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Gender Roles in the Late Colonial and Early National Eras in Wake County, 1776-1800

By the end of this presentation, students will be able to identify gender roles exemplified by four people who lived in Wake County during the late colonial and early national eras in Wake County, 1770-1800, and to compare them to present day work and gender roles.

Pre-Presentation Set Up:

If possible, it is best to have a table placed in front of the classroom in order to have the objects laid out for easy use. Depending on time, attention span, and number of students involved, the presenter may alter the presentation as he or she sees fit. The presenter will make a brief statement about the rural nature of Wake County during this era. Wake County was considered the "backcountry." There were no towns or villages in Wake County until Raleigh was established in 1792. Life in this county would have revolved around farming and the county court. (An interpretive painting of colonial farm life can be shown to help students visualize farm activities.)

The presenter will introduce and define the following social and legal terms that apply to the inhabitants during this era: gentry, yeoman, and enslaved people.

The presenter will introduce individuals who lived in Wake County during this era: Linsfield Kilgo, a Revolutionary War soldier, who was probably a yeoman farmer before going to war, Joel Lane, a well-to-do land owner, Mrs. Mary Lane, his wife, and Cate, an enslaved person owned by Col. Lane. Each character has a "pocket," basket, or bag with artifacts that relate to their role and life in society and the kind of work each would have performed. Students will be asked to assume the character of these individuals and to show the artifacts.

The class and the presenter will identify and discuss the artifacts, and determine how they define the gender role and activities of the individual. (Students might be asked to use the picture of a colonial farm to identify activities and work being done and to relate these to our Wake County characters.) Which person might be Joel Lane, Mrs. Lane, Linsfield Kilgo, or Cate? What are they doing? Where are they working? Would Mr. Lane do the same kind of work as Linsfield Kilgo? Mrs. Lane as Mrs. Kilgo? What do the artifacts tell use about each person and what they did, their roles in society?

In order to fulfill the overall needs and objectives of the presentation, the presenter should emphasize the commonalities and differences that modern-day adults have with adults of the period. Keep in mind, the ages of the students involved (5-10) dictate a very basic, straight-forward, and engaging presentation. Don't talk over their heads. Let the students' interest and the objects guide the presentation.

The number and type of objects to be shown is entirely up to the presenter. However, consideration of the amount of time one has, the environment in which one is presenting, and the wishes of the students' teacher should all be factored into which objects should be presented.

Time of Presentation: 20-30 minutes

Suitable Grades: K-5

Items to be used may include the following:

Joel Lane - **Quill pen and copy of the Declaration of Independence:** (Shows Lane's education, through his writing ability, his place in society as a leader and member of the legislature. He was to have voted on independence and was on the committee that voted for NC to join the United States.) Could Mrs. Lane or Cate have been in the legislature and voted for Independence? How about Linsfield Kilgo?

Deed (excerpt) to NC for land on which Raleigh will be sited: (Shows Lane's political position and large land holdings. Would Linsfield Kilgo have had this much land?)

Front page of **Poor Richard's Almanack:** (Shows Lane's position as a planter and member of the gentry. He would have used such an almanac to decide when to plant, what kind of weather to expect.) Would Joel Lane have done the plowing and planting himself? Who would have done it?

Money: 15,000 pounds, for housing and entertaining the NC Senate in June 25 to July 14, 1778. (Shows Lane's political position, and inflation in currency. He also held jobs in the county for which he earned money.) Who else in this group could have held jobs in county government? How did people in this era earn money?

Bill of sale: Receipt for the purchase of an enslaved person.

Mrs. Mary Lane – **Lady's Pocket:** A sack filled with necessities for a lady. If made of ticking like ours, to be worn under the petticoat with the opening positioned under the opening in the side of the petticoat to permit accessibility to its contents. Could be made of linen decoratively embroidered or of patchwork scraps.

Keys: (As plantation mistress, Mrs. Lane kept the keys to the smoke house, sugar, tea, and other food stuff that was locked up. It was her job to hand out food to the cook to prepare.)

Cook book: Would Mrs. Lane have done the cooking? Why doesn't the cook have a book?

Horn book: First book used by children to learn to read. Small in size, its page was covered with a thin layer of horn to protect it. (Mothers were the first teachers of children. Mrs. Lane had 9 children and 3 step-children.) Who would have helped her look after the children?

