Theater at Monmouth
2019 Page to Stage Tour
Teacher Resource Guide

Inside This Guide

From the Page to the Stage

This season, the Theater at Monmouth's Page to Stage Tour brings a world premiere adaptation of classic literature to students across Maine. *Tall Tales Twice Told* (grades PreK-8) was adapted to build analytical and literacy skills through the exploration of verse and playwriting, foster creativity and inspire imaginative thinking. *Page to Stage* Tour workshops and extended residencies offer students the opportunity to study, explore, and view classic literature through performance.

TAM's Education Tours and complimentary programming challenge learners of all ages to explore the ideas, emotions, and principles contained in classic texts and to discover the connection between classic theatre and our modern world.

Teacher Resource Guide information and activities were developed to help students form a personal connection to the play before attending the production; standards-based activities are included to explore the plays in the classroom before and after the performance.

The best way to appreciate classic literature is to explore. That means getting students up on their feet and physically, emotionally, and vocally exploring the words. The kinesthetic memory is the most powerful—using performance-based activities will help students with a range of learning styles to build a richer understanding of the language and identify with the characters and conflicts of the plays.

Thank you for taking some of your classroom time to teach your students about *Tall Tales Twice Told*! If you need more information to support your preparation for the production, call 207.933.2952 or email us at boxoffice@theateratmonmouth.org.

Enjoy the show!

Dawn McAndrews
Producing Artistic Director
Theater at Monmouth

About the Play: *Tall Tales Twice Told*

Most characters of Tall Tales have unknown origins. Sometimes they were real people who were known for their unusual strength or courage and their deeds became exaggerated overtime as their exploits were shared. Eventually these characters became larger-than-life (literally and figuratively) defying logic and science. Tall Tales imagine a world of limitless possibilities where good triumphs over evil.

Paul Bunyan

Paul Bunyan, the legendary hero of lumberjacks throughout America, possessed strength, speed, and skill that matched the vastness of North America. According to legend, Paul Bunyan and his giant blue ox, Babe, are credited for creating the Puget Sound, the Grand Canyon, and the Black Hills, among other landmarks. Some folklore experts have credited the French-Canadians for starting the tales. Others attribute the tales to an early 20th century Western logging company. Stories about Bunyan and Babe circulated through the logging camps of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, where loggers retold the tales, adding local or personal embellishments.

Johnny Appleseed

For 49 years, John Chapman roamed the American wilderness, devotedly planting apple trees. John's gentleness and courage were legendary even in his own time. He walked alone in the wilderness, without gun or knife. He chopped down no trees, and killed no animals. John lived very simply. He slept outdoors, walked barefoot and ate berries. He made his clothes from sacks and wore a tin pot for a hat (and to cook with). Even the people of his time were amazed at his endurance.

John Henry: Steel Driving Man

John Henry, according to legend, "was a steel-driving African-American man," who could hammer railroad spikes faster than anyone. This timeless ballad has been part of American folklore for over a century. Born with a hammer in his hand, John Henry discovers his true calling as a steel-driving man, but he meets his match in a race against a steam drill that provides a powerful metaphor for the disruption and loss of innocence created by the Industrial Age. John Henry gains respect from the townspeople due to his courage and strength fighting for the oppressed.

Kate Shelley: The Girl Who Saved a Train

On July 6, 1881, in Moingona, Iowa, when a ferocious storm washes out the railroad bridges, fifteen-year-old Kate Shelley risked her life to prevent a train disaster. Kate heard the crash, and knew that an eastbound express passenger train was due about midnight, stopping shortly before heading east over the Des Moines River and then Honey Creek. She found two surviving crew members and shouted that she would get help, having to cross the Des Moines River Bridge along the way. Although she started with a lantern, it went out, and she crawled the span on her hands and knees with only lightning for illumination. Once across, she had to cover about two miles on ground to the Moingona Depot to sound the alarm. Kate Shelley is forever remembered as their hero that saved hundreds of people!.

Where Tall Tales Got Started

Although the tall tale did not originate in North America, it has come to be regarded as a uniquely American genre of literature. Characterized by exaggeration, expansiveness and humor, tall tales and their heroes can be viewed as a reflection of the exaggerated scale of a vast frontier and of the rugged pioneers that faced and overcame its challenges.

Various functions of the Tall Tale have been suggested by critics and historians. Among these is the tall tale as a humorous means of coping with the hardships and violence encountered by the pioneers in their new land. Tall tales have also been perceived as an attempt at creating a national identity for a very young country by constructing a "history" through such folk heroes as Davy Crockett, Paul Bunyan, John Henry, and Pecos Bill — American counterparts to the folk heroes of the Old World.

