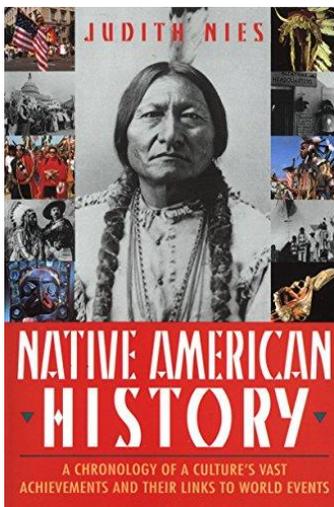


A DIVERSITY OF CULTURES AND ENVIRONMENTS; PRESENTING 18TH CENTURY HISTORY IN SOUTHEASTERN STATE PARKS

Presented by Appalachian Living History

DEVELOPING A TIMELINE

One of the most useful tools for guiding your historical interpretation program is a timeline. If your facility does not already have an historical focus, begin your timeline as early as the first historic records indicate activities in your region. You may even wish to start in the prehistoric period, if there is local archaeological information available. Carry your timeline forward to the present, not worrying too much at first about recording every detail you can gather. Record what seem to be important events, making sure to include all cultures involved in those events. You can fill in more details later, as you focus on a particular era. Developing a timeline will help you select a period to highlight at your park. The following sections will help you find resources to assist in developing your timeline, and help you judge the quality of the information those resources provide.



1734 - Peter Chartier, half-breed son of Martin Chartier, was living on upper Ohio River where he continued trade with the Shawnees.

1735 - Several English colony traders established trading houses along Ohio River. James LaTort (son of French Huguenots, Jacques & Anne LaTort) established a trading house at LeTart's Falls of Ohio River some time near 1735. Other British subjects who traded in the region at this time include Charles Poke, Garrett Pendergrass, Robert Smith, James Baldwin, Mr. Douthett, Edmund Carlidge, & Jonas Davenport. Shawnees and Delawares in the region were their main suppliers/customers. These Amerindians hunted extensively in WV, KY, OH, & PA. The names of some of the Delaware hunters are Wendaxale, Wapakishka (White Day), Wisawmeek (Catfish), & Nemaocolin. Some of the Shawnees are Kakowatcheky, Neucheconneh, Tamany Buck, & Big Hominy.

1736 - War began between Delawares & Cherokees. This war and the ongoing Delaware-Catawba War resulted in numerous battles in present-day WV.

1737 - Pennsylvanians crafted the fraudulent "Walking Purchase," that took Delaware Indian lands and caused the removal of thousands of Indians from eastern PA. The eastern Delawares refused to leave until the 6-Nations bullied them into it in 1742.

1742 - 6-Nations enforced the fraudulent Walking Purchase requiring Delawares and other Indians to leave their homes. The migration took several years.

1742 - Many Great Lakes Indians, formerly trading exclusively with the French, began trading with British traders who were traveling extensively into the trans-Ohio country.

Examples: Judith Nies' chronology of American Indian history throughout North America is an excellent timeline resource, but many of your local events are not captured therein. The box to the right is an excerpt from a timeline Doug Wood developed for American Indian history particular to West Virginia.



How far back in time do you want to anchor your timeline? Paleo, Middle Archaic, or perhaps Late Woodland, like these living history interpreters demonstrating Monongahela Tradition fishing and cooking in 2018 during the Greene County, PA Historical Society's Stone to Steel event?

HISTORICAL RESOURCES WITHIN REACH

(1) **Libraries:** Don't forget to ask if the library has reference and/or archives sections. Use Inter-library loan. Sometimes you can check out books using this device that cannot be checked out at either the borrowing or lending library. Treat all documents with respect. Handle fragile documents gently. Some libraries have historical microfilms. Don't neglect to ask the librarians for help.

(2) **Courthouses:** There is usually a wealth of old info at courthouses, although it is often limited to the period beginning with the date of the county's establishment. Sometimes the date of record is later if a fire, flood, or some other disaster destroyed records. For records older than the establishment date of the county, find out what county it was carved out of and go to that county's courthouse. There are land deeds, court records, wills, births, marriages, tax records (good way to find out how many people are living together on one piece of property, how old they are, occupation, etc.). Navigate yourself to the county clerk's office and tell the staff exactly the nature of your research. They will show you the records room and likely give you some pointers. Don't be shy in asking for help. Those folks get paid to help you, so if you get poor service, don't vote for the clerk in the next election.



In the Greenbrier County, WV courthouse, this early 19th century survey of the Williams River area in WV made for a Revolutionary War soldier named Hudson Martin, shows the ginseng camp (H) of a man named Williams, for whom the river was named. It still bears that name today. The dotted line indicates the trail leading to his camp. The images of a grouse and a cardinal direction marker were added in pencil later.

