

# WALKER SISTERS

---

**Theme:** Culture

**Grade Level:** Third

**Best Time to Plan Trip:** Fall or Spring

## Unit Rationale

The Little Greenbrier School and the Walker Sisters' Home site provide an excellent opportunity to expose students to a variety of elements of culture and community in the 1800's. Through the assistance of teachers, students can step back in time to develop an understanding of life of the early residents of this Appalachian area. The people of this community had a strong belief in the foundations of church, family, and education. By reviewing history and visiting this site, students can readily compare their lives to the lives of the people of the Little Greenbrier area.

The Walkers Sisters' story also gives students a chance to investigate the birth of Great Smoky Mountains National Park and how it affected persons living inside it's boundaries at the time of it's establishment. Students will learn about how the sisters worked with the National Park Service and it's visitors until their deaths.

## State Education Standards

### English

Communication

GLE 0301.2.1

GLE 0301.2.2

### Music

Playing Instruments

2.1

Historical and Cultural Relationships

3.9.1, 3.9.2

### Social Studies

Culture

3.1.01, 3.1.02, 3.1.04

Geography

3.3.02

Individuals, Groups and Interactions

3.6.01

### Physical Education and Lifetime Wellness

Personal and Social responsibility

3.1

# State Education Standards Tennessee

## English

### Communication //2009 stds.

GLE 0301.2.1 Continue to develop basic listening skills necessary for communication.

GLE 0301.2.2 Continue to develop basic speaking skills necessary for communication.

## Music

### Playing Instruments

2.1 Play simple rhythmic patterns alone and with others

### Historical and Cultural Relationships

3.9.1 Identify and discuss music in relation to history

3.9.2 Identify and discuss music in relation to various cultures

## Social Studies

### Culture

3.1.01 Understand the diversity of human cultures

3.1.02 Discuss the culture and human patterns of places and regions of the world

3.1.04 Understand the contributions of individuals and people of various ethnic, racial, religious and socioeconomic groups to Tennessee

### Geography

3.3.02 Recognize the interaction between human and physical systems around the world

### Individuals, Groups and Interactions

3.6.01 Recognize the impact of individual and group decisions on citizens and communities

## Physical Education and Lifetime Wellness

3.1 The student will demonstrate responsible personal and social behavior in physical activity settings

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

Activity	Page
Unit Rationale.....	1
State Learning Standards.....	2
Planning Your Trip .....	4
Safety.....	5
<b>Pre-Site Activities</b>	
Pre test.....	6
Teacher Key to the Pre test.....	8
An Introduction to the Walker Sisters.....	10
Good Eatin’ .....	11
<b>On-Site Activities</b>	
Spellin’ Bee.....	12
School Yard Games .....	13
Into the Past.....	15
<b>Post-Site Activities</b>	
Reflecting on History/Service Learning Component.....	21
Explore Your National Parks .....	23
<b>Appendix</b>	
Park Essentials to Know Before You go.....	24
What to Carry/ How to Pack for Your Trip.....	26
Resources and References.....	27

# PLANNING A SUCCESSFUL TRIP

## WALKER SISTERS

---

### Schedule for a day of activities in Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Morning:

Arrive at Metcalf Bottoms

Use rest rooms

Walk to Little Greenbrier School (1/2 mile)

School House Lesson

Schoolyard Game

Lunch on the School Grounds

Walk to Walker Sisters Home (1.1 miles)

Station 1: Spring House

Station 2: Corn Crib/Barn

Station 3: Porch/Kitchen

Station 4: Main House

Station 5: Yard/Garden

Walk back to bus

Use restrooms

Return to School

- Although there is a road to take passenger cars to the school house (located on the Wears Valley side of the river), buses are NOT permitted up this road. It is a gravel, one way road. If two cars meet on the road, one will have to back up or down. We recommend only one or two cars travel this road in order to collect the lunch waste and lunch pails (if used- see the pre-site activity “Good Eatin’” to learn more).

- Plenty of chaperones are recommended for the purposes of supervision the activities. We recommend that for the purposes of safety, a minimum of one adult should be available for each small group of students. Always travel with an adult at the lead and the back (sweep) of the group while you hike.