Their origins are as varied as the geographic regions that produced them; some, like John Henry and Johnny Appleseed, are based on actual persons. Davy Crockett first told tales about himself and later had tales written about him to win votes for his congressional campaign. Other tall tale heroes are complete fabrications, or "fakelore" as opposed to folklore: Paul Bunyan was created by the Red River Lumber Company as a promotional scheme which led to imitation of this popular hero in characters such as Pecos Bill, the cowboy, and Febold Feboldson, prairie strongman.

Despite various origins and intended purposes, these tall tales have resulted in creating a cultural identity for groups that share a common occupation, locality, or ethnic background. Settlers who made their homes in the American wilderness first told tall tales. In those days, before TV and movies, people relied on storytelling for entertainment.

Each group of workers-loggers, cowboys, railroad and steel workers-had its own tall-tale hero. Having a superhuman hero with the same job somehow made their lives easier. Perhaps it gave them strength or courage to do their difficult and dangerous work.

The canon of American Tall Tales contains few if any women. Those that are included are in supporting roles as wives, mothers (who give birth to giants), or sidekicks to the legendary heroes. Modern literature has given birth to feminist Tall Tales from around the globe to provide young women with role models who are strong, courageous, and take care of themselves, their families, and their neighbors—without needing men to aid them.

Classroom Activity: Elements of a Tall Tale

Read the tales with your class and track the elements of a Tall Tale in each.

- A folktale that includes exaggeration and humor
- Larger than life characters with super-human abilities
- The story often contains hyperboles (similes and metaphors)
- The Tale explains how familiar things began

Fables & Tall Tales & Myths! Oh My!

Fairytales, Fables, Parables, Tall Tales, and Myths are stories that entertain and serve instructive or educational purposes. All these are types of stories were originally passed by word-of-mouth, but are now found in writing. They vary in their subject matter, from explaining the natural world and delivering life lessons, to exaggerating events and people grounded in history. What they have in common, though, is their durability both as forms of entertainment and as teaching tools.

A **Fairy Tale**, as the name implies, is a short story that contains fairies and their magic as its main ingredients. Fairy tales are found in nearly all civilizations. They were designed to help young people learn about good and evil in times when there was the tradition of passing on moral values orally. Fairy tale as a literary genre is a much later invention than fables and the first stories appeared in 17th century in Italy. The most popular fairy tales of all time are, of course, *Cinderella* and *The Red Riding Hood*.

Fables are short tales that usually feature animals (real or mythical) given human-like qualities to deliver a specific moral or lesson. Many fables originated from an oral tradition and exist in every culture, but the most famous “writer” of these fables is Aesop, a Greek slave believed to have lived around 560 BCE. Of course, many disagree as to whether or not he actually wrote all, or even some of the fables we identify as *Aesop's Fables* today.

Parables are instructive tales featuring human characters we associate with the Bible and other religious texts. One of the most famous fables, and often attributed to Aesop, is the story of *The Tortoise and the Hare*. If you don't remember the plot, the speedy hare and the slow tortoise take part in a race. The hare, sure of his victory, decides to take a nap under a shady tree. The hare oversleeps, the tortoise wins, and we are reminded that “slow and steady wins the race.”

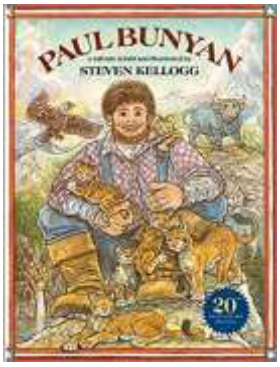
Tall Tales (also called Folktales) also stem from an oral tradition, passed down by the “folk” who told them. Folktales are different from fables because they feature people as their main characters, but often with a twist. For example, stories like *Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox* and the American cowboy Pecos Bill lassoing a tornado, show people and animals performing amazing feats of strength. Just as there are “folk” in every country, every country has its own folktales. Sometimes, countries as far apart as China and France can have very similar traditional tales. The story of *Stone Soup*, for example, is one told all over the world. Found in different countries across the world, the folktale of *Stone Soup* serves as a reminder to people to work together, share their resources and show hospitality to the needy among them.

Myths are stories from every culture that, for centuries, have explained natural phenomena and answered questions people have about the human condition: origin and creation stories, stories about life, death, and life after death. It is for this reason that myths are sacred, religious stories to the people who believe in them, from Norse myths about Thor, the powerful god who uses his mighty hammer to protect mankind, to Native American stories about the Earth's origins.

