

# COLONIAL CHILD

A Newsletter for West Virginia Teachers & Participants  
in the Pricketts Fort *Teaching History Through the Arts* Program

Issue No.1

January 2008



## WELCOME

Welcome to the maiden issue of "Colonial Child", the newsletter of the *Teaching History Through the Arts* program at Pricketts Fort. The objectives of this newsletter are:

1. To provide a forum where teachers can publish their opinions of *Teaching History through the Arts*, and make suggestions for the program's improvement.
2. To provide news & anecdotes of your experiences at our fort, as well as our experiences in your schools.
3. To provide news concerning developments in the *Teaching History Through the Arts Program* program.
4. To provide additional resources related to the teaching of frontier & colonial history not found in our curriculum.
5. To provide additional historical background for you, the teachers, regarding the role of children on the frontier & in colonial America.
6. Regular features will include excerpts from & reviews of modern children's books about colonial America, both recent & out-of-print. Also featured will be excerpts of children's books about colonial America from the past, such as this issue's selection from the 1899 book *Child Life in Colonial Times*.

## YOUR COMMENTS

Here are some of the comments made by teachers after watching their students taking part in a THTA workshop run by one of our artisans, either at the Fort or in their own classroom

☞ "Students received good insight into the time period, tools & processes"

☞ "The instructor did an excellent job explaining the history of the instrument and how to play it. My students didn't want the lesson to end! In fact, my principal offered to buy 20 to 25 instruments for my classroom. . . . I would like to say again that I *really* enjoyed the class & I feel I have been a better teacher this year because I've had all of the extra information from this class to help enrich my lessons."

☞ "This was the nicest field trip I've ever made. The students were fully engaged & all activity was purposeful. We were not rushed or crowded. The artisans' attention was on our group and it seems they genuinely like children."

☞ "The instructor did an excellent job with the students. They came back to school counting in Indian language. Instructor told stories of how the earth was made. some of his information was in our Social Studies books. Instructor had all their attention. They really had fun."

☞ "Of course the kids always like hands-on activities, but today many of them found themselves doing things they had no idea they could do."

*continued on p. 4*

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

### TEACHING HISTORY THROUGH THE ARTS PILOT YEAR WELL UNDERWAY

Pricketts Fort pilot year for the *Teaching History Through the Arts* Program is well underway. The Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation grant received in the fall of 2006 continues through the spring of 2008 with the goal of creating and piloting a new educational curriculum for the Fort.

After a long wait, we are pleased to announce that the curriculum is now in print! As pilot schools, each of you are testing the lessons in the classroom and providing valuable feedback to the project. This feedback includes how lessons can be integrated in classroom learning, the success of the activity itself and the educational and financial value of the program. Please document the lesson activity's process and finished products. In all, the grant provided for thirty free lessons for the fourteen pilot schools. Nineteen of those have already taken place and the others will be completed by May 2008.

Beginning in the fall of 2008, all schools in the state will be able to take advantage of the program. We are looking for opportunities to promote this new program so please let us know if these come up in your county.

A companion website is currently under construction and will be available very soon. Schools are asked to submit ideas for

*...continued on p. 2*

From the Director...continued from p. 1

integrating the art projects into the curriculum as well as photographs of student projects for inclusion on the website. Please send material to Melissa May electronically at [director@prickettsfort.org](mailto:director@prickettsfort.org). We will have a page for every pilot school so your input is very important. I look forward to seeing what is happening in your classrooms.

*Melissa May*



## MAKING THE MOST OF AN ARTISAN VISIT

We have been especially interested in how teachers have made use of our artisan visits, or field-trips to the fort, in the larger context of their over-all lesson plans. Have you been able to use these artisan visits and/or trips to the fort to supplement or enhance the teaching of American or regional history in your classes? We would like to hear from you.

Also, have any of you discovered ways to expand on the artisan visit or fort experience by combining them with other, similar resources?