Wig curler: fired clay curler used to style wigs. (As a member of the gentry, it was important for a lady to look neat and well groomed. Officers also wore wigs.)

Needle and case: (As plantation mistress, Mrs. Lane sewed for her family and had to see that the slaves were clothed.)

Wax figure: (Thread was waxed for strength, showing her domestic duties.) Would a lady like Mrs. Lane work outside the home? What could women of all classes do to earn money? (African Americans and white women often sold vegetables and baked goods to earn money.)

Needle work: (Gentry women were accomplished in fancy needle work.)

Fan: Colonial air conditioning! (Shows her social status. She can sit, rest and fan herself. Is she sitting under the tree in the painting?)

Medicine bottle with herbs: (It was the role of the plantation mistress to see to the health and well being of everyone on the plantation. She kept a flower, vegetable and herb garden.)

Soldier, Linsfield Kilgo - **Haversack:** Leather or canvas bag used to carry rations and personal belongings.

Sewing Kit: Wooden thimble, scissors, scraps of cloth for patching holes, needle and needle case, buttons, skein of sinew for repairing heavy materials like leather or canvas; spool of linen thread was waxed with beeswax so it could stand up to sewing. A soldier's wife might go to war with him and wash, repair clothing and cook.

Pipe & Tobacco: a clay pipe for smoking tobacco Tobacco was introduced to the colonists by Indians and was known in England in the 17th c. Believed to have medicinal effects, such as staving off hunger. Harmful effects unknown.

Penny Whistle: "Liberty Songs" rallied the American colonists. Many selections parodied British political songs. Can discuss origins of "Yankee Doodle," a song written by the British to mock the colonists. Students can explore the politics and propaganda of the American Revolution through lyrics and music including an overview of the popular "Yankee Doodle" (outside the scope of this presentation).

Dice: In America gambling was a pastime, but not a vice. Would he have played with dice back home? What other games or activities would he have engaged in to have fun? Do we still play the same games?

Flint & Steel (or Striker & Steel): Crucial for fire starting for the frozen soldier. How would a person start a fire at home?

Musket Ball & Powder Horn: Muskets could be re-loaded as fast as four times a minute, whereas a riffle with powder horn took far longer to load. Muskets are what won the war for the Continentals, not hiding behind rocks and trees. Linsfield served at the battle of Eutaw Springs in SC and was wounded.

Tin cup: For drinking his allotment of rum or milk given by a kindly inhabitant of the local area. Difficulty in finding fresh water near camp that was not filled with pond scum or mud. As they fought, soldiers lived out in the open. What does a modern soldier carry his water in?

Cockade: Worn on the tri-cornered hat to indicate rank. Lack of uniforms made it difficult to determine who was an officer. How different is life for a modern day soldier?

Playing Cards: The cards were printed on heavy paper and included features and designs (except numbers) similar to those we are accustomed to today. Used as a pastime. Do we still play cards?

Compass with Sundial: Used for orienteering and telling time, and as a tool insurveying, and making sure a barrel was round. What does a modern soldier carry in the field to determine where he is?

Cate – Enslaved person—**Bag**: Simple drawstring bag.

Wooden spoon: (She could have been the cook on the plantation. Would a man have been a cook? Thomas Jefferson took his man slave to France to learn fancy French cooking.)

Pot scrubber: (The plantation cook's job required her to work dawn to dark. She cooked only for the master and his family. Mrs. Lane planed the meals but the cook prepared the food and saw that it was served. She probably cooked for her family with the the other enslaved people.)

Egg: (Farms of all sizes had chickens. The females in the family tended to the chickens, milked the cow, made the butter and cheese.)

Thread, flax, and wool: (Women spun, and wove cloth on farms of all sizes. Enslaved women made quilts and rag rugs rather than fancy needle work.)

Soap and candle: (Women made the soap and candles used on large and small farms, and did the washing and cleaning.) (Some enslaved women worked in the fields.) What jobs would Mrs. Kilgo have done? Mrs. Lane?

Chain: Length of chain symbolizes lack of personal freedom and perhaps physical restraints for the enslaved population.

Oyster Shell: Used as a scraping tool.

Conclusion should include a brief summary of what was discussed, Be sure to include the differences between then and now. If time, space, and number of children allow, the presenter may wish to have the children use/examine the objects that were discussed if not done in course of presentation.

