

Teaching Hard History: Slavery, Reconstruction and Lasting Legacies

Thursday, Oct. 10, 2019 – Saturday Oct. 12, 2019 | North Carolina Museum of History

...All our terrible and beautiful history [can seem like it binds us down, that we are] doomed to an unimaginable unreality. I prefer to believe that the day is coming when we will tell the truth about it – and ourselves. On that day...we can call ourselves free men. ~James Baldwin

Thursday, Oct. 10

- 11:00 – 11:30 **Registration/Arrival at the NC Museum of History, Longleaf Classroom**
Participants will gather at the NC Museum of History to check in and pick up your name tag. We will then leave the Museum promptly at 11:30 AM to walk to the Executive Mansion (4 blocks away) and begin the process of security checks. All participants must have a photo ID and the workshop name tag for entry into the Mansion.
- Noon – 1:00 **Teacher Appreciation Lunch at the Executive Mansion**
As a prelude to the important work of these three days, **First Lady Kristin Cooper** will welcome teachers for a luncheon at the Executive Mansion. While enjoying lunch, we will wade into the content of our event with curator **Michael Ausbon**, who will share a bit about the history of the Mansion. We will also enjoy a preview of **Mary Williams** as she offers a musical convocation to set the stage for exploring our shared, “hard history.”
- 1:00 – 1:20 Transition to NC Museum of History, Longleaf Classroom
- 1:20 – 1:45 **Introductions & Workshop Overview**
Christie Norris | Director, Carolina K-12
- 1:45 – 3:00 **KEYNOTE - Deep Rooted: Race, Education and Inequities in North Carolina**
[James Ford](#), Executive Director, Center for Racial Equity in Education (CREED)
Other than land ownership, freedpeople in the South just after the Civil War considered education perhaps the most critical vehicle towards autonomy. Yet, racial inequality in North Carolina — a product of the deep-rooted history of slavery, Jim Crow, and racism — continues to deny black students not only their state constitutional right to a sound basic education, but also their Fourteenth Amendment right to equality under the law. James Ford will kick off our three-day exploration of “hard history” by leading us to first consider how race-based disparities in education have been constructed and preserved for centuries. By working to understand our state’s complicated history of race and education, we can acknowledge our intentions and strengthen our resolve to move forward in more equitable ways. (Access CREED’s pivotal reports “Deep Rooted: A History of Race & Education in North Carolina” and “E(race)ing Inequities: The State of Racial Equity in North Carolina Public Schools” at <https://www.ednc.org/equity-report/>.)

- 3:00 – 3:10 Break
- 3:10 – 4:20 **DISCUSSION - Teaching Hard History: Why Should I?**
Christie Norris | Director, Carolina K-12
[Dr. Brian Gibbs](#) | School of Education, UNC-Chapel Hill
- One of the greatest challenges facing educators is teaching our students to engage with hard histories, in this specific historical moment when everything, from history to current events, feels particularly fraught. Coupled with a highly polarized political spectrum, many teachers choose to avoid “hard history” and/or controversial current events all together. But democracy thrives on open discourse and we do our students and communities a disservice by not covering comprehensive history and controversial issues, despite how tricky it can be. Join Dr. Gibbs in discussing your fears and challenges of teaching “the hard stuff,” and why it is still imperative to do so despite discomfort and perceived risks.
- 4:20 – 4:30 Break
- 4:30 - 5:45 **Teaching (and Un-Teaching) the Hard History of American Slavery**
[Dr. Ebony Pearl Jones](#), NC State University
- American slavery is hard history - but it is also at the heart of our history. According to historian David Blight, slavery is the key to understanding the complexity of our past and its direct linkage to racial inequality today. In this session, we will examine the origin, evolution, demise and legacy of slavery, all of which directly contradicts the traditional historical narrative of American history as progress towards “liberty and justice for all.” Yet, we will also pay careful attention to the fact that “hard history is not hopeless history.” There is also promise and possibility in considering the lives of the enslaved and the many ways they resisted slavery, from maintaining community to armed rebellion.
- 5:45 – 6:00 Break
- 6:00 – 7:00 **Songs of Slavery: Using Music to Teach Hard History**
[Mary D. Williams](#) | Performer & Adjunct Professor at Duke’s Center for Documentary Studies
- African-American spirituals emerged from a mix of the brutal institution of slavery, African culture and spiritual influences. The powerful songs expressed everything from a yearning for a better life to an identification with community and codified protest, while often naming the slave owner’s deceit and hypocrisy and emphasizing the enslaved person’s hope for freedom and the future. In this session, Mary D. Williams will expose us to one of the most significant forms of American folksong through her voice and lead us to explore how music can be a powerful tool to engage students in “hard history.” (Listen to Mrs. Williams on NPR [here](#).)
- 7:00 Hotel check in and dinner on your own.

