

Teaching Guide: Salisbury Bread Riot

Note for Teachers:

This is the Teaching Guide for the Salisbury Bread Riot Case Study:

museumofthenewsouth.org/schools/salisbury-bread-riot/

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Background Information

Throughout history, significant societal changes have created a disturbance to the status quo. This happened repeatedly with the onset of wars such as the American Civil War and World Wars I and II. This case study focuses on the role of women and economic impacts on the homefront during the Civil War. The overarching question asked in the case study is: were the actions taken by the women of Salisbury justified?

Prior to the Civil War, North Carolina was nicknamed the “the Rip Van Winkle State” due to a reputation of being slow to change. By 1861, one out of every three people was enslaved in the state. Slavery promoted growth but not development. Funds were used to purchase more enslaved Africans and land to grow the same crops rather than on machinery or diversifying new crops or businesses. Therefore limited growth in cities took place, technology was at a standstill, and education spread slowly. Most white families lived on small farms without enslaved Africans. These farmers, called “yeoman”, grew just enough crops to feed their own families because of the lack of transportation to sell goods at market.

On April 12, 1861, the Civil War had begun with South Carolina seceding from the Union, followed by other Southern states. North Carolina chose to split from the Union on May 20, 1861, making it the next to last state to secede. The issues surrounding the war that led to the southern states seceding included slavery and the role of states’ rights. North Carolina had over 300 plantations before the rise of the Civil War, however, a lot of cities, like Salisbury, did not have large plantations, but rather small farms. At the beginning of the war, the Confederacy relied on young, unmarried men to fight. As the Civil War continued, it became necessary for all able men to join in the fight, leaving almost all home responsibilities to the women. Women had to manage the family farms. They had to decide what crops to grow and how to manage them, and crop growth failure could lead to starvation.

In Salisbury, NC, most men had to leave their families behind. Even though there were not large plantations, the families left behind struggled to maintain their lifestyle due to the effects of the war. The impact of the war caused the women to bend expected societal roles in order to survive. With the men gone, women had to find ways to feed their families and maintain their farms and households during a time when most women did not earn a living wage. The only income available to the women was through the government if their husband or son died during the war. This was in the form of a bounty, or sign-on bonus, and backpay that could add up to several hundred dollars, but proof was needed in order to collect the payments. To relieve the pressures of the absent men, NC governor Zebulon B. Vance decided to appoint speculators to provide government-issued subsidies in the form of food staples. Unfortunately, the appointed speculators took advantage of the situation and raised the prices on the subsidies, leading to

price gouging on everyday items. With limited income, the families left behind were close to starvation and were desperate for relief. The struggle of the women's limited income and resources led to the eventual Salisbury Bread Riot on March 18, 1863 in an effort to maintain their families' well-being. About 50-75 local women demanded supplies at below market value on the main street of Salisbury. The women claimed the speculators were selling these products for over double the price the government set. Shopkeepers who offered resistance were met with women with hatchets and axes knocking down their doors. By the end of the day, the women had collected over 23 barrels of flour, 1 barrel of molasses, 2 sacks of salt and 20 dollars. The women divided up the supplies the next day. The women were never arrested. After the riot, the county increased the monthly amounts of money and salt per household slightly and improved the process of distribution.

By the end of the Civil War, there were 25,000 more women than men in North Carolina. Many small farmers became tenant farmers or sharecroppers, and eventually North Carolina became much more industrialized with the widespread advent of textile mills and other factories. Mill owners welcomed women and children as cheap labor. North Carolina had one of the largest percentages of women working outside the home by 1900. Much like the participants in the Salisbury Bread Riot, women in North Carolina continued to advocate for themselves and their families as the early 1900s saw the rise of women's groups advocating for worker and children's rights, women's suffrage, temperance, etc.

Salisbury Bread Riot Case Study Optional Teaching Plan

Materials Needed:

Sources and questions

Role cards

Map of enslaved people by county in NC, 1860

Plan of Instruction:

1. *Background Information:*

Prior to having students read the background information, introduce the people involved in the Salisbury Bread Riot. Have students examine different cards that have a scenario on them from the perspective of:

-women of Salisbury

-speculators

-farmers fighting for the Confederacy

-Governor

-plantation owner

<p>Women of Salisbury: Your husband has left to fight for the Confederacy leaving you at home with the children, the farm work and little money. Your husband has always tended to the farm and you do not have the manpower to keep it going. The government has been raising prices of the basic necessities your family needs. You do not know what to do to keep your family from starving.</p>	<p>Speculators: You realize this war will last longer than anticipated so you are hoarding supplies in case there's a shortage. You are raising prices above the government set prices to earn a quick profit.</p>
<p>Farmers fighting for the Confederacy: The Confederate Conscription Act required you to go fight in the war. You left your family to fight with a promise that they will be provided for. The government has promised to pay your family the going rate set for provisions which equals about eleven dollars per month.</p>	<p>Zebulon Baird Vance, Governor of NC: You are the leader of the state. People from across North Carolina want to communicate with you. They write letters to share problems and ask for help. You are known as the "War Governor of NC" fighting for the rights of your citizens during the war.</p>
<p>Plantation Owner: In 1862 after the Second Conscription Act, you are exempted from serving in the war with the "20 Negro Law" since you have 20 or more enslaved people.</p>	

2. *Have students read the background information.*
3. *Source 1: Introduce the featured newspaper, the Carolina Watchman. Have the students read the excerpt and answer the questions. This can be done as stations or in a jigsaw method.*
4. *Sources 2 and 3: Students will analyze letters written to Governor Vance. Review the role cards. Ask the students, "Why do you think _____ (women, soldiers, speculators, etc.) would write letters to their governor at this time?" Brainstorm a list of reasons for each type of person. Distribute the letters and questions for Sources 2 and 3. You may want to divide the class into two groups to read and respond to one of the two letters.*
5. *Source 4: The next source is from a soldier's perspective. It also provides details about the differences between plantation owners and small farmers in the state. To introduce this source, display the NC map of enslaved people by county (can be found through a web search) and have students identify Rowan County, where Salisbury is. Ask students where they think the majority of the plantations in North Carolina are located during this time period based on the map. You may choose to read the introductory text from Source 4 out loud before having students read the letter and answer the Source 4 questions.*
6. *Source 5: Bread riots happened throughout the Civil War south, and the Richmond Bread Riot was the largest of them. Divide the cartoon in half. Show the first image of "sowing" first. Ask students what they notice. In this first panel, the Confederate wives are waving their men off to war in full support of their enlistment. Next, show the second panel of "reaping" which depicts the Richmond Bread Riot. Ask students to compare and contrast the two panels and then answer the Source 5 questions. More information can be found on this cartoon by doing a web search of: "new york historical society civil war political cartoons".*
7. *Introduce students to the activities and rubrics. You may give students a choice in activities or assign one or more.*
8. *Closing Discussion: Repeat the Compelling Question.*
Were the actions taken by the women of Salisbury justified?
Have students discuss their answers using textual evidence from the sources.

Letter

During the Civil War era, people wrote letters to their governor to discuss problems and solutions, such as the women in Salisbury and soldiers fighting in the war. Have students brainstorm problems and possible solutions for issues in their community. Each student should then choose the problem they think is the most important to write a letter to their governor about. They may use the template below as a guide for the letter writing.

Modification: Have students identify the problems and solutions from Sources 2, 3, and 4 using a highlighter on copies of the letters. Then students should brainstorm problems and possible solutions for issues in their community. Finally, they should write down the problems and solutions in the form of a T-chart.

Extension: After they have written their letters, have students create a plan and advertising flier for a community event to either raise awareness and/or funds for the problem or issue they are most concerned about in their community.

<i>Date</i>
<i>Dear _____,</i>
<i>-Friendly Greeting/ Introduction</i>
<i>-Short summary of an issue affecting our community</i>
<i>-Explanation of why this issue is important to you and others</i>
<i>-Suggestion of what action you would like your governor to take on this issue</i>
<i>-Closing</i>
<i>Sincerely,</i> <i>Your Name</i>

Salisbury Bread Riot: Letter Rubric

Components	Exceptional	Accomplished	Developing	Beginning
Organization (_/10)	Information is organized in a way that clearly communicates the writer's message (see template)	Information is organized in a way that mostly communicates the writer's message	Information is organized in a way that somewhat communicates the writer's message	Information is not organized in a way that communicates the writer's message.
Content (_/20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -A clear, specific connection is made between the issue and the writer and/or their local community. -A persuasive argument is made for the importance of the issue -A persuasive argument is made for what a government official receiving your letter should do (a proposed solution) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -A clear connection is made between the issue and the writer and/or their local community. -A somewhat persuasive argument is made for the importance of the issue -A somewhat persuasive argument is made for what a government official receiving your letter should do (a proposed solution) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Makes a connection between the issue and the writer and/or their local community -An argument is made for the importance of the issue -An argument is made for what a government official receiving your letter should do (a proposed solution) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Connection is not made between the issue and the writer and/or their local community. -An argument is not clearly made for the importance of the issue -An argument is not clearly made for what a government official receiving your letter should do (a proposed solution)
Language (_/10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Letter does not have any spelling and/or grammar errors -Thoughtful use of language to persuade the reader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Letter has one or two spelling and/or grammar errors -Thoughtful use of language to persuade the reader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Letter has several instances of spelling and/or grammar errors -Some thoughtful use of language to persuade the reader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Letter included spelling and/or grammar errors throughout -Language used does not persuade the reader

Total: _/40

Webquest

This activity is like a webquest that allows students to expand on the impact of the Salisbury Bread Riot on the town of Salisbury and to explore how Salisbury reacted to an ongoing concern. Provide students with a hard or digital copy of the Webquest document so they can visit the website and answer the questions.