- Flush toilets are located at the bus parking area in the picnic area. A porta-john only is available at the school house. Carry a roll of toilet paper and hand sanitizer in case the porta-john needs to be used.

- This program may be shortened to accommodate your bus schedule. We recommending skipping one of the school house activities and or using fewer activity stations at the Walker Sisters home.

### Planning a Successful Trip

- Check the weather before you go. This trip requires a possible 3.2 miles of walking (round trip).

- School busses are not allowed to cross the one lane bridge in the Metcalf Bottoms picnic area. If you travel into the park through the Gatlinburg area, this will not be a concern. Schools from Blount County will need to enter from the Townsend Wye or from the Gatlinburg area. Entering from Wears Valley is not an option.

# WALKER SISTERS SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS AND OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

---

## •Park Rules and Regulations

Great Smoky Mountains National Park is a federally protected public use area. Certain activities are prohibited by visitors. Be sure to read the rules and regulations of the National Park found in the appendix of this lesson. For further information or questions, you may contact the National Park at 865-436-1713. Please use common sense and appropriate planning whenever you participate in outdoor activities.

## •Dressing for the Weather

Please remind your students to wear appropriate footwear and clothing for an extended outdoor program. Short pants, flip flops, or sandals aren't recommended. Temperatures in the mountains can be 10-15 degrees colder than at your school. You may wish to alter portions of the program should inclement weather appear.

## •Restrooms and Water

Restrooms and water fountains are located at Metcalf Bottoms picnic area. Flush toilets are located at the bus parking area in the picnic area. A porta-john only is available at the school house. Carry a roll of toilet paper and hand sanitizer in case the porta-john needs to be used. You may wish to pack a cooler full of water bottles for the students to access upon returning from the Walker Sisters home.

## •Packing Lunches

Lunches may be eaten at on the grass at the school house. To prevent spills and food waste which may attract animals, food may NOT be eaten inside the school or any other historic structure or within

50 feet of a historic structure. Students should carry lunches in back packs, (unless you decide to participate in the pre-site activity "Good Eatin'") but NEVER leave food unattended. All trash must be locked in a chaperone's car before student depart for the Walker Sisters home. Pop top cans are not recommended for this trip. Water is always the best choice.

## •Group Size

The location and parking lot at this area can accommodate a large group (several classes). For safety and enjoyment of the hike, we recommend a group of no more than 60 students. For the activities at the Walker Sisters home, students shall be put into small work groups, therefore, plenty of adult assistance is suggested.

## •Cell Phones and Emergency Contacts

Within the National Park, cell phones are not always reliable. Be sure to stick to your agenda. Cell phones will pick up outside the park in Wears Valley and in Gatlinburg. In case of emergency call 911. For non-emergencies, contact park rangers at 865-436-1294. Again, if you do not have phone reception, contact the nearest park employee and they can assist using the park's radio communication system.

## •Poison Ivy

Please be aware of the presence of Poison Ivy throughout the park, particularly in the spring, summer and fall. Poison ivy is a three leaved plant which can grow on the ground as well as on "hairy" vines up trees. To avoid chances of an allergic reaction, stay on trails and avoid direct contact with vegetation. If contact occurs or is a concern, wash affected parts in cold soapy water immediately.

# PRE-SITE TEST

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Pre Score: \_\_\_\_\_

Post Score: \_\_\_\_\_

---

## Little Greenbrier School/Walker Sisters

### Circle the Correct Answer

1. The Little Greenbrier School and Walker Sisters' house is located in
  - (A) Great Smoky Mountains National Park
  - (B) Florida
  - (C) At Dollywood
  
2. The Little Greenbrier School consisted of
  - (A) 10 rooms
  - (B) 2 rooms
  - (C) 1 room
  
3. Culture is
  - (A) a way of life in a certain time and place
  - (B) a trip to Florida
  - (C) a game on the computer
  
4. A spring house was used for
  - (A) keeping food cool
  - (B) getting bath water
  - (C) storing farm tools
  
5. A corn crib was used for storing
  - (A) meat
  - (B) corn
  - (C) grape juice
  
6. 6. Writing your name on a cabin in Great Smoky Mountains National Park \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ((A) is a good way to let other people know you visited the cabin.
  - (B) is OK only IF there is already writing on the cabin.
  - (C) is called graffiti and it permanently damages the cabin.

