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## Tour shines quiet light on black history

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you don't just get over it. We all carry baggage. If you don't have any, you didn't pack."

Whipple's goal is to show a side of Charlotte's history that is often the least known in a city often criticized for erasing its legacy. The tour, which started seven years ago as an offshoot of an interfaith pilgrimage retracing the steps of slaves from Africa to the Americas, isn't an in-your-face exercise.

"We present the tour in a non-biased manner," Whipple said. "We put the information out there and you draw your own conclusions. We're not trying to manipulate people's minds."

At the tour's peak, as many as 150 people will ride around Charlotte. Ridership is surprisingly diverse, with whites and blacks in equal numbers. People who are new to Charlotte and curious about its history and out-of-towners usually outnumber long-timers.

"On the whole, I'd say it's half and half," Whipple said. "People who lived here a long time are the most difficult to convince they should see it. One of the comments I hear

most is 'I didn't know that' such history exists.

That's what Schneider thought, too.

"It's amazing because I worked in Charlotte for years," she said. "It's a very interesting tour where (Whipple) points out very interesting things. It gives you a feeling of the way things were during slavery. I

thought it was real meaningful things and it's good for diversity."

Ultimately, the tour and pilgrimage, which includes traditional African drumming and memorial service, tries to bring people together through the common bond of history.

"One of the things we get across is that ...it's not just

four our people," Whipple said. "It's for everybody. There were more people involved in it than us. Black people couldn't have been slaves unless there were slavemasters."

For information on the Charlotte Black Heritage Tour and Pilgrimage, call Queen City Tours at (704) 566-0104 or go to [www.queencitytours.com](http://www.queencitytours.com).