Modification: Have students explore the website and then discuss the modern Bread Riot organization's connection to the historic Bread Riot together in class. Then have students create their own website on the historic Salisbury Bread Riot with two pieces of paper, one for a page explaining causes of the riot and one about results of the riot. Both pages should include text and non text elements.

Extension: Using the issue or concern they wrote letters about in Activity 1, have students create an organization website for their chosen cause on three pieces of paper, one for a homepage, one page that explains the organization's purpose, and one page that explains specific ways the organization is trying to address the cause. All three pages should include text and non text elements.

Salisbury Bread Riot: Community Webquest

Directions: Explore breadriot.org to answer these questions.



Visit the homepage and answer these questions:

**What is the mission of the Bread Riot Organization?
How does it connect to the issues surrounding the
Salisbury Bread Riot of 1863?**

1.



Read the About us page and respond to the following prompt:

Predict how the women of the Salisbury Bread Riot would respond to the objectives of the Bread Riot Organization.

2.



Visit the Programs pages and choose at least one of the programs the Bread Riot Organization offers and explain how it's evidence of how communities can come together to combat a local, state, national, and/or global issue.

3.



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Visit the Meet the Farmers page and check out farms that have pledged to help in the Bread Riot Organization's mission. Pick two farms and describe how they are producing healthy food and strengthening the local economy.

4.

Political Cartoon

Using the Richmond Bread Riot political cartoon as a model, have students draw a political cartoon about the Salisbury Bread Riot.

Ask them to consider these questions in developing their cartoon:

- Who are the main people involved in the event?
- How will you incorporate the setting and the actions of what happened in Salisbury?
- What message do you want to convey to the viewer about the event? Was there something that shocked you, something that you think was not right, something that you think needs to change, something that is emotional. etc?
- What words or phrases will you use to communicate the message?

Modification: Find or have students find other Civil War political cartoons depicting women. Have them compare and contrast the Richmond cartoon with one of the other cartoons in a written paragraph or Venn diagram.

Extension: Have students write three questions about their original cartoons. They should be questions written to help others unpack and understand their cartoons. Students may need some guidance on creating questions for political cartoons, including scaffolding of questions. Then have them exchange their cartoons and questions with another classmate so that each person can analyze someone else's cartoon.

Salisbury Bread Riot: Political Cartoon Rubric

	Exceptional (4)	Accomplished (3)	Developing (2)	Beginning (1)
Understanding	Cartoon demonstrates a clear understanding of the Salisbury Bread Riot.	Cartoon demonstrates an understanding of the Salisbury Bread Riot.	Cartoon demonstrates a limited understanding of the Salisbury Bread Riot.	Cartoon demonstrates little or no understanding of the Salisbury Bread Riot.
Visual Presentation/ Creativity	Cartoon is neat; color and creative graphics are used exceptionally well; captions are readable.	Cartoon is neat; color and creative graphics are used; captions are readable.	Cartoon is somewhat neat; some color and creative graphics are used; captions are included.	Cartoon is not neat; color and graphics are lacking; captions are omitted or unreadable.
Message	Key issue and cartoonist's position are clearly identifiable.	Key issue and cartoonist's position are identifiable.	Key issue is identifiable; cartoonist's position may be unclear.	Key issue and cartoonist's position are unclear.
Total				

Student Objectives

1. Students will be able to identify the role speculators had on the economy in NC during the Civil War and how this affected the families on the homefront.
2. Students will be able to analyze the women's responses to the lack of food and resources at home during the Civil War.
3. Students will be able to recognize the inequities amongst soldiers and their families in NC during the Civil War.

Relevant NC 8th Grade Social Studies Standards

8.E.1.3 Distinguish the role women, indigenous groups, and racial minorities have played in contributing to the economic prosperity of North Carolina in terms of equity, equality, and mobility.

8.H.1.4 Explain how recovery, resistance, and resilience to inequities, injustices, discrimination, prejudice and bias have shaped the history of North Carolina and the nation.

8.H.2.3 Explain how the experiences and achievements of women, minorities, indigenous, and marginalized groups have contributed to the development of North Carolina and the nation over time.