

Inspiring Change: Women's Education in 19th Century America

Lesson 1: How do society's expectations influence education?



Grades 8-12

How to Use This Guide

This teaching resource aims to explore female education and its improvements which lead to the Women's Rights Movement in the 19th century. This guide for educators uses an object-based exploration strategy to facilitate conversation. In addition to the lessons, resources for further exploration of the topic are also cited and provided online.

Objectives:

- Assist educators in teaching and facilitating meaningful dialogue on the topic of female education in 19th century America
- Provide thought-provoking activities that allow students to draw personal connections to Women's Rights topics
- Demonstrate how objects may be used as primary sources for understanding history
- Foster curiosity, understanding, empathy and a spirit of self-advocacy

Grades: 8-12

Lessons are made to be flexible and adaptive based on the needs of any classroom. Each includes:

- Guide for Careful Looking
- Downloadable Object Images and Information
- Questions for Discussion
- Questions for Context
- Suggested Activities

Object images are accompanied by some basic information, which educators may or may not choose to share with the students prior to the lesson. Should a lesson need to be shortened, educators could choose to ask only one Question for Discussion and one Question for Context. For a more comprehensive lesson, teachers may choose to use one of the additional Suggested Activities.

Guide for Careful Looking (5 minutes/object) can be used at the beginning of every lesson for each object. This tool will help students carefully consider the basic features of the object and what it is communicating. After students fill out the guide on their own, educators may want to share the provided object information so that students can then fill in factual information on their Analysis chart.

Questions for Discussion (15 minutes) can be introduced after the Careful Looking Guide has been completed. They tie in background information on the objects to further the discovery process and make sense of the object's function. These questions focus on what we can know about the objects by looking or reading about them.

Questions for Context (15 minutes) can be introduced after the Questions for Discussion to help students identify, understand, and make connections to the current or past conditions or state of the object, and how it may relate to their personal experiences. These questions encourage students to consider the broader implications of the object and its spheres.

Suggested Activities (30 minutes+) can be used as additional classroom exercises or multi-day projects to enhance student understanding of the subject matter covered in the lesson. It is intended for only one activity to be chosen per lesson; however, these are only suggestions and may not be necessary for every classroom.

GUIDE FOR CAREFUL LOOKING

Title of Object:

What is this object made of?

- Paper Wood Silk Cotton
 Leather Metal Ink Linen

Describe what you see.

Analyze what you see.

	Your Guess & Why	Factual Information
Where is it from?		
When is it from?		
Who used it? Why do you think so?		
What was its purpose/function?		
What symbols, words, imagery, or details are used?		

Further your thinking.

What other questions do you have about the object? What documents, artifacts, or historical evidence could help answer those questions?

Lesson 1: How do society's expectations influence education?

Objects:

- Sampler by Caroline Childs
- Sampler by Jane Elisabeth Smith
- Sampler by Susan E. Shuford
- Lincolnton Female Academy Newspaper Advertisement

Questions for Discussion:

- These items known as “samplers” were made by young women attending school. What are their similar characteristics? What are their distinct characteristics?
- These samplers were used as teaching tools. What kinds of values are represented in them? What skills can we assume were considered the most useful?
- Read the poem on Jane Elisabeth Smith’s sampler. What do you think of this? What does the poem communicate about female accomplishments? What does this tell us about society’s expectations of females?
- Read Lincolnton Female Academy’s Newspaper Advertisement. What purposes or points of view are addressed in this writing?

Questions for Context:

- What do these school projects say about life at the time? What would people say about your life based on what you learn and produce at school and in your projects?
- How does the curriculum described in the Newspaper Advertisement compare to your curriculum? Do you find Lincolnton’s curriculum broad or limiting? What would you add or take away?
- What other kinds of resources would be helpful in understanding who the makers of the samplers were and what their lives were like?

Suggested Activities:

- Ask students to interview a woman from an older generation about what kinds of expectations were placed on her as a child. Ask students to consider how the interviewee’s experience is similar or different than their own generation. Encourage students to also think about how traditional gender roles may influence these expectations. Students should compose thoughtful interview questions and write a short report, including the interviewee’s responses and the student’s own personal reflections. Educators may choose to facilitate a group sharing activity in class.
- Ask students to find a current form of media that expresses the expectations placed on today’s students, or collaborate with classmates to create their own, building and elaborating on others’ ideas. This could be a speech, music, artwork, a video, newspaper article, poster etc. Students may share with the class in a brief presentation, or the activity could be expanded into a deeper research project.

Untitled, Sampler

possibly Caroline Childs

Deerfield, MA

1805

Silk and linen ground

17.5 x 16.5" (framed)

DAR Museum, gift of the Illinois State Society, honoring Mrs. Roland C. White, State Regent;
79.26



(Click on image to download.)

