

Timeless Tea in Celebration of North Carolina Women

Overview

In this lesson, students will examine women's roles in the making of North Carolina. Students will be assigned a woman who has lived and/or worked in North Carolina at some point throughout history and made a contribution to our state and/or the nation. Students will research their assigned person, explore her life experiences, challenges, and successes, then represent this woman while attending a "Timeless Tea in Celebration of North Carolina Women."

Grade

8

North Carolina Essential Standards for 8th Grade Social Studies

- 8.H.3.3 - Explain how individuals and groups have influenced economic, political and social change in North Carolina and the United States.
- 8.C.1.3 -Summarize the contributions of particular groups to the development of North Carolina and the United States (e.g. women, religious groups, and ethnic minorities such as American Indians, African Americans, and European immigrants).

Essential Questions

- What role have women played in the making of North Carolina?
- What contributions have women who have lived and/or worked in North Carolina made throughout history?
- Why is it important to learn about all people's contributions throughout history, including all genders, races, cultures, etc.?

Materials

- Images of NC Women, attached
- NC Women Who Made a Difference, bio slips attached
- Internet access

Duration

2 periods + homework time

Procedure

Images of North Carolina Women

1. Before students enter class, cut out and post the attached images of North Carolina women around the room (teachers may choose to use other photos of various North Carolina women as well). Number each image (1-10). As a warm-up, instruct students to number a sheet of notebook paper and travel around the room to observe each picture. Tell them to write down who they think the person in the image is and anything they think they know about the person.
2. Once students have completed their observations, project each image and allow students to share their thoughts on each woman's identity. It is likely that most students will not accurately guess the identity of these ten North Carolina women. Share with students who each woman is and provide an overview of her contributions to our state (see attached descriptions for contributions):

- Charlotte Hawkins Brown
- Ella Baker
- Isabella Cannon
- Eva M. Clayton
- Nanye'hi (Nancy Ward)
- Justice Susie Sharp
- Elizabeth Keckley
- Gertrude B. Elion
- Dortha Dix
- Pauli Murray

3. Ask students why they did not know the identities of these women, even though each woman has made significant contributions to our state. Then, project the following excerpt and discuss:

- “North Carolina history books for most generations of students contained the names of very few women — Queen Elizabeth and Virginia Dare come to mind. Of course, students had grandmothers who told them stories and mothers who taught them, but when they got up from the supper table to read their schoolbooks, they entered a house of history unlike any house they had ever lived in: where were the women? Seventeen women were among the settlers of the Lost Colony; between 1830 and 1840 women became a majority of North Carolinians; in 1920 more women were employed in textiles and tobacco in North Carolina than in any other southern state; and by the end of the twentieth century women made up about half of the state's workforce. Like most things taken for granted, women's roles in the making of North Carolina — and other states of our country — went unexamined for a very long time.”

(Source: Margaret Supplee Smith and Emily Herring Wilson)

- Do you feel our textbook does a good job teaching us about the contributions of women particularly? Why or why not?
- Why do you think Smith and Wilson feel that North Carolina history books have not done a good job educating students about women's contributions to our state?
- Why is it important to learn about all people's contributions throughout history, including all genders, races, cultures, etc.?

Hosting a Timeless Tea in Celebration of Women

4. Explain to students that this lesson will be about focusing on many women throughout our state's history who have made an important contribution to North Carolina. Tell students that they will each receive a slip of paper with a woman's name (see attached) who lived and/or worked in North Carolina at some point throughout history and contributed something to society. Explain that the women represent all periods of history, from the 1800s to present. Some are still living, others passed away long ago. The women represent various backgrounds, experiences, professions, races, cultures, etc. Tell students that their job will be to teach classmates about the woman assigned to them and her contributions while attending a “Timeless Tea in Celebration of Women” (since not all of the women are still living, the tea is “timeless”). Explain that the female students will pretend to be this woman at the tea; instruct male students that they may pretend to be the family member, friend, spouse, etc. of the female bio they received (this is to ensure male students do not mockingly portray their assigned female or feel uncomfortable). Explain that when the tea takes place, students will mingle about the room, introduce themselves to one another (for females, in first person; for males in second person), and share interesting facts about the bio they received.

