TEACHER RESOURCES

The Maggie Walker Story and this study guide are produced in support of the teaching of the Virginia Standards of Learning in English, Reading & Literacy, History and Social Science, Mathematics, Economics and Personal Finance.

AT THE LIBRARY

Maggie Lena Walker: First Female Bank President by Carole Marsh

Maggie L. Walker: Pioneering Banker and Community Leader by Candice Ransom

Pennies to Dollars: The Story of Maggie Lena Walker by Muriel M. Branch, Dorothy M. Rice

Pathfinders: The Journeys of 16 Extraordinary Black Souls by Tonya Bolden

ON THE WEB


NPS Virtual Museum Exhibit, National Park Service https://www.nps.gov/museum/exhibits/Maggie_Walker/rooms/house_tour.html


PLAY SYNOPSIS

This compelling drama is a tribute to the great American woman from Richmond, Virginia who helped establish and organize the first civil rights strike by African American students and became the nation’s first woman bank president. Starting her work at the order of St. Luke, a national savings group formed to pay the burial expenses of poor Blacks, Maggie Walker became a powerful force in civil rights. Through this production, students will form a deeper understanding of Maggie Walker and the times in which she lived.
MAGGIE LENA WALKER

Margaret Walker, more commonly known as Maggie Lena Walker, was a Black woman who chose to manage her own independent business in the age of segregation. This makes her a remarkable figure in American history.

Mrs. Walker was in fact the first woman of any race in America who became a bank president. She was a staunch supporter of Black and women’s rights and made her own life an example for all the Black women to follow.

Maggie was born in Richmond, Virginia, and was part of the household staff in a mansion of a Union spy.

She was young when her stepfather died and her mother started to support the family as a laundress. They were regular members of the First African Baptist Church and young Maggie went to school and helped her mother at work.

As she was growing up, Maggie joined the Independent Order of St. Luke, which was a community organization that tended to the aging and sick population around. She worked with the organization voluntarily until the end of her years.

Maggie took a job as a schoolteacher when she was 20 and taught there for a few years until she married a rich contractor, Armstead Walker Jr. This allowed her to leave the job and settle comfortably, giving more of her time to the Order’s cause.

She had two sons and dedicated most of her time to their upbringing. As the children grew up, however, Mrs. Walker turned to the business affairs of the Independent Order of St. Luke’s. She published a newspaper as a source of income and promotion for the Order and also chartered the first bank to be owned by a Black woman: St. Luke Penny Savings Bank.

She was its first president and later became the board’s chairperson when the bank joined with two other banks.

Her husband died unexpectedly in 1915 and she was then left to handle the household. Mrs. Walker had already made a few smart investments that continued to support her family.

As an example to Black women — and white — alike, Mrs. Walker was awarded an honorary degree by the great Virginia Union University in 1925 and her home in Richmond later became a National Historic Site.

Source: https://ywfleaders.com/2018/03/01/maggie-lena-walker/
A Timeline of Maggie Walker

**July 15, 1864:** Maggie Lena Walker is born in Richmond to Elizabeth Draper, a former enslaved person and servant in Elizabeth Van Lew’s home, and Eccles Cuthbert, a white abolitionist writer.

**1867:** The United Order of Saint Luke is founded by Mary Prout in Baltimore, Maryland.

**1876—1878:** Maggie Lena Walker helps her mother by collecting and delivering laundry to white customers and observes disparate economic opportunities for Blacks and whites; she also attends school and is baptized in the First African Baptist Church.

**February 1876:** Maggie Lena Walker’s stepfather, William Mitchell, is found drowned in the James River.

**1881:** Maggie Lena Walker joins the Independent Order of Saint Luke, a Black fraternal organization. That same year, she also organizes a Black student school strike to protest the inequality of white and Black graduation ceremonies.

**September 14, 1886:** Maggie Lena Walker marries Armstead Walker Jr., a brick contractor.

**1890:** Maggie Lena Walker’s son Russell Eccles Talmadge is born.

**1893:** Maggie Lena Walker’s son Armstead Mitchell is born; he dies seven months later.

**1895:** Maggie Lena Walker establishes a juvenile branch of the Independent Order of Saint Luke; she becomes grand deputy matron of the branch.

**1897:** Maggie Lena Walker’s son Melvin DeWitt is born.

**1899:** Maggie Lena Walker is elected Right Worthy Grand Secretary of Saint Luke, its highest rank (she later becomes secretary-treasurer), and retains this position until 1934.

**August 20, 1901:** Maggie Lena Walker delivers a speech in which she inaugurates her vision of a conglomerate for the Order of Saint Luke: a newspaper, a bank, and a department store to serve the financial and social interests of the Black community.

**1902:** Maggie Lena Walker establishes a newspaper, the St. Luke Herald.

**November 1903:** Maggie Lena Walker charters Saint Luke Penny Savings Bank and serves as president until 1929.

**1904:** Armstead Walker Jr. and Maggie Lena Walker move to 110 1/2 East Leigh Street in Richmond.

**April 1905:** Maggie Lena Walker and other women of the Order of Saint Luke establish the Saint Luke Emporium, a department store owned and run by African Americans for the African American community.

**June 1915:** Maggie Lena Walker’s husband, Armstead Walker Jr., is accidentally shot and killed by their son Russell Walker.

**1921:** Maggie Lena Walker runs unsuccessfully with John Mitchell Jr. on the “Lily Black” Republican ticket: he for Virginia’s governor, she for superintendent of public instruction.

