

***Molly Bannaky*** by Alice McGill. Houghton Mifflin, 1999 ISBN 039572287X

**Literature Annotation:** This book re-tells the story of Benjamin Banneker's grandmother. It begins with her servitude in England and the "crime" that sent her to America. In this large picture book, Alice McGill presents the beginnings of the Banneker family in the Maryland colony.

**Grade Level:** Grade 4-5

**Duration:** 45 –50 minutes

**Economic Concepts:** Production of Goods and Services; Specialization; Interdependence

### **Maryland State Curriculum**

**Economics Standard:** 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.

4.A.2 Explain how limited economic resources are used to produce goods and services to satisfy economic wants in Maryland. (Grade 4)

4.A.2 Analyze how limited economic resources were used to produce goods and services to satisfy economic wants in Colonial America. (Grade 5)

**History Standard:** 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 around the world.

5.A.1.a Explain how and why the Maryland colony was established, including political and economic motives for coming to the new world (Grade 4)

5.B.2.a Describe the religious, political and economic motives of individuals who migrated to North America and the difficulties they encountered. (Grade 5)

**Reading Standard (Comprehension of Informational Text):** Students will read, comprehend, interpret, analyze, and evaluate informational texts.

2.A.2 Identify and use text features to facilitate understanding of informational texts (graphic aids: Grades 4 & 5)

2.A.4 Determine important ideas and messages in informational texts (Grade 4)

2.A.4.g Draw conclusions and inferences and make generalizations and predictions from the text (Grades 4 & 5)

**Objectives:** Students will be able to...

- analyze the motives for migration to Maryland and the difficulties settlers encountered in early Maryland by describing the life of Molly Bannaky.
- explain specialized tobacco production and its contribution to the economic growth of the Maryland colony by identifying the resources needed in tobacco farming and its impact on the Maryland economy.

## Vocabulary

**production:** the act of creating goods and services by combining economic resources

**productive resources:** human, natural and capital resources

**Additional Vocabulary:** indentured servant, dairymaid

## Teacher Materials

- Information cards from Resource Sheet 1, cut apart
- Transparency of Resource Sheet 2: *Indentured Servant Form*
- Transparency of Resource Sheet 4: *Tobacco and the Growth of Maryland's Economy*
- Wall World map

## Student Materials

- 1 copy of Resource Sheet 3: *Resources Used to Produce Tobacco*
- 1 copy of Resource Sheet 4: *Tobacco and the Growth of Maryland's Economy*

**Teacher Background:** Be sure to read the last page in the book that contains historical notes about the Bannaky/Banneker family.

## Motivation

Distribute the information cards to selected students and have them read their cards to the class. The cards may be read in any random order. After all the cards have been read, ask the students to make a prediction about the storyline. Students may suggest that the story is about someone being in jail or going to court, coming to America as an indentured servant, or raising tobacco.

## Development

1. Show students the cover to the book and introduce them to Molly Walsh. Tell them that these information cards told something about the life of Molly Bannaky. Then display a picture of a tobacco plant and a picture of Benjamin Banneker. Tell students that Molly Bannaky was Benjamin Banneker's grandmother and that she had raised tobacco on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Explain to students that today they are going to find out how tobacco farming helped Molly Bannaky's family, as well as many other families, become prosperous in Maryland.
2. Have students locate England and Maryland on a world map. Ask students to identify how someone would get from England to Maryland in the 1600s and recall some of the dangers that these early travelers faced. If needed, ask students to recall sailing ships like the Mayflower that journeyed across the Atlantic Ocean.
3. Ask students to name some reasons why people would face these dangerous conditions to travel to the new land, America. (*Students may recall reasons such as religious persecution, political problems and persecution, or imprisonment for debts.*)

