

CATAWBA, THE RIVER PEOPLE

ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES

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NORTH CAROLINA

MUSEUM OF HISTORY

Catawba, the River People

Activities are designed to supplement and reinforce information presented in Catawba, the River People. To borrow the video, go to <http://ncmuseumofhistory.org/collateral/OrderVideos.pdf>. Some activities may be used without viewing the video. Not all activities are appropriate for all grade levels, but with some adjustments, most activities can be adapted to meet the needs of your students.

Video Description

This exploration of Catawba history includes a reenactment of early Catawba life and interviews with modern-day Catawba people.

After viewing this program, the student will

- recognize the geographic locations of various American Indian cultures in North Carolina;
- evaluate the importance of the Catawba in the settlement of North Carolina;
- analyze the impact of the history and traditions of the Catawba on their descendants today.

As a result, the student will

- appreciate the history of a specific group of people;
- respond to a lifestyle possibly unlike his or her own;
- accept the importance of preserving the traditions and history of a variety of cultures.

Curriculum Goals

Grade 4: Social Studies Goals 2, 3, and 5

Grade 8: Social Studies Goals 1, 3, and 4

Grade 11: United States History Goals 1 and 2

Preview Activities

Vocabulary

Please review the following words with your class before showing the video.

ally – a person, group, or country joined with one or more others for a common purpose.

assimilate – to make or become like another in ways such as customs, viewpoints, or character.

bison – another name for a buffalo.

floodplain – fertile land along a river formed by soil deposited by the river during floods.

heritage – shared features, such as traditions or beliefs, handed down from one generation to the next.

linguistic – having to do with language or the study of language.

migration – the act of moving from one place to another.

prejudice – an opinion formed without knowledge or thought.

reservation – a piece of public land set aside for a special purpose.

self-sufficient – able to survive without help from others.

smallpox – a contagious disease causing pus-filled blisters that leave permanent scars on the skin. Children in the United States were once required to get a smallpox vaccination before starting school.

tribe – a group of people united by common customs and race under a leader.

As You Watch

Introduce the video using the following important points as a guide.

- English colonists were not the first people to settle in North Carolina.
- American Indians have made many contributions to the state and have participated in military conflicts such as the Civil War, World War I, and World War II.
- The Catawba, like other American Indian tribes, gradually lost their land and settled on a reservation.
- Descendants of the Catawba try to balance maintaining their traditions with accepting American culture.

History Comes Alive

Learning as a Group

Use these questions in a class discussion to assess your students' understanding of the information presented in the video and to encourage original and critical thinking about the topic.

- Why did the American Indian population decline?
- Describe the steps used to make Catawba pottery.
- Why was the pottery of the Catawba important in the past, and why is it important today?
- How did the relationship between the Catawba and white settlers differ from the tribe's relationships with other Indians?
- How did Catawba children learn about their past?
- Describe what life was like for the Catawba before and after they moved to the reservation.
- What concerns do Catawba descendants have about their future?

Writing

Integrating language arts into the curriculum helps students interpret, analyze, and respond to historical information. Have students respond to these questions and statements below in short-answer form, journal entries, or an essay.

1. Think about marginalization (the act of downgrading a group of people to a powerless position within a society) throughout American history. In what ways did certain groups marginalize American Indians? Why? How did the Catawba respond? Use specific evidence from the film in your response.
2. What are some Catawba traditions? How do the Catawba retain these traditions and keep knowledge of their history alive? What part does family play?
3. The beginning of the video includes the Catawba story of creation. Think of other religious creation stories. How do those stories compare with the Catawba story?

Primary Sources

A primary source is an account by an eyewitness or the first record of an event. Examples of primary sources are photos, newspapers, diaries, letters, census records, government documents, and public records.

- Identify a portion of the video that incorporates a primary source. What primary source is used? What information does it provide?
- What are some of the challenges historians might face when they attempt to locate primary sources related to American Indian tribes?

Oral History

Catawba children learned about their history from stories. The Ancient One was responsible for teaching them these stories to pass on to others. Talk with a grandparent or older person in the community or schedule a class trip to a retirement home and find out something new about your history. Write down several questions to ask before you talk with the person. Tape your conversation if possible. Write a report on how traditions and social customs have changed. How does the person you interviewed feel about the changes? Why do you think things have changed? What kinds of things have remained the same?

Alternative Activities

1. Draw or paint your vision of the origin of the Catawba.

TO THE TEACHER: Display all the artwork and have the class discuss the differences and similarities. For a shared activity, have the students work together in several groups, each group producing a book with text and illustrations. Ask the groups to read their creation stories to the class.

2. After watching the Catawba women produce their pottery, use the coil method to work with clay. Use real potter's clay or substitute a similar substance, such as play dough. Find pictures of Catawba pottery and fashion your pots and jugs from them.

Word Search

Find the words listed below and circle them.

