

Community Changes Over Time in Mecklenburg County

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Introduction

Do you think that children are natural “people lovers”? I do! As a teacher, I have observed that children can be quickly hooked on any subject if it involves people whose personalities, struggles, dreams and experiences can “come alive” for them. I have sought to incorporate that natural curiosity into this curriculum unit about history in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina and the changes that have occurred during the period 1800 - 1920. Through participation in the Charlotte Teacher’s Institute seminar titled “The Rise of the New South,” I have learned content that will help my students see changes over time in their community through the examination of economics, education, and the stories of leaders and personalities who have made a difference in the lives of others.

Background

I teach third grade in a large urban elementary school in the city of Charlotte, North Carolina. My school is part of Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools. My class has 22 students that remain in a self-contained classroom, in which I teach all subjects. African American students make up over half of our population and half of our students qualify for free or reduced lunches.

North Carolina Social Studies goals for third graders include analyzing how qualities of good citizenship make a difference in the community and other social environments. They analyze the multiple roles that individuals perform in families, workplaces, and communities. They examine how individuals can initiate change in families, neighborhoods, and communities, how the relationship between people and geography makes a difference, and they apply basic economic principles to the study of communities. My unit will do all of these through our examination of economics, education and people that have made a difference in this community.

The students will study the changes in economics over time by developing an idea about an early 1800s profession and making an advertisement for their business, making a large scale map to show the rivers and railroad routes that changed the course of economic history in Mecklenburg, and writing a narrative as we study the life of the cotton mill worker.

Changes in education will be highlighted as we learn about hornbooks and the lack of public schools, the quest for education by African Americans after the Civil War, and the effects of Jim Crow laws on the segregation of schools. The Rosenwald rural school building program and Palmer Memorial Institute will be highlighted to show how important the pursuit of education was for all.

Leaders and important personalities will be showcased, and the students will make posters that show why they were important and how they affected the time in which they lived.

Objectives

This curriculum unit is designed to be taught over a 6 week period and will be integrated with the third grade literacy unit, Communities Over Time. The unit is divided into subsections for teacher content and classroom activities for each time period highlighted. Each of the sections includes activities that will be used to reinforce important ideas about people and events.

The first section covers the antebellum period 1800-1850. This section will show how the Carolina Gold Rush and the continued agricultural development of Mecklenburg County helped Charlotte grow and prosper. Education will be studied by learning about small church sponsored schools and tutors. To examine the events of the time two personalities will be highlighted: James Latta, a planter and slave owner in Mecklenburg County and David Walker, a North Carolina born abolitionist.

Section two describes the changes seen with the arrival of railroads, the Civil War and Reconstruction. Geography will be studied to highlight the plight of the landlocked farmers as they tried to get their crops to market and how this saved Charlotte from being a target in the Civil War. During and after Reconstruction, education became a crucial factor for African Americans. We will examine why this was so important. Zebulon Vance, W.C. Smith, and Leonidas Polk were all advocates for education, and their lives will be used to show the attitudes about education at the time.

Section three highlights the lives of those who came to toil in the cotton mills and live in the mill villages of Mecklenburg County in the early 1900s. The Plessy v. Ferguson decision will be discussed, and we will explore how Jim Crow laws had a devastating effect on education. The contributions made by Julius Rosenwald and Charlotte Hawkins Brown will be highlighted. Nathan Newbold and Daniel A. Tompkins are other leaders used to develop the events of this time.

The culminating product will be a timeline that will be displayed on the wall outside the classroom, allowing plenty of room to add posters, maps, and any additional information the students decide to include. After each section, activities will provide ideas and items to be displayed.