Tall Tales and True Tales

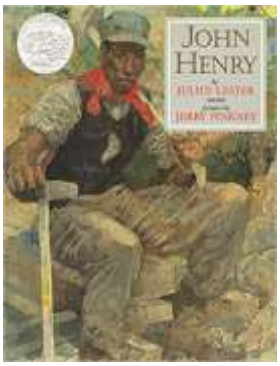
Adapting a Classic

Classrooms may read one of the following versions of these Tall Tales as adapted by contemporary writers.



Paul Bunyan: A Tall Tale Retold **(Reading Rainbow Book)**
Retold and Illustrated by Steve Kellogg

Do you know who was the largest baby ever born in the state of Maine? What about who dug the Great Lakes? Or who gouged out the Grand Canyon? Why, it was Paul Bunyan, of course, America's finest, fastest, funniest lumberman and favorite folktale hero! In this engaging tale, beloved children's author Steven Kellogg combines exuberant illustrations with a hysterical text to create a truly legendary tale.
Grades 1-3

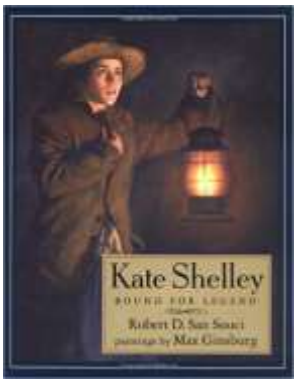


John Henry **by Jules Lester; Illustrated by Jerry Pinkney**

When John Henry was born the birds, bears, rabbits, and even a unicorn came to see him. He grew so fast, he burst right through the porch roof, and laughed so loud, he scared the sun! Soon John Henry is swinging two huge sledgehammers to build roads, pulverizing boulders, and smashing rocks to smithereens. He's stronger than ten men and can dig through a mountain faster than a steam drill. Nothing can stop John Henry, and his courage stays with us forever.
Grades pre-k-3

Johnny Appleseed: The Legend and the Truth **by Jane Yolen**

Everyone knows the legend of Johnny Appleseed, the man from Massachusetts who planted apple trees all the way to California. But the true story of Johnny Appleseed, or John Chapman, is even greater than the legend. In deft and lyrical prose, Jane Yolen tells the whole story of an individual who forever changed the landscape of America. Breathtaking paintings by award-winning artist Jim Burke illuminate the historical detail of this man's life while capturing all the magic and mystery of his legend.
Grades K-4



Kate Shelley: Bound for Legend **by Robert D. San Souci**

A lyrical account of 15-year-old Kate Shelley's feat of averting a major train disaster during a tremendous storm on the night of July 6, 1881. Based on scholarly research, as well as on Kate and her younger sister's own commentary, the story helps readers to feel the tension building to a crescendo, mirroring the fury of the storm, as Kate realizes what she must do to stop the midnight express from flying off the destroyed Honey Creek Bridge.
Grades 3-5

The Tale of Protecting Our Forest

Was Paul Bunyan a Real Person? By Sarah Pruitt

Paul Bunyan Statue, Bangor

As the legend goes, it took five huge storks to deliver the infant (already gigantic) Paul Bunyan to his parents in Bangor, Maine. When he grew older, one drag of the mighty lumberjack's massive ax created the Grand Canyon, while the giant footprints of his trusty companion, Babe the Blue Ox, filled with water and became Minnesota's 10,000 lakes. Such frontier tall tales surely stretch reality, but was Paul Bunyan himself a real person? The true story of this iconic figure is a little more complicated.

Historians believe Bunyan was based in large part on an actual lumberjack: Fabian Fournier, a French-Canadian timberman who moved south and got a job as foreman of a logging crew in Michigan after the Civil War. Six feet tall (at a time when the average man barely cleared five feet) with giant hands, Fournier went by the nickname "Saginaw Joe." He was rumored to have two complete sets of teeth, which he used to bite off hunks of wooden rails, and in his spare time enjoyed drinking and brawling. One November night in 1875, Fournier was murdered in the notoriously rowdy lumber town of Bay City, Michigan. His death, and the sensational trial of his alleged killer (who was acquitted), fueled tales of Saginaw Joe's rough-and-tumble life—and his lumbering prowess—in logging camps in Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and beyond.

Over time, Fournier's legend merged with that of another French-Canadian lumberman, Bon Jean. Jean had played a prominent role in the Papineau Rebellion of 1837, when loggers and other working men in St. Eustache, Canada, revolted against the British regime of the newly crowned Queen Victoria. The French pronunciation of Jean's full name is believed to have evolved into the surname Bunyan.