- 
7. The Walker Sisters \_\_\_\_\_.
- (A) ordered all their clothes from catalogs.
  - (B) used wool and cotton to weave their clothes.
  - (C) bought all their clothes from the store.
8. Proper clothing for taking a hike should be
- (A) long pants and walking shoes
  - (B) shorts and sandals
  - (C) bathing suit and flip-flops
9. If an accident should occur while hiking, you should
- (A) find and tell an adult
  - (B) try to apply first-aid yourself
  - (C) make a note on your clipboard about the dangerous spot
10. While hiking in Great Smoky Mountains National Park, you should
- (A) stay on the trail.
  - (B) run to the head of the group.
  - (C) walk slow so you can be by yourself.
11. The two dates on a tombstone are
- (A) when the person got married and had children
  - (B) when the person entered kindergarten and graduated from high school
  - (C) the birth date and death date of the person
12. In what year was Great Smoky Mountains National Park founded?
- (A) 1993
  - (B) 1934
  - (C) 1875

# PRE-SITE TEST

(Teachers: Administer this test once before teaching the pre-visit activities and once after the post site activities for comparable results of comprehension and retention )

---

## Little Greenbrier School/Walker Sisters

Circle the Correct Answer

1. The Little Greenbrier School and Walker Sisters' house is located in  
**(A) Great Smoky Mountains National Park**  
(B) Florida  
(C) At Dollywood
2. The Little Greenbrier School consisted of  
(A) 10 rooms  
(B) 2 rooms  
**(C) 1 room**
3. Culture is  
**(A) a way of life in a certain time and place**  
(B) a trip to Florida  
(C) a game on the computer
4. A spring house was used for  
**(A) keeping food cool**  
(B) getting bath water  
(C) storing farm tools
5. A corn crib was used for storing  
(A) meat  
**(B) corn**  
(C) grape juice
6. 6. Writing your name on a cabin in Great Smoky Mountains National Park \_\_\_\_\_.  
(A) is a good way to let other people know you visited the cabin.  
(B) is OK only IF there is already writing on the cabin.  
**(C) is called graffiti and it permanently damages the cabin.**

- 
7. The Walker Sisters \_\_\_\_\_.
- (A) ordered all their clothes from catalogs.
  - (B) used wool and cotton to weave their clothes.**
  - (C) bought all their clothes from the store.
8. Proper clothing for taking a hike should be
- (A) long pants and walking shoes**
  - (B) shorts and sandals
  - (C) bathing suit and flip-flops
9. If an accident should occur while hiking, you should
- (A) find and tell an adult**
  - (B) try to apply first-aid yourself
  - (C) make a note on your clipboard about the dangerous spot
10. While hiking in Great Smoky Mountains National Park, you should
- (A) stay on the trail.**
  - (B) run to the head of the group.
  - (C) walk slow so you can be by yourself.
11. The two dates on a tombstone are
- (A) when the person got married and had children
  - (B) when the person entered kindergarten and graduated from high school
  - (C) the birth date and death date of the person**
12. In what year was Great Smoky Mountains National Park founded?
- (A) 1993
  - (B) 1934**
  - (C) 1875

# PRE-SITE ACTIVITY

## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE WALKER SISTERS

---

**Duration:** 30 minutes

**Class Size:** any

**Materials:** Narrative (included)

### Background Information for the Class

Your class trip will take you into a very special community of the Great Smoky Mountains. The area called Little Greenbrier is home to the legacy of John N. Walker and his family. John Walker and his wife Margaret Jane raised a large family of 11 children in Little Greenbrier. It was in this small community that the Walker children lived in a 2 room cabin built by John's father and went to school in the nearby Little Greenbrier schoolhouse. The story of this family is unique due to the lifestyle of five of the Walker sisters during the years of National Park establishment. The following narrative will further tell this story.

### Narrative taken from The Walker Sisters of Little Greenbrier:

Margaret Jane King and John N. Walker began courting in the 1860's but their time together was interrupted by the Civil War. John fought for the Union and was held at the Confederacy's Andersonville prison. Upon release, he returned home to the Smoky Mountains and he and Margaret married in 1866.

