

The First Inhabitants



***The Cherokee and Woodland Indians
Traveling Trunk
Smith McDowell House Museum***

Preliminary teacher's guide

Dear Teacher,

If you have downloaded this information, you have made plans to rent Smith McDowell House's Traveling Trunk: The First Inhabitants.

You will have in the trunk, objects which are bound to bring history alive for you students. There is no right or wrong way to use the objects. Feel free to use any or all of them however you like, using these lessons as a resource. Other resources are also in the notebook included in the trunk.

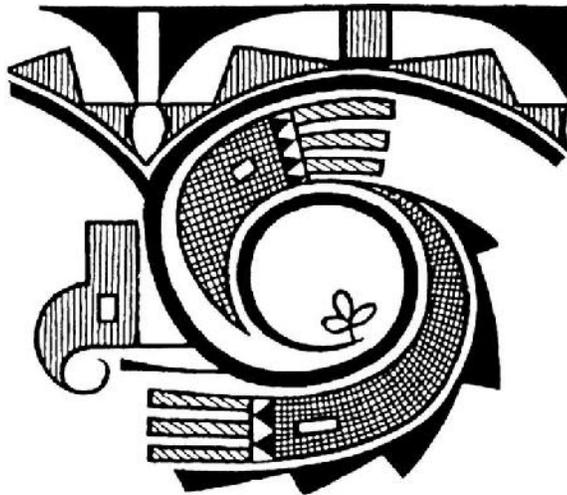
Also in the notebook is a section that pictures and explains all of the items that are in the trunk so you will know what each one is.

We have made the four basic lessons available to you ahead of time so you can look them over and feel better prepared when you have the trunk. Each lesson is complete and does not require knowledge gleaned from other lessons, although the lessons are designed to fit together as an integrated curriculum.

We appreciate you feedback, so please fill out the evaluation form in the trunk at the end of your week.

Sincerely,

Smith McDowell House Museum
Education Department
828-253-9231
education@wnchistory.org



Lesson One: Native Americans in North Carolina

Specific Content of Lesson:

To provide a brief overview of Native American tribes in North Carolina and to recognize the impact of Native Americans on North Carolina history and geography.

Materials:

- “North Carolina Indians” - included
- Map of North Carolina- master copy of worksheet and Overhead Included
- “American Indian Population of North Carolina” overhead- included
- Family tree worksheet- master copy included
- Information on modern North Carolina tribes - included

Procedures:

1. Prior to class, read “Indian Life” and the included information on modern North Carolina tribes.
2. Ask students what they think of when they think of Native Americans/Indians.
3. Have the class read the first page of “North Carolina Indians.” Does anything about the information surprise them? Did they learn anything new about North Carolina Indians?

Historians estimate that there were about thirty Native American tribes in North Carolina prior to the arrival of European explorers and settlers. Tribes included the Tuscarora, Hatteras, Meherrin, Nottaway, Waccamaw, and Pasquotank on the coastal plain and Tidewater region; the Catawba, Eno, Cheraw, Keyauwee, Saxapahaw, and Tutelo in the Piedmont; and the Cherokee in the mountains. Although disease and warfare destroyed many of these tribes, their names remain a part of the North Carolina landscape.

4. Hand out the map of North Carolina counties. Have students mark the counties they think have Native American names. Can they think of any local Native American place names? [Nantahala, Swannanoa, Oconaluftee, Cherokee, Etowah, Pisgah]
5. Ask students how many Native Americans they think live in North Carolina today. Have students read page 2 of “North Carolina Indians” (beginning with “Indians Today.”) If the students are old enough, break them into groups and have each group read about the information about one North Carolina tribe.
6. Show overhead of “American Indian Population in North Carolina.” How many Native Americans live in your county? Which county has the largest number? [Robeson] Which county in *western North Carolina* has the largest number? [Swain] Are there any counties without Native Americans? [No]

Activities:

1. Break students into groups and give each group the information about one Native American tribe in North Carolina. Have the groups present facts about their tribe to the class, either verbally or in poster form. Information to include: Where is the tribe

located? How many people are in the tribe today? Who is the tribe descended from? (E.g., members of the Haliwa-Saponi Tribe are descended from the Saponi, Nansemond, Tuscarora, Occaneechi, Tutelo, and Gingaskin tribes.)

2. Many Native American tribes, including the Cherokee, were *matrilineal*, meaning that they traced descent through the mother's line. For example, a Cherokee child whose mother belonged to the Deer Clan and whose father belonged to the Paint Clan would be considered a member of the Deer Clan. Have the students take home the family tree worksheet and fill it out to the best of their ability using their mother's descendants.

3. Native Americans in North Carolina made and used finely-craft canoes for transportation. Using the enclosed direction sheet, have your students make small models of canoes using construction paper and yarn.

