

TAR HEEL MYSTERIES AND LEGENDS

ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES

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NORTH CAROLINA

MUSEUM OF HISTORY

Tar Heel Mysteries and Legends

Activities are designed to supplement and reinforce information presented in the video Tar Heel Mysteries and Legends. 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

Enjoy learning Tar Heel history through fourteen mysteries and legends from around North Carolina.

Curriculum Goals

- Grade 4:** Social Studies Goal 1
Language Arts Goals 1, 2, 3, 4
- Grade 8:** Social Studies Goal 1
Language Arts Goals 1, 2, 3, 4

Preview Activities

Vocabulary

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

adapt – to change in order to be suitable for a different condition or purpose

accumulate – to gather or pile up

Croatan – tribe of American Indians in early coastal North Carolina

doll – cat’s paw (from mountain dialect)

elope – to run away secretly with one’s beloved, especially with the intention of getting married

eerie – causing unexplainable fear, dread, or uneasiness; strange and frightening; suggestive of the supernatural

havoc – great destruction

hostile – not friendly

Indian ceremonial grounds – places, usually considered sacred, used by American Indians for special services

inherit – to receive from an ancestor by legal succession or will

laden – weighed down with a load

legend – story handed down from earlier times that may be based on real people and events but whose truth and historical accuracy is questionable

lure – to attract by offering something tempting

mystery – one that is not fully understood or that baffles; something hidden or unknown

myth – legend or story that attempts to account for something in nature; any invented story; an imaginary person or thing

oath – something declared or promised

phenomenon – unusual event or fact (plural: *phenomena*)

reject – to refuse to consider or accept

resort – place frequented for relaxation or recreation

sandbar – ridge of sand formed in a river or along a shore by the action of waves or currents

As You Listen and Watch

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

- Before television, radio, movies, and other forms of modern entertainment were developed, storytelling entertained people.
- Many mysteries and legends that have been passed down are changed each time they are told. Each storyteller has a distinctive way of performing.
- North Carolina mysteries and legends can be used to learn about the history of different communities and about the geography of the state. Many areas have their own unique stories.

Have students use the map provided to find the locations of the towns and counties in the video.

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.

- What is the difference between a mystery and a legend?
- Which mystery or legend is your favorite? Why?
- Which story did you find the most convincing? What could have been true about it?
- Which story did you find the least believable? Why?
- What do you think happened to the Lost Colony?
- What other legends about Blackbeard do you know?
- Which stories involve animals? How are the animals used in each of these stories?
- Which stories involve real people you have heard of? Who are they?
- Which stories would be different if they were told in or about another part of the state? How?

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, a journal entry, or an essay.

- Think of an alternative explanation or ending for your favorite mystery or legend from the video. Rewrite the story with your ending.
- Write your own mystery or legend. It can be fictional or based on something that happened to you. Consider using animals with human traits, ghosts, a love story, or a famous person the way many of the stories from the video did.

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 story in the video that could be proved or disproved using primary sources. What primary source would you use? Where could you find that source today?

Oral History

Ask someone in your family or community to tell you a story, either true or fictional. Use an audio or video recorder to tape the story or take notes so that you will remember it.

Questions to ask the storyteller include:

- Where did you first hear this story?
- Do you think this story is true?
- Did this story take place in North Carolina?

Tell the story to your classmates. You can also rewrite the story and illustrate it with your own drawings or form a group to present the story as a short skit.

Matching—Characters and Legends

Match each character on the left with a description on the right.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. ___ Little Red Man | a. Killed by Lieutenant Robert Maynard |
| 2. ___ Joe Baldwin | b. Chosen governor of the Lost Colony |
| 3. ___ Virginia Dare | c. Haunted the Moravian town of Salem |
| 4. ___ Blackbeard | d. Said, “Sop, doll, sop” |
| 5. ___ Witch with one hand | e. Made the circle in Chatham County |
| 6. ___ Governor Daniel G. Fowle | f. Conductor on the Maco-to-Wilmington train |
| 7. ___ Ponies and lanterns | g. Ate breakfast with Betsy Brandon |
| 8. ___ John White | h. Caused shipwrecks along the coast |
| 9. ___ Devil | i. Believed to be the ghost in the Governor’s Mansion |
| 10. ___ President Washington | j. Shot by an arrow of silver and one of oyster shell |

Mystery or Legend?

Each of the fourteen North Carolina tales in the presentation can be classified as a mystery or a legend. Place each title under the heading **Mystery** or **Legend** and give a reason for your decision. There are no right or wrong answers.

The Lost Colony
Virginia Dare: The White Doe
The Story of Blackbeard
Brandon
Nags Head
The Maco Light
The Ghost of the Governor's Mansion
The Devil's Tramping Ground

The Girl at the Underpass
The Little Red Man
President Washington and Betsy
Tar Heels
The Brown Mountain Lights
Sop, Doll, Sop
A Ghost with a Mission

Mystery	Legend	Explanation

Going Further with Resources

I. Books

Bledsoe, Jerry. *Carolina Curiosities*. Chester, Conn.: Globe Pequot Press, 1984.

