

## Emergence of the Whig Party in 1800s North Carolina

### Overview

In this lesson, students will explore the origins of the two-party system in North Carolina with an emphasis on the rise and fall of the Whigs. They will describe changes in each party and explore issues of pressing concern in North Carolina from the early 1800s to the beginning of the Civil War.

### Grade

8

### North Carolina Standard Course of Study

- Objective 3.02: Investigate the conditions that led to North Carolina's economic, political, and social decline during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and assess the implications for the future development of the state
- Objective 3.03: Identify and evaluate the impact of individual reformers and groups and assess the effectiveness of their programs
- Objective 3.07: Explain the reasons for the creation of a new State Constitution in 1835, and describe its impact on religious groups, African Americans, and American Indians

### North Carolina Essential Standards (to be implemented in the 2012-2013 school year)

- 8.H.2.1 - Explain the impact of economic, political, social, and military conflicts (e.g. war, slavery, states' rights and citizenship and immigration policies) on the development of North Carolina and the United States.
- 8.H.3.2 - Explain how changes brought about by technology and other innovations affected individuals and groups in North Carolina and the United States (e.g. advancements in transportation, communication networks and business practices).
- 8.H.3.3 - Explain how individuals and groups have influenced economic, political and social change in North Carolina and the United States.
- 8.G.1.1 - Explain how location and place have presented opportunities and challenges for the movement of people, goods, and ideas in North Carolina and the United States.
- 8.E.1.1- Explain how conflict, cooperation, and competition influenced periods of economic growth and decline (e.g. economic depressions and recessions).
- 8.C&G.1.2 -Evaluate the degree to which democratic ideals are evident in historical documents from North Carolina and the United States (e.g. the Mecklenburg Resolves, the Halifax Resolves, the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, the Bill of Rights and the principles outlined in the US Constitution and North Carolina Constitutions of 1776, 1868 and 1971).
- 8.C&G.1.4 -Analyze access to democratic rights and freedoms among various groups in North Carolina and the United States (e.g. enslaved people, women, wage earners, landless farmers, American Indians, African Americans and other ethnic groups).

### Essential Questions

- Why did North Carolina have a reputation as the "Rip Van Winkle State" in the early 1800s?
- What factors caused the decline in the state in the early 1800s?
- What impact did individual reformers such as Archibald Murphey have on the state during this time period?
- How were the needs in the western part of the state different from those in the east? What were the implications of this divide?
- What changes were made as a result of the Constitutional Convention of 1835?

- What ideas formed the basis of the Whig Party in North Carolina?
- What reforms made in North Carolina under the Whigs helped to make it a progressive state?
- What were major differences between the Whigs and Democrats?
- Why did the Whig Party in North Carolina fail?

#### Materials:

- Picture of Rip Van Winkle, attached
- Rip Van Winkle plot summary, attached
- "A Dismal Outlook" worksheet, attached
- A textbook reading or LEARN NC's chapter, "The Rip Van Winkle State," available at <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-newnation/4.0>(Source Link not working but this is an alternative <http://northcarolinahistory.org/encyclopedia/rip-van-winkle/>)
- Archibald Murphey article, attached

#### Duration

60+ minutes

#### Procedure

##### The Need for Change in the "Rip Van Winkle State"

1. As a warm-up, project picture of **Rip Van Winkle** and ask students to describe what they see. Share with them a brief account of Rip's story, and tell them that North Carolina had a reputation of being the "Rip Van Winkle State" in the early 1800s. Ask students what they think this meant and why this might have been the case. (See also the Carolina K-12's lesson *North Carolina: The Rip Van Winkle State*.)
2. Divide students into groups of three and distribute the attached worksheet entitled "A Dismal Outlook." Assign one person as the recorder, one as the reporter, and one as a timekeeper. Read the historical background and directions out loud with students and explain that they will have 15 minutes to consider the factors that contributed to the decline in North Carolina during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Encourage them to use textbooks and any prior knowledge. A great digital source is LEARN NC's digital text chapter, "The Rip Van Winkle State," available at <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-newnation/4.0>. (Source Link not working but this is an alternative <http://northcarolinahistory.org/encyclopedia/rip-van-winkle/>)
3. After students complete part one of the worksheet, have them consider possible reforms that might wake the state from its "sleep." Encourage groups to think of three possibilities. Tell them they can be creative and inventive. Discuss answers allowing group reporters to share their group's ideas. Have students stay in their groups.

##### Archibald Murphy and the Whig Party

4. Explain to students that despite this dismal picture, reform was on the horizon. A small group of people wished to put North Carolina on a path toward improvement. Tell them they have a man named **Archibald Murphey** to thank for many of the state provided "luxuries" they enjoy today, including public school.
5. Distribute the handout on Archibald Murphey. Read together as a class paying special attention to the bolded letter Murphey wrote to a friend. Explain to students why Murphey believed North Carolina needed Constitutional reform, namely that the Constitution at the time was undemocratic in that it did not give equal representation to the eastern and western parts of the state. Further explain that Murphey died probably thinking that he had been a failure. However, his ideals brought about an era of progress and reform, and the emergence of a new political party.