Lumberjacks Bellingham, WA 1910

The first Paul Bunyan story, "Round River," made it into print in 1906, penned by journalist James MacGillivray for a local newspaper in Oscoda, Michigan. In 1912, MacGillivray collaborated with a poet on a Bunyan-themed poem for American Lumberman magazine, earning Paul Bunyan his first national exposure. Two years later, an ad campaign for Minnesota's Red River Lumber Company featured the first illustrations of the larger-than-life lumberjack. Combined with pamphlets spinning the tales of his exploits, his prominent appearance as Red River's mascot would help turn Paul Bunyan into a household name—and an enduring American icon.

Paul Bunyan & Babe, Trees of Mysteries in Klamath, CA

Debatable Origins. According to people who study folktales, Paul Bunyan was not truly a folk hero who emerged from the fireside stories of lumberjacks. Rather he was a deliberate creation of journalists and advertisers seeking to promote the lumber industry. For this reason, some folklorists consider the Bunyan stories to be "fakelore" rather than true folklore.

The Tale of Planting an Orchard

Fun Facts That Tell the True Story of Johnny Appleseed by Kristy Puchko

A hero of American Folklore, Johnny Appleseed was said to be a barefoot wanderer with a tin pot hat, and a sack of apples, so he might leave the start of trees everywhere he went. But unlike other tall tale characters, Appleseed's story was based on a real man. His name was John Chapman, and his real life was richer and more interesting than his legend. Here are fun facts about the man behind the myth.

A CHILD OF WAR. Born in Leominster, Massachusetts, on September 26, 1774, John Chapman grew up during the American Revolutionary War, in which his father served as a minuteman at the Battle of Bunker Hill and helped construct the defenses of New York against British invasion with George Washington. While his father would survive the war, Chapman's mother did not, dying in childbirth in July 1776. In 1780, Chapman's father returned home, and began to teach his son the farming trade.

NO MEANDERING PLANTER. Chapman emerged as a skilled orchardist and nurseryman, and by the early 1800s was working on his own. While his legend imagines him as a messy nomad, in reality, Chapman was much more practical. Frontier law allowed people to lay claim to land through development of a permanent homestead. Such a claim could be made by planting 50 apple trees. So in his travels through Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Illinois, Chapman would plant swaths of seeds to begin an orchard, then sell them to settlers once the land had grown bountiful. This made him quite the land baron as he traversed 100,000 square miles of Midwestern wilderness and prairie. When he died on March 11, 1845 at the age of 70, he owned more than 1,200 acres of land.

HIS APPLES WEREN'T FOR EATING. The apples that Chapman favored for planting were small and tart "spitters"—named for what you'd likely do if you took a bite. But this made them ideal for making hard cider and applejack. This was a more valuable crop than edible apples. In *The Botany of Desire,* Michael Pollan writes: *Up until Prohibition, an apple grown in America was far less likely to be eaten than to wind up in a barrel of cider. In rural areas cider took the place of not only wine and beer but of coffee and tea, juice, and even water*. Where water could have dangerous bacteria, cider was safe.

HIS SIGNATURE LOOK WAS TRUE TO LIFE. Chapman was often noted for his threadbare clothes and preference for bare feet. But these eccentricities were more about his religion, the Church of Swedenborg, a Christian denomination established in 1787. Chapman was also a vocal animal rights activist and vegetarian. He refused to use grafting to create his orchards, believing that this growing technique physically hurt the source plants. So, he carried a large sack of seeds everywhere he traveled. However, his oft-depicted tin pot hat has been determined more myth than fact.

PROHIBITION KILLED HIS LEGACY. By the time the U.S. government outlawed alcohol in 1920, Chapman had become an American folk hero. But this didn't stop the axes of FBI agents who mercilessly tore down orchards to prevent the making of homemade hooch. Aside from slaughtering Chapman's trees, this also nearly killed America's connection to hard cider. The beverage rooted deep in our history has only recently seen a resurgence in popularity.

YOU CAN STILL VISIT ONE OF HIS TREES. Nova, OH, is home to a 176-year-old tree, the last known to be planted by Johnny Appleseed himself. It grows tart green apples, which are now used for applesauce and baking in addition to cider making. While Chapman might be glad to see his seeds still bearing fruit, he'd likely be sad to hear this tree is a noted bud source for grafting new apple trees.

HE FOREVER CHANGED THE APPLES OF AMERICA. Pollan credits Chapman's preference for seeds over grafting for creating not only varieties like the delicious and golden delicious, but also the "hardy American apple." By forgoing grafting, Johnny created the conditions for apple trees to adapt and thrive in their new world home. Pollan wrote. "From Chapman's vast planting of nameless cider apple seeds came some of the great American cultivars of the 19th century."

