North Carolina in the 1960s

A period of rapid societal, technological, and political change, the 1960s is a decade with many fascinating aspects to explore.

In this educational packet:

- The first article addresses the idea of how change happens. Do you agree or disagree with the article? Why or why not?
- Review “Young People and the Civil Rights Movement” from the Spring 2019 issue of the Tar Heel Junior Historian Magazine.
- Did you know Martin Luther King, Jr. was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964? Create a peace dove inspired by MLK.
- Read through the “Murphy & Manteo” cartoon from the Spring 2019 issue of the Tar Heel Junior Historian Magazine.
- Now that you’ve seen our cartoon panel, draft up your own version. Pick any topic in the 1960s (some additional research might be required).
- Read “A Journey to the Moon and Back” from the Spring 2019 issue of the Tar Heel Junior Historian Magazine.
- Watch our archived LIVE! stream class, One Giant Leap: North Carolina to the Moon [and Back].
- Blast off using our paper rocket template!
The 1960s:
How Does Change Happen?
by Benjamin Filene

If you're writing an essay and your teacher pushes you to have a thesis or main-message statement, a safe bet is "It was a time of change." That's the historian's fallback position: Every era was a time of change. And yet, some times do seem "changier" than others.

It feels like we're living through one of those right now, and, for sure, the 1960s—the subject of this issue—was a time of upheaval. Every aspect of American society seemed to be going through an earthquake. More than 50 years later, historians are still struggling to make sense of it all. Were the 1960s a turning point, a detour, or a dead end (or all of the above)?

This historical question opens up a broader one that has direct relevance to today: How does change happen? In the 1960s, the traditional ways of doing things were being challenged on so many levels—from hairstyles to politics to gender roles to war. As we look back, we can consider which tactics or trends led to long-term changes and which turned out to be just unsustainable fads. The articles in this issue, then, are about the 1960s, but they also are treating the period as a case study—an example from which we can draw broader lessons about history and how it works. With that in mind, here are four takeaway themes to think about as you read the magazine's articles.

Under-the-Radar vs. Headline History
Even at the time, Americans in the 1960s recognized that they were living through a historic period. Most would probably have pointed to the Vietnam War or the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. No doubt those were historic events, but, looking back, historians now also see the importance of some less publicly prominent happenings: the rise of political conservatives on campus, changing ideas about whether women should work, the beginnings of the environmental movement.

Sometimes changes bubbling beneath the surface end up having the greatest impact. (continued on page 4)
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**Unsung Actors vs. “Great Men and Women”**

Presidents, generals, and civil rights martyrs dominate textbook treatments of the 1960s, but the essays in this issue also show the power of seemingly ordinary people to shape history. Right here in North Carolina, students, cafeteria workers, teachers, reporters, servicemen, and parents experienced—and, along the way, helped shape—the events of the time. As these essays show, an extraordinary number of the changes of the 1960s were sparked by the actions and opinions of young people. Together, these diverse stories can help broaden our understanding of whom we see as a history-maker. Ask your grandparents or others who lived in the 1960s how they experienced the era!

**Organized Change vs. Improvised Surprises**

Sometimes people in the 1960s set out purposely to change the world. They demanded racial equality or pushed to end the Vietnam War. Other times, change snuck up on people, and it felt as if events were swirling beyond anyone’s control: a campus protest turns violent, a new song becomes an anthem. Participants in these moments had to make decisions on the fly—about whether to join the crowd or go one’s own way, seek a compromise or take a stand, follow orders or break the rules. History often judges these decisions differently than did people at the time. As you read the stories in these articles, consider: What would you have done?

**Decades vs. Movements**

Why do historians like decades so much anyway? It’s convenient to imagine that the past neatly divides into 10-year segments, but (big surprise) real life doesn’t really unfold that way. Recognizing that fact, historians increasingly talk about “The Long 1960s” (a game-changing idea originated by North Carolina historian Jacquelyn Dowd Hall). While we recognize that a lot of important events occurred during that decade, we also want to understand what led up to those pivotal moments and what followed from them.

