Topic: Sequoyah and the Cherokee Alphabet

Lesson plans for primary sources at the Tennessee State Library & Archives

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Grade Level: Kindergarten

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Introduction: This lesson focuses on Cherokee culture and compares that culture to the culture of the white settlers that came to Tennessee and interacted with the Cherokee. There is an emphasis on the comparison of Sequoyah's syllabary to the English alphabet.

Guiding Question(s):

- What is similar and different about Cherokee and English writing?
- What is similar and different about Cherokee dolls and the dolls of white settlers?
- What are some reasons that cultures differ from one another?
- Why did Sequoyah write his syllabary and why is it important?

Learning Objectives:

- Compare the traditions of different cultures
- Learn about other languages
- Practice fine motor skills

Curriculum Standards:

K.3 Compare family traditions and customs among different cultures

K.30 Identify and summarize information given through read-alouds or through other media about famous people of Tennessee: • David Crockett • Sequoyah • Andrew Jackson • James K. Polk • Andrew Johnson • Alvin C. York • Wilma Rudolph • Elvis Presley

Materials Needed:

- Amazing Cherokee Writer (book)
- Flashcards (attached at the end of this lesson plan, be sure to print double-sided)
- Water
- Paper towels
- Corn husks
- Twine
- Materials to decorate corn husk dolls (if desired)

Background:

Cherokee background information for teachers and parents

Sequoyah **Author:** Kevin E. Smith
Source Location: Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture

Overhill Cherokees **Author:** Gerald F. Schroedl
Source Location: Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture

Lesson Activities:

Bellringer Activity

Read students Amazing Cherokee Writer by Mary Dodson Wade(or another children's book on Sequoyah) in order to introduce them to the topic. Use the Cherokee Nation website to get pronunciations of the Cherokee words.

Activity 1– Cherokee Syllabary

Show students Sequoyah's syllabary and discuss how it is similar and different to the English alphabet. Possibly pass out copies of the sheet since the writing is small.

As a group, go over flash cards with English word and "white settler" picture on front and Cherokee word and Cherokee picture on the back. Try and let the children read the English word but help them read the Cherokee word and explain what the picture has to do with Cherokee culture and life. (*The flash cards are attached following this lesson plan, be sure to print double-sided.)*

Use the Cherokee Nation website to get pronunciations of the Cherokee words.

Activity 2-Cherokee corn husk dolls

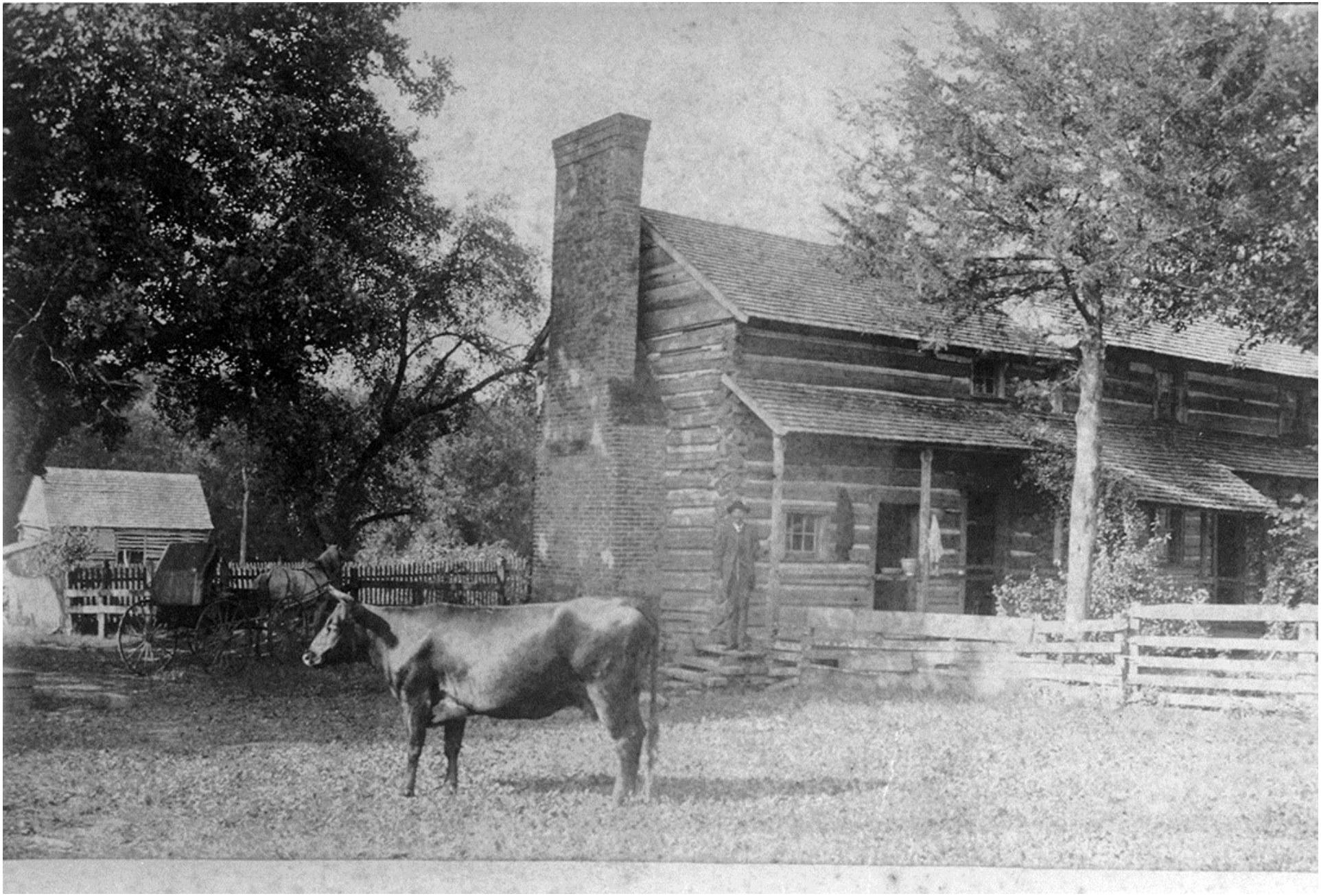
Students are to make Cherokee corn husk dolls. Instructions are attached, (available from the Martha Stewart website). It may be easier for teachers to do steps 1-6 beforehand and then have the students finish the dolls and decorate them however they'd like. This activity could be done in groups or together step by step as a class. Be sure to explain to the students that these dolls would have been made by the Cherokee. Native American cultures used every part of the resources available to them. They would have grown the corn to eat, but they found a use for the husk as well.