Taking a Swing at a Myth

The True Story of John Henry

In the American mythic pantheon, John Henry stands right at the top, alongside Paul Bunyan and Johnny Appleseed. The tale, transmitted through song and story, immortalizes the railroad worker who bests a mechanical drill only to die at the moment of victory. The story of John Henry, told mostly through ballads and work songs, traveled from coast to coast as the railroads drove west during the 19th Century. From what we know, John Henry was born a slave in the 1840s or 1850s in North Carolina or Virginia. He grew to stand 6 feet tall, 200 pounds—a giant in that day (some scholars say he was much shorter). He had an immense appetite, and an even greater capacity for work.

One among a legion of slaves just freed from the war, John Henry went to work rebuilding the Southern states whose territory had been ravaged by the Civil War. The period became known as the Reconstruction, a reunification of the nation under one government. The war conferred equal rights on freed slaves, sending thousands of men into the workforce, mostly in deplorable conditions and for poor wages. John Henry was hired as a steel-driver for the C&O Railroad, a wealthy company that was extending its line from the Chesapeake Bay to the Ohio Valley. Steel drivers, also known as a hammer man, spent their days driving holes into rock by hitting thick steel drills or spikes. The hammer man had a partner, known as a shaker or turner, who crouched close to the hole to rotate the drill after each blow.

The C&O's new line was moving along quickly, until Big Bend Mountain blocked its path. The mile-and-a-quarter-thick mountain was too vast to build around. So the men were told to drive their drills through its belly. It took 1,000 men three years to finish. The work was treacherous. Visibility was low and the air inside the tunnel was thick with noxious black smoke and dust. Hundreds of men lost their lives to Big Bend before it was over. As the story goes, John Henry was the strongest, fastest, most powerful man working on the rails. He used a 14-pound hammer to drill 10 to 20 feet in a 12-hour day.

One day a salesman came to camp, boasting that his steam-powered machine could out drill any man. A race was set: man against machine. John Henry won driving 14 feet to the drills nine. He died shortly after, some say from exhaustion, some say from a stroke. So why would one man emerge as such a central figure in folklore and song?

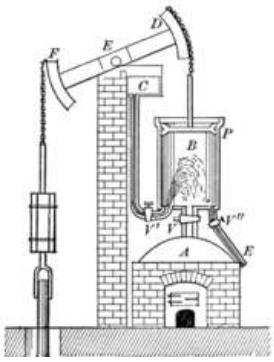
John Henry's life was about power—the individual, raw strength that no system can take from a man—and about weakness—the societal position in which he was thrust. Some consider it a protest anthem, an attempt by the laborers to denounce, without facing punishment or dismissal by their superiors, the wretched conditions under which they, like John Henry, worked. Whatever John Henry has come to mean, his legend has persevered. Perhaps it's that John Henry represents a man who stayed true, despite living in a time and place where, just like in Big Bend, the roads were blocked and the choices, limited.

The Industrial Revolution

Powered by Steam

Locomotive steam engine

The steam engine was one of the most important inventions of the Industrial Revolution. Steam engines were used in all sorts of applications including factories, mines, locomotives, and steamboats.



Newcomen Steam Engine by Newton H. Black & Harvey N. Davis (1913)

How does the steam engine work? Steam engines use hot steam from boiling water to drive a piston (or pistons) back and forth. The movement of the piston was then used to power a machine or turn a wheel. To create the steam, most steam engines heated the water by burning coal.

Why was it important? The steam engine helped to power the Industrial Revolution. Before steam power, most factories and mills were powered by water, wind, horse, or man. Water was a good source of power, but factories had to be located near a river. Both water and wind power could be unreliable as sometimes rivers could dry up during a drought or freeze during the winter and wind didn't always blow. Steam power allowed for factories to be located anywhere. It also provided reliable power and could be used to power large machines.

Who invented the steam engine? One of the first steam engines was invented by Thomas Savery in 1698. It wasn't very useful, but other inventors made improvements over time. The first useful steam engine was invented by Thomas Newcomen in 1712. The Newcomen engine was used to pump water out of mines. Steam power really took off with improvements made by James Watt in 1778. The Watt steam engine improved the efficiency of steam engines considerably. His engines could be smaller and use less coal. By the early 1800s, Watt steam engines were used in factories throughout England.

Porter-Allen high-speed steam engine popular late 1800s to early 1900s

Where was the steam engine used? Throughout the 1800s, steam engines were improved. They became smaller and more efficient. Large steam engines were used in factories and mills to power machines of all types. Smaller steam engines were used in transportation including trains and steamboats.