4. Read the first four pages of text up to the page that tells about Molly saying goodbye to England and boarding a ship. After the reading, ask students to recall why Molly had to leave England. Then ask the students to recall her age and the sentence for her “crime”.
5. Display the term **indentured servant** on the board. Ask students what a servant is. Then ask students what they think is meant by the term “indentured servant”. Explain to students that indentured means that the person had signed a contract to serve someone for a specific number of years without pay, but that the master had to provide shelter, food and clothing for the servant. At the end of the bondage or contract term, the servant was then free and could do whatever he or she wanted. Display Resource Sheet 2: *Indentured Servant Form* and have the students examine the type of contract that Molly was forced to sign.
6. Read the next page about her servitude in Maryland. Ask students to name some jobs that indentured servants like Molly did in the colonies. Responses might include working in the fields, growing tobacco, cooking, sewing, or taking care of the animals. Then ask how these indentured workers helped the economy of the Maryland colony. (*Workers produced the tobacco, which was then traded for other goods, or the tobacco was sold for gold that was then used to buy more seeds, land, tools, workers, etc.*) Explain to students that as the amount of products that were traded increased, the economy of the Maryland colony grew and thus the colony became more prosperous.
7. Ask students why Molly’s master, the planter, was growing tobacco instead of other crops. Students may recall that *tobacco was in demand in Europe, and many planters in Virginia and Maryland tried to grow tobacco to get rich.*
8. Display a transparency of Resource Sheet 3: *Resources Used to Produce Tobacco* and have students label each column with the name of a productive resource (*Human, Natural, and Capital*). Ask students what natural resources found in Maryland were needed for the planters to produce tobacco. (*Possible answers include: moderate rainfall every month, rich soil, flat land, and a network of rivers and the bay to transport the tobacco.*)
9. Read the next page about when Molly is freed. Have students recall the goods that Molly received at the end of her 7 years of bondage as an indentured servant. (*Answers include: an ox, an ox cart, a plow, two hoes, a bag of tobacco seeds, a bag of seed corn, clothing, a gun*) Ask students to predict what Molly will do with these goods. Then finish reading the book.
10. Ask students to explain why Molly and many other colonists decided to grow tobacco. (*There was a demand for tobacco in Europe, other colonists were getting richer by growing tobacco, the climate in Maryland was good for growing crops like tobacco, the soil was good for growing crops, and the bay and the rivers provided transportation to ship tobacco to Europe.*)

11. Ask students to recall how Molly established the tobacco farm. Then have students name some of the important farming skills that Bannaky had learned in Africa that he taught to Molly. Tell students that Bannaky had some specialized skills because he knew how to irrigate during a drought, and he also knew about crop rotation that helped to replenish nutrients in the soil. Ask students how these specialized skills allowed them to be successful growing tobacco. *(When other planters lost their crops from the drought or when their soil didn't grow very good tobacco because the soil was poor, Molly and Bannaky were able to grow good tobacco and sell it.)*
12. Have students reread the page with the text "Years passed. Molly and Bannaky ..... hundred acres of land." Ask students what that section tells the reader about the family. *(They were getting richer and that they were more prosperous.)* Then ask students to explain how Molly and Bannaky were now able to own a large house, many outbuildings, and more land. *(They were getting richer and making "money" from growing tobacco. As they grew more tobacco they were then able to buy and trade more goods and services. When farmers and planters were able to increase production and trading of tobacco, they helped the economy in the Maryland colony to grow and prosper.)*
13. Have students read about the role of tobacco farming in the economy of the Maryland colony on Resource Sheet 4: *Tobacco and the Growth of Maryland's Economy* and answer the questions.

### **Assessment**

Have students complete Resource Sheet 3: *Resources Used to Produce Tobacco* by having them write in each column at least two examples of each resource used in tobacco production.

### **Additional Activities and Resources**

Have students read about John Halfhead, Plantation Master, who lived in St. Mary's City in the 1600s. Go to <http://stmaryscity.org> and select educational resources to access the lesson.

*Information Cards*

<p>The cow had kicked over her pail of milk last week. The cook said that Molly had stolen her lordship's milk when the cow spilled the milk. It was the law.</p>	<p>Molly Walsh was a dairymaid for the lord of the manor in England. She had to get up at five o'clock every morning to milk a very obstinate, difficult cow.</p>
<p><i>While milking the cow, Molly sneezed, the cow jumped and tipped over the pail of milk, and the milk seeped into the ground.</i> The cook said Molly had stolen the lordship's milk again.</p>	<p>The usual penalty for stealing was death, but the law said no one could be executed if they could read the Bible. Molly could read the Bible, so she was sentenced to indentured servitude in America for seven years.</p>
<p>At the age of 17, she said goodbye to England and boarded a ship for America. After surviving the journey to the new land, Molly went to work for a planter on the eastern shore of Maryland.</p>	<p>Cannons fired at daybreak to call the servants to work. Molly planted tiny brown tobacco seeds in hills of dirt and picked worms from the flowering stalks.</p>
<p>After seven years of working for the planter, Molly earned her freedom and received everything that was due her, according to the law.</p>	<p>Molly traveled down the road for a distance, and then left the road and went 4 miles into the wilderness to stake a claim on her 50 acres of land.</p>
<p>Years passed and there was a large house and many outbuildings on the hundred acres.</p>	<p>Molly taught her grandson Benjamin Banneker to read and write.</p>

