

Reconstruction through Literature & Carolina Voices- C. Greer-Banks

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Target Grade Span: Middle Grades **Target Grade Level:** 8th Grade

Target Course(s): American History, Language Arts, Humanities

Inquiry Overview:

In this inquiry, students will learn about Reconstruction through the Wilmington Massacre of 1898- what it means, its chief aims, its outcomes, and how it ended using coercion, intimidation, and violence. Students will learn the power of voice and narrative by learning about the event through various media sources- novels, primary documents, oral histories, and film reproductions. Finally, students will learn about restorative justice by traveling to Wilmington to teach the event to adults and articulate a more inclusive future for all Americans.

Teacher Background Information:

Students in middle grades often do not fully understand Reconstruction, much less its impacts on the American landscape. In American history courses, students will most likely study events that led up to the Civil War, its major battles, and the leaders during this period. After this, many students' study of black history is isolated to Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. In a recent report, 45 out of 50 states are failing to teach students about Reconstruction, an era instrumental in shaping race relations after the Civil War. The purpose of this lesson is to widen students' scope of the breadth of Reconstruction and its wide-reaching effects.

The first part of this lesson helps students understand Jim Crow through reading a YA novel titled *Crow* written by Barbara Wright. While students are reading this novel, students will engage with a number of the primary documents to help them understand the period of 1898 Wilmington and the Reconstruction era that includes, but is not limited to: articles from the *News & Observer*, the *Daily Record*, the *White Declaration of Independence*, and the editorial of Alexander Manly in response to a speech made by Rebecca Felton of Georgia. These primary documents will help students understand the white supremacy of 1898 North Carolina and evidence of black thought and resistance during the post-Civil War period and a tumultuous election season.

The second part of this lesson requires students to evaluate efforts Carolinians make to right the wrongs of history, uncover the secrets of the 1898 Wilmington Massacre, and spread awareness of the potential of the Reconstruction era. Students will do this by examining secondary documents about the legacy of the 1898 Wilmington Massacre, including, but not limited to: excerpts from *A Day of Blood: the 1898 Wilmington Race Riot* by LeRae Umfleet, the *1898 Wilmington Race Riot Report* by the *Wilmington Race Riot Commission*, as well as the *People's Declaration of Interdependence*. They will also learn about the vision behind the creation of the 1898 Memorial Park, and watch the video by Vox, *When white supremacists overthrew a government*. Students will also watch a short film written and directed by UNC Wilmington graduate Nelson Oliver called *The Red Cape*, who was inspired to create the film after first learning about the massacre as an undergraduate in college.

The final part of this lesson focuses on restorative justice- now that students know about Reconstruction and its impacts, students will travel to Wilmington with their parents to walk the path of the Wilmington Race Massacre. The course will start at the former Confederate Memorial site and end

at the current 1898 Memorial Park site. Stops along the tour, the location of Alexander Manly's printing press, the house of Alfred Moore Waddell, Sprunt's Champion Cotton Compress, Thalian Hall, the New Hanover County Courthouse, St. Stephens AME Church, and the Wilmington Light Infantry Armory (it is now a church). Students will be divided into groups of 5 and assigned one of the following roles- the reader, the photographer, the writer, and the navigator. These groups will also have parents assigned to them; they will teach parents about Reconstruction and the massacre during the walking tour. Once at the final site, the 1898 Memorial Park, students will add their interpretations of the People's Declaration of Interdependence and how we can contribute to a more inclusive North Carolina and the United States of America.

Students will need to have already learned about the Civil War. They should also understand Westward Expansion, the war with Mexico, and the Fugitive Slave Act. These events and periods helped make the Civil War inevitable, exacerbated the potential for equality for African-Americans, and strengthened white supremacy in the United States.

My students will take a field experience down to Wilmington to teach Reconstruction to adults and write a resolution to add to a document called the People's Declaration of Interdependence. They will have had previous lessons on preambulatory and post-operative phrases, as well as writing clauses. I work at a project-based school in Raleigh, NC, where this type of curriculum is out of reach for many schools, so this summative performance task is optional.