**February 12, 1922:** Maggie Lena Walker’s mother, Elizabeth Mitchell, dies.

**November 23, 1923:** Maggie Lena Walker’s son Russell Walker dies after battling depression and alcoholism.

**1927:** Maggie Lena Walker receives an honorary masters degree from Virginia Union University.

**1928:** Maggie Lena Walker is confined to a wheelchair by paralysis.

**December 15, 1934:** Maggie Lena Walker dies in Richmond; she is buried at Evergreen Cemetery.
Activities

1: THE ERA OF JIM CROW

Maggie Walker lived during the Era of Jim Crow, when laws commonly referred to as “Jim Crow” laws were in effect throughout our country. These laws enforced segregation and punished people for mixing with those of another race. Below there is a sampling of laws from various states.*

Under each one, re-write the law to reflect the equality in civil rights we recognize in today’s world (the first one is done for you).

EXAMPLE:

**Buses:** All passenger stations in this state operated by any motor transportation company shall have separate waiting rooms or space and separate ticket windows for the white and colored races. (Alabama)

*All passenger stations in this state shall have one waiting room and one ticket window for all to use, regardless of race, gender, or religion.*

**Education:** The schools for white children and the schools for colored children shall be conducted separately. (Florida)

**Libraries:** The state librarian is directed to fit up and maintain a separate place for the use of the colored people who may come to the library for the purpose of reading books or periodicals. (North Carolina)

**Parks:** It shall be unlawful for colored people to frequent any park owned or maintained by the city for the benefit, use and enjoyment of white persons... and unlawful for any white person to frequent any park owned or maintained by the city for the use and benefit of colored persons. (Georgia)


TERMS TO KNOW

civil rights (noun): the rights to full legal, social, and economic equality

equality (noun): the quality of being equal (in rank, ability, value, or degree)

segregation (noun): setting apart or separation of people or things from others

Extend Your Learning: Imagine Maggie Walker could visit you at school today. What would surprise her? What would she be proud to see? What would she think? Write a paragraph.
Activities

2. WRITE YOUR OWN NEWSPAPER ARTICLE!

In 1902, Maggie Walker founded the *St. Luke Herald*, one of the most influential African-American newspapers of its time. In the play, Maggie's idea was to use the newspaper to talk about how important it is to save money, and to discuss issues like segregation and inequality. Work with a partner to design your own version of the *St. Luke Herald*. In the space below, include the name, publication date, and two articles about things Maggie Walker would want to tell her audience. Include at least one picture.
3: TAKE NICKELS & TURN THEM INTO DOLLARS

Banks keep money safe, allow people to earn interest on savings, and allow people to borrow money to buy a home or start a business. Interest is money a person earns when they deposit savings into a bank. It is also money banks earn when they loan money to people. Interest is written as an annual (yearly) percentage rate.

For example, if you deposit $10 in a bank account with an annual percentage rate of 5%, at the end of the year, you would have $10.50. ($10 x .05). On the other hand, if you were to borrow $10 with an annual percentage rate of 5%, at the end of that same year, you would owe $10.50.

Calculate the interest on the deposits and loans below. The first one in each section is done for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deposit amount</th>
<th>Interest Rate</th>
<th>Total after 1 year</th>
<th>Interest Earned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$100</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>$104</td>
<td>$4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$200</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>$50</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount Borrowed</th>
<th>Interest Rate</th>
<th>Total Owed after 1 year</th>
<th>Interest Owed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$100</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>$105</td>
<td>$5</td>
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<tr>
<td>$200</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>$100</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Define the following banking terms:

deposit: ______________________________________________________________________

loan: ______________________________________________________________________

interest: ____________________________________________________________________

bank: ______________________________________________________________________

GROWING A BANK

Maggie Walker opened the St. Luke Penny Savings Bank in November of 1903. By 1906, savings deposits totaled over $170,000 and allowed the bank to make home and business loans. By 1920, the bank had financed over 600 home loans, allowing for significant real estate holdings in Richmond’s African American community.
4: THE QUOTABLE MAGGIE WALKER

Maggie Walker was a progressive woman whose ideas and actions inspired and lifted thousands of lives at a time when the ideas of women - and African American women in particular - were not always welcomed or listened to.

Read the quotes below, attributed to Maggie Walker. Based on what you have learned about her life, explain what you think each quote means.

1. If we are to have race unity it must be largely the work of the school house and the church.

2. Have hope, have faith, have courage and carry on.

3. When I was about eight, I decided that the most wonderful thing, next to a human being, was a book.

4. Friends and good manners will carry you where money won’t go.

5. No person is your friend who demands your silence, or denies your right to grow.

TERMS TO KNOW

progressive (adj.): Favoring or advocating progress, change, improvement, or reform, rather than wanting to maintain things the way they are.

DID YOU KNOW?

Maggie Walker grew up in the Richmond home of Elizabeth Van Lew, who was a spy during the Civil War.
Cues at the Theatre

When you are in an audience at The Maggie Walker Story or any play, pay attention to the following:

**Cue**
1) Command given by stage management to the technical departments.
2) Any signal (spoken line, action or count) that indicates another action should follow.

**House Lights**
The auditorium lighting, which is commonly faded out when the performance starts.

**Blackout**
The act of turning off (or fading out) stage lighting.

**Curtain Call**
At the end of a performance, the acknowledgment of applause by actors — the bows.

**Build / Check**
Build is a smooth increase in sound or light level; check is the opposite — a smooth diminishment of light or sound.

**Fade**
An increase, decrease, or change in lighting or sound.