Teacher Content: Antebellum Period (1800-1850)

Economics

During the period of 1800-1850, gold and cotton, along with corn and wheat were the chief products of Mecklenburg County and the surrounding area. In 1799, about 25 miles east of Charlotte, a 17 lb. nugget of gold was found in Little Creek Meadow. Over the next several decades, men across the Carolina piedmont searched for gold in the creeks and streams, and in 1825, Samuel McComb dug the first pit mine. This required a large investment in equipment and knowledge of technology. The area began to fill with experts and experienced miners from other places. Charlotte was the gold-mining center of the United States during the first half of the nineteenth century. A branch of the United States Mint was authorized to be built in Charlotte in

1835 to produce coins from the gold mined in the area. It was completed in 1837. In 1834, a branch of the North Carolina Bank was established. Mecklenburg's mining business ended with the California Gold Rush and the Civil War.

Charlotte's earliest industries emerged from the demand created by an increasing population. The first industrial enterprise was a rifle factory, followed by a flour mill, saw mill and blacksmith shop, as well as several small stores. The trend in Charlotte was for a diversified economy to meet the needs of the people. This diversity almost came to a stop when the improvements made to the cotton gin early in the eighteenth century gave great impetus to the cultivation of cotton. Shops which had been productive were closed to the public and utilized only for what was needed on the farm or plantation. By the 1850's, Mecklenburg placed third in cotton output, fourth in butter, eleventh in corn, and twelfth in wheat production in the state. Cotton brought slaves. In 1790, just 14% of Mecklenburg's population was slaves, compared to 40% by the 1850's. This increase can be attributed to the value added to cash crop agriculture during this time by slave labor.

Education

Before the 1840s, education was a luxury for wealthy whites. Mecklenburg County schools of this time were privately owned and conducted mostly by ministers who had available space in their homes. There were also teachers who went from home to home. There were no public schools in North Carolina until after the public school law was passed in 1839. The first public schools for common North Carolinians opened in 1841.

The first school in Mecklenburg County was built at Sugaw Creek Presbyterian Church. The church fathers did start teaching at the church in 1806. Sugaw Creek school was the only one available for children of the settlers, so it was soon necessary to build a separate log school house on the church grounds. After a few years, the growing enrollment and increasing affluence of local planters gave rise to plans for a fine new brick school house. In the early 1820s Sugaw Creek Presbyterian church hired a skilled French builder named Gillet to design and build a new school. You can learn more about the history of Sugaw Creek School and see pictures at [HYPERLINK](http://www.cmhpf.org/surveys&rsugaw.htm)

"<http://www.cmhpf.org/surveys&rsugaw.htm>"<http://www.cmhpf.org/surveys&rsugaw.htm>

Personalities/Leaders

In 1800, James Latta had his home built in the backcountry of Mecklenburg County for his wife, Jane Knox. They had four children, Betsy, Polly, Nancy, and Ezekiel, who all grew up in the house. All of his children attended boarding school. Even after he had built the plantation home, he continued to make the trip along the Great Wagon Road as a traveling merchant, before focusing on planting full-time. From Charlotte, North Carolina to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and back again, he sold items from the cities to small backcountry stores and individual plantations and farms. He owned 742 acres and 34 slaves, and became an important and influential early planter.

David Walker was born in Wilmington in 1785 to a free mother and slave father. He grew up

free, obtained an education, and traveled throughout the country. He settled in Boston. He became an abolitionist whose pamphlet *Appeal...to the Colored Citizens of the World* (1829), urged slaves to fight for their freedom. It was one of the most radical documents of the antislavery movement. He was a frequent contributor to *Freedom's Journal*, an antislavery weekly. Sometime in the 1820s he opened a secondhand clothing store on the Boston waterfront. Through this business he could purchase clothes taken from sailors who had bartered them for alcohol and then resell them to seamen about to leave the city. He would then conceal copies of his *Appeal* in the pockets, which he believed would reach Southern ports and pass through the hands of other used-clothes dealers who would pass them on. He also used sympathetic black seamen to distribute pamphlets directly. When the smuggled pamphlets were discovered, the states reacted with legislation prohibiting circulation of abolitionist literature and forbidding slaves to learn to read and write. Walker's pamphlet greatly disturbed most white North Carolinians (because a native son had written it) and led to a fundamental shift in race relations in the state during the next decade. Although he was warned that he was in danger, Walker refused to flee to Canada. Many believed he had been poisoned when his body was found soon afterward near his shop. After his death, Walker's *Appeal* was widely reprinted and accepted by a small minority of abolitionists, but most antislavery leaders and free blacks rejected his call for violence at the time. Walker's only son, Edwin G. Walker, was elected to the Massachusetts legislature in 1866.

