

# The Ballad of Tom Dooley

## A Mystery of Love and Murder



By Stephen Pickett and Sherry Prewitt

### Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Be able to relate information about the Story of Tom Dula to a modern murder mystery.
- Be able to listen to the song and understand its importance as possible evidence.
- Decide whether or not Tom Dula is innocent or guilty and defend their position.

### Teacher Planning

Time Required for Lesson 5 days

### Materials Needed

- PBS Video - "The Legend of Tom Dooley"
- NC Visitor Center Link - [http://ncvisitorcenter.com/Story\\_of\\_Tom\\_Dooley.html](http://ncvisitorcenter.com/Story_of_Tom_Dooley.html)
- Audio recordings of song "Tom Dooley"
- Lyrics to "Tom Dooley" songs - various versions
- Book - The Ballad of Tom Dula by John Foster West, Parkway Publishers, Inc. Boone, North Carolina, 2002.
- [http://www.kronsell.net/tom\\_dooley\\_the\\_legend.htm](http://www.kronsell.net/tom_dooley_the_legend.htm) - This website has a lot of interesting information as well as some testimonies from different people and a breakdown of the characters. Anyone using this information can actually modify and change any or all information provided. A teacher could actually use this information to help guide students.

\*\*Teachers can also use other websites, etc. to modify and/or add to this lesson.\*\*

## Technology Resources Needed

- High-speed internet access and computers for each student
- Stereo headphones for each student

## Background Information / Pre-Activities

- Background knowledge of song and story including how it relates to the Civil War, the Antebellum and Reconstruction Periods.

## Activities

1. Students will listen to the ballad. They will hear it again throughout the lesson.
2. Watch PBS program and read information from the NC Center link.
3. Compare/Contrast the different versions of the ballad for possible evidence of Tom's guilt or innocence.
4. Students will complete a graphic organizer showing the relationship of Tom Dula, Laura Foster, Ann Melton, Bob Grayson. This form could be modified to other characters, as well.
5. Students will write a response as to whether or not they think Tom Dula was the murderer and be able to support your decision.

## Assessment

- Completion of paper on your investigation and presentation of findings to the class.

## Vocabulary

**Ballad**-A song that tells a story.

**Child Ballads**-British Ballads named after Harvard professor Francis J. Child who collected them.

**Native American Ballads**-Refers to ballads written by citizens born in America, and should not be confused with Native Americans such as the Cherokee. These ballads were typically adapted from melodies and lyrics of older songs.

**Guilt**-The fact of having committed a specified or implied offense or crime.

**Proving**-To prove in a court of law means to establish the genuineness and validity of (a will).

**Syphilis**-A chronic bacterial disease that is contracted chiefly by infection during sexual intercourse, but also congenitally by infection of a developing fetus.

**Folk Process**-learning by passing stories, songs, or skills across communities and down generations orally from person to person.

**Murder Ballad**-a category of ballads which explains the events and consequences surrounding a murder. The speaker of the ballad tells about her crime, her regret, and her fears of punishment before pleading with listeners not to follow in her footsteps.

## North Carolina Essential Standards

### SOCIAL STUDIES

#### Grade 8

- 8.H.1.1 (Construct charts, graphs, and historical narratives to explain particular events or issues)
- 8.H.1.2 (Summarize the literal meaning of historical documents in order to establish context)
- 8.H.1.3 (Use primary and secondary sources to interpret various historical perspectives)
- 8.H.1.4 (Use historical inquiry to evaluate the validity of sources used to construct historical narratives)
- 8.C.1.1 (Explain how influences from Africa, Europe, and the Americas impacted North Carolina and the United States)
- 8.C.1.2 (Summarize the origin of beliefs, practices, and traditions that represent various groups within North Carolina and the United States)
- 8.TT.1 (Use technology and other resources for assigned tasks)
- 8.RP.1 (Apply a research process to complete project-based activities)