The Greensboro sit-ins of February 1960 were hugely important, but the Civil Rights movement started years before that date and continued on for years after 1970. The same is true for the women’s rights or gay rights movements. Taking the long view gives us a better sense of how change really unfolds. As you can see, the 1960s offers no easy answers, but the period does speak powerfully to us today. Looking at the decade from many angles can help broaden what moments or movements we consider as change-making in history and, too, can help us recognize a broader set of change-makers. Along the way, if we listen carefully to the people who made that history—through oral history interviews, old newspapers, or local-history documents—we can also expand our sense of who counts as a historian. We hope you’ll use this issue of the magazine as a springboard that helps you dive in and explore the 1960s histories of your family and your community.

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**Music Gets Funky in the Sixties**

Nate Jones was a musical prodigy from Adkins High School in Kinston, where he graduated as valedictorian under Geneva Perry, a renowned music teacher. After graduating with honors in music from NC College for Negroes (now North Carolina Central University), Jones taught high school in Washington, NC, and Kinston before he was hired in 1964 as the band director for funk music pioneer James Brown. In turn, Jones hired college graduates like fellow Kinstonian Dick knight (right), who had been music director at Kinston’s Savannah High School. Knight joined the band in 1964 as a trumpeter.

Right: Dick Knight holds his original copy of the album “Fire & Soul,” 1964. Image courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of History.
1960s Writing Prompt

The previous article addresses the idea of how change happens. Do you agree or disagree with the article? Why or why not?
Young People and the Civil Rights Movement

by Watson Jennison

What do you know about the Civil Rights movement? Maybe you’ve learned about great leaders, such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks.

That makes sense since they played important roles in the history of civil rights. But the movement would not have achieved its successes without everyday people—like you and me—who joined the many boycotts and marches that led to the dismantling of the Jim Crow South.

Did you know that many of those activists were young people? And much of that history happened right here in North Carolina.

In 1960, four 17-year-old friends decided to take a stand against segregation and racial injustices. They wanted to protest the laws that did not allow African Americans and white people to eat together in the same restaurant. These students were freshmen at the Agricultural and Technical College (now North Carolina A&T State University): Franklin McCain, Joseph McNeil, David Richmond, and Ezell Blair Jr. (who changed his name to Jibreel Khazan in 1968).

On February 1, the students went to the F. W. Woolworth’s dime store in downtown Greensboro and purchased several items, including school supplies. Then they sat down at the “whites only” lunch counter and tried to order. The white employees refused to serve them. Instead of leaving, the young men stayed in their seats until the store closed.

The next day, the students returned to Woolworth’s and sat down at the counter again. But this time they were joined by other students, including women from nearby Bennett College, one of two historically black women’s colleges in the nation.

Within a month, the protest grew into a movement as sit-ins spread first to other cities in North Carolina, then throughout the South. Seizing the initiative, young black men and women pressed their demands for an end to racial discrimination.

The Greensboro sit-ins marked the start of an important new phase in the Civil Rights movement. Through their collective efforts, young African Americans drew attention to the hypocrisy of segregation and the indignities faced by black southerners on a daily basis. Their protests reflected their anger with the racist system, as well as their impatience with the slow pace of social change.

Only a few years before, the movement had achieved major victories through the landmark decision in the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education case and the Montgomery Bus Boycott the year after.

But the years that followed brought fewer breakthroughs. So young black men and women embraced different methods to achieve racial equality, which...

(continued on page 14)
challenged the movement's older leadership in the process. Some of those African American leaders were initially skeptical of the sit-ins when they began, but most came to support them eventually.

Ella Baker, the executive director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and a longtime activist, hoped to build off the momentum of the student protests. She organized a conference in April 1960 in Raleigh to bring young activists together to discuss plans to move forward. Convened at Baker's alma mater, Shaw University, the meeting drew 120 student activists from more than 50 black colleges and high schools from 12 different states.

Baker was joined by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who helped pay for the meeting. But beyond offering words of support, they and the other adults present largely encouraged the young people to make their own decisions.

By the end of the conference, the students founded the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, or SNCC—pronounced "snick." In the decade that followed, SNCC emerged as a powerful force in the Civil Rights movement, and many of its young leaders gained widespread renown.

SNCC activists were involved in many of the most important campaigns in the struggle against Jim Crow in the 1960s. They joined the Freedom Rides in 1961, which challenged segregation on interstate buses in the South. They helped organize the March on Washington in 1963, which included a speech delivered by the chairman of SNCC, John Lewis. (Today, Lewis serves as a congressman from Georgia in the United States House of Representatives.) And in 1965 they joined the protest at the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, known as "Bloody Sunday."

