

Eckerd Theater Company

presents

Woodland Tales

Expanding the Classroom

Woodland Tales

Adapted for the stage by
the Bloomsburg Theatre
Ensemble



About the Show

Woodland Tales

This play is based on *Along the Susquehanna*, a play first produced in 1985 by the Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble, a regional theater company of Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania. The show toured in Africa as well as Pennsylvania. The artists who worked on the stories concentrated on the Native American tribes in their region—the Iroquois, Seneca and Lenni Lenape tribes. They based some of these stories on *Skunny Wundy and Other Indian Tales* and *Rumbling Wings* by Arthur C. Parker (Gawaso Wanneh), which was published by Doubleday and Doran in the '20s and '30s. Eckerd Theater Company presents *Woodland Tales* in the hopes that students will appreciate and participate in the rich tradition of storytelling.

Eckerd Theater Company

Eckerd Theater Company (ETC) is a touring company of professional artists, educators and administrators under the umbrella of The Marcia P. Hoffman Performing Arts Institute, the education center for Ruth Eckerd Hall at the Richard B. Baumgardner Center for the Performing Arts in Clearwater, FL. ETC seeks to provide the finest in performance and arts education experiences to family audiences of all ages. Since its inception in 1988, Eckerd Theater Company has performed for more than one million young people and their families throughout the state of Florida and in venues as far north as Canada and as far west as the Mississippi River.

From eight local performances of its first production in 1988 through 125 performances in the 2010-2011 season, ETC has been a proud ambassador of Ruth Eckerd Hall, creating professional productions of original works, adaptations of classic literature, and the finest published scripts for the theater. ETC productions entertain while they explore such themes as diversity, multiculturalism, self-worth, loyalty and tolerance.

ETC began touring the state of Florida in 1991 and national touring began in 1993. Since 1996, the Company has been on the Florida Arts on Tour roster, a state program providing funds to allow productions to travel to remote and underserved parts of the state.

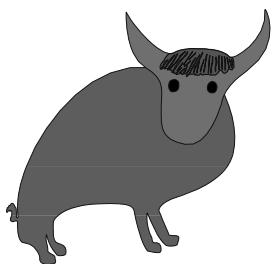
In 1998, Julia Flood took the reins as ETC Artistic Director. In 1999, a State of Florida Challenge Grant provided funds for The Florida Project, a collaborative process bringing national and Florida theater artists and educators together to develop a new theater-for-young-audiences piece about the South. ETC has been featured in showcases at both the Southern Arts Exchange (now Performing Arts Exchange), and at annual IPAY conferences (International Performing Arts for Youth).

Since February 2003, Eckerd Theater Company has made its home in the 182-seat Murray Studio Theater in The Marcia P. Hoffman Performing Arts Institute.

Background Information

The Susquehanna River and its Inhabitants

In the Beginning...



When the Siberian-Alaskan bridge formed thousands of years ago during the Ice Age, North America was opened to **immigrants**. Leading the migration were herds of animals, including **bison** and **caribou**.

Following the animals were the ancestors of Native Americans. Some of those who moved about the continent settled in the Southwest (Pueblo), Northwest (Eskimo), Plains (Sioux) and Northeast (Iroquois) of North America. Influenced by their surroundings, these immigrants formed unique cultures that we identify as Native American.

In the Northeast

The area that is now the northeastern portion of the United States was settled by many tribes linked by a common language called Algon-quin. Although they shared a common language, the **Iroquois** (meaning “rattlesnake,” so named by the **Algonquin** tribe), Algonquin, and Delaware tribes did not communicate at all because they were at war. Urged by the holy man Dekanawidah, the Iroquois League of Nations was formed. This ended the internal wars and united the tribe, making it the most powerful nation on the continent.

The Susquehanna River

The **Susquehanna River** is located west of Philadelphia. The Seneca and Lenni Lenape tribes are located along this river and are members of the Iroquois League of Nations.



