

Name: _____

Elizabeth Lucas:

The Story of a Wise Colonial Woman

Until the American Revolution in 1776, the American colonies were ruled by the British. During this time, there lived in South Carolina a wise young woman. She showed the people how to raise the indigo plant. She was known as Eliza Lucas.

Eliza Lucas

Elizabeth Lucas was born in Antigua, a British

colony in the West Indies (also known as the Caribbean), on December 28, 1722. Eliza's father was the governor there.

Antigua, West Indies

1. The West Indies are also known as the _____.

- a. American Colonies
- b. Antigua
- c. Caribbean
- d. South Carolina

2. When was Elizabeth Lucas born?

- a. 1721
- b. 1722
- c. 1723
- d. 1724

When Eliza was old enough, her father sent her to school in England. Her favorite subject was botany. Botany is the study of plants and how plants grow.

botany

In 1738, Eliza's father sent his wife and children to live with

relatives in South Carolina. At the age of sixteen, Eliza came to be in charge of the family plantation. A plantation is a large farm with many workers who live there. This plantation was worked by slaves. Many of these slaves had worked in the West Indies.

plantation

Eliza liked trying new things, especially with plants. She often got seeds from her father. These she planted in South Carolina.

Eliza's father sent her some seeds of the indigo plant. Indigo is used to create a blue dye for coloring fabric. She sowed some of these in March. But there came a frost. The indigo plant cannot stand frost. Her plants all died.

indigo

But Miss Lucas did not give up. She sowed some more seeds in April. These grew very well until a cut-worm found them. The worm wished to try new things, too. So he ate off the indigo plants.

But Miss Lucas was one of the people who try, try again. She had lost her indigo plants twice. Once more she sowed some of the seed. This time the plants grew very well. Eliza was helped by slaves who had learned to grow indigo in the West Indies.

Eliza's father sent a man from the West Indies to her who knew how to get the indigo dye from the indigo plants. The man did not want to show Miss Lucas how to make the indigo. He did not wish the people in South Carolina to learn how to make it. He was afraid that if the people

of South Carolina made indigo dye, the price of West Indian indigo dye would go down. So he would not explain just how it ought to be done. He spoiled the indigo on purpose.

South Carolina

But Miss Lucas watched the man closely. She found out, with help from slaves on the plantation, how the indigo ought to be made. Some of her family's land in South Carolina was now planted with the indigo plants.

Then Miss Elizabeth Lucas was married. She became Mrs. Pinckney. Her father gave her all the indigo growing on his land in South Carolina. It was all saved for seed. Some of the seed Mrs. Pinckney gave to her friends. Some of it her husband sowed. It all grew, and was made into that blue dye that we call indigo.

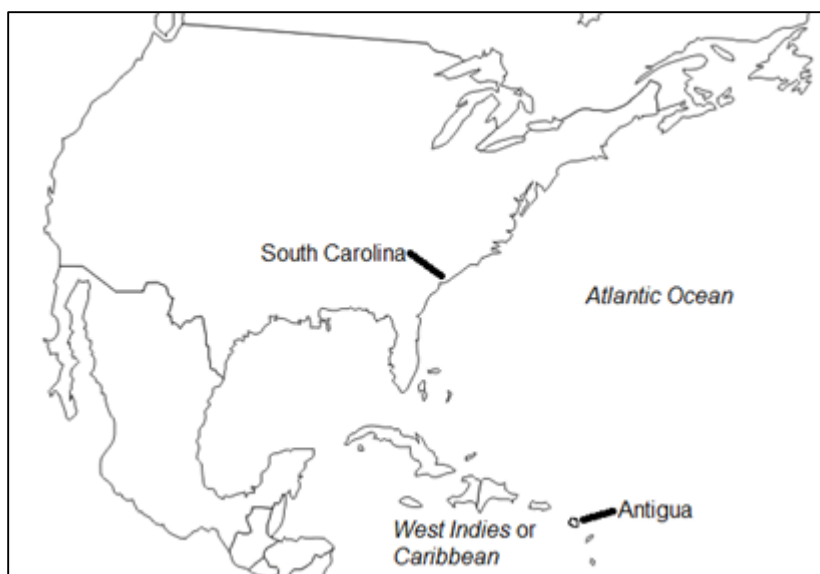
In a few years, more than a million pounds of indigo were made in South Carolina every year. By the time Elizabeth (née Lucas) Pinckney died in 1793, many people in South Carolina had grown rich

through indigo. And it was all because Miss Lucas did not give up.

She did not give up.

Summarize the life of Elizabeth (née Lucas) Pinckney in your own words.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of multiple sets of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline.



In the 1700s, people traveled by boat between Antigua and South Carolina. Draw a line to show the route Eliza's boat took to travel from Antigua to South Carolina.