GLOSSARY

Terms describing people:

Enslaved Person - A person who was legally bound to another individual for a lifetime. An enslaved person had few rights and was required to do what his or her master required of him. Gender roles that applied to white women did not applied to black women, who might be required to work in the fields, a job not required of rich woman. Enslaved men and women did not work together in the fields. If there were no children to help in the fields on a small farm, the wife might have to work there.

Esquire – An honorific title used for a judge who was a Justice of the Peace for the County Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions.

Gentry - Families who owned large farms called plantations that were worked by enslaved people. The men often held political office at the county and state level.

Militia – Each male in NC between the ages of 16 and 60 had to train for the militia. When war was declared the militia was called to fight. Enlisted men were most likely yeomen farmers such as Lindsfield Kilgo. He enlisted for 12 months and was wounded. His wounds were serious enough for the Wake County Court to ask the Legislature to give him 20 pounds specie (money) annually for life. Because Joel Lane was a justice of the peace, he was exempt from having to serve in the Revolutionary War. Before the war, Joel Lane was commissioned as a a Captain and as a Lieutenant Colonel in the militia.

Plantation – A large farm that used enslaved labor to produce various crops such as tobacco, corn, wheat. They raised cattle, hogs, sheep, chickens, ducks and geese. The master often raised and raced horses. Joel Lane purchased one especially fine horse that was confiscated from the British. A plantation consisted of many buildings such as the main house or "big house", houses for the enslaved, barns, milk houses, stables, blacksmithing shop, and ice house. Sometimes there was a weaving house where enslaved people wove the cloth for their clothes. A large plantation manufactured a large number of items. George Washington made whisky, and Thomas Jefferson made nails to sell.

Planter - A farmer who owned a large farm that included a great number of acres. Because of the farming practices at this time, land was "used up" rapidly and became unproductive for crops. This kind of land was called "old field" land and was often the site of a local school. Crop rotation was not widely used. A planter's farm usually included undeveloped land on which no crops were grown, and he was constantly adding land so he could retire the used-up land. Joel Lane had accumulated over 3,000 acres when he died.

Yeoman – An owner of a small farm that was worked by himself and his family. The family sought to be as independent as possible making their own clothes, candles, soap, and growing their own food.

Terms describing artifacts:

Cockade- a ribbon rosette used to decorate a three-cornered hat

Dice-small, numbered cubes made of wood or lead (formed from a musket ball) used for gaming. Dice games were a common form of entertainment in the 18th century.

Flint and Striker- also known as flint and steel. Used to produce a spark to start a fire. These tools were often kept in a metal tinderbox.

Haversack-A heavy canvas or linen bag with a shoulder strap, in which a soldier carried his current day's rations and personal belongings. Ingredients for bread and bean soup rations below.

Money-At the beginning of the Revolutionary War, a private's pay was $6.67 per month. Little cash actually changed hands since most transactions were based on credit rather than hard currency. British Parliament prohibited the export of silver coin to the colonies, so most coins in circulation in America were from Spain, Portugal, or Holland. Coins were convenient for everyday purchases and payments. Larger transactions required bills of exchange or other forms of credit.

Musket Ball-A round lead bullet for a musket.

Penny Whistle-a small whistle made of tin.

Pipe-a clay pipe for smoking tobacco. A pipe could be carried in the haversack, but since it broke rather easily, it was more likely to be attached to a soldier's hat.

Playing Cards-card games were very popular in the 18th century. The cards were printed on heavy paper and included features (except numbers) and designs similar to those we are accustomed to today.

Rations-each week Revolutionary War soldiers were given limited amounts of food, known as a "ration." Typically, rations included salted or dried meat, dried beans or peas, flour, and rum.

Sewing Kit-a rolled-up canvas bag with pockets for sewing supplies, including scissors, a wooden needle case with pins and a needle, wood and pewter buttons, a thimble, heavy cotton thread, and swatches of fabric.

Tin Cup-a tin drinking vessel issued to a soldier and generally tied to the haversack.

Tobacco-the primary cash crop of Virginia.

Virginia Gazette-the newspaper name used by several different 18th-century printers in Williamsburg, Va.

Wig Curler-a fired clay curler used to style wigs. Officers, not enlisted men, typically wore wigs.