### ***Indentured Servant Form***

This indenture made the            day of            in the            yeere of our  
*Soveraigne Lord King Charles, etc. betweene            of the*  
*one party, and            on the other party, Witnesseth,*  
*that the said            doth hereby covenant promise, and grant, to*  
*and with the said            his Executors and Assignes, to serve him*  
*from the day of the date hereof, untill his first and next arrivall in Maryland;*  
*and after for and during the tearme of            yeeres, in such service and*  
*employment, as the said            or his assignes shall there*  
*employ him, according to the custome of the Countrey in the like kind. In*  
*consideration whereof, the said            doth promise and grant, to and*  
*with the said            to pay for his passing, and to find him with*  
 Meat, Drinke, Apparell and Lodging, with other necessaries during the said  
*Terme' and at the end of the said terme, to give him one whole yeeres provision of Corne,*  
*and fifty acres of Land, according to the order of the countrey. In*  
*Witnessse whereof, the said            hath hereunto put his hand and seale,*  
*The day and yeere above written.*

*Sealed and delivered in*

*The presence of*

Retyped from the form available at [http://www.stmaryscity.org/Learning\\_Activities/Halfhead.htm](http://www.stmaryscity.org/Learning_Activities/Halfhead.htm)

*Resources Used to Produce Tobacco*

## *Tobacco and the Growth of Maryland's Economy*

By the early 1700s the town of Port Tobacco in Charles County, southern Maryland, had grown to be the third largest port in Colonial America. Even the name of the town indicates how important tobacco had become to the economy of the area. Imports of tobacco into England rose from 60,000 pounds in 1628 to more than 20,000,000 pounds by the early 1700s. By 1775 over 100 million pounds of tobacco was produced in Maryland and Virginia. Tobacco had become so profitable that farmers and planters were only planting tobacco. The Assembly in Maryland eventually had to pass laws to require that tobacco farmers also produced a quota of food, such as corn or grain.

Part of the success of tobacco in Maryland was the fact that almost anyone could grow a little tobacco, in even their small backyard. The high demand for tobacco in Europe gave everyone an opportunity to make some “cash” or profit by raising tobacco. The success of tobacco cultivation in Maryland in the early 1700s certainly helped to bring more economic prosperity to many settlers in the colony.

In 1634 when Maryland was founded, Lord Baltimore had tried to limit the planting of tobacco and encouraged the new settlers to produce diverse products, such as grain, hemp, flax, meats, and wood products. But the European demand for tobacco and the relatively high profits that were made when selling the tobacco enticed the settlers to raise tobacco.

During early colonial times, proprietors tried to establish coin making and a coin standard instead of trading with tobacco. However, the shortage of silver, problems with valuation of coins, and problems with England all combined to create a shortage of coins. At first early settlers used bullets, wampum, and animal skins to trade for goods, but ultimately tobacco became the standard “money” in the Maryland colony. Tobacco currency was used for buying goods, as well as to pay fines and taxes.

Tobacco became so important that it even dominated the government in such a way that most laws that were made had some kind of reference to tobacco, the protection of tobacco, or a payment in tobacco.

Tobacco also provided the governments with a principal source of revenue. For example, a duty was levied on each hogshead of tobacco exported out of the colony. This duty provided a steady income to the government every year. As the colony produced more tobacco and exported it, the government's income from the duty increased. Thus as the trade of tobacco increased, the economy of Maryland grew and prospered.

How did the production of tobacco increase over the years?

Why was tobacco called a “cash” crop?

Why did the colonists decide to plant tobacco?

What did settlers use as “money” to get goods that they wanted?

How did tobacco help the economy of the Maryland colony to grow and prosper?