

One Appalachian Christmas

by Julie Fulcher



Classroom Study Guide

Student Pages



The Story

The year is 1936. Addie Parker and her friend Clyde Runion are growing up in the Appalachian mountains of West Virginia. Christmas is coming and the two young folks are sure that "Santy Claus" won't be coming to their poor little town this year. But, the two are determined to make the holiday the best it can be. With some hard work and the help of family and friends, they learn that the best Christmases don't come from the pages of a mail order catalog.

Growing Up in Appalachia - An Oral History

Read the following real-life story of what life was like growing up in the Appalachian Mountains in the 1930's. This story was written down exactly as it was told to the writer - this is called an "oral history."

"I went to school a little when I was a kid back in the mountains, but a-body soon fergits what they learn in school, 'specially atter so many years. I know we had to go to school soon of a morning and stay till 4 o'clock.. We had to walk three 'er four miles most of the time. As soon as I got big enough I had to help Mammy make a living. We washed clothes fer people, and things like that. We didn't git much money for our work, mostly we got jest rations -- vit'als, you know."



Things to Think About

1. Why do you think the writer chose to write this story exactly as it was told to them? Read the story out loud. Does this person talk like you do, or sound a little different?
2. What do we know about the person in the story?
 - a. What was their life like in the 1930's
 - b. Did they go to school?
 - c. Do you think they knew how to read and write?
 - d. Was life easy for them growing up?
 - e. How were they paid for the work they did?

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YOU CAN DO IT...

What was elementary school like for you, Grandpa?

Find out the answer by becoming an oral historian. All you need is a pad of paper and pencil (tape recorder, if available), and a good list of questions. Interview someone in your family (grandparents, parents, aunts or uncles), using the following questions to get started. Remember to record the answers exactly as they are given to you.

- What is your full name and why were you named it?
- Were you named after somebody else?
- Did you have a nickname as you were growing up?
- If you did, what was it and why did they call you that?

- What was your elementary school like?
 - How did you get to school?
 - What was your favorite subject in school and why?
 - What subject in school was always the easiest for you?
 - What was your least favorite subject in school and why?
 - Who was your favorite teacher and why were they special?

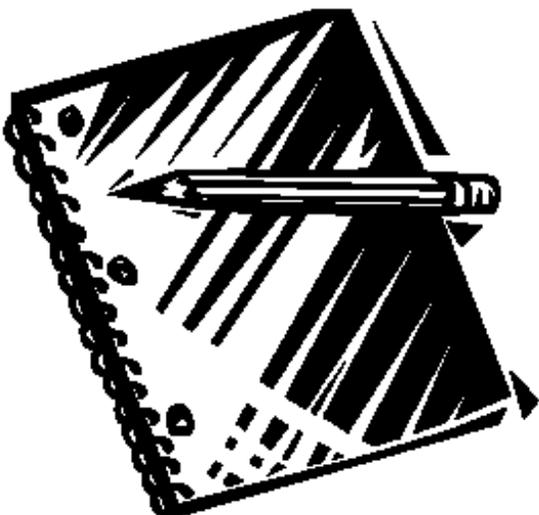


Put it in a book...

As a class, put together a book of oral histories about what elementary school was like in years gone by, or each student can make a family memory book by interviewing different members of your family.

Organize the histories by year or by family members. Remember to include the following in your book:

1. Cover
2. Title page with author listed
3. Table of Contents
4. Collected oral histories



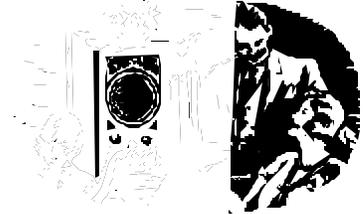
YEAR AT A GLANCE - 1936

The year is 1936. Franklin Delano Roosevelt is President of the United States. Our country is beginning to recover from the Great Depression, a time when many people did not have jobs or very much money in the bank. In 1936...

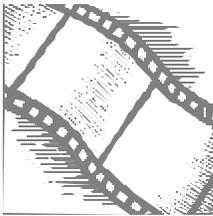


- African-American track star Jesse Owen won four gold medals at the Olympics.

- There was no television, but families would listen to the radio together for entertainment.



- Life Magazine became the first magazine to feature pictures.



- When people went to the movies they saw a newsreel, a cartoon, a short subject film, previews, and a double feature.

- Ford's Model T was the most popular car.



- Caddie Woodlawn By Carol Ryrie Brink won the John Newberry Medal for most distinguished contribution to American Literature for Children.

For Christmas I Need....

In 1936, many people didn't have enough money to buy expensive presents for their families and friends. Instead, they gave special gifts like homemade cookies or items that people really needed. In the following list, circle the things you might have gotten for Christmas in 1936.

- | | | |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| baby dolls | hat | camera |
| toy cars | games | homemade candy |
| shoes | books | cane |
| bicycle | paper | stuffed animal |
| roller skates | pencils | dress |
| sweater | television set | shirt |
| coat | | socks |

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Clyde's Favorite Poet

Clyde Runion loves to write poetry. Poems are a very creative way to express an idea, a feeling, or to tell a story. One of Clyde's favorite poets is Robert Frost. Robert Frost was born on March 26, 1974 in San Francisco, California. He moved to Massachusetts at the age of eleven. Mr. Frost attended college but never actually graduated with a formal degree. Robert Frost was married to Elinor White and together they had two children. During his life, Robert Frost published many poems and received many awards and prizes. Robert Frost died on January 29, 1963.

Stopping by the Woods on A Snowy Evening by Robert Frost

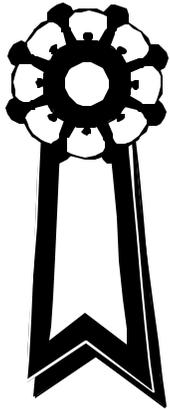
Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep.
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.





"Winter Poetry Writin Contest"

Clyde wrote an original poem to enter in the "Twin Branch Winter Poetry Writin Contest." Now it's your turn to become a poet. Use the following word games by poet Jack Prelusky to get you started. Then go on-line to:

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/poetry/index.htm> to find more hints for becoming a poet - even publish your poem on line.

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1. Word Play

Pick a word, any word, and think of all the words that rhyme with that word. Try first with one-syllable words, and then with words of two or more syllables.

2. Object Observations

Pick an object - a pencil, a brick wall, a clock, a tomato - anything. Then write down everything you notice about that object.

3. Synonym Silliness

Think of an adjective (describing word) such as happy, soft, tall, or sleepy. Then write down all the words you can think of that have the same meaning as that adjective. This list will help a lot when you're trying to describe things.



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Activity Page

Word Search

A
TN
EDRE
LUDQU
POEMSLV
COPLZERSN
SPBUISNOWIC
CLDOLLGIASEPO
PRIZEORTWBEESEX
APPALACHIAWSXCRE
UTRHPOBCGIFTLOVAW
SDNEIRFGHMOWKLIENOP
SANTYCLAUSELPCERTOVLO
HOLRTEUIZAPPLIDMKLSNOW
HTIHOLIDAYWERLMKUIKEFKLAS
FRSAITDLOCCRTHUPSSEONOEVSEA
HAPPY HOLIDAYS
FROM YOUR
FRIENDS AT
THEATRE IV

Find these words and a secret hidden message. Remember the words may be forward or backward:

HOLIDAY
GIFT
DOLL

POEM
SANTY CLAUS
APPALACHIA
PRIZE

SNOW
COLD
FRIENDS