

PPT to accompany Carolina K-12's lesson plan

"Poor Power"

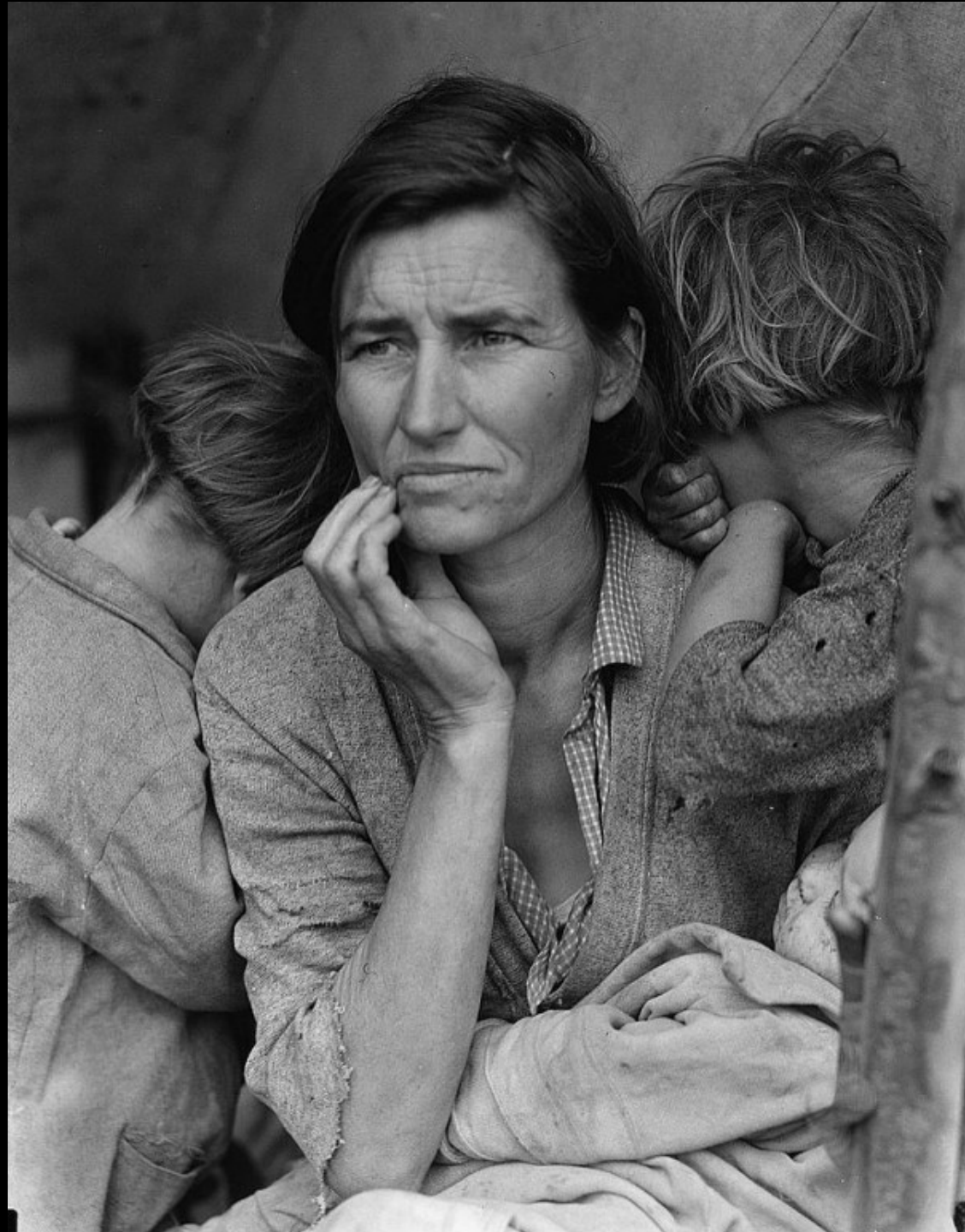
The North Carolina Fund & the Battle to End Poverty & Inequality in 1960s America



- ~ To view this PDF as a projectable presentation, save the file, click "View" in the top menu bar of the file, and select "Full Screen Mode"
- ~ To request an editable PPT version of this presentation, send a request to CarolinaK12@unc.edu
- ~ Statistical information is continually being updated; thus, teachers may want to do a data check on the Internet if the most recent poverty statistics are desired.

