Deerskin Trade Facts

Standards: 4.10, 8.9

The fur trade was an important part of the economy of many of the colonies. In the northern colonies, animals such as beaver and fox were commonly trapped for the fur trade. In the southern colonies, deerskins were the trade item of choice. Between 1698 and 1715 colonists exported 53,000-54,000 deerskins each year. It is estimated that in 1748 colonists exported 160,000 deerskins. By 1764, John Stuart, southern superintendent for Indian affairs claimed that colonists were exporting around 400,000 hides per year.

*Directions: Review 1717 and 1751 rates of exchange below. Then answer the questions that follow.*

**Rate of Exchange in 1717 taken from agreement between colonists and Cherokee**

**Item Number of Deerskins**

Gun 35

1 yard of strouds 8

White duffel blanket 16

Hatchet 3

Narrow hoe 3

Broad hoe 5

30 bullets 1

Scissors 1

Knife 1

String of beads 1

12 flints 1

Laced broadcloth coat 30

Ax 5

Pistol 20

**Rate of Exchange in 1751**

**Item** **Number of Deerskins**

Blanket 3 bucks or 6 does

2 yards strouds (cloth) 3 bucks or 6 does

Knife 1 doe

Large knife 1 buck

Gun 7 bucks 14 does

60 bullets 1 doe

Fine Ribands (ribbons) 1 buck for 2 yards or 4 does

Fine ruffled shirts 4 bucks or 8 does

1 pound deerskin= doe skin

2 pounds deerskin= buckskin

*Questions:*

1. What do most of the trade items have in common?
2. Why does the 1751 exchange list specify “buck” or “doe”? Why is the exchange rate higher for “doe”
3. Who benefitted from the deerskin trade? Explain your answer.