

The First Inhabitants



*The Cherokee and Woodland Indians Traveling
Trunk
Western North Carolina Historical Association*

Preliminary teacher's guide

Dear Teacher,

If you have downloaded this information, you have made plans to borrow the Traveling Trunk: The First Inhabitants.

In the trunk are objects to bring history alive for your students. Feel free to use any or all of the objects however you like, using these lessons as a resource. Other resources are also in the notebook included in the trunk.

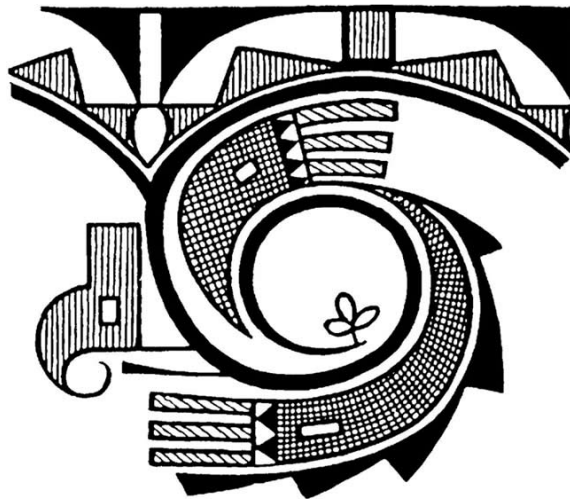
Also in the notebook is a section that pictures and explains all of the items that are in the trunk so you will know what each one is.

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

Sincerely,

WNC Historical Association
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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 us for many years. She is available for school performances and may be reached at 828-685-8411.

EASTERN WOODLAND INDIAN TRAVELING TRUNK



Deer Skin

Native Americans used all parts of the animals that they hunted. Deer provided meat to eat, antlers for tools, and furs or skins. The skins were tanned or processed using the brain of the deer. (*see info sheet on brain-tanning*). Once cleaned and tanned, the furs made warm and soft bedding. These fur blankets were also used as coats and could be hung along walls to keep cold wind out in the winter.

Moccasins

When the fur was completely removed from the deer skin and the skin was properly tanned, the skin could be used for clothing. Numerous hours were required to fashion the popular deerskin apparel. Women cut the skins with flint knives or shells and sutured them with animal sinew. Moccasins are one type of

traditional footwear that were made by sewing the soft brain-tanned hides of deer, moose, elk or buffalo. Moccasins were designed for their specific environment. Soft-soled moccasins, often made from a single piece of leather, were common in the Eastern Forests and were made by bringing up the sole of the shoe around the foot and puckering or patching the material around the instep. These moccasins were well suited to travel through woodlands with leaf and pine-needle covered ground. The soft soles of the shoes were said to make very little sound when walking in the woods and made hunting easier. In addition, moccasins would have been essential to keep feet from freezing in the winter. Moccasins were made with all types of variations and additions according to the styles of different tribes. The styles were so distinctive that one could tell the tribe of the wearer by his footprints. The word moccasin, which has language origins with Eastern tribes, traditionally referred to a shoe with a puckered u-shaped vamp over the instep. The name of the Great Lakes Ojibway tribe means “people of the puckered moccasin.” Today the word moccasin generally refers to all types of hard and soft soled shoes, with and without puckered toes.



Rabbit Skin

Small animals such as rabbits added greatly to the diet of Indians. The rabbit’s fur was useful for smaller items. Frequently, rabbit skins were used to line a baby’s bed. Indians also appreciated the rabbit’s speed and cunning. The rabbit was an important character in many stories and legends.



FRIZ

Birch Bark Basket or Makak

The bark of the birch tree was legendary for its durability and preservative properties. Its weatherproof properties made birch bark, as well as bark of elm and spruce, the perfect material for use not only for panels to cover houses and to build canoes to travel water, but also to contain and store food and drink. Birch bark was so important that it is included in the oral tradition at the center of many stories from the Indians from the Great Lakes and northern New England regions. A makak is a special container made by several northern tribes to store maple sugar. Traditionally, these containers and spoons were stitched or laced together with split spruce roots or with strips of inner bark of the basswood tree. Rims were often reinforced with wood splints or sweet grass, and handles were constructed with willow or other branches.

Corn

Corn was life for tribes throughout the Eastern Woodlands. Corn can provide 75% of the human body's food needs. Many corn varieties were raised—the Iroquois raised 15. Corn did not require very much labor to grow. Cherokee men cleared land to grow corn; Cherokee women then hoed the soil and made small mounds in which to plant the corn. After planting the seed, the only needed care until the harvest was scaring off birds. Usually, two crops were sown, a summer crop to be eaten and a fall crop to be dried and stored for winter. After husking and washing, the corn was ground into meal. The meal was then shaken through a sifter basket to remove coarse fragments.

Some corn had to be saved for the lean winter months. Cobs were dried and hung in the house. Others were shucked and the kernels dried and stored in bins or underground granaries. Ground corn kernels were boiled as porridge or made into cakes and eaten with maple sugar, honey, or fat. After husking, drying, and shucking (stripping kernels off the cob), Iroquois women had a long, hard job making corn into meal. Dried kernels were pounded in a wooden mortar and pestle or cracked and ground between two stones.

Beans and Squash

Beans and squash were often planted in the same field as corn. Beans twined up the cornstalks and squash choked weeds and kept the ground moist. The Iroquois believed that corn, beans, and squash had spirit beings and called them "the three sisters." Dried and stored, corns, beans, and squash guaranteed food supplies. Squashes grew throughout the summer when they were eaten fresh providing an important source for Vitamin C. A portion of the crop was cut into strips or rings and sun-dried. Ripening in the autumn, pumpkin squash is a valuable vegetable. English colonists learned its use from Native Americans and invented pumpkin pie. Beans were a good food source because they had high amounts of proteins and essential vitamins. Equally important, beans can be dried and stored for long periods, even years, without spoiling.



Dipping Gourd

A gourd is a kind of squash. When dried, gourds can be used for containers. This gourd has been made into a dipper or ladle that could be used for water.

Basket

Baskets are woven from honey suckle vines that have been dried. They are colored with dyes from other plants. Deep red comes from bloodroot and dark brown is made by boiling walnut husks in water. Baskets were used for gathering, storing, carrying, and even cooking food. To cook in a basket, rocks were heated in the fire. Then, the hot rocks were buried in a mixture of cornmeal inside the basket. The heat from the rocks warmed the food. Tightly woven baskets were sometimes used to hold water.

Arrowhead

Arrowheads were usually made from flint. Flint is a type of rock that was usually collected along the riverbanks. With the point of a deer antler, the edges are chipped away until the right shape and sharpness is achieved. It took great skill to learn how to shape the flint so that it was balanced. Then, the arrowhead is tied to a wood shaft with a strand of sinew. Feathers are added to the end for balance so that the arrow will fly straight.

Oyster Shells

Along the coast, rock such as flint did not naturally occur. Indians there learned that tough and plentiful oyster shells could be used as tools for preparing food, removing fur from skins, etc. The oysters were also a popular and nutritious food source.

Music CD