

The Roots of My Town, My Family, and Me

Torriann M. Dooley

Introduction and Objectives

It is important for students to know who they are and where they came from in order to start deciding where they are going. I want my students to recognize themselves as historians who look back over the past to make generalizations about the present and predictions for their future. Why does their family celebrate certain holidays? How far back can they trace their ancestors, and what do they know about the place they came from? How did their family decide to settle where they are today? These are some ideas that students can explore to know more about who they are. Second grade students can begin to form opinions about what they want their lives to look like, and although circumstances may change their decisions over time, if they have a firm foundation of who they are and the history of their ancestors, they can start inferring meaning in their lives while figuring out how to be contributing members of society.

I came from a family that valued education. Despite my great-grandparents being poor and having to work various jobs just to put food on the table and support the family, they made sure that their children went to school everyday. My grandfathers and their brothers joined different branches of the military in order to benefit from the GI education bill and attend college or trade school. They made sure that my parents and their siblings did well in school and funded their college educations. I was a recipient of the attitude that education was important, and under the support, guidance, and encouragement of my parents and grandparents, I excelled in school and attended college. I hope to share this value with others—someday my own children, but right now my students and friends. Because I know the history of why my family values education so much, I appreciate so much more the education I have and my responsibility of educating others. I want my students to understand the history of their family so they can carry on the legacy that their ancestors have designed for them, and to also understand that they can be agents of change in their family's story and can use their history to inform their present and design their future. This curriculum unit is being designed for second graders, and could be modified to be used by other elementary grades. I am a second grade teacher in a self-contained classroom in a large suburban public school in the Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools district. My school fosters strong parental involvement and participates in the Basic School philosophy which prioritizes "The School as Community, Commitment to Character, Climate for Learning, and Curriculum with Coherence." These priorities promote themed units with integrated connections across the subjects of math, science, social studies, and language arts. They also encourage the use of developing and using relevant and rigorous curriculum for students. The state's Standard Course of Study, prior

knowledge of students, observations, and assessments inform instruction in the classroom. Student assessments include district mandated quarterly tests in the subjects of reading, writing, and math, self-reflection, portfolios, grade level pre and post unit assessment, formative and summative assessment, and classroom observations. In the classroom and at the school, students have access to numerous technologies including computers with internet and instructional software, calculators, overhead and data projectors, TVs, VCR/DVD players, CD players, and cassette players. We have a transient student population that averages over 900 students, and there is an approximately one to twenty-two teacher to student ratio on my grade level. The student population of my school includes 59.6% African American, 16.5% Caucasian, 11.3% Hispanic, 4.9% Asian, and 6.9% multiracial. 54% of our students meet the state's poverty level. 64.5% of our 2009-2010 students passed the state's end-of-grade test.¹

“People make sense of their lives through story.” In this curriculum unit, students will explore their family's story in order to make sense of their own lives. They will also write their own story in order to share and compare with their peers and preserve for future generations. As students begin to understand and come to recognize themselves as historians, I want them to start thinking about the story that is unique to them – their own; and to begin to share that story with others in order to reflect and compare ways their life, family, and culture is similar and different with that of their peers. Additionally, they will examine similarities and differences between themselves and children in the South at the end of the 1800s throughout the 1900s. In order to understand more about the history of the South in which they live, they will learn about things that were different from the way they are today. Students will learn about child labor, early education, segregation, and the struggle for integration. Today, students are required to attend schools, and attendance policies are strictly enforced. In the early 1900s, North Carolina was an industrial state, and many farms, factories, and mills contributed to the industry and economic growth of the state. Back then, there were child labor laws, but they were only followed by the mills that wanted to follow them. There are many documented sources where children younger than the age of 12 (about the age of my students) worked in the mills to earn money for their families. Documenting the American South is a website source that offers pictures and captions depicting young children hard at work in various mills across the state of North Carolina. The North Carolina Standard Course of Study for Social Studies for second graders states, “The learner will analyze how individuals, families, and communities are alike and different.” Students will examine the sources that illustrate children working in the mills and compare them to their own lives today to gain a better understanding of how things have changed over time and how we are similar to our ancestors and how we are different.²