Classroom Activities: Antebellum Period (1800-1850)

1. Students will partner read pages 18 – 26 in *If You Lived in Colonial Times* by Ann McGovern and June Otani. After reading about the schools in this period, the students will make their own hornbook. A hornbook was used to teach children to read and write. It was made with a piece of wood (usually shaped like a paddle, so it had a handle) with printed text on each side. It was covered with a thin piece of horn. After the children learned the alphabet, they were ready to use the New England Primer textbook. You can learn more about the hornbook and see an example at HYPERLINK "<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/iss/archivespec/learn-exhib/spotlight/archive2006-7/hbook.html>" <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/iss/archivespec/learn-exhib/spotlight/archive2006-7/hbook.html>. Using light brown paper, students will create their own hornbook using calligraphy letters (free downloadable font is available at HYPERLINK "<http://www.dafont.com/theme.php?cat=601>" <http://www.dafont.com/theme.php?cat=601>) and one of the following sayings:

Never put off until tomorrow what can be done today.
Birds of a feather flock together.
Idleness is the mother of evil.
All that glitters is not gold.
Handsome is as handsome does.
Curiosity killed the cat.

2. Students will partner read pages 67 – 77 in *If You Lived in Colonial Times* by Ann McGovern and June Otani. After reading about the occupations in this period, the students will choose an occupation to advertise. The students will illustrate a poster about the business, explaining what their business offers to the customer. They will present the poster to the class, allowing students to ask questions about their chosen profession. Possibilities include: cobbler,

hatter, blacksmith, pewterer, tanner, silversmith, cabinetmaker, clockmaker, miller, wheelwright, cooper, barber, tailor and tinsmith.

3. Students will make biographical posters illustrating who James Latta and David Walker were and why they are important to this time period in Mecklenburg/NC history.

4. A timeline will be started for the unit that begins at 1799. The following things will be added to the timeline:

1799 - The discovery of gold at Little Meadow Creek.

1800 – James Latta builds his home in Mecklenburg County.

1820 – Sugaw Creek School is built

1834 – Branch of the North Carolina Bank opened in Charlotte.

1837 – Branch of the U.S. Mint opens in Charlotte.

All dates will be represented with pictures and commentary about the event and what it represents for the history of Mecklenburg County and North Carolina.

Teacher Content: Railroads, the Civil War, and Reconstruction

Economics

Despite the prosperity that came from the agriculture boom, Mecklenburg faced a barrier to growth that would be hard to overcome. High transportation costs meant that most trade remained local and self-contained. The Carolinas' chief cities were all ocean or river ports or political centers on the coastal plain: Wilmington, Raleigh, and Fayetteville in North Carolina and Charleston and Columbia in South Carolina. The Catawba and Yadkin Rivers ran north-south across the state and were not navigable. On October 21, 1852, 20,000 people came to Charlotte to witness a landmark event in Charlotte's economic development. The new Charlotte & South Carolina Railroad steamed into town. By the eve of the Civil War, the opening of three additional railway lines made Charlotte the best trading location in the North Carolina backcountry. These railroad lines gave the cotton trade a giant boost.

The railroads brought about the rise of a cotton district in Charlotte's downtown. Merchants began to open stores for the traveling farmers. Business enterprises began to push out residences, and Charlotte's downtown became a thriving business district.