➤ **Teacher note:** As there are more bios attached than the number of students in a classroom, teachers should use their discretion in terms of which to hand out. Likewise, the attached bios do not represent all North Carolina women who have made contributions to our state, so teachers may also want to substitute other names/bios.

5. Project/explain the following steps for completion:
 - Your bio strip contains a few basic facts about a woman who lived and/or worked in North Carolina at some point in her life, and who made a difference in some way. Research the woman assigned to you and find out other interesting or important facts about her*.
 - Prepare a 2 minute introduction of your assigned woman (girls in first person, using the pronouns “I”, “My”, etc; guys in second person, using “My sister is/was...”, “My wife contributed...”, “Let me tell you about my talented friend ...”, etc.) You should work to familiarize yourself with this 2 minute introduction so that you can repeat it as you mingle at the “Timeless Tea.”
 - You must also bring in one prop or costume piece that you feel visually represents the woman assigned to you. You will carry or wear this item at the tea. (i.e., a judge might carry a gavel)
 - When the tea takes place, you will travel around the room in character and introduce yourselves to other tea attendees. You will say hello, state your name, shake hands, then take turns sharing information with each other. As you meet one another, you will take notes regarding what you learn on a sheet that will be provided.
 - Once the tea is over, we will discuss who you met and what you learned about these women.
- If a library or the Internet is unavailable for additional research, teachers can do a simpler “meet and greet” version of the “Timeless Tea,” having students travel around the room and share only the information contained on the bios assigned to them. Students should still fill out the attached worksheet and teachers can fill in additional information about the women as students report back what they learned after the activity.
6. Let students know when the “tea” is to take place (this date will serve as the due date). If the classroom is not conducive to this type of movement, teachers may want to reserve a larger school space such as a media center, gym, or lunch room. To make the “Timeless Tea” a real treat, teachers may also want to consider providing or allowing students to bring in snacks to enjoy while mingling and learning about one another at the tea.
7. Teachers should review behavior expectations before the tea takes place as well as remind students to take notes on each woman they learn about at the tea (worksheet attached). It is also important students understand that their goal at the tea is to mingle and meet as many attendees as they can and learn about some of the women who have made a difference to our state. Teachers should monitor students as they meet in pairs or small groups to discuss at the tea, ensuring conversations are “in character”, on track, and that they do not last too long before students excuse themselves to find someone else to meet.
8. Once it is time to end the tea (all students should have had the opportunity to mingle with at least 10 other tea guests), debrief the activity as a class and discuss each woman who students learned about. Have students report back from the notes they took on the attached sheet.
 - Tell me about the various people you met today. Who do you most admire and why? Who did you find most interesting and why? Did anything you learned surprise you? Explain.
 - Did you already know about any of the women you met/learned about today? Explain. If most were unfamiliar to you, why do you think this is?
 - Out of all of the women you learned about, who do you think has had the greatest affect on our state and why?
 - If you were told to teach one person about your assigned bio, who would you teach and why? Who needs to be educated about these women and why?
9. For homework, instruct students to write a letter as their assigned female to another female who they met at the tea. In the letter, students should again assume the identity of their assigned woman and explain what they do, what accomplishments they have made, and the challenges they have faced (some of this

may be creative inferences). Students should use this letter as an opportunity to ask questions of the woman they have chosen to write, as well as explain why they chose to write her, what they admire about her, what they both might have in common, etc.

Additional Activities

- Extend this activity into a project in which students prepare a longer monologue of their assigned woman that they present to class; students can be instructed to come dressed as their character (or again for males, as their character's family member or friend).

Images of NC Women











North Carolina Women Who Made a Difference – Bio Slips

Dr. Annie Lowrie Alexander was born in Mecklenburg County, NC in 1864. After leaving the state to attend Women's Medical College in Philadelphia, she returned to North Carolina in 1887 and became North Carolina's first licensed female doctor, and the first woman to practice medicine in the entire South. Although medicine was considered an improper field for women, Alexander gained the respect of her community. In 1909 she was elected to her first of several terms as president of the Mecklenburg County Medical Society.