Information from the study guide for *Along the Susquehanna*, Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble, 1991, www.meyna.com/lenape.html and *The Red Record* by David McCutchen, Avery Publishing Group, © 1993

The Red Record

(For more information, please see Additional Resources.) The Lenni Lenape tribe (a Woodland Tribe whose name loosely translates to “Original People”) is believed to be descended from an ancient people in the lands where China, Mongolia and Russia now meet. They came to North America over the Siberian-Alaskan bridge around 1600 BCE, and eventually settled in the area of the present day Northeast states of Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey and Delaware. The migration and settlement of the Lenni Lenape was **fraught** with threats and dangers, both by nature and other tribes. The legend of the Lenni Lenape has been recorded in what may be the oldest written record of a Native American tribe.

This story of creation and poetic record of the Lenni Lenape tribe is called the **Wallam Olum**, which means the “Red Record.” The work has two parts: a narrative and pictographs. These pictographs were originally recorded by carving and paint on birch bark prayer sticks and were red in color. The Record begins with the story of the Creation and The Great Flood, follows the migration of the Lenni Lenape across the Bering Strait from Asia, chronicles almost a hundred generations as they migrate across North America, encountering good times and hardships, conflicts and periods of peace, and ends with an account of the arrival of European explorers in the seventeenth century, when the Lenni Lenape were at the height of their power. The last two pictographs that appear describe the coming of the white people in ships and questions who they were. Although some scholars contest the authenticity of the Red Record, there is still much to be gained from studying this fascinating document.

A supplementary document exists that describes the history of the Lenni Lenape (then known as the Delaware Indians) through colonial times, the Revolutionary War, their forced march along the Trail of Tears, resettlement in the West, and other events up to the present. Combined with the Red Record, this offers us insight into a long period of history of the North American continent.

Background Information

The Lifestyle of the Woodland Tribes

The early Pennsylvania natives were skilled hunters, fishermen and farmers. In the summer, they worked together in their villages, fishing and cultivating the “**three sisters**,” corn, beans and squash, which were staples in their diet. In winter, they would split up into smaller bands hunting up and down the river.

The people we call Native Americans had a great respect for all living things and used virtually every part of any animal they killed. Skins were used for clothing, **moccasins** and bedding; hair was used for jewelry; antlers became tools and arrow points; hoofs were used for tool handles and as ornaments; even the bladder and stomach would be made into bags and containers.



Although they did not use metal for tools until after the arrival of the Europeans, the Native Americans had invented a great many **ingenious** devices that were ideally suited to their way of life. European settlers quickly learned the merits of the snowshoe, the hammock and the canoe, for example. In addition to a variety of stone tools, the Native Americans had beautifully decorated baskets and clay pots. They had many utensils made of wood and bone, and made bowls, dishes and ceremonial rattles from the shells of turtles.

The natives of the Susquehanna Valley built long-gabled lodges of bark and wood capable of housing several families. Each family had its own apartment and its own fire, which was divided from those of the other families by partitions of animal skin. The people who lived in each of the **longhouses** were members of the same **clan**, or “sib.” Members of a clan were related by common descent through a female ancestor.

A Longhouse, a Clan and a Legend

Each settlement had an official storyteller whose predecessor had carefully taught him all the **legends** and traditions of his people. On winter evenings, the storyteller would announce his desire to tell a story and young and old would eagerly gather ‘round to listen. In this way, **fables**, **myths** and stories of **ancient** adventures were passed down from generation to generation.

There were some strict rules as to when and how the stories could be told, emphasizing the powerful magic associated with storytelling. According to tradition, no story could be told during the summer, because to listen to stories then would make trees and plants as well as animals and people lazy and **shiftless**, resulting in **scanty** crops and poor game. Should a storyteller forget this rule, he would be punished by “the little people” (jo-ga-oh), who could fly about in the shape of bugs or birds. The offending **culprit** would be forced to stop “forbidden talk” because a bee might sting his lips, or his tongue might swell up and fill his mouth.

Another rule was that no story could be told outdoors. This ancient rule had two reasons: the animals might be offended by the people boasting of their triumph over them or they might become too interested in the story and forget their place in the forest.