Suggested Time Frame: Two to three weeks of 45-minute periods. These lessons are taught in a humanities class, a course that combines language arts and social studies, but it can occur in a traditional school if both social studies and language arts teachers are willing to work together on an interdisciplinary project.

Concept/Vocabulary List:

- **Reconstruction**- a period in American history following the Civil War that attempted to solve the inequalities of slavery and its legacy as well as to readmit the 11 states that had seceded from the Union at the outbreak of war
- **Jim Crow**- a symbol often used to describe the segregation laws, rules, and customs which arose after Reconstruction ended and continued until the mid-1960s
- **Coup d'état**- also called *coup*, is the sudden, violent overthrow of an existing government by a small group
- **Propaganda**- information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote or publicize a particular political cause or point of view
- **Hypocrisy**- a pretense of having a virtuous character, moral or religious beliefs or principles, etc., that one does not really possess.
- **White Supremacy**- the belief that white people constitute a superior race and should therefore dominate society
- **Democracy**- a system of government by the whole population or all the eligible members of a state, typically through elected representatives
- **Reconciliation**- the restoration of friendly relations
- **Alderman**- an elected member of a municipal council
- **poll taxes**- a tax of a fixed amount per person required for the right to vote.
- **Grandfather Clause**- A clause that allowed individuals, who did not pass the literacy test, to vote if their father or grandfather had voted before Reconstruction began
- **Black Codes**- Laws passed in the South, just after the Civil War aimed at controlling black people

Instructional Resources:

Bellamy, Rhonda, and Si Cantwell. *Moving Forward Together: A Community Remembers 1898*. Slapdash Publishing, LLC, 2008.

Chakraborty, Ranjani. "When White Supremacists Overthrew a Government." Vox, Vox, 20 June 2019, <https://www.vox.com/2019/6/20/18693018/white-supremacists-overthrew-government-north-carolina>.

Greer-Banks, Cori L. *8th Grade Exploris Wilmington Walking Tour*, Google Maps, 2019, <https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1jVJngxZuGSjNssEABcWI5knqu9iER27m&usp=sharing>. Accessed 31 Dec. 2022.

Manly, Alexander. "[Untitled]." Omeka RSS, <https://exhibits.lib.unc.edu/exhibits/show/1898/item/2278>.

Norris, Christie. "*Exploring Life in 1898 Wilmington & the Wilmington Race Riot with Crow ...*" Carolina K-12, UNC-Chapel Hill's Carolina Public Humanities, <https://k12database.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2013/08/CROWComonCore.pdf>.

Oliver, Nelson, director. *The Red Cape. The Red Cape Movie*, 2007, <https://www.theredcapemovie.com/>.

"Senate Stories: Rebecca Felton and One Hundred Years of Women Senators." *U.S. Senate: Rebecca Felton and One Hundred Years of Women Senators*, 12 Dec. 2022, <https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/senate-stories/rebecca-felton-and-one-hundred-years-of-women-senators.htm>.

Umfleet, LeRae Sikes, and Valerie Ann Johnson. *A Day of Blood: The 1898 Wilmington Race Riot*. In Association with the North Carolina African American Heritage Commission, 2020.

Umfleet, LeRae. *1898 Wilmington Race Riot Report*. Research Branch, Office of Archives and History, N.C. Dept. of Cultural Resources, 2006.

Waxman, Olivia B. "Schools Are Failing to Teach Reconstruction, Report Says." *Time*, Time, 12 Jan. 2022, <https://time.com/6128421/teaching-reconstruction-study/>.

"The White Declaration of Independence." 1898WHITEDEC, The News & Observer, <http://people.uncw.edu/schmidt/Misc/1898/1898WhiteDec.html>.

Wright, Barbara. *Crow*. Yearling Books, 2013.