This sampler includes a family register that is unsigned, but may have been worked by Caroline Childs, the eleventh child and youngest surviving daughter of Samuel Childs (1742-1814) and Eunice Wright (1750-1830) of Deerfield, Massachusetts. Caroline enrolled at Deerfield Academy on July 3, 1805 for a quarter term, which usually lasted only 11-12 weeks. Her instructor was Sally Williams. It is believed the sampler was worked on at more than one time and probably by more than one person due to the two shades of brown used in the lettering. The poem reads "Abroad in search of bliss we roam / Yet must confess it dwells at home / Where kindred mingle pain and joys / And thoughts of love each heart employs." This is one of many samplers that include family names, lineage and history. Because we know that samplers were often used to display culturally significant skills or knowledge of the maker, this sampler speaks to the importance of the family unit in 19th century society and the female role within it.

Untitled, Sampler

Jane Elisabeth Smith

possibly New Jersey

1842

Silk and natural linen ground

12.5 x 17" (framed)

DAR Museum, gift of Caroline Lareuse, in memory of Mrs. E. Townsend Look; Conservation adopted by Carole Belcher, Serrano Chapter, CA; 89.22



(Click on image to download.)

This rectangular sampler was made by Jane Elisabeth Smith in 1842 at the age of seven. The inscription reads "A sampler resembles an elegant mind whose passion by reason subdued and refined moves only in lines of affection and duty reflecting a picture of order and beauty." The sampler is bordered by a strawberry vine on all four sides. The top half of the sampler features a central long-tailed bird sitting atop a branch. Surrounding the bird are flowering trees, floral sprays, a dog and two baskets of fruit. The lower half of the sampler features the verse surrounded by floral sprays, a four-heart motif, a butterfly and a duck. Jane has stitched her name and age above the bottom border.

DAR Museum

(202) 879-3241 ★ museum@dar.org ★ www.dar.org/museum

This resource is made possible by the generous contributions of North Carolina State Society, DAR.

Untitled, Sampler

Susan E. Shuford

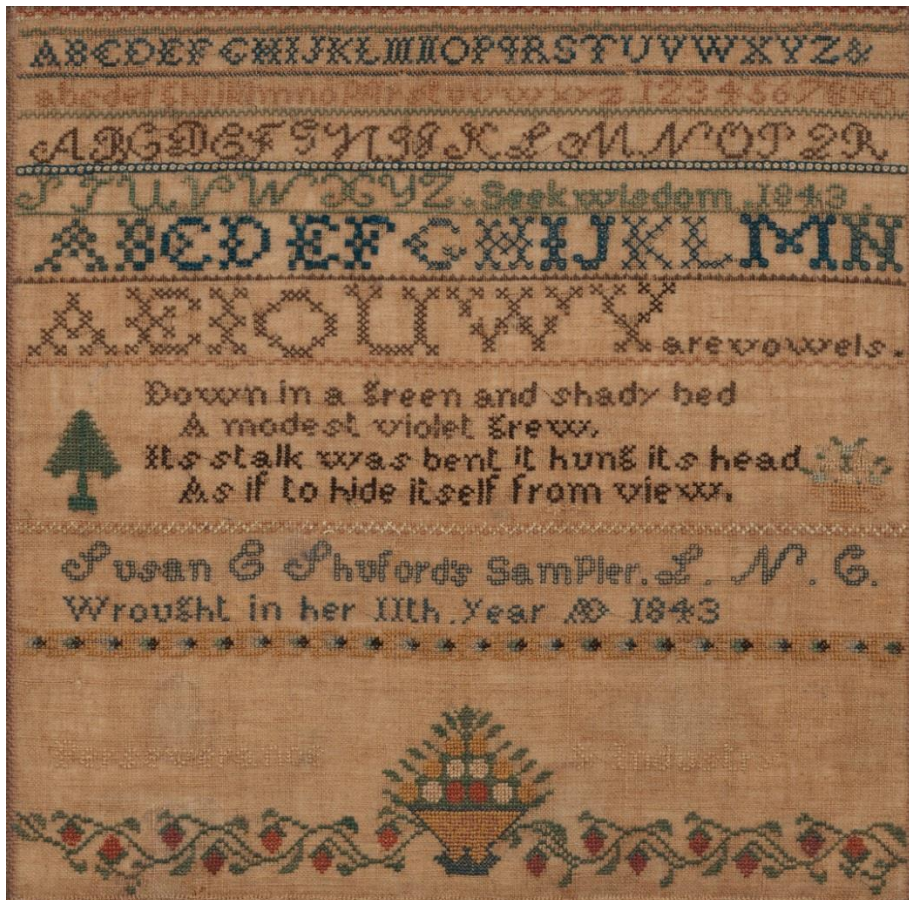
Lincolnton, NC

1843

Silk on linen ground

19.75 x 19.25" (framed)

DAR Museum, Friends of Museum purchase and gift of North Carolina State Society, in honor of Rolfe Towle Teague, Curator General, 2001-2004; 2004.18



(Click on image to download.)