Are steam engines still used today? The steam engine as we think of it from the Industrial Revolution was largely replaced by electricity and the internal combustion engine (gas and diesel). Some old steam engines are still used in certain areas of the world and in antique locomotives. However, steam power is still heavily used around the world in various applications. Many modern electrical plants use steam generated by burning coal to produce electricity. Also, nuclear power plants use steam generated by nuclear fusion to produce electricity.

Interesting Facts about the Steam Engine and the Industrial Revolution

- The unit of power (the Watt) was named after inventor James Watt.
- James Watt used the term "horsepower" to describe how much power his engine could produce. He compared his engine to the actual output of how much power horses produced.
- One horsepower is equal to 745.7 Watts.
- The first successful steamboat was the Clermont developed by Robert Fulton in 1807.

The Tale of Protecting Our Neighbors

Kate Shelley & the Midnight Express

Kate Shelley was born in Loughaun, Ireland December 1863 and was nine months old when her parents, Michael and Norah Shelley, emigrated with many of their neighbors from Offlay County. The Shelleys headed west, settling on a quarter section of farm land near Moingona, Iowa. Michael got a job as a section hand on the railroad. The Shelleys built a small frame house a short distance from Honey Creek, a tributary of the Des Moines River, and within sight of the railroad's Honey Creek Bridge. The family grew with siblings Margaret, Mayme, Michael, Jr., and John. When Kate was 12 her father was killed in a railroad accident and shortly afterward Michael, Jr, was drowned while swimming in the Des Moines River. Mrs. Shelley's health gave under the strain and Kate took over as head of the household.

Original Honey Creek Bridge

July 6, 1881 started out clear but by dusk thunderstorms were rolling into the area. The storms were heavy and stiff winds blew through the valley. Honey Creek, already high because of recent heavy rains, continued to rise. Both Kate and her mother knew of the dangers that a flood on Honey Creek could present. At about eleven o'clock they heard old No. 12 crossing the nearby Des Moines River Bridge. The four men aboard the train were to make a run to Boone and then return to Moingona Station. As the train crossed the Honey Creek Bridge, they twice heard its bell and then, as Kate told reporters later, "came the horrible crash and the fierce hissing of steam" as the engine plunged into the swollen stream below.

Despite the shock of the accident, another thought raced through Kate's mind—the Midnight Express would soon try to cross the same bridge. The Express had to be stopped to keep it from plunging into the raging waters. Kate ran out into the storm with a straw hat on her head and one of her father's railroad lanterns. She made her way to the washed out bridge. In the flash of the lightning, she spotted two of the men hanging from branches of a tree caught up in the flooding. There was nothing she could do for the men so she headed for the long, high Des Moines River Bridge to reach Moingona in time.

The Des Moines River Bridge in 1881

Crossing the bridge was no easy task. The railroad knew the dangers of the bridge and prohibited anyone from walking on it. The railroad removed flooring from the bridge leaving large gaps between the ties. To keep from being blown off, Kate would have to cross the span on her hands and knees. She began to crawl but the lantern soon went out leaving her groping for each tie in front of her. Track spikes ripped at her skirt and splinters tore into her skin but she continued to cross with only the lightning to light her way. Finally she felt for a tie and felt solid ground instead. The Station Agent saw Kate running down the tracks and assembled a rescue party to go after the men from Old No. 12. Kate guided the men to the Creek's west bank where the survivors could be helped.

Word of the amazing warning and rescue was as swift as the rains. Kate got no rest as reporters arrived on her doorstep for days after. Worn down by the ordeal and the attention four days after the crossing she convalesced in bed for three months. The world was waiting for Kate when she recovered her strength. She received gifts of money, medals, goods, and a lifetime railroad pass. The North Western Railroad offered Kate a job and finally in 1903 she became Station Agent at Moingona, the same station to which she had carried the news of the bridge washout. The bridge she had crossed was replaced in 1900 by a new iron bridge, named for Kate, over the Des Moines River. Kate never married and worked up until shortly before her death on January 21, 1912.

Riding the Rails

The Early American Railroad

1869, a golden spike linked the Central Pacific Railroad and Union Pacific Railroad in Utah.

The development of railroads was one of the most important phenomena of the Industrial Revolution. With their formation, construction and operation, they brought profound social, economic, and political change to a country only 50 years old. Over the next 50 years, America would come to see magnificent bridges and other structures on which trains would run fueled by ruthless rail magnates, as the majesty of rail locomotives crossed the country.