Material on this page courtesy of the study guide for *Along the Susquehanna*, Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble, 1991

Vocabulary

Show Related

Algonquin—a Native American language spoken by tribes from present day Virginia to the Rocky Mountains and north to Hudson Bay

Ancient—having had an existence of many years or relating to a time early in history

Bison—a large, shaggy-maned mammal with a large head and short horns

Caribou—a large deer with broad flat antlers; reindeer

Clan—a group of people tracing descent from a common ancestor

Culprit—the source or cause of a problem

Fable—a narration intended to enforce a useful truth, often featuring animal characters

Fraught—filled with a load or burden of some sort

Immigrants—people who come to a country to take up permanent residence

Ingenious—marked by originality, resourcefulness, and cleverness in conception or execution

Iroquois—a Native American confederacy of New York originally consisting of the Cayuga, Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga and Seneca, and later including the Tuscarora people

Legend—a popular story coming down from the past, not always “true,” but larger than life

Longhouse—a long communal dwelling of Native Americans such as the Iroquois

Moccasin—a soft, leather, heelless shoe or boot on which the sole is joined to a U-shaped piece lying on top of the foot

Myth—a story stemming from historical events, describing the world view of a people or culture

Scanty—limited or less than sufficient in degree, quantity or extent

Shiftless—lacking in ambition or incentive

Susquehanna River—a river west of Philadelphia

Tale—an imaginative narrative of an event

Three sisters—a name for Native American crops of corn, beans and squash

Wallam Olum—the “Red Record,” or creation story and poetic record of the Lenni Lenape

Definitions courtesy of www.m-w.com. Visit this site for more extensive definitions.

Art Form Related

Theater in the Round

Theater in the round is also called “arena theater,” and refers to performances for which the audience is seated on every side of the stage. This type of theater originated in the ancient theaters of Greece and Rome. In the 17th century, proscenium staging became more popular. In proscenium staging, the audience is seated in front of the stage, and the stage space appears to be framed by the proscenium arch. Although proscenium staging is widely used, theater in the round did regain some popularity in the 20th century.



There are both challenges and advantages to theater in the round staging. When the audience surrounds the actors, some of the audience will always get a view of the backs of the actors. Also, it is more difficult to surprise or hide things from an audience when the actors are always in sight. In order to exit or enter the stage in theater in the round, the actors have to walk through the audience.

The advantage of theater in the round is that the action of the play is very close to the audience. It is easier to see the actors’ expressions and one can hear them more clearly. Actors can often be more natural with their movement than they would be on a proscenium stage, since the arena theater audience can see every slight movement or gesture. Also, in theater in the round, audience members often feel as if they are a part of the story the actors are creating because they are close to the stage and the story that is unfolding. In this way, theater in the round is very much like the Native American tradition of storytelling, with the actors creating the magic of the storytellers.

Information above in part courtesy of: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theater_in_the_round

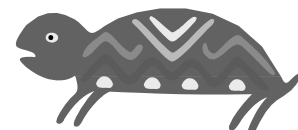
Expanding the Classroom through Discussion

Pre-Performance Discussion Questions

1. The Native Americans of the Susquehanna Valley lived together in longhouses with many different families. How many people live in your house? What would it be like to live with other families? Do you think it would be easy or difficult? Explain your answer.
2. Storytellers of the Native American tribes would not tell stories outdoors or in the summertime because they were afraid certain things would happen if they broke those rules. What were they afraid of? Are you superstitious about some things? Why do you feel that way?
3. Stories have been told since language was first spoken. Why do you think people tell stories? Why do you tell stories to other people?
4. The stories you will hear in *Woodland Tales* have many animal characters. Why do you think some stories use animals as the main characters? How do you think actors will show that they are animals?
5. Are you excited about seeing a play based on Native American tales? Why or why not?

Post-Performance Discussion Questions

1. When you saw *Woodland Tales*, were you surprised about where you sat? Why or why not? How did sitting in a circle affect the way you saw the play? What did you like about sitting “in the round”? What did you not like about sitting this way?
2. How did the actors become different animals?
3. How did Ha-No-Ah the Turtle discover who was stealing Nuk-Da-Go the Squirrel’s hickory nuts? What did she do to punish Ga-Wump the Frog and Te-Da-Oh the Groundhog? Did you think this punishment was fair? Why or why not?
4. Many of the characters in this play learned very important lessons. What were some of the lessons they learned?
5. What happened to Ot-Soon the Turkey? What mistakes did he make? What could he have done to change the outcome of the story?
6. If you could change the ending of any of the stories, which one would you change? How would you change it? Why did you choose that story?
7. How did the stories make you feel? Were there any that made you laugh or smile? Which parts of the show surprised you? Why?



