



Artists on Tour

Rick Sowash

Johnny Appleseed



STUDY GUIDE

Information provided by Rick Sowash, Kathleen Riemenschneider, and Hank Fincken

Edited & Designed by Kathleen Riemenschneider

CINCINNATI ARTS ASSOCIATION, EDUCATION/COMMUNITY RELATIONS, 650 WALNUT ST., CINCINNATI, OH 45202

PHONE 513-977-4116, FAX 513-977-4150

WWW.CINCINNATIARTS.ORG, EDUCATION@CINCINNATIARTS.ORG

JOHN CHAPMAN ("JOHNNY APPLESEED"):

TIME LINE

- 1774: John was born September 26, 1774 in Leominster, Massachusetts.
- 1776: John's Mother Elizabeth (formerly Simons) dies July 18, 1776.
- 1780: Nathaniel Chapman (John's father) remarries Lucy Cooley July 24, 1780. The family settles in Long Meadow, Massachusetts. Altogether, the new Chapman family will have ten children.
- 1796: First confirmed report of John Chapman and his apple tree business has him in Warren, Pennsylvania. Undocumented accounts say he was planting trees in western New York in 1792. Another source says he began planting his seeds in Virginia.
- 1803: John plants first apple seeds in Ohio (some say sooner); by tradition in Carrollton.
- 1804: John moves his operations full time into Ohio.
- 1806: Nathaniel Chapman dies in southeast Ohio.
- 1809: Map of Mt. Vernon shows two plots owned by John Chapman.
- 1812: John makes historical ride/run to save the people of Mansfield from hostile Indians.
- 1816: John gives July 4 speech in Mansfield, Ohio.
- 1817: First printed reference of John Chapman as a member of The New Church or the Church of New Jerusalem, January 1817 (England)
- 1816/1822: Although first nicknamed Appleseed John (date unknown), the first printed reference to John Appleseed is November, 1822. Some ledgers mention his name as early as 1816.
- 1828-1834: Sometime between 1828 and 1834, John moves his operations into Indiana.
- 1845: John's death reported March 18, 1845 by Fort Wayne *Sentinel*.
- 1871: Article: "Johnny Appleseed; A Pioneer Hero" published in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*.
- November 1871. John becomes a national hero.
- 1871 to present: Stories old and new emerge about John Chapman

ACTIVITIES

APPLES

1. Have any of the students been to an apple farm? Have them describe their experience.
2. Have students name different foods/drinks that are made from or contain apples? Do they know how the food/drink is made? Have students find different recipes with apples in them. Have an apple day, where students bring in different foods/drinks made with apples.
3. Have an apple tasting. Bring in a variety of apples and have student taste them and compare the different flavors and textures.
 - a. Prior to the tasting: brainstorm words that can be used to describe apples
 - b. After the tasting (writing exercise): students describe which apple variety they liked best or compare the varieties

HISTORY

1. Create a map of John Chapman's travels. What else is in the areas John Chapman has lived? Have fun and decorate the map.
2. Create and decorate a timeline of John Chapman's life include historical events. Possible historical events to add:
 - a. U.S. Revolutionary War
 - b. When did Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky become states? Other states?
 - c. When were Cincinnati, Covington, Newport or your hometown settled?
 - d. Writing of the Constitution and amendments
 - e. Which U.S. Presidents were elected during John's life?
 - f. Northwest Ordinance
 - g. Louisiana Purchase
 - h. Eli Whitney's Cotton Gin
 - i. Fugitive Slave Law
 - j. Indian Removal Act
 - k. Trail of Tears
 - l. Lewis and Clark's journey
 - m. Baltimore & Ohio Railroad

STORYTELLING AND RE-ENACTING

Kids love stories – and history is just a big story. Teachers can tell students true stories of real people from Ohio history who lived through real dramas.

Taking this a step further, a teacher can be a re-enactor. The teacher can bring to class a prop and a bit of costume. But something more is needed. Construct a free-standing doorway, decorate it with flags and dates. This is “Time’s Doorway,” and whoever passes through it becomes a figure from history for a little while. You put on a bonnet and pass through the doorway, and when you come out the other side, you are Johnny Appleseed’s sister (or whoever). You tell a little about life as a pioneer and try to explain your strange but lovable brother. The students ask you some questions they’ve prepared, and you answer them as best you can, then exit once again through Time’s Doorway and return to your real self. Easy and fun.

Once they’ve seen you do it, students can do the same exercise, each with their own character from history. This is much more fun than simply giving a report. Better yet, it requires the student to really know their stuff and be on their toes, ready to improvise when they are asked questions.

