

**Title:** Political Leaders and Their Use of Police to Build Political Power

**Essential Question:** Why did NY Mayor Wood use the NYPD? What cost did his ambition play?  
How does this relate to contemporary political power?

**Essential Knowledge:**

**Common Core**

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.9: Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.6: Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

**New York State**

- 11.3 EXPANSION, NATIONALISM, AND SECTIONALISM (1800 – 1865): As the nation expanded, growing sectional tensions, especially over slavery, resulted in political and constitutional crises that culminated in the Civil War. (Standards: 1, 3, 4, 5; Themes: TCC, GEO, GOV, ECO, TECH)
- 12.G2 CIVIL RIGHTS and CIVIL LIBERTIES: The United States Constitution aims to protect individual freedoms and rights that have been extended to more groups of people over time. These rights and freedoms continue to be debated, extended to additional people, and defined through judicial interpretation. In engaging in issues of civic debate, citizens act with an appreciation of differences and are able to participate in constructive dialogue with those who hold different perspectives.
- 12.G5 PUBLIC POLICY: All levels of government—local, state, and federal—are involved in shaping public policy and responding to public policy issues, all of which influence our lives beyond what appears in the Constitution. Engaged citizens understand how to find, monitor, evaluate, and respond to information on public policy issues.

**National Council for the Social Studies Themes**

- Civic Ideals and Practices
- Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- Power, Authority, and Governance

**C3**

- D3.1.9-12. Gather relevant information from multiple sources representing a wide range of views while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection.
- D2.Geo.8.9-12. Evaluate the impact of economic activities and political decisions on spatial patterns within and among urban, suburban, and rural regions.
- D2.Geo.4.9-12. Analyze relationships and interactions within and between human and physical systems to explain reciprocal influences that occur among them.

**Learning Objectives:**

- Students will explain Mayor Wood’s rise to power and his use of the NYPD.
- Students will be able to explain the militarization of the NYPD.
- Students will learn about Seneca Village as a site of Black sovereignty and resistance.
- Students will make contemporary connections to politicians and the ways in which they amass power through policing.
- Students will be able to tell who Elizabeth Jennings Graham was and what her legacy was.

**Grade Level:** 9-12

**Time Needed:** This lesson requires at least two class periods at 60-90 minutes OR Jigsaw the activities.

**Relevant Topics:**

- Urban development
- Abolition

**Key Vocabulary:****Required Sources:**

[Lesson Citations](#)

**Materials/Additional Sources:**

- [Lesson 3: C3 Inquiry](#)

**Teacher Preparation/Background Knowledge:**

This lesson is centered around the C3 history framework. Teachers should familiarize themselves with the [C3 Inquiry model](#) before engaging in the lesson. The purpose of C3 inquiry is for students to engage in history through a critical thinking lens.

In this inquiry, they'll explore Fernando Wood's mayoralship and his destruction of Seneca Village, the independent black village, to make space for Central Park. If you live in NYC, this would be a great field trip opportunity. If not, there are many similar lost villages and destroyed sites throughout the US that could make this lesson on displacement more vivid for your students.

***This lesson requires at least two class periods at 60-90 minutes OR Jigsaw the activities***

**Implementation Notes & Disclaimers:**

Highlight any sensitive information or notes for implementation.

**Modifications****Individual Student Learning Needs:**

- Encourage students to work with a partner to read and analyze the documents.
- Scaffold supporting questions for students who need more support.

**Language Support:**

- Provide definitions of vocabulary terms for students. Use images to support understanding.

**Podcast Reflection: [What's Done Can't Be Undone](#)**

**Suggested Time:** 10 minutes

- Lead a discussion debriefing the episode. Use [Harvard Project Zero Thinking Routine: Claim, Support, Question](#) to lead discussion about the episode.
- Call on students to share observations, questions, and things that were surprising or shocking. Any curiosities they have.
- Then say that today they'll be exploring Fernando Wood in more depth.

**Engage: Eric Adams + His Use of NYPD**

**Suggested Time:** 5-10 Minutes

- Introducing the video and Pro-Publica. Note that they're serious journalists. Then play video and have students turn and talk to their neighbors about what they saw.
  - [The Secretive, Problematic NYPD](#)
- Saying that political leadership, allyship, or partnership with the NYPD is not new. Today, we're going to be exploring Fernando Wood in greater depth today. As you learned from the podcast, he worked closely with the NYPD in establishing some of his more ambitious goals, like in establishing Central

Park.

- Today, we'll be doing an inquiry to understand Seneca Village and Fernando Wood's role in its destruction.

### **Inquiry**

**Suggested Time:** 60 Minutes

- Students will go through a C3 inquiry looking at primary sources. [Lesson 3: C3 Inquiry](#)
  - The Compelling Question: Did political power help or harm black communities in 19th-century New York City?
  - Staging Question: Have students search for "power" or "systems of power."
  - Supporting Question: Who was Fernando Wood? What were his values?
    - Formative Task: Students work in groups to fill in graphic organizers, answering these questions and exploring Fernando Wood.
  - Supporting Question: What was Seneca Village? Why was it significant to New York City's Black community?
    - Students work in groups to complete the graphic organizer
  - Supporting Question: How did city leaders justify the destruction of Seneca Village?
    - Formative Task: Explore and read aloud this excerpt in a group and discuss the question.
  - Supporting Question: What was Seneca Village?
    - Formative Task: Students explore Seneca Village primary sources in groups, groups complete graphic organizers, then individually answer the supporting question in a thesis statement, listing 3- 5 pieces of supporting evidence.
  - Supporting Question: How do Fernando Wood's actions reflect broader tensions over race, class, and power?
    - Formative Task: Find one example in this primary source document of a "purchase/resolution" and explain how technical language hides the human impact.

**(Evaluate) Summary:** Zohran Policy Recommendation  
(extension activity)

- Students will use what they have learned about the political use of policing to write an accountability plan for Zohran. How should the new mayor engage with the police? (or their own local leaders)

### **Informed Action & Community**

**Connection:** Have students explore their community and local historical societies. Are there sites of displacement in their communities in ways that are similar to in Seneca?