Activity 3– Log cabin settlers

In this activity, students will craft a two-dimensional log cabin using popsicle sticks and construction paper. It should be explained to the students that white settlers in Tennessee would have built for themselves log cabins to live in.

1. Glue together 10 popsicle sticks, glue 2 popsicle sticks to the back for support.
2. Cut a triangular piece of paper and glue to the top of the popsicle stick square.
3. Cut a rectangular piece of paper and glue to the popsicle stick square for the door.
4. Cut 2 square pieces of paper and glue to the popsicle stick square for the windows.

Note: *All paper should be pre-cut or pre-outlined and students should have the option of decorating the paper before they glue it to their house.*



House

Ga-li-tso-de

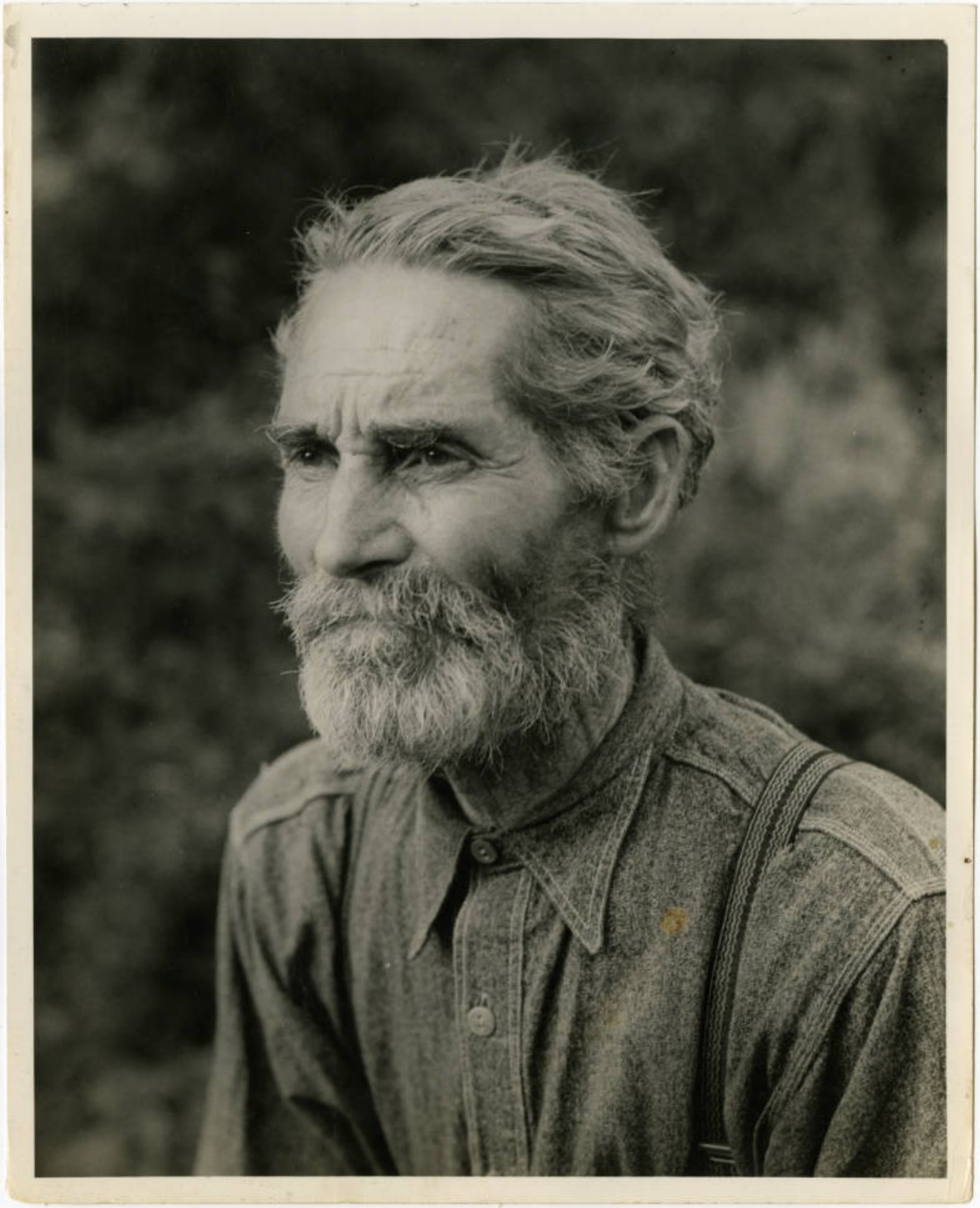
Dinner

I-ga-a-li-s-da-yv-di

US DEPT. AGRIC., FARM SECURITY ADM.
Negative No.
13276-M3
PHOTO BY Russell Lee

Game

Di-ne-lo-di-i



Man

SE-QUO-YAH
PUBLISHED BY F. W. GREENOUGH, PHILAD.A
Drawn Printed & Coloured at I.T. Bowens Lithographic Establishment No. 94 Walnut St.