Susan E. Shuford attended Lincolnton Female Academy, where she likely stitched this sampler. Contemporary school advertising indicates embroidery and other needlework instruction was available at the school in the 1840s when Susan was a student. This household skill would later be used to repair and label family clothing and linens.¹ This is a precise example of a “marking sampler,” used by young girls to practice lettering, numbering, and prose. The inscription reads “Down in the green and shady bed/ a modest violet grew/ Its stalk was bent it hung its head/ as if to hide itself from view.” The style and requirements of these marking samplers were usually dictated by the teacher of the school the student attended. This sampler was stitched by Susan “in her 11th year,” at age ten.

¹ Peck, A. A. (2003, October). American Needlework in the Eighteenth Century | Essay | Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History | The Metropolitan Museum of Art. https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/need/hd_need.htm

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The course of instruction proposed is as follows:

FIRST YEAR.
 Reading, Writing Spelling, Arithmetic, English Grammar, Geography and Natural History commenced.

SECOND YEAR.
 A continuation of the above branches, with Natural Philosophy, Ancient and Modern History, use of the Globes, Chemistry, Rhetoric, Mineralogy and Composition,—commenced.

THIRD YEAR.
 Reading, Writing, Spelling, Composition, Chemistry, Mineralogy, Botany, Intellectual and Moral Philosophy, Ancient Geography, Astronomy, Natural Theology Evidences of Christianity.

In addition to the above, instruction will be given in Music, both on the Piano and Guitar.

Also, Poonah, Velvet and Landscape Painting, together with Embroidery and Rag work, of various descriptions.

A competent Teacher will be employed to give instruction in the Languages, if necessary.

Scholars will not be required to pursue a regular course, unless their parents wish it.

Terms, per Session as follows:
 Children under 8 years of age, \$5 00.
 For children over eight years, in Reading and Writing, together with the Elements of Arithmetic & Geography \$10 00.
 For those pursuing, in addition to the above, any or all of the other branches, mentioned above, \$12 00.
 Fancy or Ornamental Needle work, 5 00.
 Plain Needle work, 2 00.
 Instruction on Guitar, 10 00.
 Do, on Piano, 20 00.

Scholars may enter the School at any time in the Session, and be charged from the time of entrance, but no deduction will be made for absence after the term has commenced but for sickness.

M. SMITH,
E. SMITH,
 Principals

LINCOLNTON FEMALE ACADEMY.

THE Trustees have the pleasure of announcing to the public, that they have engaged **MISS MARGARET SMITH,** to take charge of this Institution.

Miss Smith has been for several years, Principal of the Female Academy in Milton. Her qualifications as an instructress are of the highest order.

The Trustees take pleasure in recommending her to the public as a competent scholar, a good disciplinarian, and a lady of exemplary and pious habits—well calculated to train the female mind for happiness and usefulness.

Miss E. SMITH, late of Danville, Virginia, whose qualifications are inferior to none in the Southern country, will conduct the Musical Department.

Lincolnton is one of the most healthy and pleasant villages in the State—the habits of the citizens are industrious; there are but few indocuments to neglect study: the streets are of that kind of soil, that it is but seldom young ladies will be liable to wet feet—the best assurance of good health.

Board can be had in respectable families, at the usual prices, where the young ladies will have to rise early—which will be an advantage to their health, and cause them to make more rapid progress in their studies—a gratification to the pupils, parents, guardians and friends.

The exercises of this Institution, will commence on the 4th of January next.

Trustees,
 VARDRY M'BEE,
 D. REINHARDT,
 CARLOS LEONARD,
 B. S. JOHNSON,
 P. G. ROBERTS,
 MICHAEL HOKE,
 J. A. RAMSOUR, 35—4f.

Lincolnton, Nov. 5, 1836.

Annexed is a statement of the principles upon which the studies will be conducted, comprising a wide range of useful learning:

Instruction will be given in all the various branches taught in the best Female Seminaries in the country.

The recitation will be accompanied with suitable explanations and illustrations from the teachers, so as to give the scholars a thorough and practical knowledge of their studies.

The government of the School will be strictly parental' suiting affection with firmness and efficiency. Such attention will be paid to Young Ladies from abroad, as will render their connexion with the Seminary agreeable and satisfactory.

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