INVITE LOCAL HISTORICAL RE-ENACTORS TO VISIT

Re-enacting has become a national phenomenon in recent years. Very likely there is a reenactment group in your community. Get in touch. Invite a re-enactor to come in costume to individual classrooms and share what they know. Tip: Specify that the visit is to be no more than 30 minutes long. This will allow you to politely cut off a long-winded visitor before the students begin to squirm, but if you see that the kids are into it, you can always let it continue pass 30 minutes.

Before the visit, consider with your students what questions would be appropriate. Write them down on separate slips of paper. Pass them out so that each student will be ready with at least one good question.

Perhaps the best question to ask a re-enactor would be: How did you become interested in re-enacting? In other words, tell us the story of what inspired your interest. These stories can be inspiring in themselves and we all like to know how things begin.

Afterwards, have every student write a thank-you note to the re-enactor. Send all of them in one big envelope. (At the very least, you, the teacher, should write a thank-you note.)

WRITING ACTIVITIES

History is mainly conveyed to us in words – spoken words and written words.

Good historians are good writers. They have developed the skill of portraying actual events of the past in ways that make us FEEL what it was like to be there. Students can aspire to be good historians – and thus, good writers. They can strive to write about history in ways that will be fun to read.

How? By using words that address the senses – colors, sounds, smells, tastes, the ‘feel’ of the moment. The student-writer must ask themselves, “If I had been there, what colors would I have seen? What sounds would I have heard?” ... and write, using words that speak to the senses.

DIARY ENTRIES

Students who have re-enacted heroes of the past can write first-person “memories” of what their life was like at certain important moments. In other words, they can write diary entries or fragments of an autobiography.

Johnny Appleseed left us no diary or autobiography, but what if he had? What might we expect to find in it? Suppose just one page of it survived, the page for September 26, 1834, which was Johnny’s 50th birthday. What would be written on that page? Creating such a page from such a document can be a richly entertaining and informative adventure for a student. And the result will be fun for other students to read, fun for parents to read, fun for you to read.

STUDENTS WRITING A SINGLE SCENE FROM HISTORY

Most history, however, is written in the third person. Students can try their hand at this, too. The key to their success lies in keeping the scope very narrow. Unfolding a complete account of a major historical event – what happened and why – is beyond the ability of most of us. But I believe that almost anyone can present a single scene from history.

Teachers must help the student choose a scene from history ... and then try to think of it as a painting – in words.

Let’s take Betty Zane’s run to retrieve gunpowder for the defenders of Ft. Henry. Ask students to imagine a painting of the most important scene in that story. What would be shown in such a painting? The fort would be seen, the gate open, the defenders’ rifles sticking out here and there. The surrounding green of the forest would be broken by glimpses of the red-coated British and their native allies in bright war paint. Orange bursts and puffs of smoke would be seen at the tips of rifles on both sides. The little house where the extra gunpowder was kept would be in the background. And in the center would be Betty herself, sprinting back to the fort’s open gate, a keg of powder under her arm, long hair, apron and full skirts flying, one bare foot up, the other thrusting into the dust, a wild, determined look on her face.

Challenge your students to learn about the scene so thoroughly that they can picture it clearly in their imaginations. Ask them to imagine the scene as a painting – a giant, complicated mural, teeming with fascinating images and details. Their job is going to be to write down what they have pictured. Yes, but where to begin?

Ask them to imagine that this mural depicting their scene has been painted on one huge wall of a huge room and that they are standing in the middle of that room. The painting is there before them – but no one can see it! Why not? Because the room is totally and utter dark.

Then ask them to imagine that one small beam of light suddenly illuminates one tiny detail of this vast painting. That illuminated detail is the opening sentence of what they are going to write. The next sentence will spread out that beam of light just a little wider, describing more of the scene. The next paragraph will make it wider yet.

Gradually the whole mural will be revealed. When that is achieved, then the student must undertake the same process in reverse. A good piece of writing often ends with one last detail being “seen” before the lights go out altogether.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

Means, Howard. *JOHNNY APPLESEED: The Man, the Myth, the American Story*. Simon & Schuster, 2011.

Pollan, Michael. *The Botany of Desire*. Random House, New York, 2001.

This book has a chapter on Chapman that claims that John's biggest contribution to pioneer life was providing the tools to make applejack, a liquor that could be sold to pay Ohio state taxes. Needless to say, other historians are furious that all John's efforts have been reduced to cheap alcohol. The debate continues.

Price, Robert. *JOHNNY APPLESEED Man & Myth*. 1954; reprinted by Urbana University Press, 2001.

For more than fifty years, this was the best source book on John Chapman/Johnny Appleseed.