They called him "Hairy John" for his snowy chest-length beard. He was known as an excellent carpenter, blacksmith, and orchardist. Margaret possessed her own courage and fortitude, captured in an oft-repeated family story of her response to a commotion out in the henhouse one day. Upon investigation, she found a weasel about to abscond with one of her chickens. She reached down and grabbed the predator, whereupon it latched onto her thumb with full fervor. Margaret proceeded to walk

over to the washtub, plunge her hand down in the water, and drown the culprit.

Over the course of twenty-four years, Margaret bore eleven children- seven girls and four boys. The boys married or left home, while one daughter, Sarah Caroline, married. The other girls lived with their father on the farm. John Walker died in 1921, his daughter Nancy ten years later. The remaining five walker sisters accepted their inheritance and decided to stay on at the old homeplace, partly out of choice and partly out of necessity. These hard-working women put into practice the skills they'd learned from their parents, feeding and clothing themselves, cutting their own wood, raising their own livestock, and maintaining a sustainable farm long after nearly everyone had left the mountains for new homes and jobs in town.

Great Smoky Mountains National Park was created in the 1930's, but for thirty more years all five of the Walker sisters, forever in high-necked long dresses and heavy shoes, stayed put and maintained their lives in their beloved mountain home in Little Greenbrier, in what had become known as "Five Sister Cove."

### Review:

- Ask students to explain why five of the sisters stayed in the Mountains, even after so many other families left when it became a National Park.
- Ask students if they ever felt strongly about something and acted on their beliefs even though other people may have acted and believed differently?

### Resources and References

Houk, Rose. The Walker Sisters of Little Greenbrier. Gatlinburg, Great Smoky Mountains Association, 2005. (Excerpts copied directly with permission from Great Smoky Mountains Association)

# PRE-SITE ACTIVITY

## GOOD EATIN'

---

**Duration:** Prepare as needed

**Class Size:** any

**Materials:** lunch pails and prepared lunches

At the turn of the century, students often carried lunches to school in lard pails or syrup buckets. To recreate this unique experience, a few supplies (possibly donated by local suppliers) can help place students into a time gone by.

Ideas for pails include 2.5 quart paint pails from a local hardware store for close to \$2.00 each. They are topped with a cloth napkin and string (or elastic banded plastic food covers) to prevent food from falling out. Students should put their names on index cards and place them in the lunch pails so they will be able to find theirs at lunch time. Students should carry their own lunch pail from the bus parking area one half mile to the Little Greenbrier school house. When lunch is finished, pails may be placed in the trunk of a chaperones vehicle to prevent problems with wildlife or other park visitors.

In cooperation with your cafeteria, or as a request from each student's family, students may wish to pack a meal similar to one carried by a child one hundred years ago:

Baked Sweet Potato, apples, biscuits (with jelly or butter), a chunk of cheese and a stick of hard candy. Milk may be carried up to the schoolhouse in a chaperone's car. Water can also be made accessible in a cooler.

The trash and food waste from lunches must be packed out in a trash bag and locked in a vehicle's trunk to be taken to the large dumpsters in the picnic area.

# ON-SITE ACTIVITY

## SPELLIN' BEE

---

**Duration:** 15 minutes

**Class Size:** any

**Materials:** none

### Background Information for the Class

Little Greenbrier Schoolhouse was built in 1882.

The building doubled as a Primitive Baptist Church (look for the cemetery near the school) until 1925 and the school was used until the spring of 1936 when most families had moved away because of the establishment of the National Park. The land for the building was donated by William “Gilbert” Abbott and Ephraim Ogle gave the yellow poplar logs for the walls and other necessary building materials. It took the work of several men (including John Walker) from the community to prepare the logs and fit the corners together to set up the walls.

The first benches were made of poplar slabs with four legs and no backs. They were set in two rows against the walls. The second set of benches were made of sawn and dressed lumber and had backs but no desks. The benches in the school today are the third set to be used in this building.

Around 1910 the window openings in the east and west walls were enlarged and fitted with frames and sash. At the same time, the original blackboard which was about three feet square was replaced by the present blackboard consisting of three boards painted black.