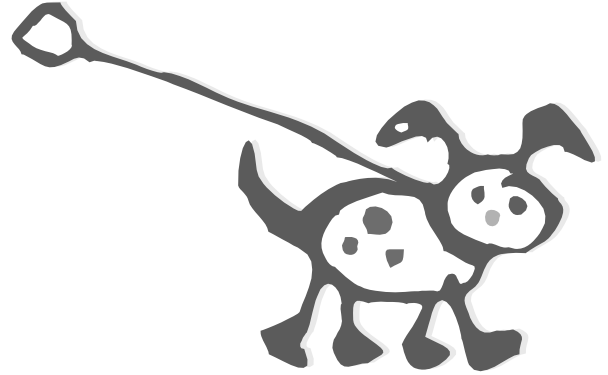
Teacher Guided Activities

Animal Celebration

Remind students that in *Woodland Tales*, all of the stories center around various animals. In these tales, the animals have specific characteristics and traits that mold their personalities. What traits and characteristics do other animals have? Guide your students to write animal poems in the following activity.

Materials You Will Need:

Blackboard and chalk or appropriate markers
Pencil
Paper
Colored pencils and/or crayons



What To Do:

1. As a class, brainstorm a list of the students' favorite animals and write them on the board.
2. Then ask them to volunteer examples of adjectives (describing words), verbs (action words) and nouns (naming words), that best fit their animals. Write some of these examples on the board.
3. Ask students to choose their favorite animal and write the name of that animal vertically on a piece of paper. If students are too young to do this independently, write the letters on the board for the class to see.

Example: **D**
O
G

4. Ask students to use adjectives, verbs and nouns to write a poem about their favorite animal. Remind students that each letter of the animal's name will start a new word or phrase. If children are too young to write their own poems, ask for contributions and suggestions from the whole class to complete one or two animal poems together.

Example: **D**igs for bones
Outside in the dirt
Gleefully

5. After the poems are written, ask students to illustrate their poems.
6. Share the poems in small groups or with the whole class. Celebrate the creativity of the class!

Modifications

For younger students:

Ask younger students to provide animal sounds if they are having difficulty thinking of nouns, verbs and adjectives. Incorporate these sounds into the animal poems.

For older students:

Ask older students to research their animals in the library, media center, or on the Internet. Ask them to incorporate at least one new fact they have learned about their animals in their poems.

Teacher Guided Activities

Making the Fear Disappear

In *Woodland Tales*, the rabbit is easily frightened by larger animals and unknown sounds. Remind your students that it's natural to feel fear, but there are things that can help make fear go away. Ask the students to complete the following activity, then lead them in a discussion.

Materials:

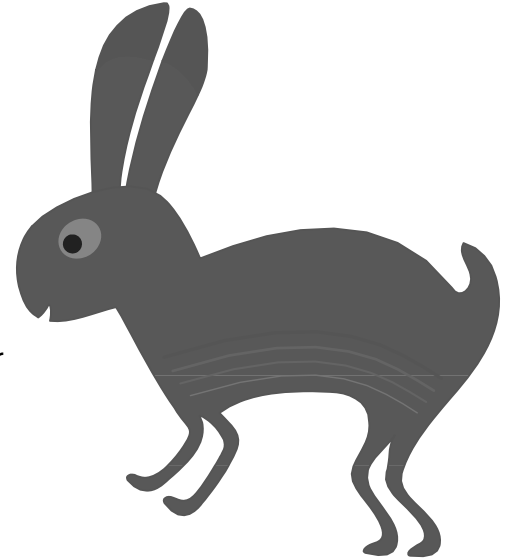
Blackboard
Pencils
Crayons
Markers
Construction paper

Instructions:

1. Ask students what kinds of things are frightening. Write their suggestions and feedback on the board.
2. Next, give each student some construction paper and drawing implements.
3. Ask students to draw a picture of something that is frightening. They may choose one of the examples from the board, or they may draw their own ideas.
4. Have students stand in front of the class and explain their drawings.
5. After all of the students have shared with the rest of the class, ask students to exchange their drawings with someone else in the class. Make sure that no student has his or her own work.
6. Ask students to think about how they could change these pictures so they would no longer be about frightening things. Ask them to use their drawing materials and their imaginations to make the pictures less frightening and more fun or peaceful.
7. Ask students to return to the front of the class and explain how they changed each picture to make it less scary.
8. Finally, lead the class in a discussion with the following questions.

Questions:

1. How can you help other people conquer their fear of things? Have you ever done this for someone? How?
2. How can you help yourself feel less scared about certain things? Is this hard or easy to do? Explain your answer.





Eckerd Theater Company

The Marcia P. Hoffman Performing Arts Institute

1111 McMullen Booth Road, Clearwater, FL 33759-3219

www.eckerdtheatercompany.com

Additional Resources

Ask your school or local librarian for help in locating these books for you and your students!

The Red Record: The Wallam Olum

by David McCutchen

Lenni-Lenape of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Delaware, Wisconsin, Oklahoma, and Ontario

by Anne Dalton

Red Bird, Vol. 1

by Barbara Mitchell

Iroquois: Longhouse Builders

by Rachel A. Koestler-Grack

Check out these Internet sites for additional information!

www.meyna.com/lenape.html

www.newhopepa.com/delawareriverlenape2.htm

www.tip.sas.upenn.edu/curriculum/units/2006/01/06.01.04.pdf

www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/birds/info/Eagle.shtml

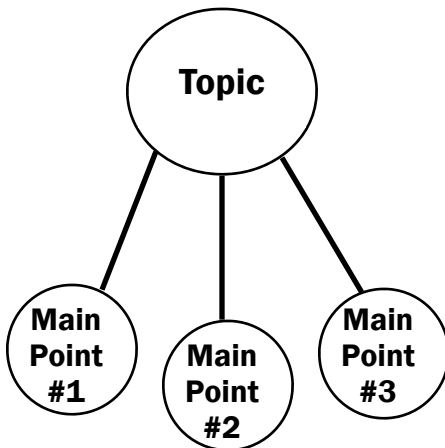
<http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/animals/creaturefeature/baldeagle/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theater_in_the_round

Writing Connections

In *Woodland Tales*, the actors tell the audience stories. Stories can do many things. They can make you laugh or make you cry. They can inspire you, or make you think. What are some of your favorite stories? How do they make you feel? Write an essay explaining what YOU think makes a good story. Don't forget to follow the helpful hints when writing your essay. (Educators should take suggestions from younger students to collectively write a "class essay.")

Helpful Hints



Language Arts: Writing

Paragraph #1—Introduction: In the first sentence, introduce your topic. In the next three sentences, state what your three major points are (one in each sentence). Finally, write a concluding sentence.

Paragraph #2—In the first sentence, tell what your first major point is. Then, in the body of this paragraph, give lots of good details about your first major point. Finally, write a concluding sentence.

Paragraph #3—In the first sentence, tell what your second major point is. Then, in the body of this paragraph, give lots of good details about your second major point. Finally, write a concluding sentence.

Paragraph #4—In the first sentence, tell what your third major point is. Then, in the body of this paragraph, give lots of good details about your third major point. Finally, write a concluding sentence.

Paragraph #5—Conclusion: Restate what you wrote in your first paragraph.

We want to hear from YOU! Write to us at The Marcia P. Hoffman Performing Arts Institute at Ruth Eckerd Hall, 1111 McMullen Booth Road, Clearwater, FL 33759

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Student Guide Curriculum Concepts

Page 1—Theatre: Aesthetic and Critical Analysis; Visual Arts: Skills and Techniques, Creation and Communication

Page 2—Mathematics: Numbers; Visual Arts: Skills and Techniques

Page 3—Science: Biology, Conservation and Ecology; Social Studies: Geography

Page 4—Brain Teasers; Language Arts: Reading