Working in the mills instead of attending school contributes to what a person knows and believes as he or she progresses from childhood to adolescence and then to adulthood. These beliefs are one contributing factor that shapes a person's family and destiny. There are many unique things that shape a person and a variety of ways a

person's history contributes to his or her present, and will contribute to their future. Second graders can begin to have meaningful conversations with their family about events that shaped their family history and what contributed to their family's story. They will then become oral storytellers and authors who relay the information that they learn, research further to understand more about their family's past, and document their own lives.

While engaged in the seminar, "The Rise of the New South," at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, I learned what contributed to the collective history of the South, and what informed the transition and progress of the region in order to make it what it is today. Using the ideas presented in seminar, I'm creating a curriculum unit for my second grade students where they will get to tell their unique story and collect artifacts that articulate who they are and what their family history is. Students will develop an understanding of their heritage and compare it with their peers in order to better understand and build a relationship with each other. In this way, they will develop an appreciation and respect for different people and different cultures. They will also learn about children and education in the state of North Carolina from the late 1800s to the 1900s in order to begin practicing how to compare themselves to others. In 1880 the average amount of money spent per student in the South was \$2.75 in white schools and \$2.51 in black schools. Today, about \$6,511 is spent per student in the state of North Carolina. Using various reference points, students will identify things that are similar and different between children back then and children today. They will use primary sources, including digital copies of photographs from that time period, to make their comparisons and inferences.³

I moved from Massachusetts to North Carolina seven years ago, and everyday I learn and discover new things about the place where I currently live. The seminar, "The Rise of the New South," will help me learn about the Southern identity in order to better help my students understand it. Most of their families come from a variety of places, and they can teach each other about those unique places to which they have a personal connection or affiliation. I also want my students to affirm their identities and set high goals for the future. They will create something to capture their story up to the present.

Background Information

In order for students to start practicing comparing their lives, families, and cultures with other students, I want them to consider making the comparison with students from the past. They will learn about the education of children their age and make comparisons to their lives. Looking at the time period of the 1800s through the 1900s, North Carolina children saw a lot of change related to education.

Public schools date back to the early 1700s in the South but offered limited educational opportunities to citizens. During the 1800s, churches made a commitment to

educate children. Educational opportunities were dependent upon where a family lived, their income level, and the color of their skin. Private schools were available and popular for wealthy white Americans in the South, but the education of African-Americans was dependent upon tuition and grants, not state funding.

One teacher who made a difference during the early 1800s was John Chavis, a free African-American. Little is known about him, but records document that he was a preacher and teacher who ran one of the last integrated schools (in that time period) in North Carolina. Chavis “taught both white and free black students and was widely considered one of the best teachers in the state.” At this time, North Carolina did not have a state education system; education was mostly for the elites because universal education in North Carolina was a low priority. Male teachers were very unusual for this time, and to have an African American teacher teaching white students was almost unheard of. After 1808, he taught white children during the day and black children from sunset until 10pm. White children paid \$2.50 per quarter and African American children paid \$1.75. He valued educating children as well as attending to their morals.⁴

The transition to having state funded public schools came with “North Carolina’s first superintendent of common (public) schools, Calvin Henderson Wiley, who served from 1853-1865.” Through his writing about the state and its culture, “he became interested in the politics of education.” His many contributions to education included: “establishing common schools, improving education, organizing the state education association, beginning teacher training institutes, creating standards and examining boards for teachers, regulating textbooks across the schools, increasing attendance efforts of students and decreasing illiteracy in the state.” Calvin Wiley was also a writer who used his talents to advocate for education in the state. He wrote many articles for newspapers in order to gain popularity and support for schools. He also wrote textbooks for the schools as well as novels about his experiences and the processes of developing the school system. In his novel *Alamance*, he described school rules including: “The punishments shall consist of whipping, slapping in the hand with the rule, riding the ass, and expulsion, according to the gravity of the offence.