Warm Up

- What do you see? What first catches your attention in this image and why?
- Describe the person/people pictured.
- Describe the setting of this picture. What is the location? How would you describe the conditions in this location?
- What type of life do you imagine the person/people pictured lead and why?
- What time period do you think is pictured here? What evidence makes you think this?
- Imagine the person/people pictured could speak to you. Based on what you see pictured, what do you imagine they are feeling, thinking, experiencing, etc.?
- Is there anything else you can point out about this image that someone else may not necessarily notice upon first glance?
- If you were to give this photo a title, what would you call it?





POVERTY

True or False?

- America is one of the **richest nations in the world** and thus, we **do not** have a problem with poverty here.

FALSE.

- Poverty in America? One of the richest countries in the world? Yes, poverty is a reality in America, just as it is for millions of other human beings on the planet.

True or False?

- The number of people living in poverty is **decreasing** in the United States.

FALSE. Poverty is INCREASING

- Check out the poverty rates over the past few years:
 - 2007 – 37.3 million people lived in poverty
 - 2008 – 39.8 million people lived in poverty
 - 2009 – 43.6 million people lived in poverty
- The overall poverty rate is currently the **highest** since 1994.

True or False?

- You can have a job, work very hard, but still live in poverty.

TRUE.

- Many people are considered “**working poor.**”
- The median income for working households continues to drop , and the number and percentage of Americans without health insurance continues to grow.
- Approximately 46.3 million people, representing 15.4% of the population, lacked health insurance in 2008.

True or False?

- The rate of **child poverty** is **LESS** in the United States than in most other economically advanced countries.

FALSE.



- Despite having the highest national income among major economically advanced countries, the real child poverty rate in the United States (20.6%) is among the highest .
 - Finland (4.2%), Sweden (4%), Austria (6.2%), and Denmark (2.7%), among others, have low child poverty rates .
- Children make up **39 percent of the poor** but only 26 percent of the total population .
- **15 million - one out of every five -children in America live in poverty.**

True or False?

- Even though poverty may be a problem in America, hunger is not. No one in this country goes hungry, since we have many places to offer food assistance.

FALSE.

- Feeding America, the nation's largest network of food banks, said in "the land of plenty," one in eight Americans face growing hunger problems, and not just the poor and unemployed. They're "often **hard-working adults, children and seniors** who simply cannot make ends meet" and have to forego meals, even for days.
- According to the Bread for the World Institute **3.5% of US households experience hunger, skipping meals or eating too little.**
- **9.6 million people**, including **3 million children**, live in these homes.
- Feeding America also reports that **23.3 million people** turned to food agencies (i.e. food pantries) in 2001, an increase of over 2 million since 1997. **Forty percent were from working families.**
- **33 million Americans** continue to live in households that do not have an adequate supply of food. Nearly one-third of these households contain adults or children who went hungry at some point in 2000.

Who is responsible for helping the poor?

What is the government's responsibility in terms of poverty in America?

The Great Society

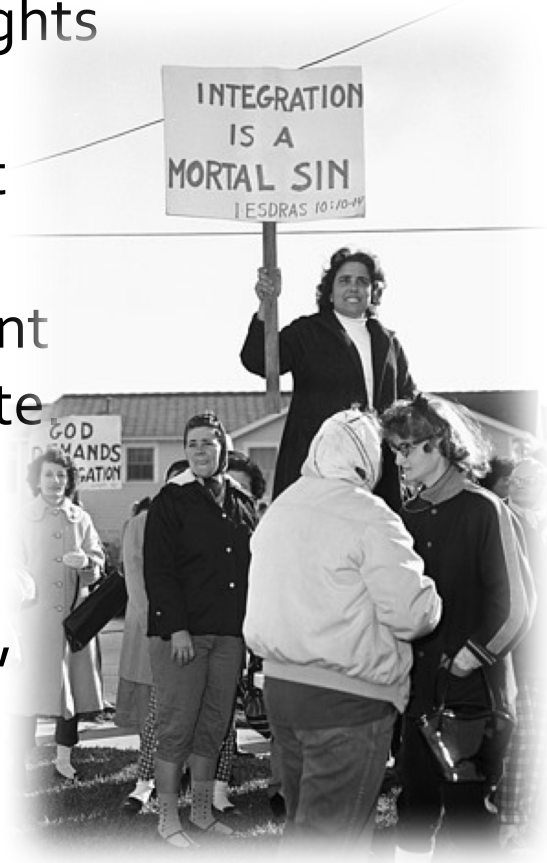
- In **1964**, the national poverty rate in the United States was **19%**. (That's almost two in every ten people living in poverty!)
- In response, President Lyndon B. Johnson's administration initiated "**The Great Society**," a set of domestic programs proposed and/or enacted with the main goals of eliminating poverty and racial injustice.
- The programs strove to expand the government's role in providing social welfare through major spending on programs addressing education, healthcare, urban problems, and transportation.
- The Great Society resembled FDR's "**New Deal**," which ran from 1933 to 1935, and the "**Four Freedoms**" of 1941.
- "**The War on Poverty**" was first introduced by President in January 1964 and led to Congress's passing of the **Economic Opportunity Act**, which established the **Office of Economic Opportunity** (OEO) to administer the local application of federal funds targeted against poverty.