6. Explain to students that for 20 years following the **War of 1812**, there was only one political party in North Carolina. Ask students to think of reasons why a one party system might be dangerous.
7. Explain that the rift between the eastern and western parts of North Carolina culminated after **Andrew Jackson** became president in 1828 and opposed internal improvements that the west supported. In response, the dissatisfied voters in North Carolina switched loyalties to an emerging party in the country known as the **Whigs**. From 1836 to 1850, the Whigs controlled the North Carolina government. Many of Murphey's ideals of reform were put into action, including the establishment of public schools, state services for the poor, and interstate transportation.
8. Provide student groups with the attached "Democrats vs. Whigs" handouts. Read through each of the party ideologies as a class and provide explanations where needed (i.e. some students may wonder what is meant by "party of modernization"). In groups, students will select party ideologies to support. Students will write a paragraph on each ideology as specified in the handout directions. Once students in each group have finished, each student will select their best supported argument to present to the class. Groups will take turns presenting, with each student responsible for presenting and supporting one idea.
  - As an alternative assignment, students can be instructed to write roll plays between a Democrat and a Whig in which they argue their party's ideologies with one another.
9. In conclusion, ask students what issue they think might have led to the demise of the Whig party in 1850. Inform them that "men's suffrage" was the issue that was the "nail in the coffin" of the party. Have them consider why the Whigs might have supported not allowing all men to vote.
10. Optional culminating homework assignments:
  - Have students research one of North Carolina's Whig governors (**Edward B. Dudley, John M. Morehead, William A. Graham, and Charles Manly**) and write a speech from this man's perspective advocating for the Whig Party. The speech should include wording that exhibits student's understanding of the person himself, as well as an understanding of the party's platforms.
  - Have students pretend they are living in North Carolina during the years following the War of 1812. Ask them to write a letter to a friend in another state describing the conditions of the state and how they think it could be improved.

### Rip Van Winkle Image and Plot Summary



#### Rip Van Winkle plot summary:

The story is set in the years before and after the American Revolutionary War. Rip Van Winkle, a villager of Dutch descent, lives in a nice village at the foot of New York's Catskill Mountains. An amiable man whose home and farm suffer from his lazy neglect, he is loved by all but his wife. One autumn day he escapes his nagging wife by wandering up the mountains. After encountering strangely dressed men rumored to be the ghosts of a British sea exploring crew, who are playing nine-pins, and after drinking some of their liquor, he settles down under a shady tree and falls asleep. He wakes up twenty years later and returns to his village. He finds out that his wife is dead and his close friends have died in a war or gone somewhere else. He immediately gets into trouble when he hails himself a loyal subject of King George III, not knowing that in the meantime the American Revolution has taken place. An old local recognizes him, however, and Rip's now grown daughter eventually puts him up. As Rip resumes his habit of idleness in the village, and his tale is solemnly believed by the old Dutch settlers, certain hen-pecked husbands especially wish they shared Rip's luck. (Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rip\\_Van\\_Winkle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rip_Van_Winkle))

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## A Dismal Outlook: North Carolina in the Early 1800s

**Historical Background:** In most parts of the United States, the War of 1812 spurred business and brought new ideas. This was not the case in North Carolina. In fact, few states had done as little as North Carolina to promote education, science, and the arts. When people in other states became aware of the conditions in North Carolina, they began to refer to it as the “Rip Van Winkle State,” because it seemed that the state was asleep when much of the nation was changing dramatically.

*A Proud State in Our Nation.*

*(Source: Powell, William S. North Carolina:*



**Directions:** In your group, discuss each of the following factors that led to the decline in the state in the early 1800s. How do you think each factor contributed to the decline? Write at least 2 sentences for each. You may use your textbooks, prior knowledge, and critical thinking.

1. Isolation (living far apart on scattered farms)
2. Lack of public schools/Attitude that education was unimportant
3. Lack of industry and commerce
4. Poor farm conditions
5. Rule by the elite without regard to the “common people”

If your group was the legislative body for the state, what are 3 possible reforms you would propose to wake North Carolina from its “sleep?”

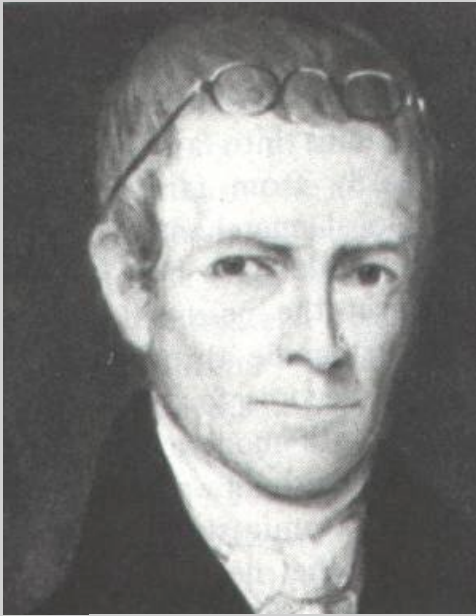
a)

b)

c)