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CW: http://www.history.org/Foundation/journal/Autumn08/gamble.cfm

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CW: http://www.history.org/Foundation/journal/Winter08/tactics.cfm

Hands-On History: 18th-Century Artifacts for the Classroom: Soldier's Haversack by Colonial Williamsburg (No Date)

Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cockade

APPENDIX If you'd like to read more (excerpts from articles on CW's web site listed above):

On gambling: English games, attitudes, and practices towards gambling crossed the Atlantic, and Americans adopted them, but colonial gaming gained a character all its own. Gaming clubs never caught on in America because there weren't enough people to support them in the few existing cities. Moreover, settlers did not typically hazard the large sums routinely wagered in Great Britain.

Even the wealthiest of planters did not have the deep pockets of British aristocrats, who could bet £15,000 without flinching. A frontier mentality accepted risk; it didn't accept recklessness. Having created their own success, fewer men were willing to throw it away, and few colonists had the leisure for games. In short, in America gambling was a pastime, but not a vice.

Excessive gaming was, however. Stories abound from the 1700s of lost fortunes, ruined reputations, and plantations and indentured servants lost on the turn of a card. Virginian Landon Carter said, "No African is so great a slave" as a man obsessed with gambling.

Most Americans accepted Carter's view and avoided Byrd's fate, but gaming was a centerpiece of colonial life. Everybody did it—men, women, rich, poor, gentry, and slave. Like their English cousins, colonists bet on all sorts of things. They wagered on card games, like whist, piquet, cribbage, loo, put, and all-fours. Foreigners reported that card lovers could start a game after supper and play until dawn. Dice was a standard pastime, and betting on combative activities—bear baiting, cock fights, dog fights, dogs killing rats, target shooting, and wrestling matches—was popular.

Arguably, horse races were the most popular venue for gaming. As early as 1665, a permanent oval track stood at Hempstead Plain on Long Island, New York. Many consider this the birthplace of the horse racing industry. New York City eventually wanted something closer to home and built a track in lower Manhattan. Other sites popped up throughout the colonies, especially in the South. During the 1700s, well-known tracks operated in Alexandria, Annapolis, Fredericksburg, and Williamsburg. Prominent men took an interest in these tracks and the horses that ran on them. George Washington was a member of the Alexandria Jockey Club, as well as a club in Annapolis.

If tracks were not handy, fans conducted impromptu contests on public roads, a practice that became a public nuisance. In 1776, a Philadelphia grand jury warned about the dangers of these events: "Since the city has become so populous the usual custom of horse racing at fair in the Sassafras Street is very dangerous."

The onset of the Revolutionary War did nothing to slow down gamblers. The Continental and British armies tossed dice and cards into the knapsacks and marched off to fight.

For commanders on both sides, gambling was a constant problem. Washington's headquarters repeatedly issued orders trying to stop the wagering, as a typical directive from 1776 shows: "All officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers are positively forbid playing at cards, or other games of chance. At this time of public distress, men may find enough to do, in the service of their God and their country, without abandoning themselves to vice and immorality." Needless to say, the order's effect was nil. Starving soldiers at Valley Forge rolled dice to win acorns to eat.

On Staying Warm:

Ice-hardened roads served George Washington well as he repositioned his artillery by the Delaware River. Not so at Valley Forge, where the winter of 1777–78 froze the deep ruts of farm wagons into ragged ridges that tore at the soldiers' feet—some in makeshift moccasins, some bare and bleeding—as General Washington marched his army toward a long winter of discontent. Promised supplies never came; foodstuffs arrived rotten or waterlogged. A shipment of coats came, but the supplier had omitted the buttons that would close them tight against the wind. Soldiers made crude footwear out of untanned animal skins or anything else that would do. Assigned to guard duty in the snow, a shoeless man could only stand on his hat and shiver.

The first work party ashore from the Mayflower got busy building shelter. Washington's men did the same. On Mount Joy—ironically, a Mount Misery rises nearby—crews of about a dozen men each built themselves a hut of logs and got a fire of green wood going in a rough fireplace at one end. But if they opened the makeshift door at the other end to let the choking, eye-stinging smoke out, the warmth went out with it as the frigid wind sliced inside. Cold drafts found their way in anyway, blasting down the chimney or knifing through the clay and splinters stuffed haphazardly between the logs.