(3) Bookstores: For research into local history, visit those stores with local history sections. Oftentimes, locally-owned stores have pretty good local history books.

(4) Historical sites: Visit state parks, national historic parks, locally-owned historic sites that have interpretive programs and ask the staff for assistance. Some sites have their own research libraries.



The American Indian Weekend at Pricketts Fort State Park is a good place to learn how to brain-tan a deer hide.

(5) Historical events, re-enactments, lectures, etc.: At such events you can meet amateur historians with varying degrees of knowledge and you can get a glimpse into life as it was in the past.

(6) Historians: Local professional and amateur historians can often provide fruitful leads for your research. Find several and pick their brains. Many of them are glad to share their knowledge, but some are very secretive. Respect their wishes and you will find gems of knowledge.

(7) Internet: There are some good research materials on the internet, but there are many, many more worthless materials in the guise of historical information. Apply the guidelines under the *Judging the Quality of Historical Resources* section.



Sue and Mike Little, excellent instructors show onlookers at an interpreters' workshop held at Seneca Rocks Visitor Center of Monongahela National Forest in 2005 how to determine the veracity of website information.

JUDGING THE QUALITY OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES

- (1) **Reference, reference, reference:** Avoid research documents that do not give references for information presented. This includes internet sites you intend to utilize. Make sure you document your own references in detail. This information can be very helpful to other researchers.
- (2) **Original documents:** Research original documents or their facsimiles if at all possible. This will help prevent the use of misquoted material. An original document is the first one ever written down.
- (3) **Eye-witness accounts:** Utilize eye-witness written accounts whenever possible.
- (4) **Categorize your reference material:** Distinguish between information gleaned from eye-witness accounts, period hearsay, legend, oral tradition, etc. It is acceptable to utilize non eye-witness accounts sparingly, but make clear your sources of the information.
- (5) **Red flags:** When researching non-original documents, like history books and scholarly historical writings, a few “red flags” can warn you that the author may be straying from a relatively unbiased view of historical events and people.
- 1 - Authors who frequently use the words “**never**” and “**always**,” are often not very well versed in history. In other words, there are almost always exceptions to general truths.
 - 2 - **Derision** of a particular race or culture, is a clue to the bias of the author of such derision. All cultures have qualities worthy of our respect.
 - 3 - Authors who **criticize** other authors, yet do not provide solid evidence for the criticism may not be as interested in learning history as in settling personal scores or gaining stature in the eyes of his/her peers.
 - 4 - **Conspiracy theories** and **cynicism** are good clues to an author’s overt bias and disregard of historical documents. However, well-referenced conspiracy theories may reveal real historical conspiracies. Pay particular attention to the references.
 - 5 - If **oral history** is the backbone of an author’s work, with little or no documentation, beware. While oral history can complement historical documentation--and vice versa--it is not a good backbone for most research because it is so readily altered over time.
- (6) **Multiple references:** The more original documented eye-witness accounts you find that support a particular hypothesis, the greater confidence you will have in determining the truth of that hypothesis.
- (7) **Chain of documentation for references:** Original author of the quoted material, description of the original document (letter, diary, land title, etc.), author of the secondary document, first date of publication, date of publication you have in hand, edition number of the publication in hand, publisher (name, city, & country), page number of publication you have in hand.
- (8) **Images:** Similar needs for chain of documentation as for the written materials. Additionally, list the original image’s present location and ownership.

METHODS FOR PRESENTING HISTORY

(1) **Lecture:** Without visual aids, lectures should be short or very animated to retain the attention of the audience.

(2) **Show & tell (Lecture with visual aids):** Visual aids, such as physical specimens, powerpoint and slide presentations, drawing, maps, etc. will help emphasize important points and assist the audience in remembering. Show & tell is a very useful tool for keeping the attention of children in a mixed age group audience. There is no need to show your references for each point made, but have a bibliography available for audience members who show special interest later. Dressing in attire of the emphasized period often helps the audience to remember your presentation and to spark questions afterwards. **Special note about powerpoint presentations:** Go light on verbage and heavy on images.

(3) **Show & tell & do:** Follow up the show & tell with a hands-on session with the audience involved in a craft or a presentation.



In 2013, the chief interpreter of Georgia's state park system, Deb Wallsmith, volunteered to help Doug Wood demonstrate prisoner restraint by 18th century American Indians during warfare, as other southeastern state park staff watched and learned at Cumberland Falls State Park, KY. Photo by Christen Miller, VA DCR.

(4) **Historical tours:** These events can do much to highlight local history. Be sure to visit and interpret structures or natural landmarks that give witness to local history.