Elreta Alexander graduated from Agricultural and Technical College of Greensboro and became a torchbearer for black women in law. She was the first black woman accepted to Columbia University Law School, and became the first African American woman licensed as a lawyer in North Carolina when she returned to practice law in Greensboro from 1947-1968. In 1968, Elreta Alexander was elected a District Court Judge, becoming the first black woman judge in North Carolina.



Ella Baker and her family moved to her mother's hometown of Littleton, NC when she was 8-years-old. As a girl, Baker listened to her grandmother tell stories about slave revolts. As a slave, her grandmother had been whipped for refusing to marry a man chosen for her by the slave owner. Baker attended Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina, graduating as class valedictorian in 1927 at the age of 24. As a student she challenged school policies that she thought were unfair. After graduating, she moved to New York City and became a leading African American civil rights and human rights activist beginning in the 1930s. She was a behind-the-scenes activist whose career spanned over five decades. She worked alongside some of the most famous civil rights leaders of the twentieth century, including: W.E.B. DuBois, Thurgood Marshall, A. Philip Randolph, and Martin Luther King Jr.



Harriet Morehead Berry graduated from UNC-Greensboro in 1897 and became a secretary of North Carolina Geological and Economic Survey in Chapel Hill. This agency, which was concerned with the conservation of natural resources and the construction of better roads, provided valuable assistance to the North Carolina Good Roads Association. Harriet Berry became acting head of the survey in 1917, playing an effective role in planning and securing legislation for a road building program in North Carolina. As the appointed head of North Carolina's Road Commission and soon becomes known as the "Mother of Good Roads in North Carolina."



Sarah Malinda Pritchard Blalock and her husband Keith were Union sympathizers during the Civil War. In fear that her husband may be drafted into the Confederate forces, Sarah and Keith decided to enlist in the Confederate army and find a way to desert to the Union side. On March 20, 1862, Sarah cut her hair, but on men's clothing, and enlisted with her husband in the Confederate army, becoming North Carolina's only known female Civil War soldier.



Charlotte Hawkins Brown was born in Henderson, NC, but moved with her family to Cambridge, MA in the late 1880s. In 1901, Charlotte returned to her native North Carolina as a teacher in a one-room school in the rural community of Sedalia, North Carolina. Her dedication to educating young African Americans led to the tiny school evolving to become an accredited school and junior college, renamed the Palmer Memorial Institute in honor of her benefactor. Charlotte Hawkins Brown devoted her life to the improvement of the African American community's social standing and was active in the National Council of Negro Women. Among her numerous institutional efforts, she served on the national board of the Young Women's Christian Association, the first black woman to do so.



Isabella Cannon was involved in public service most of her life, and made history in 1977 when, at age 73, she became the first woman elected mayor of Raleigh. In fact, this was the first time a woman had been elected Mayor of any North Carolina city. Known as the "little old lady in tennis shoes," she had never run for office before her election. Working 16-hour days and using a no-nonsense style, she developed a comprehensive plan that still guides the growth of the city.



Lillian Exum Clement from Buncombe County was nominated for the NC General Assembly early in 1920 by Buncombe County Democrats, before women were even given the right to vote. Her election is especially impressive in light of a telegram sent earlier that year to the Tennessee legislature by the General Assembly. In this telegram, North Carolina house members write to assure their Tennessee counterparts that they will not ratify the nineteenth amendment, which guaranteed women the right to vote, because they saw it as "interfering with the sovereignty of Tennessee and other States of the Union." However, upon national ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, Lillian became the first woman elected to the North Carolina House of Representatives in fall of 1920.



Eva M. Clayton was elected to the United States House of Representatives in November of 1992. She is the first woman and the first African American woman to represent North Carolina in Congress. Before her election to Congress, Clayton had been an outstanding leader in state and local government as well as the private sector. Clayton was an advocate for rural health care, housing assistance and job training.



Anna Julia Haywood Cooper was born into slavery in 1858 in Raleigh, NC. She graduated from St. Augustine's College for free Blacks in Raleigh, which was an institution supported by the Freedmen's Bureau for the education of newly freed African Americans. Upon receiving a Ph. D in history in 1924, Cooper became the fourth African American woman to earn a doctoral degree. She is credited with being a prominent author, educator and one of the most important African American scholars in United States history.



