Petition Spelling: Teacher's Guide

Instructions

Find the following misspelled words in the petitions. Identify the words and correct the spelling.
This activity can be used to explore phonetic spelling, the lack of standardized spelling in the 18th and 19th centuries, and it can provide a key to accents. Some of the "misspelled" words reflect the manner in which petitioners "sounded out" the words. It is important to note that without standardized spelling, the same word could be spelled different ways in a single petition. In John Morison's petition, number 9 on this sheet, "privilege" was spelled two different ways. Other spelling "mistakes" reflect what the scribe *heard* the petitioner dictate.

Challenge students to find more misspelled words in these and other petitions in this collection. Ask them to identify reasons why the words were spelled that way.

Petition	***Word***	***Correct Spelling***
1. Newell Mercure	Anctious	anxious
2. John Julian	elegal	illegal
3. Lewis Joseph	schoner	schooner
4. Louis Joseph	Milacete	Maliseet
5. Noil Bernard	Madawoiska	Madawaska
6. Noil Bernard	Eist	East
7. William Morison	Cheef	Chief
8. Isaac Blair	Searved	Served
9. John Morison	privalige	privilege
10. Simon Francis Xavier	on choir	inquire
11. Simon Francis Xavier	fewter	future
12. Simon Francis Xavier	trac	tract
13. Elizabeth Mackay	Ars	Heirs
14. Elizabeth Mackay	Bildens	Buildings
15. Elizabeth Mackay	Eath	Eighth