the location and distribution of human activities and spatial connections throughout time.

- Describe the relationship between physical characteristics of a place and the location of human activities. (MLO 3.3)
- Explain the impact of geographic characteristics on the settlement, growth, and prosperity of places in Maryland and the United States. (MLO 3.5)
- Describe causes and consequences of migration to and within Maryland and the United States. (MLO 3.6)
- Identify ways and reasons why people adapt to and modify the natural environment with technology, and analyze consequences of the modifications. (MLO3.8)

#4 Economics

Students will develop economic reasoning to understand the historical development and current status of economic principles, institutions, and processes needed to be effective citizens, consumers, and workers participating in local communities, the nation, and the world.

- Explain how specialized work results in interdependence, trade, and economic growth. (MLO 4.7)

Materials Needed

1. Copy of reading from *The Blacksmith* prepared as an overhead transparency or displayed in another form visible to all students.

2. Print articles discussing tax and other incentives offered by government entities in the hopes of attracting business to the local area.

3. Venn Diagram, Incentives for Economic Development

Suggested Activity

1. Distribute contemporary articles to students, try to locate multiple articles so that not all students read exactly the same material.

2. Have an individual read the excerpt from *The Blacksmith* to the class.

3. Using the Venn Diagram included, instruct students to list the incentives offered to the blacksmith or to modern businesses in the appropriate circle. Incentives offered to both groups will be listed in the shaded area.

4. When the list is complete, lead students in a discussion that compares the real economic value to the blacksmith or business and to the respective communities. i.e.,
   - What is the true value of the land offered to the blacksmith in comparison with the land, tax incentives or other offers made to modern business?
   - How will the community change or benefit from having a blacksmith or additional business come to the area?
   - What happens if the individual or business does not meet the expectations of the community?
   - What steps must be taken to alleviate the situation and find a suitable replacement?

Follow-up Activity

1. Let's assume that your students are part of a potentially award winning sports team or musical ensemble. Unfortunately the group needs an outstanding player or musician to fortify their efforts. What tangible incentives could be offered to recruit the needed participant? How could the team/group define the performance required to earn the incentive? Have students write a short essay describing what they would offer the needed player, the expected results and the monitoring system that would be put in place to assure that the expected results are achieved.

2. It is sometimes difficult to fill specialized job positions. These jobs may be potentially dangerous, have specific education requirements or have stigmas attached. Have students contact local job agencies to find out what occupations are in demand. After determining which positions are hard to fill, have them contact human resource officials where these workers are needed to see what, if any, incentives are offered to fill these jobs. Have students develop a database listing the job title, salaries, locations, benefits, length of time and age required for retirement and recruitment incentives for the jobs in demand and for a specified number of typical local jobs. Using information from the database, have students calculate the lifetime earning potential of each occupation. Lead students in a discussion of the values of education and technical training.

3. As populations grow, the number of specialty stores and businesses also increase. Assign a specific kind of business, i.e., drugstore, grocery store, convenience store, etc., to each student or group of students. Using the local map from the Suggested Activity for Lesson 3, have students map the location of these businesses. It is typical to find small stores in almost every neighborhood. Residents enjoy the convenience of local shopping but are usually openly against large department stores or shopping complexes near residential areas. Have students interview family members to determine how they would react if they learned that a major department store was purchasing property and planning to build a large store in their neighborhood. Allow students to voice these opinions during a mock "Town Meeting", held in your classroom.

Reading for Lesson Plan #1

The first party of settlers that came to Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607 included a blacksmith by the name of James Reed. By the end of the very next year another smith was needed, and in 1611, to meet the growing demand for ironworkers, four more smiths were sent over by the London-based Virginia Company. New England towns also acknowledged the importance of this craftsman, as shown in the Derby, Connecticut, town records for 1711:

> Voted, that the Town grant John Smith of Milford, blacksmith, four acres of land for a home lot, to build upon, anywhere within one mile of the meetinghouse where he shall choose, in land not laid out, upon condition that he build a mansion house (a dwelling) and a smith's shop, and set up the trade of blacksmith, and follow it for the benefit of the inhabitants for a space of seven years.