- a. The punishment of riding on the ass was generally inflicted for long-continued and gross neglect of study, vulgarity of manners, and insults to the girls, and was as follows: — The culprit, with a large pair of leather spectacles on his nose and a paper cap on his head, with the inscription “Fool’s Cap,” in Roman letters, was mounted astraddle one of the joists, being assisted up by a few cuts of the master’s switch, which sometimes played, at intervals, across his legs during the hour that he held his seat. This punishment was only inflicted on the males, and was considered as so disgraceful that it was rarely merited, and when imposed attached a stigma to the culprit, which affected his standing in and out of school, for a long time afterwards.

2. All the boys and girls may laugh, without noise, when any one is mounted on the ass; but no one shall speak to him, or make gestures or ugly mouths at him, in token of derision.
3. When the master tells an anecdote the students are not bound to laugh immoderately, though it will be considered respectful to give some indication of their being pleased or amused.
4. Whenever one enters or leaves the house, if a boy he shall bow, and if a girl courtesy, to the master, and when a stranger comes in all shall rise and do the same towards him.
5. When the boys meet a stranger on the road they must take off their hats and bow: they are enjoined to be, on all occasions, respectful and attentive to their seniors, and not to talk in their presence, except when bidden.
6. Every boy shall consult the comfort and convenience of the girls before his own, and whoever is caught standing between a female and the fire shall be whipped.
7. If any boy is caught laughing at the homeliness of a girl, or calling her ugly names, he shall ride on the ass.
8. Giggles are detestable, and when a girl is amused she must smile gracefully, or laugh out; and if the master catches any one snickering he will imitate and reprimand her in presence of the whole school.
9. Every offender, when called on, must fully inform on himself, remembering, that by telling the truth he palliates his offence.
10. When the master's rule falls at the feet of any one, he and all his guilty associates must come with it to the teacher.
11. The master will inflict on every common informer the punishment due to the offence of which he maliciously gives information.
12. As it is God who gives the mind, and as he has bestowed more on some than on others, it shall be considered a grave offence to laugh at or ridicule any one who is by nature dull or stupid, such persons being entitled to general commiseration rather than contempt.
13. The girls must remember that the exemptions to which their sex entitles them are to be used as a shield, and not as a sword; and they are therefore enjoined to eschew the abominable and unlady-like habit of indulging in sarcasms and attempted wit at the expense of the boys. Whenever a girl loses the docility, gentleness, and benignity of manners becoming her sex, she forfeits her title to the forbearance and deferential courtesy of the males.
14. No one shall, out of school, speak disrespectfully of the master, or of a fellow-student.
15. No one shall ridicule, laugh at, or make remarks about the dress of another; the boys are enjoined to be kind and courteous to the girls, the girls to be neat and cleanly in their dresses, and all to act as if they were brothers and sisters, the children of the same parents.
16. Let the words of The Preacher be held in constant remembrance, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth,"

These rules described the expectations for school age children and schools. Today, the *Public School Laws of North Carolina* (2001) is 837 pages long and includes rules and laws that govern educational practices in the state, encompassing all aspects of education and emphasizing that “all children can learn.”⁵

Building on the foundations established by Calvin Wiley, public schools were created after the Civil War, and they began to be split by color after Reconstruction. Newspapers and wealthy land owners started to argue that blacks needed to be controlled because, according to historian Tom Hanchett, they were “dangerous and inferior.” Sensing the change, and with help from some whites, blacks created their own institutions. “The Peabody School opened in 1870 as a private black institution” and in 1883, St. Michael’s created its “Training and Industrial School.” Myers Street School was built at Myers and Stonewall streets as “Mecklenburg County’s first black graded school building in 1886.” These educational institutes attracted more families to come from more rural land areas to live in the area in order to provide their children with a public education.⁶