During the Civil War, Charlotte's economic picture was much brighter than other locales. As soon as fighting started in 1861, Charlotte's entrepreneurs began to turn out gunpowder, chemicals, woolen goods, and canteens, and the Mecklenburg Iron Works switched from making mining equipment to canons. Charlotte was made the site of the Confederate main naval yard, because of its landlocked geography. For two years, the rebels moved their foundry and other machine shops to a spot by the railroad near downtown. Charlotte's sheltered backcountry location prevented the city from ever coming under attack from Northern troops. This gave Charlotte a great advantage. The world wanted Southern cotton, and any community that could transport their crops could name their own price. By 1875, Charlotte was the busiest inland

cotton market in both Carolinas. Another rail line was added to Wilmington in 1872.

Education

The outstanding system of public schools that had been started in North Carolina before the Civil War ended soon after with a lack of interest and mounting debt. But by 1874, there were 46 white schools and 34 African American schools in Mecklenburg County. In 1886 the Myers Street School, the first public school for blacks, opened in Charlotte.

You can learn more and see pictures at [HYPERLINK](#)

"http://cmstory.org/aaa2/places/my_003.htm" http://cmstory.org/aaa2/places/my_003.htm. Black leaders began a campaign to promote education for blacks after the War. They knew that education was the solution for African Americans gaining economic and political power.

Personalities/Leaders

Becoming known as “North Carolina’s Civil War Governor,” Zebulon Vance was one of the most influential figures to hail from the mountains of Western North Carolina. His life represented the challenges, struggles, and accomplishments of a nation divided by war and a growing southern state in the nineteenth century. Vance attended the state university in Chapel Hill where he excelled, earning his law degree and developing his beneficial oratory skills. Vance began his political career at age 24 when he was elected to the North Carolina State House of Commons. He quickly gained recognition and was elected to a United States congressional seat four years later. In 1858, at age 28, he was the youngest member of that body and looked forward to a long career of service to both his state and his country. As a U.S. Congressman, A staunch unionist, Vance was in favor of a strong but fair federal government. The beginning of hostilities at Fort Sumter in 1861 changed his position. Vance became an ardent supporter of the Confederate cause. By August of 1861, Vance was commander of the 26th North Carolina Regiment. He was elected governor of North Carolina 1862, and served until 1865. He vigorously supported states’ rights and even butted heads with the Confederate government on war-time measures that harmed North Carolina businesses and residents. It has been said that it was his practice “to fight with the Yankees and fuss with the Confederacy.” This attitude endeared him to the citizens of North Carolina, known for their independence and mistrust of government. When the war ended in 1865, Vance was arrested and held for several months in a Washington, D.C. After being pardoned in 1867, he was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1870 although Radical Republicans refused to seat him, protesting his history of owning slaves and serving the Confederacy. Returning to his home state, Vance was elected again as governor. He was eventually elected to another term as U.S. Senator in 1879. His speeches were always delivered to a packed Senate gallery, a testament to his skill as a powerful debater. He was just beginning his fourth term when he died in April 1894. He was a supporter of education. After the War he proposed teacher training in anticipation of an increase in school enrollment and created the Fayetteville Colored Normal School, now Fayetteville State University, as a teacher training institution for blacks. One of the first summer schools in America was held in 1877 at the University of North Carolina in order to train teachers.

William C. Smith was the African American publisher of the *Charlotte Messenger*. His stated mission was “to promote the moral, intellectual and material standing of our people”. He was

interested in promoting uplift in nonpolitical ways. He was an ardent supporter of education and bravely condemned the act of lynching. He reported on the lodges and social groups for African Americans during the 1880s that shared black community life. He encouraged service-oriented organization in the African American community and called for the establishment of a night school for Charlotte's young black men. His paper carefully covered the graduation exercises at black schools. He printed sermons in his paper and encouraged morality and purpose for all. To see a picture of Smith, go to **HYPERLINK**

"<http://cmstory.org/african/album/volume1/work03.htm>"

<http://cmstory.org/african/album/volume1/work03.htm>.