NCSS Thematic Strand(s):

- 2- TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE
- 4- INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT & IDENTITY
- 5- INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS
- 6- POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE
- 10- CIVIC IDEALS AND PRACTICES

Content Area Standards (North Carolina):

- I.1.11 Use a range of civic approaches to address problems being investigated.
- 8.B.1 Analyze the impact of group behavior on the development of North Carolina and the nation.
- 8.C&G.1 Understand how democratic principles have influenced the government structure and policies of North Carolina and the nation.
- 8.C&G.2 Evaluate the effectiveness of societal reforms.
- 8.H.1 Understand the role of conflict and cooperation in the development of North Carolina and the nation.
- 8.H.2 Understand how innovation and change have impacted the development of North Carolina and the nation.

C3 Framework Indicators:

- D2.His.1.6-8. Analyze connections among events and developments in broader historical contexts.
- D2.His.2.6-8. Classify a series of historical events and developments as examples of change and/or continuity.
- D2.Civ.2.6-8. Explain specific roles played by citizens (such as voters, jurors, taxpayers, members of the armed forces, petitioners, protesters, and office-holders).
- D2.Civ.7.6-8. Apply civic virtues and democratic principles in school and community settings.

Essential question: How can the goals of Reconstruction create “a more perfect union” for Americans?

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Staging the Essential Question	In this inquiry students will learn about Reconstruction, Jim Crow, and Wilmington North Carolina in 1898 through various literary and historical sources.
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Supporting Question 1	Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3
What was it like to grow up in North Carolina at the end of the Reconstruction Era?	What was Reconstruction and how did it lead to the Jim Crow Era?	How have ordinary citizens worked to bring the Wilmington Massacre to light and remember the victims?

Performance Tasks	Performance Tasks	Performance Tasks
Using <i>Crow</i> , a novel by Barbara Wright, students will learn about Reconstruction: what it was, its chief goals, the reactions of various citizens, and its impacts on today’s society. Students will take chapter quizzes to check for comprehension.	Students will analyze and interpret primary sources from 1898 such as the <i>White Declaration of Independence</i> , Alexander Manly’s editorial from <i>The Daily Record</i> , and white supremacist political cartoons from the <i>News & Observer</i> .	Students will understand how ordinary citizens have worked to bring the Wilmington Race Massacre to light so that more people know about the event and can learn from it.

Featured Sources	Featured Sources	Featured Sources
<p>Crow. By Barbara Wright</p> <p>Exploring Life in 1898 Wilmington & the Wilmington Coup with CROW accompanying PowerPoint</p>	<p>Exploring Life in 1898 Wilmington & the Wilmington Race Riot with CROW, a novel for young adults</p> <p>Speech by suffragette Rebecca Felton of Georgia</p> <p>Reply to Felton speech. Editorial by Alexander Manly</p> <p>The White Declaration of Independence</p> <p>"The Vampire that Hovers Over North Carolina (Negro Rule)," News and Observer, September 27, 1898</p>	<p>Excerpts from A Day of Blood: The 1898 Wilmington Race Riot. by LeRae Sikes Umfleet</p> <p>Excerpts from 1898 Race Riot Commission by LeRae Sikes Umfleet</p> <p>When White Supremacists Overthrew a Government by Chakraborty, Ranjani & Vox</p> <p>Viewing of The Red Cape by Nelson Oliver</p> <p>Excerpts from Moving Forward Together: A Community Remembers 1898 edited by Rhonda Bellamy</p>

<p>Summative Performance Task: Taking Informed Action</p>	<p>Understand: American cities are reflecting on the legacies of Reconstruction and Jim Crow to create a better country for all of its citizens.</p> <hr/> <p>Assess: What role can I play in dismantling white supremacy, restore justice, and promote healing in North Carolina and the United States?</p> <hr/> <p>Act: Students will walk the path of the Wilmington Race Massacre using 8th Grade Exploris Wilmington Walking Tour, teaching this as well as major components of Reconstruction to adults during the walking tour. At the end of the walking tour, students will write their own clause to the resolution, People's Declaration of Interdependence to imagine a better and more inclusive society.</p>
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