Virginia Dare was born on August 18, 1687 on the land that became known as Roanoke Island, NC. Born into John White's colony to Eleanor and Ananias Dare, she was the first English baby born in the New World. She was one of 17 women living in the colony. However, what became of Virginia and the other colonists is a mystery. After her birth, John White returned to England for supplies for the colony and did not return until three years later. When he arrived, all traces of the colonists were gone.



Dr. Susan Dimock was born in 1847 in Washington, North Carolina. A pioneer in American Medicine, she was forced to go abroad to find a medical school that would accept women. She was a doctor at the University of Zurich, then practiced medicine in Boston as one of America's first licensed female doctors. In 1872, she became the first female member of the North Carolina Medical Society in 1872, although she never practiced medicine in the state.



Dorothea Dix was an activist on behalf of the mentally ill and spent much of her time lobbying state legislatures and the US Congress to provide services for the mentally ill. She spent three months in North Carolina studying the treatment of the unfortunate and lobbying the state government to build a hospital for the mentally ill in NC. Her persistence and persuasion was rewarded in 1856, when the North Carolina legislature made its first appropriation to a hospital for the insane.



Gertrude B. Elion was an American biochemist and pharmacologist. With degrees from Hunter College and New York University, she was unable to obtain a graduate research position in her field due to her gender. In 1970, she moved to the Research Triangle in North Carolina where she eventually became an assistant to George H. Hitchings at Burroughs-Wellcome pharmaceutical company (now GlaxoSmithKline.) Working alone as well as with Hitchings, Elion developed a multitude of new drugs, using innovative research methods that would later lead to the development of the AIDS drug AZT. In 1988 Elion received the Nobel Prize in Medicine, together with Hitchings. Other awards include the National Medal of Science (1991) and the Lemelson-MIT Lifetime Achievement Award (1997). In 1991 she became the first woman to be inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame.



Ava Gardner was born in Johnston County, NC in 1922 and was an Academy Award-nominated American actress. She is listed as one of the American Film Institute's greatest stars of all time.



Annie Wealthy Holland of Gates County was a teacher and educational advocate for African American children. She formed the North Carolina Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers in 1928. During this period of segregation, this was the first parent/teacher association started for African American schools.



Tabitha Ann Holton passed the North Carolina state bar and became the first licensed female lawyer in North Carolina, and the entire South, in 1878. Her brothers, John Holton and Samuel Holton were licensed to practice law by the North Carolina Supreme Court on January 7, 1878, but Tabitha's admission did not occur until several days later after the Supreme Court of NC heard arguments for and against admitting her to the bar since she was a woman. She practiced law in the town of Dobson, in Surry County, from 1878 to 1886.



Harriet Jacobs was born into slavery in Edenton, NC. She escaped from her cruel master Dr. James Norcom and hid in a tiny attic room for seven years before fleeing to the North. She escaped to New York, and was able to buy the freedom of her children. Her 1861 narrative, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, records her experiences in both slavery and freedom.



Elizabeth Hobbs Keckley was born a slave in Virginia in 1818. At age fourteen, she was sent to live with her owner's son in Hillsborough, North Carolina. Due to her "stubborn pride", Elizabeth experienced brutal beatings with the goal of making her more obedient, however she admirable remained strong-willed. Elizabeth was later sold to a man in St. Louis, where she faced many hardships. While in St. Louis, Elizabeth made a name for herself as a dressmaker and by 1855 she had saved enough money to buy her freedom. After a failed marriage, she moved to Washington where she worked as a dressmaker for the wife of Abraham Lincoln. In 1868 she published her autobiography, *Thirty Years a Slave*.



Annie Brown Kennedy was the first African American woman to serve and be elected to the General Assembly. Appointed by Governor James B. Hunt, Jr., in 1979, Kennedy skipped the 1981-1982 session, and, in 1982, became the first African American woman to be elected. Kennedy served through 1994.



Jeanne Lucas was an educator from 1957-1993, and in 1993 she became the first African American woman to be elected to the North Carolina Senate. She had risen to the position of Party Whip during this cycle. Senator Lucas focused much of her work on the children of North Carolina: "Education is easily the most pressing issue for our community and our State. I am particularly focused on reducing the dropout and suspension rates, and making sure our young people stay in school to get a good education."