The Blacksmith
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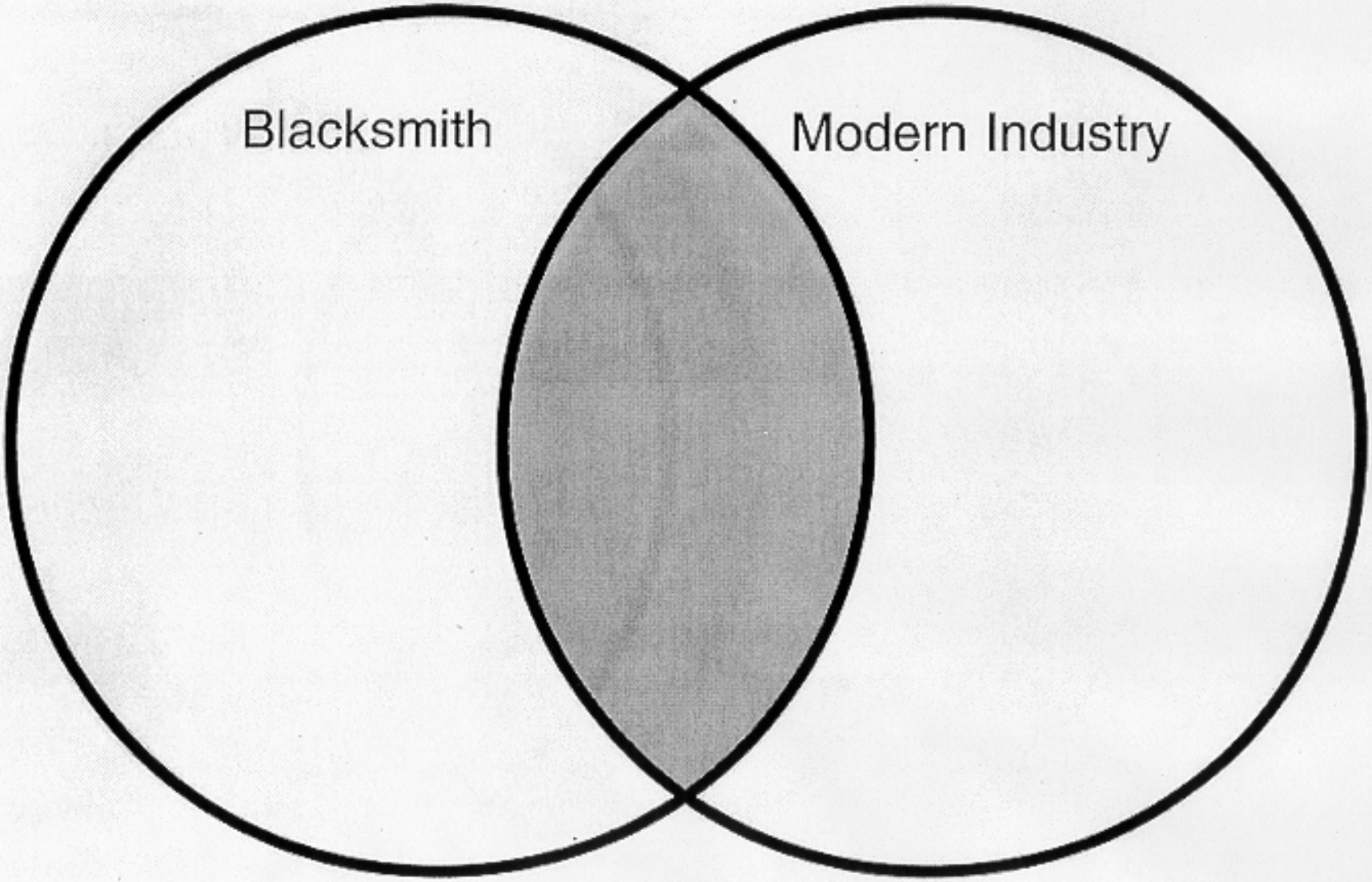
Incentives for Economic Development