

LEARNING ACTIVITIES FOR VIRGINIA WOMEN IN HISTORY 2005



THE VIRGINIA FOUNDATION FOR WOMEN

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Kindergarten—Grade 3: K-1, K-3, K-4, K-5; 1-1, 1-4; 2-4, 2-5, 3-6

1. Create a timeline placing all eight women on it according to their birth dates. Discuss change over three centuries.
2. On a large Virginia map, locate the site associated with each woman. Have students point out major geographic details near each site and its proximity to their location.
3. Monacan Indians lived in Virginia when the first Englishmen arrived. Discuss how they helped the English survive at Jamestown.
4. Discuss the personal contributions of Bessie Blount Griffin, Clara Adams-Ender, and Caitlyn Day to improve life for those around them. What can an individual student do to help their school or community?
5. Direct students to draw a picture or write a paragraph about their family depicting names and ages of members. Explain that this is how Mary Johnston, Nora Houston, and Lee Smith began their careers.

Grades 4 and 5: VS-1, VS-2, VS-6

1. Write a short story describing the meeting of a Monacan Indian maiden and an early English woman. What might they have done to communicate and help each other survive peaceably?
2. Two women—Barbara Johns Powell and Caitlyn Day—made changes in their community. Discuss what they did and decide if you or your class could do something in your school or community to make a difference.
3. Nora Houston was an artist, while Mary Johnston and Lee Smith were writers. Discuss how artwork and stories might be a better way to relate historical fact. Then, look for examples of American history in art books that illustrate particular events. How accurate do you think they are?
4. Bessie Bount Griffin and Clara Adams-Ender devoted their lives to helping sick and impaired soldiers. Have students research Griffin's invention for amputees on the computer. Discuss why you think the Veterans Administration rejected the use of it. Compare this situation with that of Adams-Ender who administered the Walter Reed Army Medical Center. In the span of time from the 1940s through the 1980s, what changes took place to allow these differences to occur?

Grades 6—9: USI.1, USI.2; USII.1, USII.5, USII.8, CE.3

1. Native American tradition made women the cultural power within their tribes. Research Mary Belvin Wade's Monacan tribe to discover the women's role in their traditions. How does mythology set the stage for their relationship with the landscape?

2. Mary Johnston and Lee Smith are writers of fiction, yet each depicts life styles of a particular period in Virginia history. Obtain copies of books published by each—i.e. Johnston's *To Have and To Hold* and Smith's *Cakewalk* for students to read and discuss illustrating how fiction can depict lifestyles of the past.
3. Barbara Johns Powell laid careful plans to protest desegregation in her school. Compose a speech that she might have written to rally her fellow students to walk out as a protest. Discuss what she had to do prior to her speech to make a walkout possible.
4. Change was made possible by Nora Houston through her artwork, and Caitlyn Day through her love of reading. Lacking an art museum and a library in their respective communities, these women worked to obtain them. Discuss what might be missing in your school community or the greater community in which you live. What might you do to make changes occur?
5. Both Bessie Blount Griffin and Clara Adams-Ender were born into a segregated society. Yet both obtained higher education and devoted their lives to making the lives of sick and disabled soldiers better. Research how segregation policy changes occurred in the U.S. Army more quickly than in the broader society of the U.S. enabling these women to make their contributions.

Grades 10—12: VUS.1, VUS.6, VUS.11, VUS. 13, VUS.14; GOVT.1, GOVT.3, GOVT.9, GOVT.10, GOVT.11, GOVT.18

1. Mary Johnston and Nora Houston depicted Virginia history through novels and paintings. Both recognized the lack of inclusion of women in their work and actively fought to give women the right to vote. Discuss how voting was and is considered a privilege allowing women equality with men. Why do so many young women take voting for granted today?
2. Barbara Johns Powell and Clara Adams-Ender stood up against segregation. Research the cases brought to the U.S. Supreme Court that desegregated schools and lunch counters. Determine what the Supreme Court decided in each situation to uphold civil rights for African-Americans. Then review Virginia's initial massive resistance to the civil rights movement.
3. Bessie Blount Griffin, Mary Belvin Wade, and Caitlyn Day recognized needs that were not being met. Griffin helped paraplegics, Wade worked for Native American recognition, and Day established a library. Research a woman who has made a contribution in your community. If possible, interview her to uncover her motivation. Share your knowledge with the class. Consider having your class make a contribution to your community?
4. Lee Smith wrote fiction about her hometown of Grundy. She also completed many oral histories that she wrote about. Plan an oral history project about your community in which every student in the class does one of the following: interview lifetime residents black and white, about growing up, going to school and/or starting a business there; interview newcomers who have arrived in the last five years inquiring why they chose the area over other communities in which to live; interview prominent local leaders, businessmen, and educators to determine their influence in the community. Bring your information back to class through oral reports. Answer these questions: How did each individual impact your community? What role did women play in community involvement?