



Teacher's Guide to *Betrayal at Cross Creek*

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Synopsis

It's 1775. Elspeth Monro, newly come from Scotland, is just beginning to feel at home in North Carolina, with a new friend and a weaving apprenticeship she loves. To Elspeth, the brewing Revolution feels very far away--until someone starts to threaten her own family, trying to force them to join the rebels. When her grandfather marches off to fight with the British, Elspeth is left alone to protect her grandmother --and to figure out who is putting her family in danger!

Activity Suggestions

Note: North Carolina (NC) goals and Wisconsin (WI) standards refer to 4th grade curriculums; National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) standards refer to primary grades.

1. Ask students to map the journey Elspeth and her grandparents made from the Isle of Skye to Cross Creek, North Carolina Colony.

- NC Social Studies Curriculum Goals: 1.05, 2.02

If immigrants were arriving in your community in the 1770s, have students map and compare Elspeth's journey with local arrivals.

- WI Model Academic Standard for Social Studies: A.4.2
- NCSS Standard for Social Studies: 3b

2. Guide students through a comparison of the geography on the Isle of Skye, off the coast of Scotland, to the historical longleaf pine savanna of Elspeth's home near Cross Creek. How did geography affect Elspeth's feelings about her new home in North Carolina? How did the author of *Betrayal at Cross Creek* use the longleaf pine landscape to help convey the story's mood and tone? Ask students to write a poem about a landscape that makes them feel happy; and one about a landscape that makes them feel unhappy or anxious.

- NC Social Studies Curriculum Goal: 1.04
- NC English Language Arts Curriculum Goals: 2.04, 3.01, 4.02

Have students compare these landscapes with the physical environment found in their own community. How did Elspeth's feelings about her new surroundings compare with the experience of immigrants to their area?

- WI Model Academic Standard for Social Studies: A.4.4.
- WI Model Academic Standards for Language Arts: B.4.1, F.4.1
- NCSS Standards for Social Studies: 1d, 3h

3. Although Elspeth's fictional family (and many real-life Scottish immigrants) left North Carolina and moved on to Canada, thousands of Scottish immigrants stayed and made enormous contributions to North Carolina's, and the country's, cultural heritage and identity. Ask students to investigate Scottish influences on state or national culture, and share their findings in a manner of their choosing (poster, poem, performance, diorama, computerized presentation, etc.)

- NC Social Studies Curriculum Goals: 2.04, 3.05, 5.01
- NC English Language Arts Curriculum Goals: 3.05, 3.06, 4.03, 4.10

Help students compare the contributions of Scottish settlers in North Carolina with cultural contributions made by immigrants to their community or state.

- WI Model Academic Standard for Social Studies: E.4.4
- WI Model Academic Standards for Language Arts: E.4.1, E.4.5, F.4.1
- NCSS Standards for Social Studies: 1a, 1c

4. Ask students to create a Venn Diagram comparing and contrasting Elspeth and Mercy. How were they alike? How were their lives different?

- NC Social Studies Curriculum Goal: 2.03
- NC English Language Arts Curriculum Goals: 3.01, 3.02
- WI Model Academic Standard for Social Studies: E.4.3
- NCSS Standards for Social Studies: 1b, 1d, 2a, 2e

5. During the American Revolution both Loyalists and Patriots wanted the Scottish immigrants near Cross Creek to join their cause; Elspeth's grandmother chose one side while her grandfather chose the other. Divide students into small groups, and ask them to review the reasons why some Scots chose to become Loyalists and others chose to become Patriots. Ask them to write a paper explaining which choice they would have made had they lived in colonial North Carolina. Or, let some students participate in a debate, trying to convince the rest of the class of their views.

- NC Social Studies Curriculum Goal: 3.05
- NC English Language Arts Curriculum Goals: 2.06, 3.01, 4.06, 5.04
- WI Model Academic Standards for Social Studies: B.4.3, E.4.7, E.4.8
- WI Model Academic Standards for English Language Arts: A.4.3, C.4.1
- NCSS Standards for Social Studies: 1e, 2a, 2e, 5b, 5d, 5e, 6f, 9b, 10d

6. Guide students through a discussion about the role of the Battle at Moores Creek Bridge in the American Revolution, in North Carolina, and in the lives of the Scottish immigrants. How much impact did the battle have on each? Ask students to write an imaginary account of the battle from the perspective of both a Scottish-born Loyalist and a North Carolina-born Patriot. (More information about Moores Creek National Battlefield, including a teacher guide, can be found at < <http://www.nps.gov/mocr/> >).

