



UNIT TWO

A SENSE OF PLACE



The Forest 1749

by Louise McNeill

*When the whites first came, the virgin forests ran
From Allegheny to Ohio's stream,
All 15,000,000 acres, span-on-span of leafy distance
Like a hunter's dream.*

*The oak, the maple, and the tulip tree,
The birch and beech, and walnut, spruce and pine,
The ash and cherry – endless as a sea
Upon whose floor the game paths intertwine:*

*The deer trail and the bison track, the fox;
The brakes of laurel, the siskin's echo-call;
The pale arbutus climbing on the rocks;
And all the rivers singing as they fall...*

(McNeill 1979:6)

The Natural Environment

When the Prickett family moved to the present day mouth of Pricketts Creek in 1772, the land was much different than what we see today at Pricketts Fort. The area around the Fort would not have been the grass lawn that grows now, for example. The river was there, but the backwater area was all forest. The forest at that time was very dense. The beautiful laurel (rhododendron) that we see today was so thick that people and animals could get lost. The Prickett family located here because of the rich natural resources. Wild animals and plants were abundant. Because the area was thick with forest, the Pricketts had to clear the land so they could have open space to build, plant, and have domestic animals. In visiting the Fort, be



aware of its location within this specific landscape and its relationship of the river. The forest, as well as the river were needed for the family's survival, just as it was for the first inhabitants of this area. Units three and four deal more specifically with some of the uses of plants and animals within each culture.

When you visit the Fort, you will see items that are typical of the 18th century western Virginia frontier. You will see interpreters show how plant and animal resources from the landscape were used to meet the needs of the Native Americans and the early settlers. Overall, you will be presented with an authentic portrayal of the lifestyle and culture of the settlers who came to the Fort in the 18th century and their 19th century descendants who built the Job Prickett House in 1859. Like so many West Virginia families, the Pricketts lived on the same piece of land for many generations. How did the land change and how did each generation relate to the land and create a sense of place?

SUGGESTED UNIT TWO ACTIVITIES

PRE-VISIT

- Create a CULTURAL MAP. Map a familiar place such as your bedroom, home, community or neighborhood/street, school or classroom to visualize and establish a personal sense of place. Designate in the mapping where the “safe place” to them would be located.
- Discuss the map of Pricketts Fort State Park included in the kit. Have students locate each area of the park and note the two different time periods.
- LOG ENTRY: Discuss *A Guide to Pricketts Fort* included in the kit. Answer the question: Why did the Pricketts build where they did?
- LOG ENTRY Write the steps that you feel would be required to clear the land and build a Fort.
- What plants would have been available for food consumption, clothing, and medicinal purpose?
- Have students collect or research different kinds of plants that could have been used for food.
- LOG ENTRY: Could you survive in today's world living off the land?
- Read and discuss The Job Prickett House in the section on Architecture in *A Guide to Pricketts Fort* included in the resource kit. Under what conditions was the Job Prickett house built? What was used to construct the house?
- LOG ENTRY: How were forests used for lodging?
- Read the poem *Buffalo Dusk* (2-A). Discuss how animals were used as a source of food. What other animals (or things) are now gone? Write your own version of the poem.
- Review the vocabulary list for this unit and complete the Sense of Place Word Search (2-B).
- Read and discuss the Climate and Landscape in the section on Background and History in *A Guide to Pricketts Fort*.



LEARNING TRUNK

- Review and discuss the aerial photograph.
- Look at the period brick, shingle and hinge. What natural resources were requires to create these?

POST-VISIT

- Look at *In the Mountain State* 4.23 and select one activity to complete.
- Build a fort.
- Write about a fort and how it may be built differently in another part of the country.
- Give a presentation to the class on one of the following topics:
 - A day in the life of the fort
 - Defending the fort
 - Children's activities in the fort
 - What might you have stored in a refuge fort?
- Have a classroom demonstration by a resource person on the art of brick making. Find a recipe of how to make a brick and make a small brick.
- LOG ENTRY: Where would you rather have lived, in the Fort or in the Job Prickett House?
- LOG ENTRY: Why were homes built then and now? Discuss Need versus Want.
- LOG ENTRY: The community came together in the Fort for protection. How do we support each other in a time of crisis today?



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INTERNET SITES

- West Virginia Forts
www.geocities.com/nafortswv.htm
- Pricketts Fort State Park
www.wvparks.com/prickettsfort
- Virginia Frontier Defenses 1719-1795
www.wvculture.org/history/journal
- West Virginia Goldenseal
www.wvculture.org/goldenseal
- West Virginia University Libraries
www.libraries.wvu.edu

HUMAN RESOURCES

- Historical societies
- Community and senior citizen centers
- Museum staff (see list of area museums)
- West Virginia Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Family members

VOCABULARY

- Sense of Place** - 70% of individuals living in West Virginia were born in the same area as their parents and grandparents. Because of this, West Virginians maintain a rich relationship to their state and to their land: a "sense of place"
- Survival** - continuing longer than another person or thing
- Terrain** - land and its natural features
- Climate** - average weather of region over long period of time
- Cultural Mapping** - the visual and graphic representation as the end result of research or fieldwork. Ex. Family tree and physical location
- Rolling Up the Walls** - actually rolling logs up an incline made of two logs to get the logs stacked for the walls
- Puncheon** - split logs, often set flat side up to form the floor of a cabin or furniture used in the cabin
- Coal** - discovered in WV in 1747, used by blacksmiths in forge and picked up on the surface of the land
- Fertile Soil** - rich top soil
- Communal** - having to do with or belonging to a community or of a public nature, also shared
- Diffusion** - spreading out in all directions
- Refuge Fort** - a fort used by civilians for protection against Indian attacks used on a temporary basis. (Not a military fort)