Chase, Richard. *Grandfather Tales*. Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1948.

Chase, Richard. *Jack Tales*. Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1943.

Credle, Ellis. *Big Fraid, Little Fraid*. New York: Nelson Publishing Co., 1964.

Credle, Ellis. *Tall Tales from the High Hills and Other Stories*. New York: T. Nelson, 1957.

Harden, John. *The Devil's Tramping Ground and Other North Carolina Mystery Stories*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1954.

Harden, John. *Tar Heel Ghosts*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1954.

Johnson, F. Roy. *Tales from Old Carolina*. Murfreesboro, N.C.: Johnson Publishing Co., 1965.

Leach, Maria. *Whistle in the Graveyard: Folktales to Chill Your Bones*. New York: Viking Press, 1974.

Marsh, Carole. *North Carolina Bandits, Bushwhackers, Outlaws, Crooks, Desperadoes, and Other Assorted and Sundry Characters*. Peachtree City, Ga.: Gallopade International, 1993.

McCorkle, Lutie Andrews. *Old Time Stories of the Old North State*. Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., 1903.

Quinn, David B. *The Lost Colonists: Their Fortune and Probable Fate*. Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1984. Reprint 1985.

Rankin, Hugh F. *The Pirates of Colonial North Carolina*. Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1960. Reprint 1988.

Roberts, Nancy. *America's Most Haunted Places*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1978.

Rossmann, Douglas A. *Where Legends Live: A Pictorial Guide to Cherokee Mythic Places*. Cherokee, N.C.: Cherokee Publications, 1988.

Scheer, George F., ed. *Cherokee Animal Tales*. New York: Holiday House, 1968.

Smith, Beth Craddock. *Mystery Tour: A Student Guide to North Carolina Ghosts and Legends*. Wendell, N.C.: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1995.

Underwood, Thomas Bryan, and Moselle Stack Sandlin, adapts. *Legends of the Ancient Cherokee*. Asheville: Stephens Press, 1956.

Walser, Richard. *North Carolina Legends*. Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1980.

Walser, Richard, and Julia Montgomery Street. *North Carolina Parade: Stories of History and People*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966.

Wechter, Nell Wise. *Teach's Light: A Tale of Blackbeard the Pirate*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999.

Whedbee, Charles Harry. *Blackbeard's Cup and Stories of the Outer Banks*. Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, 1989.

II. Periodicals

Legends of North Carolina issue, *Tar Heel Junior Historian* 39, no. 2 (Spring 2000).

III. Web Sites

Winkle, Michael D. "Haunted North Carolina: Up These Heights and Down These Hollows." *Ghosts of the Prairie*. <http://www.prairieghosts.com/hollows.html>. North Carolina stories associated with the Cherokee Indians about monsters and other creatures.

National Storytelling Network. *Welcome to StoryNet*. <http://www.storynet.org/>. Storyteller directory, list of guilds and regional organizations, events, and other information.

ASL Legends. "North Carolina Legends." *Folklore, Myths & Legends: America and the South*. Oracle Education Foundation.

<http://library.thinkquest.org/03oct/00492/page11.html>.

Links to sites with information on real characters featured in the video, including Blackbeard and Virginia Dare.

North Carolina Storytelling Guild Inc. <http://www.ncstoryguild.org/>.

Information on storytelling events, continuing education opportunities, and advocacy.

Coastal Guide. "Tales from the Coast." <http://www.icw-net.com/tales>.

"Beautiful Nell Cropsey," "Legends of the Great Dismal Swamp," and other tales from the North Carolina coast.

IV. Storytellers

North Carolina abounds with people and organizations working to preserve the tradition of storytelling. Some storytellers specialize in a particular subject, such as Indians, family folktales, mysteries, and African American history. Others perform a variety of tales, including national and international versions. Most storytellers charge a fee, because telling stories is their livelihood. If you would like to book a storyteller, remember to schedule well in advance. Contact your local public library for assistance. Storytelling is an entertaining way of teaching children about history.

The list below is only a small sample of storytellers in North Carolina.

The Arts Center
300-G East Main Street, P.O. Box 789
Carrboro, NC 27510
919-929-2787
<http://www.carrboro.com/artscenter/artscenter.html>

Joyce Grear
P.O. Box 4176
Wilmington, NC 28406
910-794-9359
910-350-2831 fax

Gwenda LedBetter
5 Beaverbrook Road
Asheville, NC 28804
828-254-3133

Rebecca Tighe
Wilson County Public Library
249 Nash Street West
Wilson, NC 23793-3801
252-237-5355
rtighe@wilson-co.com

Connie Regan-Blake, Storyteller
StoryWindow Productions
P.O. Box 2898
Asheville, NC 28802
828-258-1113 or 1-800-864-0299
828-253-2956 fax
<http://www.storywindow.com/>
Connie@storywindow.com

Visit our web site <http://ncmuseumofhistory.org>. Find more North Carolina history resources at <http://nchistoryresources.org>. The North Carolina Museum of History is a division of the Department of Cultural Resources, www.ncculture.com.