A G B W K G S O M C Z W Q H D H U P Y
Q I A G B C A T A W B A Q C N K P D X
B N W U L T X N K M I U K S M A O G D
C D A N C E W F H A S P Q M C N T A B
K I S W O G Q W S W O S X A X F T Q L
R A D K R H H A I K N T Q L W K E O I
O N Q S N K G K O U H O M L A L R P N
Q C X B L O W G U N X R U P B M Y K G
D R S K B M A P A A H Y K O N C Q X U
A H T R I B E Q N W B T H X I E S K I
U R U P L H R B M D K E L P X A G U S
M I A H D B M P U S A L G F M C U P T
B V O G S A C B P R W L U H P R K Q I
W E C O I L K N A T E I P B N F P M C
G R B C X P S K L X Q N K F S D C M P
H P K T Y F M P D E M G F D X P Q A H
E S P R A T T L H C S E A P M R H G D
S Q X I B E D Y J P L M S W Q A O F D
N M N M G F W L P V X T Q A D K L Y E

Indian
Catawba
river
pottery
blowgun

coil
Spratt
corn
bison
smallpox

tribe
Siouan
linguistic
dance
storytelling

Going Further with Resources

I. General Information

North Carolina Tribes Listed by Linguistic Family

Algonquian Language		Iroquoian Language	Siouan Language	
Bear River	Moratok	Cherokee	Cape Fear	Sissipahaw
Chowan	Pamlico	Meherrin	Catawba	Sugeree
Hatteras	Secotan	Neuse River	Cheraw	Tutelo
Machapunga	Weapenmeoc	Tuscarora	Eno	Waccamaw
Chowanoc	Croatoan	Coree	Keyauwee	Wateree
Pasquatank	Poteskee		Occaneechi	Waxhaw
			Saponi	Woccon
			Shakori	

From Ruth Wetmore, *First on the Land*, p. 26.

Catawba Beliefs and Miscellaneous Information

- A rabbit's foot around the neck will make anyone love another.
- If the groundhog sees his shadow, he will go back in the ground and the weather will be bad.
- A falling star means trouble.
- Throwing crayfish out of the water onto the bank will cause the stream to dry up.
- It is unlucky to cook venison and turkey together.
- The Catawba believed in "little people." Putting tobacco on one's head would ward off any unwelcome attentions from the little people.
- The Catawba performed the rain dance as late as 1940.
- The monument at the end of the video was erected in 1900 at Fort Mill, South Carolina, by Samuel Elliot White and John McKee Spratt in memory of the Catawba Indians. White and Spratt were descendants of Thomas Spratt. The names of the Catawba who served in the Confederate army during the Civil War are listed on the front of the statue.
- It was not until after the Yamassee War that the name *Catawba* was used by colonists in Virginia and the Carolinas. The Catawba have been given many different names by other tribes and New World settlers. Here are a few names and the people who used them:

Esaw – South Carolina colonists

Toderichroone – Iroquois Indians
Issa – Spanish explorers
Atakwa – Cherokee Indians
Ushery – Virginia colonists
Ye Iswa (or *Eswa*) – the Catawba themselves (means “People of the River” in the Catawba language)

II. Speakers

North Carolina American Indian teachers are available to present lectures and workshops on Indian life and culture. For more information, contact Olivia Oxendine, Department of Public Instruction, 301 N. Wilmington Street, Raleigh, NC 27601-2825, 919-807-3300.

III. Books and Periodicals

Brown, Douglas Summers. *The Catawba Indians: The People of the River*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1966.

Hudson, Charles. *The Southeastern Indians*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1976.

Lee, E. Lawrence. *Indian Wars in North Carolina 1663–1763*. Raleigh: Carolina Charter Tercentenary Commission, 1963.

Rights, Douglas LeTell. *The American Indian in North Carolina*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1947.

South, Stanley A. *Indians in North Carolina*. Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, Department of Cultural Resources, 1976.

Speck, Frank G. “Catawba Games and Amusements.” *Primitive Man* 26 (1944): 19–28.

Speck, Frank G. “Catawba Medicines and Curative Practices.” *Twenty-fifth Anniversary Studies*. Philadelphia Anthropological Society 1 (1937): 179–197.

Wetmore, Ruth Y. *First on the Land: The North Carolina Indians*. Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, 1975.

IV. Articles from *Tar Heel Junior Historian Magazine* (available at <http://nchistoryresources.org/>)

Baum, Laura. “The Sauratown Woman.” *Tar Heel Junior Historian* 33, no. 2 (Spring 1994): 5–10.

Claggett, Stephen R. “First Immigrants: Native American Settlement of North Carolina.” *Tar Heel Junior Historian* 34, no. 2 (Spring 1995): 3–7.

Crow, Terrell A. “New Words in a New Land.” 24, no 1(Winter 1985): 14–15.

Davis, R. P. Stephen, Jr. “‘The Flower of Carolina’: The Piedmont before European Settlement.” *Tar Heel Junior Historian* 29, no. 2 (Spring 1990): 6–11.

Eanes, Jimmy. “Algonquian Culture.” *Tar Heel Junior Historian* 24, no. 1 (Winter 1985): 21.

Moser, Irene. “Voices of the Elders.” *Tar Heel Junior Historian* 31, no.1 (Fall 1991): 3–5.

Phelps, David S. “The Carolina Algonquian: Archaeology and History.” *Tar Heel Junior Historian* 24, no.1 (Winter 1985): 16–19.

Sumner, Jim L. “‘The Difference Is about Our Land’: Cherokees and Catawbas.” *Tar Heel Junior Historian* 32, no.1 (Fall 1992): 23–27.

V. Places to Visit

Museum of Anthropology
Wake Forest University
Box 7267 Reynolda Station
Winston-Salem, NC 27109-7267
910-759-5282

Schiele Museum of Natural History
1500 E. Garrison Blvd.
P.O. Box 953
Gastonia, NC 28052-0953
704-866-6900
Supports the Center for Southeastern Native
American Studies.

North Carolina Museum of History
5 E. Edenton St.
4650 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-4650
919-807-7900

Town Creek Indian Mound
509 Town Creek Mound Rd.
Mt. Gilead, NC 27306
910-439-6802

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