Entered according to act of Congress in the Year 1838 by F. Wainwright, in the Clerks Office of the District Court of the Eastern District of Penn.a

As-s-ga-ya

Boat

Tsi-yu

Woman

A-ge-yv

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Hunt

Ga-no-ha-li-da-s-di

Dance

A-la-s-gi-da

1. Start by soaking the husks in water for 10 minutes, and then blot excess water with a paper towel.

2. Lay 4 or 6 husks (always an even number) in a stack.

3. Using thin twine, tie husks together, about 1 inch from top

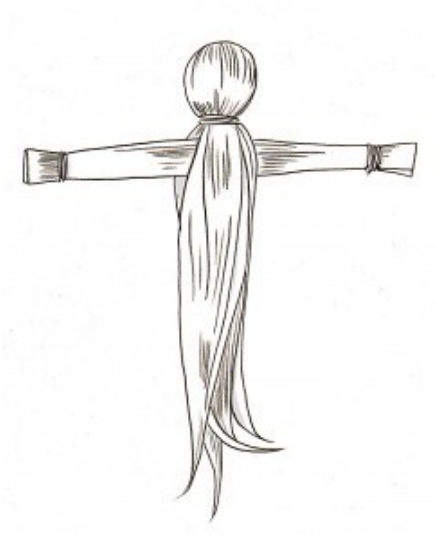
Source: http://www.marthastewart.com/968909/harvest-time-corn-husk-dolls

4. Separate husks into equal portions (2 and 2, or 3 and 3), and fold halves down, covering twine.

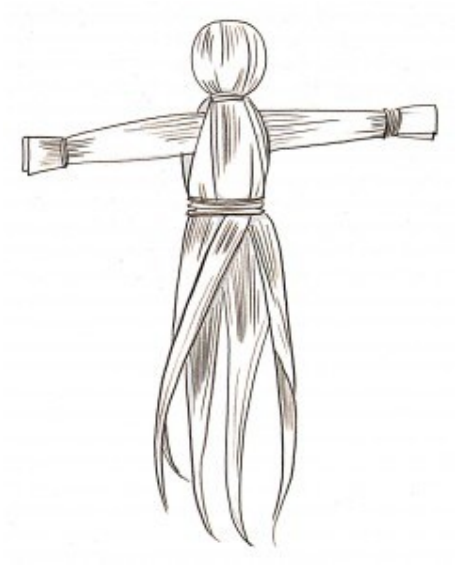
5. Using thin twine, tie husks about 1 inch down, creating head.

6. Roll a single husk and tie at ends to make arms.

7. Position arms below knot at neck, between equal portions of husks.



8. Tie waist and trim husks to an even length.



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