In the beginning, SNCC activists focused their efforts on direct-action protests like the sit-ins and marches. But soon they broadened their approach to include voter registration drives and political organizing. In the 1960s, black men and women throughout the South were prohibited from voting because of laws passed by state governments in the late 1930s and early 1940s. SNCC activists moved into African American communities across the region to help local organizers establish Freedom Schools. They promoted literacy campaigns to help black citizens qualify to vote and to participate in the electoral process. These efforts culminated in the Freedom Summer of 1964 and the creation of the Mississippi Freedom and Democratic Party, and contributed to the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965, which removed many of the restrictions that had prevented African Americans from voting.

Young activists brought a fierce urgency to the black freedom struggle when they assumed a leading role beginning in the 1960s. Rather than holding them back, the students' youthful exuberance and inexperience enabled them to see new possibilities and embrace new strategies that adults could not imagine. Their vision and activism made the seemingly impossible possible.
Martin Luther King Peace Dove

Martin Luther King made several trips to North Carolina. For example, in 1962 he spoke to a crowd of nearly 2,000 at Rocky Mount’s Booker T. Washington High School. There he used expressions that made their way into his “I have a dream” speech at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. in 1963.

NEEDED:
- this sheet
- markers
- scissors
- hole punch
- stapler
- yarn
- string
- glue stick

1. Print this sheet.
2. Color the dove’s beak yellow & the olive leaves green.

3. Cut out all three pieces.
4. Glue the olive branch to the dove’s beak.
5. Fold the wings on the dotted lines and staple them to the dove’s back.
6. Punch a hole through all 3 layers & thread string or yarn through to hang.

A peace dove traditionally carries an olive branch.
Our state had sit-ins before the 60s, too. In 1957, protesters sat-in at an ice-cream parlor in Durham with separate seating areas for "whites" and "non-whites."

But the attention protesters got in the 60s made a big difference.

No, Manteo. When I said no fair, I meant the Greensboro Four is MY THJHA Literary Project! I'm making a historical photo album.

Sometimes I feel like we just go around in circles.

No, you meant you're a copycat!

And Jack, in time, with our Time Travel App.

No, NO YOU are!

No, NO YOU are!

No, NO YOU are!

No, NO YOU are!

No, NO YOU are!

No, NO YOU are!

The Greensboro Four were peaceful protesters at a lunch counter that did not serve African Americans.

The next day, the Greensboro Four returned, and five students from Bennett College for Women joined them. They were known as the Bennett Belles.

The protest in Greensboro spread to other segregated lunch counters all over North Carolina.

The Greensboro Four were students at what is now North Carolina A&T State University.

Lunch Counter Sit-ins in the 1960s

Durham, Fayetteville, Winston Salem

Charlotte, Concord, Elizabeth City, Henderson, High Point

Raleigh

Salisbury

Chapel Hill

Shelby, Statesville

Segregation did not stop with African Americans. In Dunn, NC, two American Indian girls sat-in at the "whites-only" public school. Fighting back, school leaders said the protesters could not eat their lunch in the school cafeteria.

Keeping groups of people apart from others is called segregation, a word that means "separated from the flock."

But sit-ins started to change that. At lunch counters, the number of people served was dropping. Business was hurting. Managers started to have second thoughts about segregation.

North Carolina allowed segregated, "white" and "non-white" lunch counters, restaurants, movie theaters, libraries, hospitals, public schools, and swimming pools!

No Swimming Allowed!

Lunch counters were not the only things segregated before the 1960s. So were movie theaters, schools, beaches, and public swimming pools. On August 7, 1962, six young men—four black and two white—decided to do a "swim-in" at the whites-only Pullen Park pool in Raleigh. Some people jumped out. Others (mostly children) stayed in. Finally the pool was shut down. All public pools in the city were immediately closed until the city council could figure out what to do, and the Pullen Park pool remained segregated until 1965. The event might seem small compared to big marches on Washington, but it was an important civil rights protest—and young people led the way. — Cathy East

Murphy & Manteo: Tar Heel Time Travelers created by Cathy East and Mark Dubowski.
1960s Cartoon Panel

Now that you’ve seen our cartoon panel, draft up your own version. Pick any topic in the 1960s (some additional research might be required).
A Journey to the Moon and Back
by Jessica A. Bandel

In April 1972, 16-year-old Brad Perry climbed into the Command Module for the Apollo 16 mission. For 11 straight days, the North Carolina native piloted the module from the outer reaches of Earth’s atmosphere to the Moon and back—without ever leaving his basement. Here’s his story.