The railroad was first developed in Great Britain. A man named George Stephenson successfully applied the steam technology of the day and created the world's first successful locomotive. The first engines used in the United States were purchased from the Stephenson Works in England. Even rails were largely imported from England until the Civil War. Americans who had visited England to see new steam locomotives were impressed that railroads dropped the cost of shipping by carriage by 60-70%.

Baltimore, the third largest city in the nation in 1827, had not invested in a canal. Yet, Baltimore was 200 miles closer to the frontier than New York and soon recognized that the development of a railway could make the city more competitive with New York and the Erie Canal in transporting people and goods to the West. The result was the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, the first railroad chartered in the United States. There were great parades on the day the construction started. On July 4, 1828, the first spadeful of earth was turned over by the last surviving signer of the Declaration of Independence, 91-year-old Charles Carroll.

In 1830, the South Carolina Canal & Rail-Road Company was formed to draw trade from the interior of the state. It had a steam locomotive built at the West Point Foundry in New York City, called The Best Friend of Charleston, the first steam locomotive to be built for sale in the United States. A year later, the Mohawk & Hudson railroad reduced a 40-mile wandering canal trip that took all day to accomplish to a 17-mile trip that took less than an hour. Its first steam engine was the DeWitt Clinton after the builder of the Erie Canal.

Although the first railroads were successful, attempts to finance new ones originally failed as opposition was mounted by turnpike operators, canal companies, stagecoach companies, and those who drove wagons. Sometimes opposition turned to violence. But the economic benefits of the railroad soon won over the skeptics. Shares were sold to fund the construction of the B&O Railroad. In only 12 days, the company had raised over $4,000,000. Perhaps the greatest physical feat of 19th century America was the creation of the Transcontinental Railroad. Two railroads, the Central Pacific starting in San Francisco and a new railroad, the Union Pacific, starting in Omaha, Nebraska, would build the rail-line. Huge forces of immigrants, mainly Irish for the Union Pacific and Chinese for the Central Pacific, crossed mountains, dug tunnels and laid track. The two railroads met at Promontory, Utah, on May 10, 1869, and drove a last, golden spike into the completed railway.

Create Your Own Tall Tale Character

For Grades 3 - 8

Objective: Students will write narratives of imagined characters and events using descriptive details, clear event sequences, and hyperbole.

Choose a Name for Your Tall Tale Character: _____

Describe your Character Physically and Emotionally. Your character can be bigger, faster, stronger, and smarter than anyone or anything else!

_____

_____

_____

Send your Character on an adventure! Your character's adventure should be larger than life.

Setting (Where does the story take place?)

_____

_____

Add Other Characters (Does your Character have a sidekick? Is there a villain?)

_____

_____

Conflict (What happens in the story? What does your hero have to overcome?)

_____

_____

How is the problem solved?

_____

_____

Now Add Hyperbole!! (Hyperbole is used to exaggerate the situation and often are not true)
Below are a few examples:
It was so cold, even polar bears were wearing coats!
Her smile was a mile wide.
Henry was thirsty enough to drink an entire lake!

Write two or three hyperboles to add to your story!

_____

_____

Now, draw a picture of your Tall Tale Character in action for the cover of your book!

BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE

1. **Creating a Class Tall Tale**
   The teacher or a student starts the Tall Tale by writing an opening sentence on a piece of paper. Each student adds a sentence to the story as a paper is passed around the room. Writing the story down creates some safety for students who may be too shy to recite aloud their contribution to the story. Once all the students have contributed a sentence, the "Tale" is returned to the teacher and she/he/they read it to the class.

2. **Making Meaning of Tall Tales**
   For some students, the nature of a Tall Tale can be confusing. Before reading the tales or attending the production discuss with students the following questions:
   1. What's the difference between a Tall Tale and a lie?
   2. Are Tall Tales intended to hurt people's feelings or trick them in anyway?
   3. What is the difference between a fact and an opinion?
   4. How does a real person from history become a folk-hero?

3. **Pass the Story, please**
   After reading the original Tall Tales or watching videos, have students sit in a circle, pick one of the tales, and pass a talking block or beanbag to indicate their turn. When they have the bag, they should add one sentence to tell what happens in the original tale. Once the story has been completed then start to pass the bag again only this time students pick a different Tall Tale and can begin to elaborate on the story in new ways as long as they only add one sentence. Repeat as many times as the students' imagination will allow.