Lesson Two: Native American Foods and Farming

Specific Content of Lesson:

The students will learn about Native American farming practices and discuss how Native American foods play a role in modern American eating habits.

Materials:

- Beans, corn, squash seeds, gourd (included)
- Deer and rabbit skins (included)
- Birch bark basket (included)
- Oyster shell (included)
- Native foods worksheet (master copy included)
- "Hide Tanning" (master copy included)

Procedures:

1. Ask students what they think Native Americans ate. Do they think Native Americans were farmers?
2. Discuss with your students: North Carolina Native Americans were farmers. They grew melons, sunflowers, and pumpkins, but the three most important crops were corn, beans, and squash. These were called the "Three Sisters." They often grew all three crops in the same field. Do we eat these vegetables today? Pass around

- the beans, corn, and seeds. Point out to your students that women were usually responsible for farming the crops. Are most farmers today women?
3. Native Americans also grew gourds. They would make containers out of the dried gourds. They would also make baskets using birch bark, like the one included. Pass around the gourd and the basket.
 4. Even though North Carolina Native Americans were farmers, they did not have domesticated animals like cows or pigs. Native Americans fished and hunted turkey, deer, bear, and other wild animals to provide meat. Men hunted to provide food, just like women farmed to provide food. Pass around the deer and rabbit skins.
 5. What else would Native Americans do with the animals they hunted? Read “Hide Tanning” with your students to learn how the Catawba used deer hides. The Catawba would scrape the hides with oyster shells until they were soft and dry. Pass around the oyster shell. Why would they use an oyster shell? (Sharp edges; before contact with whites, the Catawba did not have metal knives.)

Activities:

1. Have students complete the Native Foods worksheet in class or as homework.
2. Try some of the included Lumbee and Cherokee recipes with your class. These traditional dishes are still enjoyed by Native Americans and others today. Native Americans had a big influence on traditional Southern cooking. Are any of the dishes familiar to your students? (Collards, succotash)
3. Have your students plant their own traditional Native American plants. Use the “Planting a Garden” lesson plan as a guide, but adapt freely to your own needs. For example, if you do not have outdoor space, you may plant bean seeds in cups and place them on a sunny windowsill in the classroom.

Lesson Three: Cherokee Writing

Specific Content of Lesson:

The students will discuss the importance of written language, learn about the history of Cherokee writing, and create their own written language.

Materials:

- “Sequoyah (a.k.a George Gist)” and “Cherokee Language” background materials-Included
- Example of Cherokee script-Included
- Language Worksheet-Included
- Paint, markers, colored pencils

- Construction paper

Procedures:

6. Before class, read the background material on Sequoyah and the Cherokee alphabet. When students come to class, tell them the story of Sequoyah and the “Talking Leaves.” If the students are old enough, have them read the “Sequoyah (a.k.a George Gist) essay themselves. Discuss with the students: what are the advantages of having a written language? What can you do with written language that you can’t do with spoken language? Show students the overhead of Cherokee script.
7. Using the overhead as a key, have students write their own names and the name of their school in Cherokee script on the construction paper.
8. Tell the students that they will create their own written language using letters, numbers, or pictures. Remind them that some languages, such as Chinese or ancient Egyptian, use *ideographs* or word-pictures as the basis for their written language. Have students use the Language Worksheet to create a key for their language.
9. Pass out the construction paper and coloring utensils and ask the students to write their names on the paper using their new language. Display them around the class.

Lesson Four: Native American Myths

Specific Content of Lesson:

The students will examine North Carolina Native American legends, discuss the function of myths and legends, and create their own legends.

Materials:

- Five Native American myths- master copies included
- “Cherokee Medicinal Herbs”- included

Procedures:

10. Divide students into 5 small groups. Give each group a myth to read.
11. Once students have read their myths, have each group read or act out their myth for the rest of the class.
12. Discuss why people tell myths. Most of these legends give an explanation for something that occurs in the natural world, e.g., mosquitoes, waterfalls, buzzards, etc. Myths help people make sense of the world around them. Can your students think of any other myths or legends they’ve heard before?

Activities:

1. Have your students write and illustrate their own myths based on North Carolina nature. Possible prompts: why does it thunder? Why do fireflies light up? How did the mountains get so big?

2. Have each group make puppets and act out their legend for the rest of the class.
3. Have students draw the upper and lower worlds described by the Tuscarora.
4. The Cherokee myth, "The Origin of Medicine" discusses the Cherokee use of herbal medicines. Before class, read "Cherokee Medicinal Herbs" to learn about some of their remedies. Discuss these remedies with your class, and ask them to compare traditional Cherokee remedies with modern remedies. For example, the Cherokee used blackberry to treat sore throats. Today, we might use Halls or other cough drops.

Supplemental activity: Virginia Blackfeather Thompson is a Cherokee storyteller who has worked with Smith-McDowell House Museum for many years. She is available for school performances, and may be reached at 828-685-8411.