Urbana University (Urbana, Ohio) has the best collection of Johnny Appleseed books, articles, artifacts, etc., in the country. Their Johnny Appleseed Museum reopened in the spring of 2011. It is a great source for anyone interested in knowing more about John Chapman.

FOR YOUNGER READERS:

Greene, Carol. *John Chapman—The Man Who was Johnny Appleseed*. A Children's Press/ Rookie Biography, 1991.

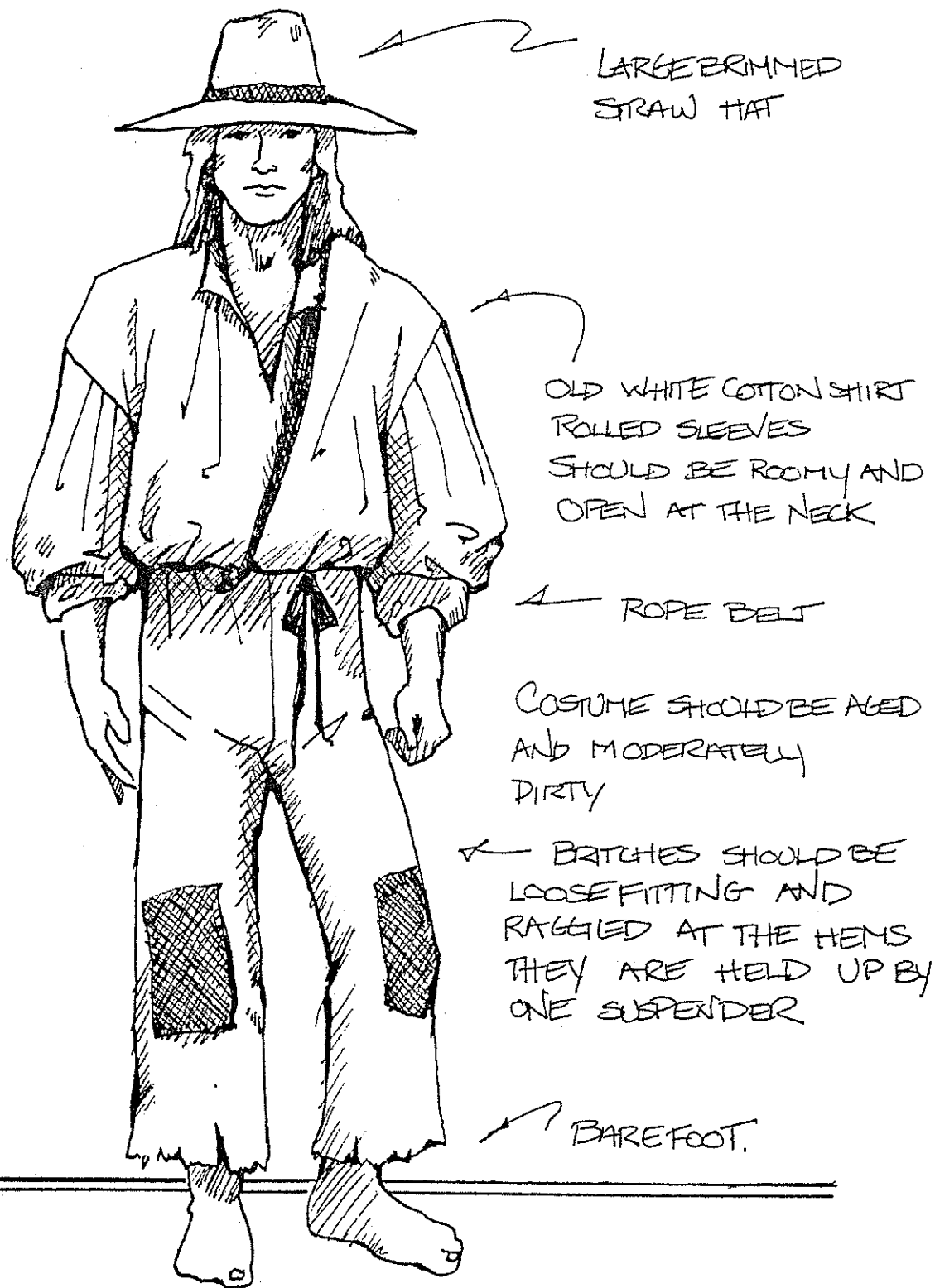
Kellogg, Steven. *JOHNNY APPLESEED: A Tall Tale*, Harper Collins, 1988.

Swain, Gwenyth. *Johnny Appleseed*. Carolrhoda Books, Inc., Minneapolis, 2001.



On the next page is a costume design for John Chapman/“Johnny Appleseed”

JOHN CHAPMAN



PROP:

John Chapman will carry a small apple tree