In an effort to keep up with the efforts being made in other parts of the state, “in 1882 Charlotteans moved to make public education available to (white) city children, opening the taxpayer-funded Charlotte Graded School.” Even though the school was available to all (white) children, most of the children were working in the textile mills to support their families and therefore could not or did not come to school. In response to children not going to school, churches created “Sunday Schools” which seemed to teach “reading, writing, and arithmetic and attempted to instill the values of hard work, thrift, and obedience.” Sunday schools were in reality indoctrination by mill owners and instruction was used to help keep mill workers and families responsible to their position in the mills. When mills began in North Carolina, white families transitioned from being farmers to mill workers and “usually began mill work together.” Children were cheap labor in the mills, and most “manufacturers had a rule that required families to supply one worker for each room occupied, further encouraging the entry of children into the mills. Mills sometimes sponsored village schools, providing buildings and paying teachers’ salaries. Supervisors would often send for children in the school when extra workers were needed in the mill.” After the mid 1910s, more children started attending school up to the age of twelve because it became mandatory for them. After their children reached seventh grade, families had to pay for most mill village schools, which forced more children to abandon their education and go work in the mills to support their families.⁷

In the late 19th century and early 20th century, laws protecting children against labor “were moderate and rarely enforced” in North Carolina. Children contributed to family work by maintaining farms, but were also employed by factories. Children were allowed to start working at age 13, and children under the age of 18 “were allowed to work up to a shocking 66 hours per week.” Children younger than 13 were allowed in the mills as “helpers who would begin to learn the jobs that older workers performed and tried their hand at various tasks.” Some jobs in the mills included “spinners (mostly preteen and

teen girls) who constantly attended to the cotton being spun on machines, doffers (small boys) who replaced the full bobbins of thread with empty ones, [and] sweepers (small boys) who swept up the cotton fiber and lint from the floor.” Children dropped out of school to work in the mills to make money for their family, even if their parents didn’t want them to. They were allowed to take breaks, and sometimes even allowed to play. But many of the mill jobs were extremely dangerous, and injured children received little or no compensation from the companies.⁸

While white students chose between attending school and working in the mills, blacks were trying to gain the opportunity to go to school. One program committed to educating African-Americans in the South was the Jeanes Fund which “provided educational assistance to black schools and black students all over the South.” With family money, Anna T. Jeanes created the foundation in the early 1900s and it “was the only one with African-Americans sitting on the board and wielding some power over how to spend the money.” The Jeanes Fund operated by sending to schools mostly black women supervisors who taught students a well rounded education. They provided an academic education and prepared African Americans to live in their homes and take care of their families (by sewing and making fish nets, etc). Jeanes Fund Supervisors were also public figures in the community who made various efforts to “make the communities better places to live.” They continued to make contributions to educating African Americans and serving in the communities until the 1960s when “school desegregation became a reality.”⁹

“Jim Crow” practices manipulated the dynamics of schools and education as well. Charlotte Hawkins Brown (born Charlotte Hawkins) was an African American woman born in North Carolina who moved to Cambridge, MA during her childhood “to escape ‘Jim Crow’ practices of the South and for better social, economic, and educational opportunities.” There she excelled in school and met Alice Freeman Palmer who was an educator and took on the personal role of serving as Charlotte’s mentor. Palmer funded her collegiate education and introduced her to wealthy people. After attending junior college, Brown moved back to North Carolina to educate rural blacks. Her job was sponsored by the American Missionary Association, but despite her efforts to repair the school she was given, it was closed. With the support of African Americans in the area and the financial backing from her friends in the North, Brown raised money to create her own school, the Palmer Memorial Institute. “The school’s board of trustees members were all African Americans” and “its goal was to be a facility where blacks could escape and the then common assumption that African Americans were innately inferior to whites and did not need any schooling beyond vocational training.” The Palmer Memorial Institute had college preparatory instruction and “classes included drama, music, art, math, literature, and romance languages.” Students also had to work to contribute to their education. Brown’s personal philosophy of education combined “education, religion, and deeds” and she gave speeches across the nation regarding this philosophical idea used in her school. In 1937 she “convinced Guilford County officials to open the country’s first

public rural high school for African Americans.” Students attending the Palmer Memorial Institute had to follow these rules in the classroom:

1. Always greet the teacher when meeting for the first time, whether it be morning or not.
 2. Be sure that you have everything you need – text, paper, pen, etc. Don’t be a carpenter without tools.
 3. When called on to recite, always make some sort of reply. Don’t sit dumbly in the seat and say nothing. Don’t even think too long. Valuable minutes are wasted thus.
 4. When standing or sitting, hold yourself erect. Don’t slouch. Talk clearly and sufficiently loud for everyone in the room to hear.
 5. Don’t make a habit of laughing at the mistakes of others. This often hinders a person from doing his best.
 6. Don’t deface property. Writing on or cutting into desks or chairs, writing and drawing in books, breaking the backs, or turning down the corners of pages of texts are evidences of poor training.
 7. Make it your business to keep the room in order. Straighten the shades, keep the floor and desks free of waste paper, and erase the boards when they need it.
 8. Don’t cheat. You will never learn by “copying” from your neighbor or from the book.
 9. Do not argue with or contradict the teacher in class. If you think that she has made a mistake, wait until the hour is over and discuss it with her quietly at the desk.
 10. Do not yell out the answers to questions; wait until you are called upon. The teacher will let you know when concert recitation is desired.
 11. Don’t mistake the classroom for a lunchroom or a bedroom.
- These rules look similar to the expectations for students today.¹⁰

In the early 1900s, the city of Charlotte, North Carolina, began to plan high schools, originally only for boys, but eventually including both genders. Three high schools were built to serve Charlotte’s population: Tech High School “trained the white sons and daughters of blue-collar workers in skills appropriate to the factory,” Second Ward High was for African American students in Charlotte, and Central High School accommodated “moneyed white-collar suburbs.”¹¹

In 1901 North Carolina schools “were only open 73 days each year and fewer than one third of the school-age children were receiving instruction.” Today North Carolina has more than 50 technical schools and community colleges with vocational and technical programs. The University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill opened in 1795, and since then, there are 4 more Universities of North Carolina and eleven state universities.¹²

In addition to segregating schools, Charlotte’s white leaders segregated libraries. Andrew Carnegie “gave Charlotte a grant to construct a white public library.” As a

response to that generous donation, the city aldermen “allocated modest sums to build a separate black building” and books were only used by the race that touched them first.¹³

“The city-county school system had token desegregated in the late 1950s in symbolic, but not literal compliance with *Brown*,” and since children went to school in their own segregated neighborhoods, schools remained segregated. In 1957, Dorothy Counts was one of four black students in Charlotte who attended a white high school. She only lasted four days of threats and abuse before her family moved to Pennsylvania. Attempts at desegregation were made across the South during the 1950s; some were successful and some were not. Pockets of African-Americans were placed into predominantly white schools and suffered the sometimes violent reaction of their peers and the community. As the result of the Swann decision, busing was initiated in the Charlotte Mecklenburg system in 1969 by Judge McMillan, however, the boundaries for busing students were not equitable across the region. The School Board was given the opportunity to create a plan to desegregate schools in the district. After the Board failed, an outside expert was called in to create a plan that included providing students with transportation to fill racial quotas reflective of the district as a whole. “In 1971, the Supreme Court upheld legislation that caused children of different races to be transported to white schools for racial balance.” In an effort to keep their children segregated, many white and affluent families sent their children to private schools.¹⁴

All of these efforts to integrate all citizens into public schools contribute to the unique story that composes the history of the United States of America. “Just as the United States is a diverse nation, consisting of people either from or descended from people all over the world, so, too, is it vital for our collective memory and our world outlook to have historians who represent that diversity.” Students will conduct research into their family history; they will become historians who contribute to the story that makes up our classroom community this year. Students will learn and understand the history that is their life, share it with their peers, and make comparisons to other’s history. Historian David Brody provides an excellent description of the motivation within those who write history:

“First of all, there has to be some sense of calling—that one is drawn to the historian's work and has a personal bent in that particular intellectual direction. Second, there has to be a conviction of something special and important in the often-solitary labors of the research side of what historians do. In part, the attraction is intellectual, almost a game, in which questions from the past call out to the student for answers. But what also is involved is the belief that something worthwhile is being done, maybe not in dollars and cents, but for the life of our society. It's not a small thing to help uncover the historical voice of working people and to give them their rightful place in America's past.”¹⁵

At the beginning of this curriculum unit, students will learn the vocabulary word primary sources, defined as “sources that were created during the historical period that

you are studying,” and apply it throughout the unit to the artifacts they look at related to studying southern history. Their artifact box that they create will be a compilation of primary sources about themselves, as well as any primary sources they can find from their family tradition, and secondary sources, “taking someone else’s word for what happened and trusting them to approach the subject objectively, interpret the evidence thoughtfully, and report their findings in interesting and appropriate ways.”¹⁶

Students will use the background information they learn about children in the early 1900s to generate questions they want to ask their ancestors about their family’s history.

Strategies

Students will spend time researching their family history. They will be historians. They will learn through looking at photographs of children, students, and schools from the beginning of the 1900s and through making comparisons to their lives today. Before starting this curriculum unit, I will take digital photographs of the students in my class in their natural school setting so that they can compare the photographs from long ago to the photographs today. Students will work in groups to complete this activity, and they will produce Venn diagrams illustrating the results of their findings.

At the beginning of the curriculum unit the students will decorate their own (empty) cereal box. Around the box they need to include pictures of themselves, either drawn or photographed, as well as picture and written information about who they are today – their favorite things to do, food, color, book, sports team, etc., and other things that are significant about their lives like their birth date, names of parents and siblings, and even friends. This box will be their special place to house information, objects, pictures, and papers that they gather and collect. It will be theirs to keep and preserve for as long as they want. (See Appendix II for a sample of an All About Me list that can be attached to the outside of the box).

Students will act as researchers and historians gathering information about their own personal families. They will interview adults in their family and complete a graphic organizer to help them organize the information they’re gathering. For older students conducting interviews with people in their family or in the community, the website <http://www.hsp.org/files/oralhistoryguide.pdf> has some good advice on how to go about doing that. What will work best developmentally for second grade students will be for the students to generate a list of questions they may want to ask or gather more information about and compose those questions on a graphic organizer where they can record the answers they hear. When students research and learn about things that are personal or specific to them, it makes learning much more relevant for them. Their learning is steered in the direction they want it to go based on what they know about their family, and with some guidance, they will use a variety of resources to learn more information about where they are from.

Students will read about the South using our Social Studies textbook as well as other developmentally appropriate resources in order to better understand their role as a responsible citizen in the region. Read aloud selections will be used in the classroom that model different family dynamics, history and heritage, so students can compare their own historical story to the characters in the books that they are listening to being read. Please reference the annotated Reading Lists for Students attached to this curriculum unit for suggested titles to use as read aloud selections or book choices students could have access to in order to support their learning.

Lessons from this unit will be integrated and support standards across the curriculum, including the areas of reading, writing, math, and social studies. Students will engage in research for the purposes of writing, exploring, organizing, reflecting, and explaining. They will graph data that they gather when making comparisons about their families, like the number of siblings they have or regions or countries their family members are from.

Students will follow the steps of “approaching primary sources” as described in the website <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-newcentury/745>. First, students will identify the source by telling what its nature is, who created it and what they know about the creator, when and where it was produced. Next they will contextualize the source learning about the historical context and creator. Third, students will explore the source and evaluate factual information, opinions related in the source, what is missing from the source, what is surprising or interesting or not understood by the source. Lastly, students will analyze the source (See Appendix III for graphic organizer students can use to complete this).