Have you ever had a dream? A dream so big that you stayed awake at night, sleepless, wondering how you might make it come true? Brad Perry had such a dream. The Albemarle, North Carolina, native wanted to be an astronaut so badly that he began working toward that goal when he was just 14.

Inspired by the news coverage of Apollo 8, Brad set out in 1969 to forge his own path to the Moon and back. Using a scaled model of the Apollo Command Module, or CM, he and his dad, Raleigh, created true-to-life blueprints and began preparations for constructing a life-size version of the interior of the module in the family basement. Every dollar he earned through his paper route and received on Christmases and birthdays was spent on construction materials and components.

Fairly early into the project, Brad’s work caught the eye of fellow North Carolinian Robert “Bob” Ermull. Ermull worked for NASA—the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. At the time, he was assigned to the Flight Operations Directorate in Houston, Texas. Brad’s dedication impressed Ermull very much. “It’s without any question the most remarkable project that I have ever seen a young man undertake,” Ermull observed.

As the project progressed, Brad’s relationship with NASA grew. During a visit to the Kennedy Space Center in Florida in 1970, he met Apollo 14 astronauts Alan Shepard and Ed Mitchell and toured the simulators and trainers used by the crew.

NASA even invited Brad down to the Manned Spaceflight Center in Houston. Over the course of two days in March 1972, he met with NASA officials and undertook training in the CM simulator, the same trainer used by Apollo astronauts and personnel.

Throughout the course of the project, Bob and his NASA colleagues provided Brad with all the necessary technical documentation, including mission flight plans, checklists, and systems handbooks. Ever a stickler for accuracy and detail, Brad eagerly gobbled up every bit of technical data sent his way. His quest for accuracy delayed his “mission” twice. Though his CM was finished in time for the Apollo 15 launch—thanks in large part to a 31-hour-long work session that took him right up to the launch window—Brad was much too tired, and had not trained, to simulate an entire Apollo mission.

Despite the delays, the finished product proved to be well worth the wait. When all was said and done, Brad’s aluminum-and-plywood CM mockup took close to 36 months to build and outfit and cost approximately $2,500 (more than $15,000 today when adjusted for inflation).

On April 16, 1972, Brad settled into the CM just as Apollo 16 astronauts John Young, Ken Mattingly, and Charlie Duke prepared for liftoff. Clothed in a custom-made white polyester flight suit and outfitted with a communications headset, Brad spent the next 11 days matching CM pilot Ken Mattingly’s every move, switch for switch, in real time.

Brad’s parents acted as “technical support,” providing meals, removing waste pouches, and keeping a watchful eye out for any potential emergencies. The 16-year-old emerged on April 27, having spent 11 days, 1 hour, and 51 minutes in complete isolation while simulating the Apollo 16 astronauts’ journey to the Moon and back. But Brad’s story doesn’t end there. He went on to study aerospace engineering at the Georgia Institute of Technology, served as a pilot for six years in the US Air Force, and landed a job with his beloved NASA. Over the course of his career, Brad worked on many exciting projects: the Apollo-Soyuz Test Project (a joint US-Soviet space mission); the Space Shuttle program; the International Space Station; and most recently, unmanned, robotic space missions.

In recognition of his work, Brad has received the NASA Outstanding Leadership Medal, the NASA Exceptional Service Medal, and five NASA Group Achievement Awards.

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Pioneers in Space

From First Flight—to First Step!

On October 4, 1957, the Soviet Union did something no one had ever done before: They shot Sputnik 1 into space! (Sputnik is the Russian word for “satellite.”) It orbited (flew around) the Earth for three weeks.

The United States rushed to create a new government agency: NASA (the National Aeronautics and Space Administration). The Space Race had begun!

