

People

David Walker



Lesson Plan

OBJECTIVE: *To become familiar with the life and contributions of David Walker*

Social Studies Objective: 3.03

Social Studies Skills: 1, 2, 3

Language Arts Objectives: 1.03, 1.04, 2.01, 5.01, 6.01, 6.02

Resources/Materials

- Summary of David Walker
- Responding to Activities page

Procedures

- Students will read the biographical sketch of David Walker independently, or as a small group as a whole class.
- Students will complete *Activities* page
- Discussion and extensions follow as directed by the teacher.

Evaluation

- Student participation in reading and discussion of David Walker
- Student performance on *Activities* page

Bibliography

"David Walker's Appeal." *African Americans Resource Bank Judgment Day Part 4*. WGBH PBS Online. Accessed 2/23/03.
<http://www.pbs.org>
Search for David Walker's appeal.

"Richard Allen in David Walker's Appeal 1829." *African Americans Resource Bank Judgment Day Part 3*. WGBH PBS Online. Accessed 2/23/03.
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part3/3h101.html>

"David Walker's Appeal: Excerpts from the Appeal." *Africans in America*. WGBH PBS Online. Accessed 2/23/03.
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h2931t.html>

David Walker



The African
American
Experience
in North Carolina

North Carolina Freedom Monument Project

Biographical Sketch

David Walker was born in Wilmington, North Carolina in 1796 or 1797. The exact date of his birth is unknown. He was the son of a slave father and a free African American mother. Although he was considered a free man, he was very aware of slavery and its many injustices.

Walker left North Carolina and traveled throughout the United States. He eventually became a resident of Boston, Massachusetts. In the 1820s while in Boston, he opened a used clothing store. He became friends with African American activists of Boston. Walker also joined organizations that denounced slavery. Scarce food, little clothing, and poor housing made the life of a slave miserable. One incident left a life-long impression on this free African American man. Walker witnessed a son forced to whip his mother until she died. As a result of all of these events and relationships, Walker became involved with the publication of the first African American newspaper, *Freedom's Journal*. He wrote articles published in the newspaper. By 1828, David Walker was known as Boston's leading spokesperson against slavery.

In 1829, Walker published the *Appeal*, a pamphlet describing the horrors of slavery and encouraging slaves to rebel. It was considered one of the most revolutionary of all antislavery documents with its call for slaves to revolt against their masters. The *Appeal* made a great impression on both Southern slave owners and slaves. The *Appeal* angered and upset the slave owners. It was inspirational for the slaves, giving them encouragement, pride, and hope for the future.

The distribution of the *Appeal* was a unique undertaking by Walker. He used sailors who were sympathetic to the plight of the slaves to transport the pamphlets. Walker would sew the pamphlet inside the lining of the sailors' clothes. When they reached the Southern states, the sailors would distribute the *Appeal*. Slaves were forbidden to read and write, and the *Appeal* and other antislavery literature were forbidden.

Attempting to prevent the distribution of the *Appeal*, a \$3,000 reward was offered by slave owners for the capture of Walker. A \$10,000 reward was promised if Walker was returned to the South alive. Because Walker's friends were concerned for his safety, they helped him escape to Canada. In Canada, he published a third edition of his *Appeal* in June, 1830. Two months after the publication he died mysteriously. According to *Africans in America Resource Bank*, later research suggests he may have died of tuberculosis, the same disease that killed his daughter.

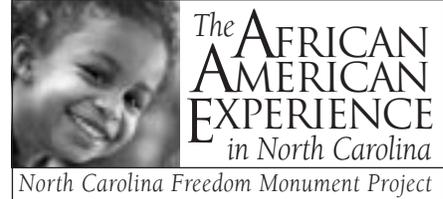
David Walker believed that "America is more our country than it is the whites---we have enriched it with our blood and tears." The radical words of his writings echoed the injustices suffered by slaves throughout North Carolina and the United States.

His profound statements impacted the antebellum society and are still relevant today in our continuing quest for equality.

"Treat us like men and we will be your friends. And there is not a doubt in my mind, but that the whole of the past will be sunk into oblivion, and we yet, under God, will become a united and happy people. The whites may say it is impossible, but remember that nothing is impossible with God."

People

David Walker



Activities

Personal Response

Would you have been willing to distribute the *Appeal* if David Walker asked you to help? Explain.

Analyzing Information

Directions: Respond to each of the following questions in complete sentences.