Rationale

It is important for students to know where they came from in order to understand their role in society. Knowing where they are from can help them develop their own personal identity and to create a respect for themselves, as well as an appreciation for their peers who share with them some similarities and differences. This helps to develop a classroom community that is respectful and where students can understand other cultures, feel validated by their own, and recognize the significance of the diversity that makes up the classroom community.

Classroom Activities

Students will learn about children and students from the early 1900s. They will examine some primary sources, pictures, of children from that time period. Website resources for pictures include the National Archives website, <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/hine-photos/> and the Old West Durham Neighborhood Association website, <http://www.owdna.org/History/history15.htm>. They

will also look at pictures available at <http://docSouth.unc.edu/nc/childlabor/childlabor.html> that show child labor in the South. Students can either look at the photographs and captions at the computers or the teacher can print them out and have them available for students to look at in groups. Students will follow the steps of “approaching primary sources” as described in the website <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-newcentury/745> (see Appendix III). They will compare these sources to primary sources of today—pictures I will take of them in the classroom and around the school doing what is natural and expected of them. Students will work in partners or small groups to examine the primary sources from the 1900s and today. They will record their comparison ideas into a Venn diagram illustrating the similarities and differences they observe of children then and now. Students will share their results with other students in the class. They can either present their findings to the class as a whole group, or larger groups of students can meet to share their findings. Students will be individually evaluated based on the efforts they make to follow the steps for approaching primary sources, and groups will collectively be evaluated on their findings as recorded in their Venn diagrams. Students will probably need a couple of class periods (or one long class period) to have time to examine and analyze the primary resources and record a comparison.

Students will create an artifact box to preserve all of the items they create that tells their own personal history. It is important to teach young children how to save things that are important and what they should value and treasure about their lives. They are also developing skills for organizing materials. They will organize the information they learn and recordings in their artifact box. They will decorate the outside of their artifact box to include pictures (either drawn or photographed) of themselves as well as information about themselves, such as a student generated “All About Me” questionnaire (see Appendix II). All of the items the students create will be preserved in their artifact box. Teachers need to create a space in the classroom for students to store their artifact boxes so they are available for students to access when they need them. Students will probably need at least one class period to complete this activity, and they will need access to markers, glue, and construction paper. Ideally the artifact boxes will be aesthetically pleasing so that they (and their families) will value them enough to save them over the years. They could eventually become a primary document that their children or grandchildren look at to learn about their family’s history.

Students will create a timeline of their lives. It is important for them to do autobiographical research about themselves in order to better understand other people. Students will create a book with one page modeled after each year in their lives. Together as a class students will create a book. First they need to get a piece of construction paper for each year of their life. Then they need to label each piece of paper with the year. They can also include how old they were if they want. On each piece of paper they need to include pictures: photographs, hand-drawn pictures, cut outs, or clipart that represent their lives for each year. They will also write a minimum of three sentences about that

year in their life. This will be a homework activity. Students will need to spend time with an adult or family member to get this information. In order to be sensitive to the students who may not have someone to spend the time or someone who is knowledgeable about their personal history, they can write what they think happened each year in their life, or creatively respond. The teacher can guide this activity and get it started by having students record the grades they start during each year. Students should also be able to complete the more recent years without family support, if they want to do those pages of the timeline in class as a model, and to set the expectation for how to complete the remainder of the timeline. Using a timeline supports students learning how to sequence events, describe events in detail, and documenting different time periods. When students complete their timeline, they will preserve it in their artifact box. I will probably allow students to work on it for one to two weeks using a class period at the beginning of the work time, and then taking it home to finish for homework. I will communicate with parents what the project is that the students are working on, and how they can support their child's work and learning.

Students will utilize local and world maps to describe their family's journey. Each student will get a copy of a world map to write on places that are significant to his/her family. They will need to identify where their ancestors are from and then conduct research about that place so that they will have historical and modern facts and information to share with their peers about where they are from. Students will apply geographical vocabulary to describe the landforms that can be found where their family originated, as well as historical and contextual information about the place. This supports geography standards as well as reinforces map skills, two important objectives taught in second grade.