Grades kindergarten through eight attended this one room schoolhouse. Boys and girls sat on opposite sides of the building. This helped the teacher (there was only one for all grades!) keep order in the classroom.

When the children acted out or became a disturbance in the classroom, they were punished by the teacher. Sometime a student was sent to the corner to wear a dunce hat, or they might have been made to stand with their nose touching the wall. You can look up at the ceiling and see where the stove pipe of the pot bellied stove once went.

Students often walked to school barefoot and sat around the stove with their feet on the hot metal to warm up!

The length of the school year was based on how much tax money was paid by the community to pay for a teacher. it varied year to year from two to nine months.

### Directions for this Activity:

Tell the students that they are going to learn how to spell the same way that students learned to spell during the time that this school was in use. Use spelling words that your students are currently learning in school and give a short lesson on how people would spell by syllables.

Tell the students that the rule for this spelling bee is to “pronounce-spell-pronounce. For example, if John is going to spell “cab”, he should say: “CAB, C-A-B, CAB”. If he does not spell like this, then he goes back to his seat.

Note in the next example, the word must be divided into syllables, then each syllable is spelled separately.

Another example: BAKER, B-A, BA, K-E-R, KER, BAKER.

Have students form a line in front of the room across the front of the chalkboard. Start with one syllable words and go to two or three syllables.

When only two students remain, they are the Champion Spellers!

suggested vocabulary: Cabin    Butter    Apple  
Letter                    Bacon            Hunter  
Garden                  Apron            Potato

### Resources and References

Voorhis, Ken, et al. Connecting People With Nature  
Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont.

# ON-SITE ACTIVITY

## SCHOOLYARD GAMES

---

**Duration:** as time allows

**Class Size:** any

**Materials:** Various old time games. See examples included in lesson

### Background Information for the Class

Before radio, television, and computer games, people spent more of their leisure time creating their own entertainment. Of course, leisure time was often limited for farm families due to the amount of work required to keep the family fed and clothed. However, work activities such as corn shucking, apple peeling, and molasses making were often turned into social events with family and friends gathering to help with the work.

Winter nights were often spent in front of the fireplace with family members reading, telling stories, or sharing the news of the day. Even then, work ranging from sewing, knitting, and quilting to shoe repair was often in progress.

Families often expected children to help with chores like feeding chickens or gathering eggs when they were as young as five or six. But even with all the work that had to be done children usually had some time to play. School provided an opportunity for large groups of children to play together.

The games children played varied depending on the time of year, the weather, and the age and number of children. Warmer weather meant outdoor games and activities, while rainy days often found children playing on a porch or maybe in the barn. Cold weather usually meant less active, indoor activities like word games, riddles, or playing with small toys. Marbles were a favorite game and provided some serious competition when they were playing “for keeps” when the winner got to keep all the marbles they won from their opponents. Fox and Geese was a popular board game similar to checkers that involved the movement and jumping of pieces.

However, unlike checkers the pieces were often dried kernels of corn or small stones.

Although a great variety of manufactured toys were available 100 years ago, many families could not afford them and many children’s toys were homemade and ranged from dolls made from cloth scraps or corn shucks, to whistles, sling shots, and popguns made from wood. Balls were often made from rags or string wound together. One of the best examples of making do with what you had was a balloon-like ball made from a hog’s bladder after the animals were butchered for meat. Introduce schoolyard games by asking students to list as many schoolyard games as they can. Ask where they learned these games from. Most likely, they learned them through siblings or other students.

Today you will teach the students some games that were learned and played by students of the Little Greenbrier Schoolhouse.

### Resources and References

Page, Linda G and Smith, Hilton, eds. Appalachian Toys and Games. New York: Dutton, 1985.

# ON-SITE ACTIVITY

## SCHOOLYARD GAMES (CONTINUED)

---

### **Thimble**

Everyone sits in a big circle except an “it” which sits in the middle, and the “thimble”.

The thimble conceals a thimble in his hands, and goes to each person in the circle pretending to drop the thimble into their hands.

To each person he says “Take all that I give you.”

After he has visited each person in the circle, the thimble sits down, having given the thimble to one person in the circle.

The “it” will then point to the person he believes to have the thimble and says “Rise Up, Thimble!”