1. Compare the response of the slave and the slave owner to Walker's *Appeal*.
2. Describe David Walker's plan to distribute his pamphlet.
3. Explain the incident in the life of Walker that helped him become an activist against slavery.
4. Interpret this quotation, "America is more our country than it is the whites"—we have enriched it with our blood and tears."

Interpreting Meaning

Directions: Read the selection. Locate each of the following terms. Write the sentence in which the word is used. Explain the meanings of the term as it is used in the sentence.

1. injustices
2. impression
3. denounced
4. activists
5. pamphlet
6. tuberculosis
7. inspirational
8. enriched
9. plight
10. sympathetic

Creative Response

1. Create a wanted poster for the capture of David Walker. This advertisement may have been found throughout the cities of America.

2. Examine the following excerpt from David Walker's *Appeal*. Draw a political cartoon that may have appeared in a newspaper of the time.

"... I must observe to my brethren that at the close of the first Revolution in this country, with Great Britain, there were thirteen States in the Union, now there are twenty-four, most of which are slave-holding States, and the whites are dragging us around in chains and in handcuffs, to their new States and Territories to work their mines and farms, to enrich them and their children—and millions of them believing firmly that we being a little darker than they, were made by our Creator to be an inheritance to them and their children forever—the same as a parcel of brutes."

3. Research slave codes and generate a list of restrictions that were placed on slaves.

4. **NCFMP:** Look up the word *appeal* in the dictionary and copy down all of its meanings. If you could make an appeal to future generations about the practice of slavery as an inscription or image on the NC Freedom Monument, what would it look like? Would you use words or images or both? Sketch this element as part of the Monument to Freedom.

David Walker



Activities ■ Answer Key for Teachers

Personal Response

Would you have been willing to distribute the *Appeal* if David Walker asked you to help? Explain.

Responses will vary

Analyzing Information

Directions: Respond to each of the following questions in complete sentences.

1. Compare the response of the slave and the slave owner to Walker's *Appeal*.

The slaves appreciated the information in the *Appeal*. They felt encouragement and renewed pride in themselves. The slave holders were angered by the *Appeal* and supported the passage of laws that forbade the slaves to learn to read and write.

2. Describe David Walker's plan to distribute his pamphlet.

David Walker owned a second-hand clothing store that was located near the port of Boston. Walker sewed the pamphlets into the lining of clothing sold to sailors who were sympathetic to the plight of slaves.

3. Explain the incident in the life of Walker that helped him to be an activist against slavery.

Walker witnessed a son who was forced to whip his mother until she died.

4. Interpret this quotation, "America is more our country than it is the whites'—we have enriched it with our blood and tears."

Responses will vary

Interpreting Meaning

1. injustices (unfairness, dishonesty) Although he was considered a free man, he was very aware of slavery and its many injustices.

2. impression (an influence or effect on feeling, sense, or mind) One incident left a life-long impression on this free man.

3. denounced (to inform as being against) Walker also joined organizations that denounced slavery.

4. activists (one who stands up publicly for what he believes to influence others) He became friends with African American activists of Boston.

5. pamphlet (a short printed publication) In 1829, Walker published the *Appeal*, a pamphlet describing the horrors of slavery and encouraging slaves to rebel.

6. tuberculosis (a disease of the lungs) According to the Africans in America Resource Bank, later research suggests that he may have died of tuberculosis, the same disease that killed his daughter.

7. inspirational (to move or guide by spiritual powers) However, for the slaves, the *Appeal* was inspirational and gave hope for the future.

8. enriched (to make richer) David Walker believed that "America is more our country than it is the whites'—we have enriched it with our blood and tears."

9. plight (a bad state or condition) He used sailors who were sympathetic to the plight of the slaves to transport the pamphlets.

10. sympathetic (tendency to favor or support) He used sailors who were sympathetic to the plight of the slaves to transport the pamphlets.

Creative Response

1. See *Activities* page. Responses will vary.

2. See *Activities* page. Responses will vary.

3. The slave code defined the social, economic, and physical place of slaves. Some of the restrictions included: disrespect to white persons; trespassing on white-owned property; marrying free African Americans; running away; producing forged papers; hiring out their services themselves; raising horses, cattle, hogs, or sheep; selling alcohol; gambling; hunting with a gun; setting fire to the woods; and selling articles of property without written permission.

4. See *Activities* page. Responses will vary.