**What was society and life like in the
1960s?**

America & NC in the 1960s...

- North Carolina was in the height of the civil rights movement during the 1960s.
- The effects of Jim Crow were still very present and segregation was in full effect.
- It wasn't until 1971 that the federal government demanded NC schools completely desegregate
- Think about it: African Americans who had defended democracy and America abroad, risking their lives for this country during WWII, had returned home to a country that still denied their freedom!



America & NC in the 1960s...

- Across America, African Americans and white allies organized through groups such as the NAACP, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the Congress on Racial Equality, to demand equal rights.
 - **Greensboro Sit-Ins, 1960**
 - After Feb. 1, sit-ins spread across NC to Winston-Salem, Durham, Raleigh, Charlotte, Fayetteville, High Point, Elizabeth City, and Concord.
 - On February 10, Hampton, Virginia became the first city outside of NC to experience a sit-in, and by the end of the month, sit-ins had occurred in more than 30 communities in 7 states.
 - By the end of April, sit-ins had reached every southern state and attracted a total of perhaps as many as 50,000 students.
 - **Freedom Rides, 1961**
 - **March on Washington, 1963**
- America was at a crossroads in the 1960s, as civil rights activists challenged the country to fulfill its promise of equality and opportunity.



America & NC in the 1960s...

Tough Times in North Carolina



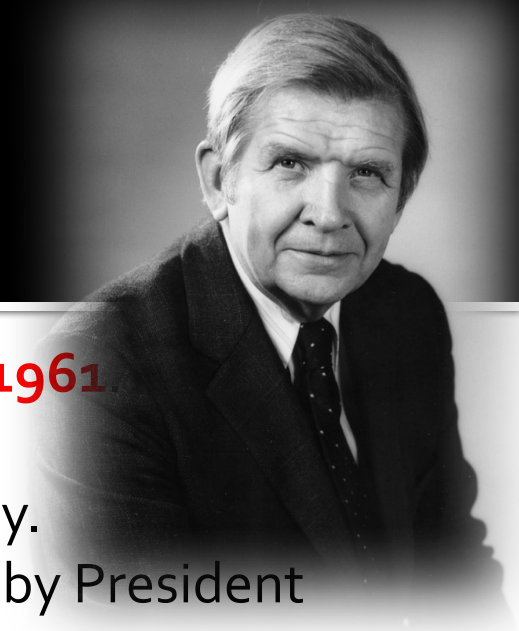
- Amidst the fight against the legacy of Jim Crow and white supremacy, many white and particularly Black residents of North Carolina were struggling:
 - Automation in the textile and tobacco factories and the mechanization of farming cost thousands of North Carolina's men and women their jobs and drove them onto the welfare rolls or out of state
 - NC's factory workers earned some of the lowest industrial wages in the nation
 - Thirty-seven percent of the state's residents had incomes below the federal poverty line
 - Half of all students dropped out of school before obtaining a high school diploma
 - One-fourth of adults twenty-five years of age and older had less than a sixth-grade education and were, for all practical purposes, illiterate
- By 1960 the state's rate of growth had been falling for decades, in part because of heavy emigration due to the declining number of agricultural jobs.

Think – Pair – Share

You've Been Elected Governor of NC!

- Imagine that the year is 1961 and you have just been elected Governor of NC.
- As we've just learned, a good number of North Carolinians are facing serious hardships.
- What would you do to help improve conditions in the state you have just been elected to govern?
- With your partner, discuss and determine the first major steps you would take as governor to try and tackle the issues plaguing NC.
- Be prepared to summarize at least 5 of your first steps to the remainder of class.