Dolly Madison, born in Guilford County, North Carolina, became first lady when James Madison was inaugurated as the fourth president in 1809. During her husband's political life, Dolley Madison was noted as a gracious hostess, whose sassy personality, love of feathered turbans, and passion for snuff (tobacco) seemed at odds with her Quaker upbringing. One of her most lasting achievements was her rescue of valuable treasures, including state papers and a painting of President George Washington, from the White House before it was burned by the British army in 1814 during the War of 1812. Dolley was enraged at how American soldiers fled rather than fought the oncoming British, and she even slept with a sabre near her bedside should a British soldier show up in the middle of the night. Dolley remained a popular figure in Washington, D.C. long after her husband's presidency ended, and was the only private citizen (much less a woman) to be allowed to sit in on Congress, on the congressional floor, while it was in session.



Pauli Murray was a civil rights advocate, feminist, lawyer, poet, professor, and ordained minister. Raised in Durham, North Carolina, she began a campaign in 1938 to enter the all-white University of North Carolina. She spoke out on discrimination against women before the 91st Congress of the United States and was the first African-American woman Episcopal priest and a co-founder of NOW, the National Organization for Women.



Gertrude Dills McKee became the first woman elected to the North Carolina Senate in 1930. She represented Jackson County. Gertrude was a graduate of Peace College in Raleigh.



Mary Jane Patterson, a free black from Raleigh, becomes the first African American woman to receive a Bachelor of Arts degree. She obtains the degree from Oberlin College in Ohio.



Beverly Perdue, a Democrat, served in the North Carolina House of Representatives from 1986 to 1990, and in the North Carolina Senate from 1990 to 2000. During her last three terms in the Senate, she served as one of the state's chief budget writers and was the first woman to hold this position. In 2000, she was elected as North Carolina's first female lieutenant governor; she was re-elected to a second term in 2004 and announced her candidacy for governor in 2008 on October 1, 2007 at her hometown, New Bern, North Carolina. If elected, she will be North Carolina's first female governor.



Emeline Jamison Pigott was born in Carteret County and was a blockade runner and Confederate spy. She was eventually captured and imprisoned in New Bern. She founded the Morehead City Chapter of the Daughters of the Confederacy in December 1906.



Katie Pomerans is a founder of North Carolina's El Pueblo, a statewide Latino advocacy organization dedicated to strengthening North Carolina's Latino community and promoting cross-cultural understanding. A native of Uruguay, Katie and her family have made their home in North Carolina since 1971. She is the Hispanic Ombudsman for the NC Dept. of Health and Human Services and a tireless proponent of improved race relations and advocate for Latinos and other minorities. She is also a member of the State Executive Board of the NAACP, the Governor's Race Initiative, The NC Farmworkers' Health Alliance, SAF and many other organizations. She was the 1997 recipient of the Harvey Estes Award.



Susie Sharp entered law school at UNC-Chapel Hill in 1926 as the only woman in her class. In 1949, she was appointed as a Superior Court Judge, making her the first female judge in the history of the state. In 1962, Governor Terry Sanford made Sharp the first female Associate Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court. Justice Sharp was elected by the people that November and again in November 1966 to a full eight-year term. *Time*, in its January 6, 1976 cover story, named Sharp one of the 12 "women of the year" for 1975. In so doing, *Time* called her a "trail blazer" with a "reputation as both a compassionate jurist and an incisive legal scholar". Senator Sam Ervin recommended to President Richard Nixon that he appoint her to the United States Supreme Court. Nixon declined the advice, and there would not be a woman appointed to the Court until 1981.



Mary Martin Sloop was a physician, community leader, and child welfare advocate in the hills of the Blue Ridge. In 1913 she and her husband started a school in the poverty entrenched mountains of western North Carolina, because they believed "Education is the best way for a child to rise above his circumstances." The Sloops trudged on foot and rode horse-back on steep dirt trails in isolated mountain valleys to bring medicine to the people and convince farmers to let their children come to school. Sloops built a school, hospital, dental clinic and eventually, a boarding school to give children the basis for an improved life. They brought to Avery County the first electricity, the first telephone, the first paved road and the first boarding school, and through Mary's advocacy, public schools flourished in Avery County.