4. **Making Theater Magic**
   To present these stories on stage, the actors and other theatre artists must solve some problems. Here are some problems that had to be solved for *Tall Tales Twice Told*. Ask students to discuss how they might solve the problems below (and some of their own). Divide the class into groups and ask each to pick a Tall Tale. They may use lights, costumes, set pieces, sound effects, music, or props to solve the problem.

   Problem 1: How do you show many different types of exaggerated situations like Digging a tunnel really fast with a hammer or befriending a Big Blue Ox? Or making the audience feel the terror of a young girl as she climbs over a railroad trestle in a thunderstorm?

   Problem 2: How do you make a flat stage look like an orchard full of trees?

   Problem 3: How can you show a very large man making a lake with a footstep?

AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

1. How Stuff Works

Ask students to explore the history of innovation related to one of the tall tales using the following references:
History of Steam Engines: https://www.explainthatstuff.com/steamengines.html
History of Bridge Building: https://www.explainthatstuff.com/bridges.html/
History of Logging in the US: https://www.explainthatstuff.com/bridges.html/
History & Folklore of Planting Apples: http://usapple.org/all-about-apples/history/

Ask the students to outline three major components of each industry and three major impacts on their lives today. Then they can give a report on their findings including visuals or create a diorama of a scene from the period of their research.

2. Create Your Big Blue Ox

Now that you've read and seen some original Tall Tales, it's time to create a statue of your favorite. Have students select their favorite character (animal or human) from one of the Tall Tales and write a description using the tale and their imagination. To ensure that their creation fits in the classroom, use the following guidelines.
The 3D character should be:

- No taller than 24 inches
- Be made of some type of paper
- Be securely fastened to a piece of string

Create a gallery, hang them from the ceiling, or arrange them together with the other character(s) in their fable.

3. Create Your Own Tall Tale

To be considered a Tall Tale, a story must have three things: Characters, Situation, and Hyperbole. The first two are pretty straight forward but the third, Hyperbole, might be a new vocabulary word for some. Ask students to write a definition for Hyperbole and then to look it up. Draw three columns on the board and use the three things as headers. Ask students to brainstorm a character (human, plant, or animal), a situation the character might get into, and the hyperbole of the adventure that ensues. Then ask them to pick one from each column and…

- Outline the story's beginning, middle, and end, including the problem and the solution.
- Add additional details like time of year, description of the characters, and dialogue.
- Complete with a title and illustrations.

4. Making Music for the Play

Explore how music can help tell a story. Dialects were a big part of this production. How did the accents help you understand the location of the play and the feelings of the characters? Discuss what "sound effects" are and recall any sound effects used in the show that helped create the world of the play.

RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Books on Tall Tales

- Bosma, Bette. *Fairy Tales, Fables, Legends, and Myths: Using Folk Literature in Your Classroom*. New York: Teacher's College Press. 1992
- Botkin, B.A. *A Treasury of American Folklore*. Bonanza 1983.
- Bright, J.E. *Famous American Folktales*. Auzou, 2015.

Videos on Tall Tales

- *Tall Tales and Legends: John Henry*. Produced by Shelley Duval. 1984.
- *John Henry*, Told by Denzel Washington with Music by B.B. King. 1994.
- *Meet Johnny Appleseed.* PBS Nature Cat https://pbskids.org/video/nature-cat/2365931714
- *Paul Bunyan*, Told by Jonathan Winters. Rabbit Ears Entertainment, 2012.

Books for Early & Middle Readers

- Osborne, Mary Pope. *American Tall Tales*. Knopf Books for Young Readers, 1991.
- San Souci, Robert D. *Kate Shelley: Bound For Legend.* Dial Books for Young Readers, 1995
- Keats, Ezra Jack. *John Henry: An American Legend.* Knopf, 1987.
- Krensky, Steven. *Paul Bunyan.* First Avenue Additions, 2007.

Recommended Web Sites

- http://www.vrml.k12.la.us/dozier2/fairytales/fairytales.htm Table demonstrating the difference between Fairy Tales, Folktales, Fables, Legends, Myths with links to grade-level appropriate books.
- http://www.treeremoval.com/paul-bunyan-resources-stories/#.XEh7WWCWyM8 Links to articles on Paul Bunyan, Folktales, and tree removal/trimming/regulations/safety.
- https://youtu.be/njTbUtrKFYA Early animated video on the Steam Engine.
- http://ushistoryscene.com/article/second-industrial-revolution/ A great website exploring the Second Industrial Revolution and the rise of the railroads.
- https://www.explainthatstuff.com/bridges.html/ Great website exploring how bridges are engineered throughout history and today.

Common Core Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy: Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

- Comprehension and Collaboration
  - Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
  - Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
  - Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

- Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas
  - Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
  - Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.
  - Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.