The North Carolina Fund



- **Terry Sanford** became Governor of North Carolina in **1961**.
- It did not take Governor Sanford long to recognize that many North Carolinians were struggling in poverty.
- Thus, a year before The Great Society was announced by President Johnson, Governor Sanford had started North Carolina's own program for battling poverty in 1963 - the **North Carolina Fund**. In fact, the Fund actually influenced Johnson's Great Society the following year.
- The North Carolina Fund was a non-profit experimental project set up to operate for five years and designed to target improvements in education, health, job training, housing, and community development across NC. **George Esser** was appointed director.
- Governor Sanford understood the connection between race and poverty in America, and hoped to "improve the lives of the 'neglected and forgotten' poor in a nation that celebrated itself as an affluent society.

The North Carolina Fund



"In North Carolina there remain tens of thousands whose family income is so low that daily subsistence is always in doubt...There are tens of thousands who go to bed hungry. . . . There are tens of thousands whose dreams will die." ~Governor Terry Sanford

- According to Sanford, such suffering cried out for "institutional, political, economic, and social change designed to bring about a functioning, democratic society."
- This, the Governor proclaimed, "is what the North Carolina Fund is all about."
- With those words, Sanford positioned the private nonprofit corporation and the state as the "advance guard" in what would soon become a national, federally funded war on poverty.

The North Carolina Fund

- The Fund was overseen by a board of directors that included civic leaders—men and women, Black and white—from across the state.
- It began its work with \$2.5 million in financial backing from two local philanthropies, the Z. Smith Reynolds and Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundations. The Ford Foundation, which had been investing in projects of social reconstruction in urban America, gave an additional \$7 million
- After passage of President Johnson's **Economic Opportunity Act** and the creation of the **Office of Economic Opportunity** in 1964, the Fund received federal funds designated for antipoverty programs.

The North Carolina Fund

- By 1968, it had received just over \$7 million from the OEO and the Departments of Labor; Housing and Urban Development; and Health, Education, and Welfare.
- The Fund's total 5-year budget of \$16.5 million roughly equaled the state of North Carolina's average annual expenditure for public welfare during the mid-1960s.
- The Fund's reliance on a combination of private and federal dollars was a calculated political tactic designed to ensure its independence. It allowed Sanford and his allies to bypass conservative state lawmakers and challenge the entrenched local interests that nourished Jim Crow, perpetuated one-party politics, and protected an economy built on cheap labor and racial antagonism.

The North Carolina Fund

- The Fund's purpose, explained executive director George Esser, was “**to create the possible**” with a grassroots approach to antipoverty work.
- During the summers of 1964 and 1965, the **North Carolina Volunteers Program** created teams of African-American and white college students to work together and show that communities could be stronger if their members reached across lines of race and class to solve problems of poverty.
- At the core, its aims were to reduce minority poverty all across North Carolina and to further the cause of civil rights.
- Also by example, the North Carolina Fund served as a model and catalyst for such national programs as Head Start, VISTA, and the Community Action movement.

The North Carolina Fund

“**Democracy** means more than giving every man a vote, because many of the problems we face today will never appear on a ballot: welfare regulations; code enforcement; garbage collection; police brutality. . . . Beyond the formal ballot comes the larger mandate of democracy—to give the poor an effective voice in reshaping our cities. To give the poor a role, an opportunity to contribute to the rebuilding of our society.”

Sergeant Shriver, OEO Director

The North Carolina Fund

“The time for action is now...Never again can Americans take pride in their ‘**democracy**,’ for the basic facts of the denial of human rights to one-third of [the] people have been exposed. True democracy can and will be realized through the use of ‘**Poor Power**.’ . . . Thirty-four million Americans can, by uniting around their poverty, exert the necessary pressure . . . to change the present structure of power which has for so long denied the opportunity to rise to the standard the other two-thirds of the nation enjoys.”

~Joseph Flora, "Poor Power"

The North Carolina Fund

- Over the next 5 years the Fund's staff and volunteers touched the lives of countless North Carolinians and the Fund's programs and services affected communities across the state.
- However, many lawmakers began to question the uses of Fund resources and services, especially when some North Carolina Fund programs became involved with local Black freedom movements.
- Even though the Fund's philanthropic backers offered to extend their support beyond the first 5 years, its leaders declined. They held to their vision of the Fund as a temporary and experimental agency.
- The founders also had no desire to see their work routinized; to allow such a development, they insisted, would be to sacrifice innovation and see the Fund fall into the same patterns that had for so long crippled the nation's response to its most needy citizens.
- At the end of 1968, the North Carolina Fund disbanded, spinning off many of its successful state-wide programs into independent non-profit organizations.

Sources

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