Friday, Oct. 11

- 8:30 – 10:00 **Breakfast & Independent Exhibit Exploration:** [Freedom! A Promise Disrupted, North Carolina 1862-1901](#) and [The Story of North Carolina](#)
- 10:00 – 10:30 **Reflections**
Christie Norris | Carolina K-12, UNC-Chapel Hill
- 10:30 – 11:45 **Teaching Reconstruction through Primary Sources**
[Dr. Susanna Lee](#) | *Department of History, NC State University*
Primary sources are an excellent way to provide students with a powerful sense of a more comprehensive history and the complexity of the past, guiding them toward better critical thinking and analytical skills. In this session, Dr. Lee will discuss the period of Reconstruction while modeling ways to integrate primary sources to dispel myths and highlight the relevance of this history to today.
- 11:45 – 12:20 Lunch
- 12:20 – 1:45 **Walking Tour & Discussion: [NC Capitol's Confederate Monuments](#)**
[Dr. Susanna Lee](#) | *Department of History, NC State University*
Although Confederate monuments have become flashpoints of controversy around the state, the old State Capitol grounds hosts several monuments to Confederate causes and soldiers erected between 30 and 75 years after the end of the Civil War. They stand among a dozen other memorials commemorating presidents, governors and veterans of several wars. Dr. Susanna Lee will discuss each monument and offer her thoughts regarding how they differ than monuments built to memorialize individual soldiers in graveyards (several of which can be found just blocks away in Oakwood Cemetery.)
- 1:45 – 3:00 **Talking “The Talk”**
[Sonny Kelly](#), *Creator and Performer*
Our nation seems to bear daily witness to an epidemic of state-sanctioned violence against minority communities, much of which is rooted in the history of this nation. In this session, Sonny Kelly will perform a 30-minute excerpt from his one-man show “The Talk,” which is centered around a painful conversation a father has with his seven-year-old son regarding violence against black people in a racialized America, while weaving current events with complicated history. We will then engage in discussion regarding how to mobilize storytelling and story witnessing to engage K-12 students in the study of our shared past and present for maximum impact and change in the classroom.
- 3:00 – 3:15 Break
- 3:15 – 5:15 **Working to Extend Anti-Racist Education**
[Dr. Ronda Taylor Bullock](#) | *Director, Working to Extend Anti-Racist Education ([weare](#))*
Race, though often ignored in K-12 curriculums, is central to exploring American history, culture, and current events. In this exploratory session, participants will examine their own identities while gaining an understanding of race, racism, and white privilege. We

will discuss how to safely and effectively address race in the K-12 classroom, despite its complexities and the discomfort teachers (and students) can often feel.