On May 25, 1961, President John F. Kennedy said: “I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before the decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to the Earth.”

And we did! Fifty years ago, on July 20, 1969, astronaut Neil Armstrong was the first person to step foot on the Moon. It was only 66 years after Wilbur and Orville Wright made history by making the world’s first powered, manned flight in an airplane at Kill Devil Hills on December 17, 1903.

Many North Carolina people—and places—have been a part of that history. Here are just a few:

Early space capsules splashed down into the ocean on return from flight. Aviators at Marine Corps Air Station—New River in North Carolina helped develop the early recovery procedures. Here, George Cox pulls astronaut Alan Shepard into the recovery helicopter after the successful flight of Mercury-Redstone 3 on May 5, 1961. A Florida native, Cox served three tours in Vietnam, then retired from the service and earned a degree in education from East Carolina University. He taught math at Beaufort Middle School until 2001 and is a long-time resident of Newport.

From 1960 to 1973, 62 astronauts trained for space travel at North Carolina’s Morehead Planetarium in Chapel Hill—including 11 of the 12 men who walked on the Moon’s surface. Here, astronauts Edward White (left) and James McDivitt train for their Gemini flight at Morehead in May 1965.

Clayton native Samuel Beddingley (above, left)—a graduate of NC State—joined NASA as an engineer in 1959. He was one of only 33 agency employees assigned to Cape Canaveral, Florida, at that time. During the Project Mercury program, Beddingley oversaw mechanical and gyrostabilization operations, including the systems for the landing parachutes and capsule hatch. Beddingley is seen here with astronauts John Glenn and the Friendship 7 capsule before launch. Glenn was the first to orbit the Earth, in 1962.

Charlotte-born Charles M. Duke Jr. was a member of the astronaut support crew for Apollo 10. He also served as CAPCOM—the main point of contact between the spacecraft crew and NASA mission control—for Apollo 11. Asumr in April 1972, Duke piloted the lunar module for the Apollo 16 flight. He remains the youngest man to have walked on the Moon.

Beaufort native Michael Smith watched in awe as Neil Armstrong took man’s first steps on the Moon on July 20, 1969. Right then and there, he decided to become an astronaut. Sixteen years later—on January 28, 1986—he piloted the space shuttle Challenger into American memory. Tragically, the Challenger exploded, killing all on board. From single farm boy to courageous explorer of a new frontier—his short but remarkable life served, and continues to serve, as an inspiration to anyone with a dream.

Did you know that the first astronauts were animals? On January 31, 1961, a young chimpanzee named Ham made a 16-minute, 39-second suborbital flight that flew 157 miles above the Earth. Here, Commander Ralph A. Baker, a native of Gaston, welcomes Ham aboard the US Donner after his successful recovery. In 1963 “Ham, the Armstrong,” was transferred to the National Zoo in Washington, DC. In 1960 he retired to the North Carolina Zoo where he lived out the rest of his life surrounded by fellow chimpanzees.

In the early days of spaceflight, people—not devices—performed the calculations necessary for space travel. Many of these “human calculators” or “computers” were women, including some from North Carolina. Their tools of the trade: slide rules, spring-loaded calculating machines, pencils, and paper. During the Apollo years, Dr. Christine Darden, born in Monroe—shown here in 1974—wrote computer programs that could run calculations related to spacecraft reentry.

Image courtesy of CCPA 2016

Images courtesy of NASA, except where otherwise noted.
One Giant Leap: 
North Carolina to the Moon [and Back] LIVE!

On Friday, April 5, 2019, museum educator Sally Bloom toured the Museum’s One Giant Leap exhibit with curator Jessica Bandel and special guest Mr. Gerry Griffin. Mr. Griffin is a former director of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration’s Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center in Houston and, during NASA’s Apollo program, he was a flight director in Mission Control.

Straw Rocket Craft

Materials:

- Straws (Make sure one is larger in diameter than the other)
- Glue
- Tape
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- Scissors

Directions:

1. Print out the rocket and cut it out.
2. Color.
3. Cut the larger straw to the length of the rocket and tape one end shut, so it’s sealed.
4. Attach it to your rocket using glue or more tape.
5. Slip the smaller straw into the larger straw and blast off!

Adapted from Buggy and Buddy (https://buggyandbuddy.com/)