For instance, one teacher, Amber Davis of Nutter Fort, used the occasion of several visits by our artisans as an opportunity not merely to introduce her students to the subject of frontier life, but to immerse them in it over a period of about two weeks. During that time her students were exposed to the subject of frontier life from a number of different perspectives.

Amber discovered a book for children published by Fort New Salem, *Pioneer Children of Appalachia* (reviewed in detail on page 3), which she read to her class as an introduction to the subject of local frontier history. This was an especially apt resource as some of the children had been to Fort New Salem and recognized some of the buildings in the photographs. Also, the book mentioned local places familiar to many of the children, "Raccoon Run" and "Big Flint", which helped them to realize that, although colonial history seems remote in time, it is, geographically, quite literally in their own back yard. This point was reinforced when visiting artisans from Pricketts Fort mentioned that the childrens' own town, Nutter's Fort, was named for another important frontier fort contemporaneous with Pricketts Fort.

One of the more exciting things Amber did for her class was to invite an historical re-enactor from Jackson's Mill, Greg "Copperhead" Graham, who portrayed a Scottish immigrant forced to come to America to fight for King George but who managed to escape from the English army to become a free trapper. "Copperhead" spread out his accoutrements & equipment on a "trade blanket",

demonstrated their use & told the story of his life. Thus, with one re-enactor from Jackson's Mill and three artisans from Pricketts Fort, the children were able to talk with, and participate in activities with, four historical figures of different genders & social backgrounds, yet all from around the time of the Revolutionary War.

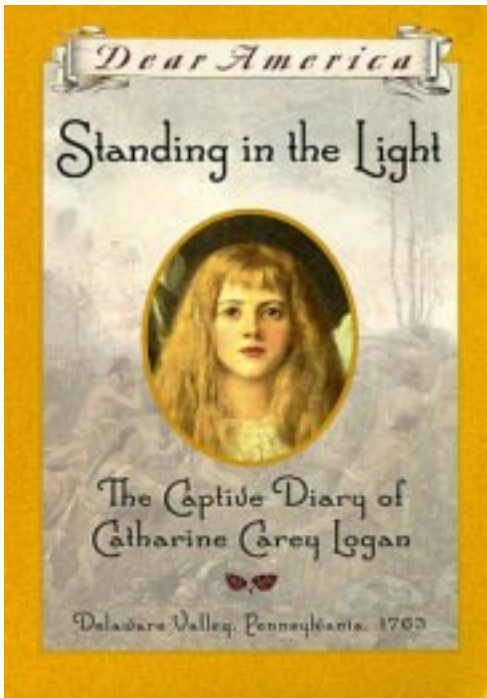


In addition Amber made use of a number of objects and visual aids: a scale-model log cabin, cut-out pictures for the bulletin board of various colonial objects and personages (blacksmith, butter-churn, spinning-wheel, etc), block paper quilts, paper covered wagons, and some basic Indian symbols.

If you, as a teacher, have discovered other ways to augment the resources we send to you, or which you find at Pricketts Fort, please let us know about them & we will describe them here.



**B O O K R E V I E W**



**STANDING IN THE LIGHT:**

**The Captive Diary of Catharine Carey Logan, Delaware Valley, 1763**

by Mary Pope Osborne

Hardcover, (NY: Scholastic Incorporated, 1998). 184 pp. Ages 12 and up. Currently in print at \$10.95.

*Synopsis:* A Quaker girl's diary reflects her experiences growing up in the Delaware River Valley of Pennsylvania and her capture by Lenape Indians in 1763.