One of the state's most important agricultural leaders, Leonidas Polk was born in Anson County in 1837. Prior to the Civil War, Polk owned a modest farm and a number of slaves. He was a Unionist but eventually supported the Confederacy and served from 1862 until he was elected to the state legislature in 1864. After the war, the North Carolina Central Railroad laid down track near his farm. In order to make money, Polk sold sections of his property to people who wanted to settle near the railroad, founding a town which he called Polkton. In 1874, Polk began publishing his first newspaper, the weekly *Ansonian*, in which he gave advice to farmers, arguing that they should diversify their farms (plant a variety of crops rather than just one cash crop) and raise crops and animals they could use rather than focusing on cash crops such as cotton. Diversification allowed farmers to weather difficult economic times while an overreliance on cotton often led to ruin. In 1877, Zebulon Vance appointed Polk the first commissioner of North Carolina's new Department of Agriculture. Polk resigned from the Department of Agriculture after only three years, unhappy with the lack of support he received from the legislature. In 1886, he founded the *Progressive Farmer* magazine and used it to advocate improvements in agriculture, farmers' organizations, and the establishment in 1887 of a state agricultural college, the North Carolina College of Agricultural and Mechanic Arts, later North Carolina State University. Polk also became active in the National Farmers' Alliance, which had 100,000 members in North Carolina and had moved its headquarters there. He served as the Alliance's president from 1889 to 1891. The Democratic Party showed little interest in the reforms he wanted, and he joined the new People's Party (or Populist Party). A nationally-known reformer, Polk may well have become the party's nominee for President in 1892, but he died suddenly that June.

Classroom Activities: Railroads, the Civil War, and Reconstruction

1. To show the difficulty farmers had in transporting their goods to market, students will work in groups of four to make a map showing the topography of North and South Carolina and any impediments to traveling to the major markets of Wilmington, Raleigh, and Fayetteville in North Carolina, and Charleston and Columbia in South Carolina. Maps can be viewed at **HYPERLINK**

"<http://www.learnnc.org/search?area=&phrase=map+north+carolina+south+carolina>"<http://www.learnnc.org/search?area=&phrase=map+north+carolina+south+carolina>. The students will then amend the maps to show the impact the railroad had on the economy in Charlotte.

2. Students will make biographical posters that illustrate who Zebulon Vance, William C. Smith, and Leonidas Polk were and why they are important to Mecklenburg/NC history.

3. The following dates will be added to the timeline:
- 1852 – First passenger train arrives in Charlotte.
 - 1856 – Railroad from Charlotte to Goldsboro completed.
 - 1861 – North Carolina seceded from the Union.
 - 1862 – Confederate Navy yard moved to Charlotte.
 - 1862 – Zebulon Vance is elected governor of North Carolina.
 - 1873 - First graded school (elementary) opens in North Carolina in Charlotte.
 - 1877 – Vance appoints Leonidas Polk the first commissioner of North Carolina Agriculture.

All dates will be represented with pictures and commentary about the event and what it represents for the history of Mecklenburg County and North Carolina.

Teacher Content: Cotton Mills and Jim Crow

Economics

There were 33 small cotton mills in North Carolina in 1873, but none were in Mecklenburg County until the Charlotte Cotton Mill was opened in 1881. By 1896 there were 5 in Charlotte, and in 1903 there were 17, with one each in Davidson, Pineville, Huntersville and Cornelius.

