

New Mexico's Women: Creating an identity of 'home': Community connection, inspiration, education, and commitment

Grade Levels: 9-12

Overview:

“Claiming a home is a potent way of changing the world.”

Scharff and Brucken in *Homelands: How Women Made the West

The women of New Mexico created and contributed to the richness of our state in unique and significant ways, weaving the fabric of home and a dedication to ways of life in diverse communities throughout the state. Through the process of inhabiting spaces and places, women define the concept of home. Home is inclusive of social, emotional, and physical situations. Imagining Southwestern history from the standpoint of home offers a new perspective regarding women and their roles as the area “became what it is”. The definition of “home” may differ, depending on time period, cultures, historical situations, and societies. Walking the timeline of the Land of Enchantment’s history, we can encounter a woman who will tell us the story of her experiences; from her hardships to successes that occurred along the way. **In this lesson students work independently to learn about a specific woman from New Mexico’s history who is represented on a NM Historic Women Marker, through examining her short profile biography and examining supporting sources. Primary and secondary research leads to a final project presentation that conveys student understanding and addresses the key concepts below.**

Key Concepts:

1. **Survival:** What do women survive and how do they survive? Use examples from the various time periods in the history of New Mexico to contextualize. How are women establishing “home”?
2. **Sustenance:** What strategies and methods do women employ in order to sustain their livelihood, family, and cultural values/practices? How does this relate to the concept of “home”?
3. **Borders and Barriers:** What challenges do women face due to the creation of borders that impact their home/cultural balance? What coping methods do women utilize? How might these women redefine “home” depending on access to resources: cultural, social, economic, etc.?

Objectives:

This lesson supports Inquiry standards, particularly in gathering sources in order to communicate multiple perspectives on issues and topics to reach a range of audiences. Civic roles and responsibilities may be addressed, using historical data and evidence to determine the influence of individuals on past and present communities, as well as critiquing leadership strategies or public influence of “change-makers”.

Objective 1: Introduce the New Mexico Historic Women Marker Program website. Students will become familiar with the layout of the website, exploring its many resources and how it is organized.

Objective 2: Identify a woman on the website who is inspirational, gaining knowledge of her role in New Mexico as a significant contributor to her community. Students will read, take notes, and create a means of conveying this woman’s life story and contributions to her community, focusing on the key concepts around “home spaces”.

Objective 3: Apply research skills to identify both primary and secondary sources that support and enhance the webpage from the New Mexico Historic Women Marker Program website. Students will utilize in-person and digitized records within local libraries, state archives, and museum resources to access these supplemental sources.

Objective 4: Create a project such as one of the following options: a radio PSA, short film, TED talk, newspaper article, script for a televised newscast, editorial page for the newspaper with multiple entries representing varied perspectives, or a persuasive speech. Projects will vary depending on the woman researched and what fits best for her role in New Mexico.

Length of Time for Lesson:

SIX (60-90 minute) class periods depending on length of time spent in class and whether or not additional homework is assigned. If students are able to access offsite institutions to examine research records, the lesson may take more time, and may be integrated into course work for an ongoing research project.

Materials:

- Computers
- New Mexico Historic Women Marker Program website
<https://www.nmhistoricwomen.org/>
- List of state and local archives, libraries, and museum collections:
 - New Mexico State Records Center and Archives: Office of the State Historian
 - New Mexico History Museum: Fray Angélico Chávez History Library
 - Other local resources depending on your location within the state

Activities:

1.
 - a. Introduce the **New Mexico Historic Women Marker Program** website to students. <https://www.nmhistoricwomen.org/>
 - b. Project the website to the entire class. Review each aspect of the website, and how to navigate and explore its multiple forms of information.
 - c. Teacher selects one or two women ahead of time to highlight and navigate the entire website with students. Allow for Q&A time around website navigation.
 - d. Teacher shows students the diverse categories the women fall under, and discusses the types of people they might be most interested in.
As a class discussion, ask students the following questions:
 - How do women participate in the formation of communities?
 - How is the concept of “home” integrated into the establishment of society and communities?
 - Discuss definitions of survival and sustenance, especially in relation to communities.
 - What inspires you about someone’s life? Are there specific characteristics or actions that you admire? How are people recognized for their achievements, whether large or small?
2. Students explore the website (independently), and select one woman to research and become an ‘expert’ on her life and significance to New Mexico. Give students time to read and take notes about the woman they select. This may be in class, or given as a homework assignment. Students should take ample research notes in order to create a robust summary of the woman’s life.
3. Students use research notes to generate a list of questions and interests around their selection to explore further with additional secondary and primary sources.
 - a. Students access the “Application PDF” on the NMHWM website, noting what types of documents are available here.
4. Students examine any available primary sources on the website, taking additional notes regarding the key concept questions and any evidence they find to answer their own questions.
5. Students then explore other resources. Students access and review digital and local archives and libraries. These may include photographs that can be analyzed for information. Students should explore as many collections as possible, noting if they can access digitized materials or need to arrange to visit a location if possible. If needed, assist students in arranging a site visit to examine primary sources available.
6. Teacher explains to students proper citation formats, and how to generate a Works Cited document using proper MLA format and standards. An excellent source for all MLA citations is linked here: [MLA Formatting and Style Guide - Purdue OWL](#)
7. Students create a final project from the following options: radio PSA, TED Talk script, newspaper article, television news script, newspaper editorial page representing multiple perspectives, or a persuasive speech. (Projects will vary depending on the woman researched, and teachers’ learning targets.)
8. Students present their projects to their class, school, and potentially arrange for a public display/presentation of their projects.

Adaptations/Extensions:

- Research Permissions: Discuss how to obtain research permissions for primary sources.
- MLA/APA Citation Standards: Teach how to create proper citations for research sources.

Evaluation:

1. **Research process**, including locating sources, communication with institutions, and gathering data from a variety of primary sources
2. **Representation of their research**, checking for organization of information, ability to address key concepts and ability to utilize and apply new sources
3. **Presentation of their research**, effectively utilizing their chosen presentation method

Exit Ticket/Discussion Questions:

- What did this woman contribute to her community?
- Why is this woman significant in the history of New Mexico?
- How does this woman's life exhibit a form of personal or cultural survival or creating a sustainable community through her actions?
- How did you connect yourself to this woman's story? Did she inspire you? What did you take away from learning about her that you may incorporate now or in the future? What questions would you ask if you met them?

NM PED Educational Standards:

HS Civics: Inquiry 23. Construct Compelling and Supporting Questions. 9-12.Civ.2

HS Civics: Inquiry 27. Take Informed Action. 9-12.Civ.11

HS Civics 1: Civic and Political Institutions. 9-12. Civ.16

HS Civics 2: Processes, Rules, and Laws. 9-12. Civ. 27

HS Civics 3: Civic Dispositions and Democratic Principles. 9-12. Civ. 36

- *Economic Standards apply in all of the above areas*
- *Ethnic, Cultural, and Identity Studies Standards apply in all of the above areas*

HS Geography: Geography 11. Geographic Representations and Reasoning. 9-12. Geo. 15

HS Geography: Geography 11. Geographic Representations and Reasoning. 9-12. Geo. 16

HS Geography: Geography 11. Geographic Representations and Reasoning. 9-12. Geo. 17

HS Geography: Geography 12. Location, Place, and Region. 9-12. Geo. 18

HS Geography: Geography 12. Location, Place, and Region. 9-12. Geo. 19

HS Geography: Geography 13. Movement, Population, and Systems. 9-12. Geo.21-26

- *HS New Mexico History and US History Standards should be applied as determined by the educator, dependent on topical selections by the teacher and students.*
- *NM PED Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Scorecard criteria may be applied and met through Representation, Portrayal, Critical Consciousness, and Teacher Support*

Works Cited: Scharff, Virginia, and Carolyn Brucken. *Home Lands: How Women Made the West*. 1st ed., U of CA Press, 2010