Gladys Avery Tillett was born in Morganton, NC, in 1891. She helped to organize a local chapter of the League of Women Voters in Charlotte. As the president of that local chapter, Tillett worked to register women voters and motivate them to participate in politics. She also briefly served as the state president of the League. By the early 1930s, she became involved in state politics, serving on the state executive committee. In 1932, Tillett became involved in the National Democratic Party, serving as the party's state vice-chairman and helping organize the speakers bureau during the 1936 presidential campaign. In 1940, she became the head of the Women's Division of the Democratic Party and was elected as the vice-chairman of the National Committee of the Democratic Party. Tillett remained in that post for ten years, resigning in 1950 to campaign for Frank Porter Graham's senatorial bid. She was a United States delegate to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, 1961-1968, and a strong proponent of the Equal Rights Amendment.



Nancy Ward was a mixed-blood Cherokee woman who lived during the eighteenth century (1738-1822). She was also known as **Nanyeh'hi**, and was the Cherokee nation's last "Beloved Woman," which meant she was allowed to sit in councils and make decisions. At a time that the Cherokee nation was frequently at battle with American troops and white settlers who were invading their lands, Ward made repeated attempts to establish peace between the various parties.



Alfreda Johnson Webb was the first woman graduate of Tuskegee Institute's School of Veterinary Medicine and first African American woman to graduate from a U.S. veterinary school. In 1971, she became the first African American woman appointed to the North Carolina General Assembly. She was appointed by Governor Robert Scott after the close of the session, but never got the chance to serve since she lost her bid for election in 1972.



Gertrude Weil was born in Goldsboro, NC and was active in the women's suffrage movement. She served as an executive to the North Carolina Equal Suffrage League (which became the NC League of Women Voters), beginning in 1915. Active in support of many progressive causes — woman suffrage, voter education, child labor reform, and collective bargaining — Gertrude Weil was a well-known public woman who enjoyed family wealth and status.



Ella May Wiggins was a textile mill worker and labor organizer in Gastonia, North Carolina. Well known as an outspoken union activist, Ella May commonly joined groups who protested the “hard rules” of cotton mill labor. A popular balladeer (singer), Wiggins was murdered in 1929 on her way to sing for the union at the Loray Mill.



Leticia Zavala is the vice president of North Carolina’s Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC), a trade union developed to protect migrant farm workers with a branch in North Carolina. In October of 1998, she assisted in organizing a boycott of the Mt. Olive Pickle Company due to the difficult, unhealthy, and dangerous conditions migrant farm workers were experiencing, as well as the low wages the pickle company was paying cucumber growers. The union's five-year boycott of Mt. Olive Pickle was ultimately successful. In September 2004, FLOC signed a collective bargaining agreement with Mt. Olive and the growers. More than 6,000 of the state's 10,000 guest workers joined FLOC. More than 1,000 growers agreed to form the North Carolina Growers Association to act as the employers' collective bargaining agent. The Association covered a number of cash crops, such as Christmas trees and tobacco, in addition to cucumbers.

Name: _____

North Carolina Women

Dr. Annie Lowrie Alexander _____

Elreta Alexander _____

Ella Baker _____

Harriet Morehead Berry _____

Sarah Malinda Pritchard Blalock _____

Charlotte Hawkins Brown _____

Isabella Cannon _____

Lillian Exum Clement _____

Eva M. Clayton _____

Anna Julia Haywood Cooper _____

Virginia Dare _____

Dr. Susan Dimock _____

Dorothea Dix _____

Gertrude B. Elion

Ava Gardner

Annie Wealthy Holland

Tabitha Ann Holton

Harriet Jacobs

Elizabeth Hobbs Keckley

Annie Brown Kennedy

Jeanne Lucas

Dolly Madison

Pauli Murray

Gertrude Dills McKee

Mary Jane Patterson

Beverly Perdue

Emeline Jamison Pigott

Katie Pomerans

Susie Sharp _____

Mary Martin Sloop _____

Gladys Avery Tillett _____

Nancy Ward (Nanye'hi) _____

Alfreda Johnson Webb _____

Gertrude Weil _____

Ella May Wiggins _____

Leticia Zavala _____

Reflect...

Of all these women, who do you find most interesting and why?

Out of all of the women you learned about, who do you think has had the greatest affect on our state and why?