The new mills were much larger than North Carolina's older ones, so owners began to construct mill housing for the workers coming from the farms to work in the mills. By 1900, 92 percent of textile workers lived in the company's mill villages. The mill village usually included a supervisor's home, houses for workers and their families, one or more churches, a school, and the company store. In the early 1900s, most mill houses were one-story with only four rooms. They were lit by kerosene lamps and heated by open fireplaces. Many manufacturers wanted to encourage children working in the mill, so they had a rule that required families to supply one worker for each room occupied. It was advantageous to be close to the mill, but it also meant that mill managers could keep close tabs on families sometimes using other company employees for surveillance. Mills often supported the churches in the villages, and, in turn, mill owners frequently shaped the message from the pulpit. Not surprisingly, some company-supported pastors preached a gospel that favored the company's interests.

The desperation on the farm resulted in many having to move to the towns for mill jobs. Droughts and the fall in cotton prices pushed people to the cities to make a living. In addition to the burden of working long hours, mill hands faced horrible working conditions. The mills were kept hot and damp in order to make the cotton easier to spin, and lint choked the air. Workers were laid off at the whim of the market, and in the absence of child labor laws, children were forced to work long hours at dangerous jobs.

Education

The state's constitution of 1868 required the General Assembly to provide funding for schools. The separation of black and white students was not mentioned until 1875. This began the racially segregated system that persisted for almost 100 years. Public funding for education was limited or non-existent from the end of the Civil War until the late 1890s. Propped up by the "separate but equal" ruling in Plessy v. Ferguson (1896), first white schools were built, then in 1910, public elementary schools for blacks began receiving money. Nathan Newbold became the state agent for African American schools. Much of the money for black schools in North Carolina came from out-of-state philanthropic agencies, including the Rosenwald Fund, a northern charity. See [HYPERLINK](#)

"<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X3o1HSlcOgk>"<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X3o1HSlcOgk> for an informative look at the history of Mecklenburg Rosenwald Schools.

The first schools providing a high school education for blacks were not established until 1918. Between 1923 and 1929, secondary schools for blacks were concentrated in Mecklenburg and other larger counties. In counties where no secondary education was offered, African American parents had to send their children to a private school. One of these was Palmer Memorial Institute in Sedalia, Guilford County. Nineteen-year-old Charlotte Hawkins Brown opened the school in 1902 and named it for a northern benefactor, Alice Freeman Palmer. Palmer began with both elementary and high-school instruction, and by the mid-1920s, had added an accredited junior college program. It became one of the better-known black preparatory schools in the nation. See [HYPERLINK](#)

"<http://www.nchistoricsites.org/chb/history.htm>"<http://www.nchistoricsites.org/chb/history.htm> for a wealth of information about Charlotte Hawkins Brown and Palmer Memorial Institute.

Personalities/Leaders

An owner and leader of Sears, Roebuck and Company, Julius Rosenwald was one of the most successful entrepreneurs of his time. The Rosenwald rural school building program was an effort to improve the quality of public education for African Americans in the early twentieth-century South. In 1912, Julius Rosenwald gave Booker T. Washington permission to use some of the money he had donated to Tuskegee Institute for the construction of six small schools in rural Alabama. Pleased with the results, Rosenwald agreed to fund a larger program for schoolhouse construction based at Tuskegee. In 1917 he set up the Julius Rosenwald Fund, a Chicago-based philanthropic foundation, and in 1920 the Rosenwald Fund established an independent office for the school building program in Nashville, Tennessee. By 1928, one in every five rural schools for black students in the South was a Rosenwald school. These schools housed one third of the region's rural black schoolchildren and teachers. At the program's conclusion in 1932, it had produced 4,977 new schools, 217 teachers' homes, and 163 shop buildings, constructed at a total cost of \$28,408,520 to serve 663,615 students in 883 counties of 15 states. There were 26 Rosenwald schools built in Mecklenburg County between 1918 and 1929. Designed for one to four teachers, they were all one-story buildings. Most were phased out in the 1940s and 1950s as school buses and improved roads made consolidation of students feasible.