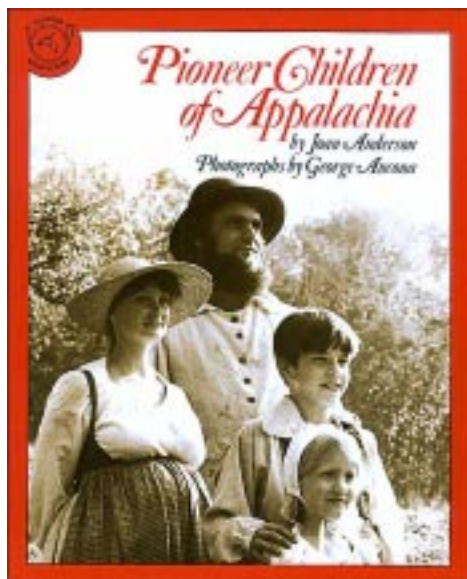
*Our Comment:* Of the many available books for children about colonial life, *Standing in the Light* is one of the most relevant to frontier life in this region, where significant numbers of European women & children were taken captive by various tribes, including the Lenape (Delaware) who are depicted here.

*Reviews:* From *Children's Literature*: "Opening this little book, which does resemble a diary, reveals the personal thoughts of Catharine, a Quaker girl living in the Delaware Valley of Pennsylvania in 1763. The Quakers

had lived in peace with the Native Americans who they treated fairly and with respect, but greed and a burgeoning population have changed that relationship. Catharine and her brother Thomas are captured and brought to live separately among the Lenape. The separation from her family and her brother is difficult and only her faith and the ability to write in her dairy seem to provide solace. Finally, she begins to accept her new life and is even reunited with her brother. But life takes another twist and the heartbreak continues. Osborne's words paint the images and readers feel Catharine's anguish in this moving story of a young girl caught between two cultures."



**B O O K R E V I E W**



**PIONEER CHILDREN OF APPALACHIA**

by Joan Anderson, with photographs by George Ancona

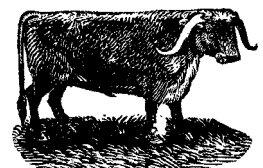
Trade paperback, (NY: Clarion Books / Houghton Mifflin Company, 1986), reprinted 1990, text by Joan Anderson, photographs by George Ancona, 48 pp. Ages

9-11. Currently in print at \$7.95.

*Synopsis:* Between 1790 and 1830, hundreds of Americans moved into the rugged hills and narrow hollers of what was to become West Virginia. This book recreates the life of the fictional Davis family. The scenes were photographed at Fort New Salem, a living-history museum celebrating the folkways of America.

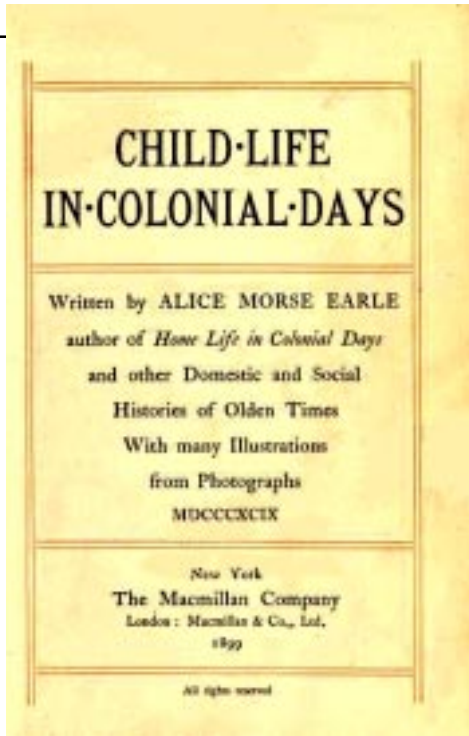
*Our Comment:* Many West Virginia children will already be familiar with Fort New Salem, or at least will have heard of it. The book also makes mention of other WV locations. The period (1790-1830) it depicts is later than the frontier period (prior to 1776), but is close enough in time that the way of life it shows will be identical to frontier life in most respects.