In 2019, Dianne Anestis and Doug Wood led a Michigan couple on a tour retracing part of frontier heroine Mary Ingles' route as she escaped from Shawnee captivity in 1755. We viewed the difficult terrain of Mary's New River Gorge passage and we introduced them to a direct descendant of Mary, still residing at Ingles Ferry, VA.

(5) Living history, event re-enactment: A good deal of planning is necessary to re-enact historical events. Select dependable assistants to serve on a planning committee. Recruit re-enactors early and ask some to serve on the committee. Determine your target audience and plan your event with this target audience always in mind. Find a suitable location for the event and ask the owner early if you can hold the event there.



(6) Living history, chataqua presentation: First person presentation followed by questions from the audience to the historical character and then questions to the researcher. Contact the WV Humanities Council for guidelines and for a list of current presenters.

(7) Living history, drama: This can be theatre style or on a trail. Living history trails are very well received these days, but are weather dependent. Research costumes and behaviors as best you can before writing the drama.

(8) Living history, tour: By utilizing first person presentations on historical tours, you will spice up the tours and make the experience more memorable for the audiences.



On the 250th anniversary of the Cherokee-Virginia Sandy Creek Expedition against Shawnees, Doug Wood led a living history tour near a part of the expedition route in McDowell County, WV.

(9) Visual aids alone (self guided, no active interpretive staff): Maps, coloring books, videos & other film media, and other displays.

TARGETING YOUR AUDIENCE FOR HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION

The characteristics of your target audience will help you determine which method of presentation will be best. Ask yourself these questions:

Q1 - What is the dominant age group of the audience? Very young children (pre-writing skills), grades 2-5, middle school, high school, young adult, middle aged adult, older adults. Young children generally like to touch, feel, and experience history. Their life experiences are few, but very important to them. Teenagers generally are overwhelmed with issues of social status, so address similar issues in an historical context for that age group. For most non-adult audiences, chronological events are boring. However, for adults, the flow of historical events over time, can be quite interesting.

Q2 - What is the dominant education level reached by the adults? High school diploma, undergraduate, or graduate degree. The higher the level of education, the more likely the audience will be interested in your references. Have a bibliography available.

Q3 - What is the level of interest in history of the audience? You should definitely be aware of the differences between an audience of teenagers who would rather be elsewhere and an audience of history professors who can scrutinize the minutest detail of your presentation for historical accuracy. Keep in mind that all folks of all levels of interest will respond best if you show enthusiasm for your subject. If possible, make time for a short session of whole audience Q&A after your presentation, but offer to answer further questions more informally after the audience has been dismissed. Have your bibliography handy.

If your audience is not strongly dominated by any of the categories given above, then try to have a mixed bag of historical interpretative tricks up your sleeve. Keep in mind that parents accompanied by their children generally appreciate efforts made by you to specifically teach their children.

Many audience members like to touch items from the past. However, never pressure a reluctant audience member to touch anything. Ask for volunteers if you need to demonstrate something using an audience member.

Never attempt to separate young children from their parents in a dramatic presentation. Drama can be very real to young children. Frightening situations are sometimes called for in a dramatic presentation, but young children need to be assured by the presence of their parents or guardians.



These children agreed to being stocked in an 18th century prisoner manner. Their parents gave a nod as well.

Research considerations:

- Stick with portraying events and persons who were in the local region in the era of interest.
- Plan for a balanced interpretation so all cultures & characters represented in the re-enactment are treated fairly.
- From the local persons/groups, form a committee and meet often. Remember the balanced approach to interpretation.
- Form the committee and begin planning for small re-enactments at least 1 year & 6 months in advance of the event. For large living history events, begin planning at least 2 years in advance.
- Find out what are the appropriate blackpowder regulations for historical re-enactments on your facility if firing will be part of the event. Check on open campfire laws as well.
- With the assistance of your local resource persons, research local libraries, courthouses, book stores with local history sections, and other historical interpretive sites nearby.
- Avoid research documents that do not give references for information presented. This includes any internet sites you utilize.
- Utilize eye-witness written accounts wherever possible.
- Research original documents or their facsimiles if at all possible. This will help prevent the use of misquoted material.
- Distinguish between information gleaned from eye-witness accounts, period hearsay, legend, oral tradition, etc. It is alright to utilize non eye-witness accounts sparingly, but the interpreters should make clear the sources of the information.
- Make the living history event worth the while of the resource persons. For example, you can provide free firewood or a catered meal to camping re-enactors, or provide an author the opportunity to conduct a book signing/sale, or pay mileage and a stipend to a living historian.
- Jury the potential event presenters. You can jury at various levels of strictness. Decide what is best for your event by conferring with your committee. In general, the looser the jury criteria are, the more presenters you will attract, but also the more misinformation you will have disseminated at your facility.
- Advertise the event in appropriate media well in advance and also nearer to the event date.