# Archibald Debow Murphey (1777-1832)

## *Father of North Carolina Public Schools*



*Click on Photograph for Another Image*

- Archibald Debow Murphey
- Born c. 1777 in Caswell County
- University of North Carolina Graduate
- Planter
- Lawyer
- State Senator
- NC Superior Court Judge
- Known as *The Father of North Carolina Public Schools*
- Died 1832
- **Buried Hillsborough Old Town Cemetery**

### Biographical Sketch

Archibald Debow Murphey was born around 1777 in the part of Orange County, North Carolina, that later became Caswell County. His father, Archibald Murphey, was from Pennsylvania and a Revolutionary officer; and his mother, Jane Debow, was from New Jersey. He was one of seven children.

After attending preparatory school in Greensboro (David Caldwell's famous "Log College"), Archibald Debow Murphey entered the University of North Carolina in 1796, graduating with honors in 1799. After serving as a professor at the University for several years, Murphey relocated to Hillsborough to study law with William Duffy. The year was 1801, the same in which he married Jane Armistead Scott, the daughter of John Scott of Alamance County. Before his marriage, Murphey purchased the Hermitage plantation from Jane Armistead Scott's father and established a formidable estate, including a separate building that Murphey used as his law offices.

During the first two decades of the 19th century, Murphey was active in business, legal, and political affairs. He made considerable investments in additional properties, had a vibrant and financially rewarding law practice, and

served in the North Carolina State Senate 1812-1818 (representing Orange County). As a senator, he travelled throughout the state. During his travels, he became deeply disturbed by the conditions he observed.

**In a letter to a friend, Murphey wrote:**

**I know ten times as much of the Topography of this Circuit, as the men who have lived here for fifty years. I had no idea that we had such a poor, ignorant, squalid population, as I have seen. Who that sees these people, and those of the center and the west can wonder that we wish to have a Convention (to amend the constitution)? In the towns are found decent and well informed men in matters of business, men who look well and live well. But the mass of the common people in the country (rural NC areas) are lazy, sickly, poor, dirty, and ignorant. This is a section of the state upon which the head of industry would soon impress a fine character.**

Murphey probably is best known for his thoughts on education and internal improvements for North Carolina. He submitted a legislative report recommending a publicly financed system of education. In 1819, he drafted a document recommending a program of internal improvements to build roads and to make rivers and canals navigable. Murphey's ideas were clearly ahead of the times and were often ignored by his fellow legislators. In 1818, he was elected a superior court judge, but gave up the position after only two years to concentrate on his deteriorating financial condition and to compile a history of the State of North Carolina. He unfortunately, was unsuccessful in both endeavors.

However, his agitation for public education helped bring about the establishment of the State Literary Fund in 1825 and the first public school act seven years after his death. His proposals for overland and water transportation, though somewhat outdated with the coming of railroads, continued to emphasize the need for North Carolina to cast off its dependence on Virginia and South Carolina for markets.

The problem was that while the western counties of North Carolina supported Murphey's reform, the eastern landowners, who had control over the legislature due to the unrepresentative nature of the current state Constitution, did not. This rift had tremendous implications for the future of the state, and eventually led to the drafting of a new Constitution

Sources: Powell, William S. *North Carolina: A Proud State in Our Nation*. Evanston, Illinois: McDougal Littell, 2003.

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~ncccha/biographies/archibaldmurphy.html>



# Democrat vs. Whigs (1836-1850):

## The Debate

**Directions:** In your groups, read the descriptions of each of the party ideals below. Choose one party to support. Once you have selected a party, each group member must choose 2 party ideals and write a paragraph for each elaborating on them. Discuss why the ideals you chose are superior to the corresponding ideals of the opposing party. Be prepared to support your argument.

### Democrats:

1. The party of tradition.
2. Looked backward to the past.
3. Spoke to the fears of Americans
4. Opposed banks and corporations as. state-legislated economic privilege.
5. Opposed state-legislated reforms and preferred individual freedom of choice.
6. Were Jeffersonian agrarians who favored farms and rural independence and the right to own slaves.
7. Favored rapid territorial expansion over space by purchase or war.
8. Believed in progress through external growth.
9. Democratic ideology of agrarianism, slavery, states rights, territorial expansion was favored in the South.
10. Believed all men should have the right to vote.



### Whigs:

1. The party of modernization.
2. Looked forward to the future.
3. Spoke to the hopes of Americans.
4. Wanted to use federal and state government to promote economic growth, especially transportation and banks.
5. Advocated reforms such as temperance and public schools and prison reform.
6. Were entrepreneurs who favored industry and urban growth and free labor.
7. Favored gradual territorial expansion over time and opposed Mexican War.
8. Believed in progress through internal growth





9. Whig ideology of urbanization, industrialization, federal rights, commercial expansion was favored in the North.
10. Believed only land-owning men should have the right to vote.