- NC Social Studies Curriculum Goal: 3.02
- NCSS Standard for Social Studies: 2c

7. Ask students to map the longleaf pine forest ecosystem with other ecosystems found in North Carolina; and to create maps comparing the extent of the longleaf pine forest ecosystem in Elspeth's time with the remnants that exist today. What aspects of North Carolina's economy created this change?

- NC Social Studies Curriculum Goal: 6.04

Compare these changes with changes which have taken place in your own region.

- WI Model Academic Standard for Social Studies: A.4.8
- NCSS Standards for Social Studies: 3c, 3e, 3h, 3i 3j

8. Lead a discussion about Elspeth's weaving apprenticeship. Why was it important to her? Guide students to other books and media that help them understand how few options for income and artistic expression were available to uneducated girls during the colonial period. Ask them to write a paragraph, comparing the past with options for girls today. Follow by asking the school art teacher to help develop simple weaving projects for the students, or inviting a local weaver to visit the class to demonstrate the art.

- NC Social Studies Curriculum Goals: 2.03, 5.01
- NC English Language Arts Curriculum Goals: 3.01, 3.05
- WI Model Academic Standards for Social Studies: B.4.3, B.4.4, E.4.1, E.4.2, E.4.11
- WI Model Academic Standards for English Language Arts: A.4.2, A.4.3, B.4.1, C.4.3, F.4.1
- NCSS Standards for Social Studies: 1c, 4e, 4f, 5b

9. Oats played a prominent role in the diet of Scottish people in the 1700s, although their diet changed in the New World. In chapter 1, Elspeth enjoyed oatcakes because they reminded her of Skye, while Mercy found them unappetizing. Lead a discussion: What other aspects of cultural differences did Elspeth and Mercy experience in their friendship? Why do students think the Scottish immigrants' foodways changed in their new home? Do any of your students have special memories related to a particular food? Are any foods enjoyed only on holidays or certain special occasions? If any students have moved from another state or country, do they enjoy any dishes that are not commonly found in their new home? What role do food traditions play in a person's cultural identity?

- NC Social Studies Curriculum Goals: 1.04, 2.04, 5.01
- WI Model Academic Standards for Social Studies: E.4.4, E.4.7, E.4.9
- NCSS Standards for Social Studies: 1a, 1b

To give students a taste of the oatcakes Elspeth enjoyed in Scotland, try the following recipe.

Oatcakes

2/3 c. oatmeal
1/4 t. baking soda
1/4 t. cream of tartar
1/8 t. salt
1/4 - 1/3 c. milk
oil for frying

Mix dry ingredients together. Add 1/4 c. milk and stir to blend well. If the mixture is too crumbly to hold together, add a bit more milk. Shape into small cakes and place on a hot griddle. If you are not using a nonstick pan, be sure to add a bit of cooking oil first. Fry on one side over medium heat until the bottom is golden brown. Flip cakes and fry on the other side until done. Makes 4 small cakes.

For Further Exploration

North Carolina Museum of History
4650 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-4650
Phone 919-715-0200

www.ncmuseumofhistory.org

The museum's website offers a variety of resources for educators and students, including a "North Carolina Women's History Timeline," information on 18th-century North Carolina, field trip information, and lesson plans. The site also includes a searchable collections database.

Scottish Tartans Museum
86 East Main Street
Franklin, NC 28734
828-524-7472

www.scottishtartans.org

This museum is the American extension of the Scottish Tartans Society in Scotland, which was formed in 1963 to study the history and development of tartans. The small Franklin Museum displays Scottish Tartans, and exhibits touch on other aspects of the Scottish experience. The website includes a number of helpful articles, and photographs of several exhibits.

Author Presentations

Kathleen Ernst offers a number of programs and presentations for student audiences. Information about her current offerings can be found on her website: <http://www.distaff.net>. Kathleen can be contacted by phone at 608-836-9218 Central US time zone or via email at k.ernst@distaff.net to discuss content, cost, and scheduling arrangements.