Students will participate in letter writing. I will ask family members to write a letter to their child about what they want for their child in his/her life. For students who may not have a family member to do this, I will ask a previous teacher or I will do this myself so that each student has a special letter to preserve in his/her artifact box. I may have a day when families can come in and share their letter with their child. I will also have each student write a letter to his/her future self. I think it would be interesting to read what they have to say and what they want to remember or think is significant in their lives at this moment in time. One thing that I have from my own childhood is several lists where my peers wrote words or sentences to describe or encourage me. I also want the students to have this to preserve in their artifact box so if in the future they need words of hope and encouragement, they can go back and read what other students have written to them, or if someone wants to learn about them, they can read what other people share.

In order to integrate reading throughout the unit, students will listen to various stories, either read or orally retold, about Southern settlers. There are many children's books written about settlers, family dynamics, ancestors, and lifetimes. I will share these stories with the students in order for them to make a connection to characters in historical

fiction. (Please reference the Reading List for Students for examples of books that can be used to contribute to this unit).

Students will practice sharing and communication skills by sharing their findings with their peers. This will give them pride, confidence, and ownership over their family's story and help them to develop their own skills as story tellers. They will evaluate their own learning by self-assessing using a product rubric that they create as a class. The rubric will focus on the materials that the students create and the knowledge gained from conducting the interviews and investigating information about where their family is from. I would like to try to have the students create the rubric and criteria that they will use to evaluate their own work, but I will have to generate leading questions to guide them to establish criteria based on the expected outcome. The rubric will be created at the onset of the unit in order for them to know what is expected of their work throughout.

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Appendix I - Implementing the North Carolina Second Grade Standards:

Primary Standards

Social Studies Goal 4 – “The learner will exhibit an understanding of change in communities over time.” This will be supported by students looking at primary artifacts related to children in the early 1900s, as well as learning about the different occupations they had and the education they received.

Language Arts Goal 2 – “The learner will develop and apply strategies and skills to comprehend text that is read, heard, and viewed.” When students listen to read aloud selections or independently stories related to the curriculum unit, they will engage with the stories and demonstrate comprehension with the connections they make to the text.

Language Arts Goal 4 – “The learner will apply strategies and skills to create oral, written, and visual texts.” Students will evaluate the information they learn about their own lives and the lives of their ancestors and decide how to record that information in order to share with others.

Language Arts Goal 5 – “The learner will apply grammar and language conventions to communicate effectively.” Final products of student work will have correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Students will take pride in the work they do and check it for accuracy with their writing. They can receive assistance from teachers and adults as they transition through drafts of their products.

Appendix II – All About Me list (used to profile second grade students at a certain date in time)

This list is just a suggestion. You can use it or have students contribute ideas to making a list specific to your class.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

My brothers and sisters are _____

I live at _____

I am _____ years old

The name of my school is _____

I am in _____ grade.

My favorite subject in school is _____

My favorite color is _____

My favorite sport is _____

My favorite book is _____

My best friend is _____

My favorite toy to play with is _____

My favorite food is _____

Things I like to collect are _____

My best memory is _____

My favorite holiday is _____ because _____

When I'm not at school I like to _____

Appendix III – Looking at Primary Sources

Identify the Source

What kind of source is it? Who created it? When and where was it produced?

Contextualize the Source

What do you know about the historical context? What do I know about the creator of this source? Why did the person create this source?

Explore the Source

What facts are in the source? What opinions are in the source? What is implied from the source? What is not said in this source? What is surprising about the source? What do I not understand in this source?

Analyze the Source

How is information conveyed? How is the source different from the world today? How might others have reacted to this source?

Evaluate the Source

How does this source compare to other primary and/or secondary sources? What do you believe about this source? What do you still want to know?

Endnotes:

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