On Arms: The arms the armies used was what distinguished the Continentals from the British soldiers. The smoothbore military musket—the English version came to be known as the Brown Bess—is often maligned for inaccuracy, though the weapon was true enough at short range, say less than eighty yards. Yet accuracy was not at all the issue. Rate of fire, with companies firing in volley, gave muskets their military advantage. A well-drilled company could load and fire in unison at least four times a minute, and some seasoned units probably did better. No soldier aimed his weapon at any single adversary. He "presented" his weapon straight ahead, or obliquely to the right or left, at the command of his officers, and fired in unison with his company as rapidly as possible.

As a modern historian has written,

"Speed was everything. Speed for the defending force to pour as many bullets into the attacking force as possible; speed for the attacking force to close with its adversary before it had been too severely decimated to have sufficient strength to carry the position. . . ."

Linear positioning and rapid volleys explain the significance of the contributions to the American cause of Baron Friedrich von Steuben. Joining Washington's regulars in their winter encampment at Valley Forge in February 1778, the German baron somewhat simplified the British manual of arms and used the new manual to drill the Continental force relentlessly and effectively in rapid loading and firing of the musket. He improved their battlefield maneuverability, too. Historian Douglas Southall Freeman called von Steuben the "first teacher" of the American army.

Rapidity of fire—sending constant, coordinated volleys in the direction of the enemy—was infinitely more important than the accuracy of any individual's musket. Such firepower was hard to achieve unless the men were arrayed in open terrain and organized by company. So much for hiding behind rocks and trees.

What about those rifles? These formidable firearms had been in use for about a hundred years before the Revolution, and they were plentiful in the southern and middle colonies, though relatively rare in New England. True enough, they were more accurate and effective at greater distances, several hundred yards, than were military muskets. But accuracy came at a price: rifles took too long to load. A minute or more was needed to tightly "patch" the ball and carefully ram it down the barrel to engage the rifled grooves that spun the ball and gave it true trajectory.

Moreover, unlike the riflemen, musketmen did not carry the powder horns used in the time-consuming measurement of powder for each charge. A musket's charge, along with the ball, was measured and encased in a paper cartridge. The wrapper served as the ball's wadding when it was quickly, though loosely, thrown down the barrel and pushed home with the rammer. The comparative sluggishness of reloading a rifle rendered it unsatisfactory for linear military tactics. Interpreter Dale Smoot says during his Magazine presentations, "Rifles are fine weapons for shooting at things that don't shoot back—like deer."

There was another problem with rifles and, indeed, all civilian long arms of the period. They were not fashioned to accommodate bayonets, an essential weapon of eighteenth-century infantry. Regular forces moved into lines of battle with bayonets fixed. Military bayonets were offset from the muzzle to permit loading and firing with the bayonets in place, always ready for a charge to force the enemy from the field. Civilian weapons might be equipped with plug bayonets, essentially knives with wooden plugs to be inserted into the barrel of the firearm, rendering it incapable of firing.

On Cockades: During the American Revolution, the Continental Army initially wore cockades of various colors as an *ad hoc* form of rank insignia, as General George Washington wrote:

"As the Continental Army has unfortunately no uniforms, and consequently many inconveniences must arise from not being able to distinguish the commissioned officers from the privates, it is desired that some badge of distinction be immediately provided; for instance that the field officers may have red or pink colored cockades in their hats, the captains yellow or buff, and the subalterns green."

Before long however, the Continental Army reverted to wearing the black cockade they inherited from the British. Later, when France became an ally of the United States, the Continental Army pinned the white cockade of the French *Ancien Régime* onto their old black cockade; the French reciprocally pinned the black cockade onto their white cockade, as a mark of the French-American alliance. The black-and-white cockade thus became known as the "Union Cockade".

Cockades were later widely worn by revolutionaries and proponents of various political factions in France and its colonies beginning in 1789. Just as they did in the United States a few years before, the French now pinned the blue-and-red cockade of Paris onto the white cockade of the *Ancien Régime* - thus producing the original *Tricolore* cockade. Later, distinctive colours and styles of cockade would indicate the wearer's faction -- although the meanings of the various styles were not entirely consistent, and varied somewhat by region and period.

On Rations:

The food had to be something that would not spoil. Hard bread was known in Roman times. Made of flour, water, and salt, the bread could be soaked in a soldier's drink or broth before it was eaten. Bean soup was made of dried bean (or peas), salt pork, onion, vinegar, and pepper and had to cook for several hours for the beans to soften.