5:15 – 5:45 **Reflections**
Christie Norris | Carolina K-12, UNC-Chapel Hill

Saturday, Oct. 12

****Hotel guests will need to check out before our 9 AM start.*

9:00 – 9:30 **Breakfast**

9:30 – 10:20 **Curriculum Connections**
Christie Norris | Carolina K-12, UNC-Chapel Hill

10:20 - 10:30 Break

10:30 - Noon **Revealing the Hidden History of Lynching in North Carolina**
[*Dr. Seth Kotch*](#) | *American Studies, UNC-Chapel Hill*

As Ida B. Wells-Barnett argued in her courageous fight for justice, lynching was much more than a response to alleged crimes. It was part of a narrative of white supremacy that wrote out Black success, Black families, and Black personhood. Dr. Kotch will discuss the history of lynching, the impact of these crimes on the individuals, their families and legacies, and the residual impacts of lynching on today's society. He will also discuss the ways in which people bravely found back against lynching, despite the very dangerous risks of doing so. The session will also highlight the [Red Record](#) website, which plots the points of each lynching across North Carolina, and links to primary sources regarding each victim. Ultimately, we will explore how this history can be used to wage an important conversation about race, violence, and power in the United States.

Noon – 12:45 **Lunch and Panel Discussion: How Educators are Teaching Hard History Today**

- *A History of Anti-Black Violence in Halifax County*, 8th grade Social Studies teacher Rodney Pierce
- *Integrating Hard History into English Language Arts*, High School English teacher Matthew Scialdone

12:45 – 2:00 **1898 Wilmington & Lasting Legacies**
[*LeRae Umfleet*](#), author of [*A Day of Blood: The 1898 Wilmington Race Riot*](#)

The events of 1898, in Wilmington were a turning point in North Carolina history. By force, a white mob destroyed the local black-owned newspaper, seized the reins of government, and terrorized the African American community. LeRae Umfleet will recount the events, how the stage was set for the coup to occur, as well as the impact of the upheaval for years to come.

2:00 – 2:15 Break

2:15 – 3:45 **Teaching Hard History: Here’s How**
Dr. Brian Gibbs | School of Education, UNC-Chapel Hill

From history to current events, addressing controversial and difficult topics can result in some of the most memorable teaching and learning moments – both good and bad. It can be monumental when students engage in critical thinking and respectful dialogue, but catastrophic when instructional goals are misunderstood or response to a lesson grows out of control. Dr. Gibbs will discuss specific strategies for engaging students in hard histories safely and effectively, including a modeled Socratic Seminar, an excellent format for engaging students in a safe and structured format for critical conversation.

3:45 – 4:30 **Closing Reflections and Evaluations**
Christie Norris | Carolina K-12, UNC-Chapel Hill

Required Pre-Readings:

****Please note the purpose of these readings is to provide you with a common foundational knowledge prior to beginning our work on Oct. 10. Some of these readings will be referenced by various presenters and used as the basis for discussion and others will not.*

1. [We Have to Face It to Fix It](#), by James Ford
 - Linked in this article are two reports that it is recommended teachers read: [Deep Rooted: A Brief History of Race & Education in NC](#) and [E\(race\)ing Inequities: The State of Racial Equity in NC Public Schools](#); while not a required pre-reading, the information is highly relevant to any teacher interested in issues of education and equity.
2. [Teaching Hard History: American Slavery](#), report by SPLC (p. 5-11)
 - p. 5-11 is required, but we highly recommend reading the entire report
3. [History Class & the Fictions About Race in America](#), article by Alia Wong, The Atlantic
4. [Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror](#), report by Equal Justice Initiative
 - While this report is 76 pages long, we suggest reading the entire report (with the optional exception noted below) to provide yourself with a strong foundation in many of the topics we will address at the workshop.
 - Section III of the report - *Lynching in America: From “Popular Justice” to Racial Terror* (p. 27-48 in the PDF version) contains very graphic details regarding various lynching’s throughout history. Participants who choose to skip this section and instead engage with the material during the workshop, as part of a safe class format with Dr. Seth Kotch, are welcome to do so.
 - For additional (OPTIONAL) exploration, [EJI’s entire website](#) is an excellent source for exploring hard history and it’s lingering impacts today - from information from the evolution of slavery, mass incarceration, the death penalty, and much more being available.
5. [Talking Race with Young Children](#), NPR podcast episode for direct play or download
 - You might want to save this for your drive to the workshop. While it is worded for a parent-audience, the information is highly applicable to classrooms of any age.