Nathan Newbold was a dedicated educator. He became North Carolina's first state agent for African American schools in 1913 and maintained the post until 1950 when he retired. He

worked tirelessly for reform in the black schools, although huge disparities remained. He protested the conditions in black schools that included lack of access for those ready for high school, a shortened school day and severe overcrowding. Some classrooms had up to 100 students, causing Newbold to say that conditions were “pathetic” for black students. He protested that black teachers were paid as much as 30 percent less than white teachers. He is credited with managing the task of expanding opportunities for African American students when there was very little support.

D. A. Tompkins was an industrialist who came to Charlotte after earning an engineering degree from highly respected Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. He chose Charlotte as his base to sell Westinghouse steam engines to the cotton industry. He joined with R.M. Miller to form the D.A. Tompkins Company. The Tompkins Company designed over 100 cotton mills across the region. His book *Cotton Mill, Commercial Features* was subtitled “A Text-Book for the Use of Textile Schools and Investors,” and it was intended to provide everything someone needed to know in order to run a successful textile mill. He was a proponent of mill village housing and in his book, he covered design, construction, and sanitation. He was an advocate for thrift and encouraged the building of a southern industrial base. Tompkins is considered to have been a New South Prophet when he gave the following example of the preindustrial situation: “I attended a funeral once in Pickens County, Georgia. It was a poor "one gallus" fellow. They buried him in the midst of a marble quarry; they cut through solid marble to make his grave; and yet a little tombstone put above him was from Vermont. They buried him in a heart of a pine forest, and the pine coffin was imported from Cincinnati. They buried him within touch of an iron mine, and yet the nails in his coffin and the iron in the shovel that dug his grave were imported from Pittsburg (sic). They buried him beside the best sheep-grazing country on earth, and the coffin bands themselves were imported from the North. The South didn't furnish a thing on earth for that funeral but the corpse and the hole in the ground." This quote most certainly was used to motivate the men he encountered and constantly encouraged to form the new South. He bought the *Charlotte Observer* and developed it into one of the most influential papers in the country and used it to promote the textile industry. He was a proponent of trade schools and was an ardent supporter of the North Carolina College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, which later became North Carolina State University. Eventually, Tompkins built and owned a number of mills in and near Charlotte, including the Alpha, Ada and Victor mills.

Classroom Activities: Cotton Mills and Jim Crow

1. Using the Smart Board, show the video/slideshow at <http://www.lib.unc.edu/stories/cotton/about/reform.html>

After discussion, students will use the information from the article to write a narrative about how their life probably compares to the children working in the mills.

2. Discuss with students the concept of “separate but equal,” decided in the Plessy v. Ferguson decision. Read *Ruby Bridges Goes to School*.

3. Show HYPERLINK "<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X3o1HSlcOgk>"<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X3o1HSlcOgk>

[cOgk](#) and discuss the importance of the Rosenwald rural school Program. Students will write a narrative about why the Rosenwald schools were important.

4. Use HYPERLINK

"<http://www.nchistoricsites.org/chb/history.htm>"<http://www.nchistoricsites.org/chb/history.htm> to highlight Charlotte Hawkins Brown and her Palmer Memorial Institute. The students will make posters expressing why education is important to them.

5. Students will make biographical posters to illustrate who Julius Rosenwald, Nathan Newbold, and DA Tompkins were and why they are important to Mecklenburg/NC history.

6. The following things will be added to the timeline:

1881 – First cotton mill begins operation in Mecklenburg.

1886 – Myers Street School, the first graded school for African Americans opened in Charlotte.

1887 - North Carolina College of Agricultural and Mechanic Arts, later North Carolina State University is established.

1898 – Presbyterian Hospital opened.

1902 – Palmer Memorial Institute opened in Sedalia, NC.

1913 – Nathan Newbold becomes the state agent for African American schools in North Carolina.

All dates will be represented with pictures and commentary about the event and what it represents for the history of Mecklenburg County and North Carolina.

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A complete side show and detailed history of children working in cotton mills can be found at

“Child Labor: Reform.” University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Libraries - Home.

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