*Reviews:* From the *School Library Journal*: "A look at pioneer life in the late 18th and early 19th Centuries. Fort New Salem in Salem, West Virginia, attempts to recreate those times in a living history museum. Through succinctly written text and clear black-and-white photographs, the fictional Davis family: Pa and Ma, Grandpa and Grandma, young Elizabeth, and older brother Isaac are shown as they go about their daily lives. The story follows them from early morning farmyard chores to the joys of a trading trip to town and a harvest festival. Typical pioneer skills such as soap making, fashioning corn husk dolls, and burning out stumps are demonstrated. *Pioneer Children of Appalachia* brings a long-ago time within the grasp of young readers and enhances their understanding of pioneers' work and play. One quibble: Were the children (and adults) always that clean performing their strenuous tasks? Anyway, the presentation is inviting and accessible. There is much to learn here, whether for report writing or simple eye-feasting."



Your Comments...continued from p. 1

“We did the Blacksmithing lesson with 3-5 grades here at our school and would agree that I saw kids working with tools that many of them probably have never worked with, and they were so proud of themselves and what they had made!! I don’t think it would be a good lesson for students under 2-3 grade, though. (I wouldn’t want to hold the flower!) The only other thing that I would have done differently would have been to split up my pottery lesson. We did pottery with K-2 and we gave them the option of making a bowl or a tile. We put all of the students making a tile at one table and the rest at the other two tables and the Potter got the students started with the bowls first. There were 25 students and even with 4 adults, the half of the group that the Potter wasn’t working with got loud. I think I should have done two groups of 12-13. They were just so excited! (I try to understand that, but the noise bothers me after a while, especially when we are doing something new and I think they need to listen to directions and follow along.) All of the artisans were very good. The students learned a lot, even if it was just that they could make something that they didn’t know they could. Thank you so much.”



## CHILD LIFE IN COLONIAL DAYS

excerpts from the chapter  
“Schools & School Life”

by Alice Morse Earle

As well as offering reviews of contemporary books about colonial children, we will also be including extended excerpts from books on this subject from previous eras. The following excerpt is from Alice Morse Earle’s *Child Life in Colonial Days*, published in 1899.

No greater contrast of conditions could exist than between the school life of what we love to call the “good old times,” and that of the far better times of to-day. Poor, small, and uncomfortable schoolhouses, scant furnishings, few and uninteresting books, tiresome and indifferent methods of teaching, great severity of discipline, were the accompaniments of school days until this (nineteenth) century. Yet with all these disadvantages children obtained an education, for an education was warmly desired; no difficulties could chill that deep-lying longing for learning. “Child,” said one noble New England mother of the olden days, “if God make thee a good Christian and a good scholar, tis all thy mother ever asked for thee.”

Not only did parents strive for the education of their children, but the colonies assisted by commanding the building and maintaining of a school in each town where there was a sufficient number of families and scholars. Rhode Island was the only New England colony that did not compel the building of schoolhouses and the education of children.

So determined was Massachusetts to have schools that in 1636, only six years after the settlement of Boston, the General Court, which was composed of representatives from every settlement in the Bay Colony, and which was the same as our House of Representatives today, gave over half the annual income of the entire colony, to establish the school which two years later became - Harvard College.

This event should be remembered; it is distinguished in history as the first time any body of people in any country ever gave through its representatives its own money to found a place of education.

In Virginia schoolhouses were few for over a century. Governor Berkeley, an obstinate and narrow-minded Englishman, wrote home to England in 1670, “I thank God there are in Virginia no free schools nor printing, and I hope we shall not have, for learning hath brought disobedience and heresy into the world.” Some Virginia gentlemen did not agree with him, however, and gave money to try to establish free schools for poor children. A far greater hindrance to the establishment of schools than the governor’s stupid opposition, was the fact that there was no town or village life in Virginia; the houses and plantations were scattered; previous to the year 1700 Jamestown was the only Virginia town, and it was but a petty settlement. Williamsburg was not even laid out; a few seaports had been planned, but



had not been built. Hence the children of wealthy planters were taught by private tutors at home, or were sent to school in England.

... to be continued in subsequent issues