The real thimble then stands up. If the “it” guessed correctly, he gets out of the middle, otherwise the game begins a gain with the new thimble.

### **Drop the Handkerchief**

Drop the Handkerchief is similar to Duck-Duck-Goose. Form a circle of players facing each other. The person that is “it” will go around on the outside of the circle. The person that is “it” will drop a handkerchief behind one of the other players.

The person that drops the handkerchief will race around the circle in hopes they won’t get caught by the person the handkerchief was dropped behind. The people around the circle have to keep checking to see if the handkerchief was dropped behind them. The person where the handkerchief was dropped picks up the handkerchief and chases after the person. The first one to sit in the empty spot wins. The one who loses will be “it” next.

# ON-SITE ACTIVITY

## INTO THE PAST

---

**Duration:** 30 minutes

**Class Size:** any

**Materials:** thermometer, optional photos to be borrowed from Great Smoky Mountains National Park by calling 865-436-1713

### Walker Sisters Homesite Tour

The following narratives will help to describe your on-site experience at the Walker Sisters. You may wish to divide the students into smaller groups. Based on your time frame at the site, you may have time for all the stations, or you may need to combine them. The tour consists of rotating stations of the garden, living room/bedroom, kitchen/porch, springhouse, and corn crib. Rotate from the garden to the house interior to the kitchen/porch to the corn crib to the springhouse to the garden.

### Introduction (given by 1 person to the whole group)

This area is the homesite for the Walker family. In the late 1860's, a man named John Walker married a woman named Mary Jane King. They moved into this house with Mary Jane's family. John and Mary Jane had 11 children in this house which eventually was known as the Walker house. These children went to the Little Greenbrier schoolhouse and the oldest 2 sons eventually became teachers at the school. John Walker was very skilled at woodworking and caring for his apple orchard. Mary Jane was known for being able to cure almost any illness with plants. John often bragged that he spent a total of 50 cents for doctoring his entire life and this was for his 2 sons who got measles when they were away at college.

Eventually the boys moved away from home and only the sisters remained. Only one of them got married. When the park was founded, 5 of the sisters still lived in this house. They refused to leave the land where they had lived their entire lives so the park service agreed to let them live there until they died. In 1964, the last Walker sister died and now the land is cared for by the park service who educates visitors about the Walker sisters and how they lived.

### 1) Kitchen/Porch (photos available of porch area and sisters and the house)

The kitchen was the most crowded room in the Walker house. It had a big table surrounded with benches and chairs; two wood stoves; cupboards; three large bins made from hollow black gum logs for salt, corn meal, and flour; a work table and a lot of shelves for jelly and other jarred items. Somewhere in this kitchen is a potato cellar, can anyone find it? (in the floor in front of the fireplace). Why do you think it is located in front of the fireplace? (easy to get to,

# ON-SITE ACTIVITY

## INTO THE PAST (CONTINUED)

---

potatoes were cooked in the coals of the fire). Where did the Walker family get the potatoes? (grown in the garden).

The Walker sisters were known for their fine cooking which was unusual since most people in this area ate very bland food. The Walker sister's nephew, Jim Shelton, remembers that there was always a big pot of green beans cooking on the fireplace. He said Christmas was the best because the sisters would cook for days and you could smell the food from way down the road. Most of the cooking was done on the fireplace, but eventually the sisters got 2 wood stoves. Not all of the sisters did the cooking. Some were better at clothes making or gardening and spent most of their time there.

The porch was like a separate room in the house. The sisters had to make all of their own clothes and most of that work was done here. They had a big spinning wheel for making what? (thread) and a big loom for making what? (thread into cloth). Both were set up on the porch. They used cotton for summer clothes and wool from their sheep for winter clothes. Two of the sisters were especially good seamstresses so that was their main chore. The porch was also where most of the socializing was done, but even that included work. The sisters would shell peas and beans and shuck corn while singing spiritual hymns or talking. (Photos available of all of the Walker sisters and the porch area).

Optional Photo Information (These may be requested from the National Park Service by calling 865-436-1713)

This is a photo of the Walker sisters. The only one to marry and leave home was the tallest one, Carolina. Louisa (pronounced Lou-i-za) was the last sister living in the house to die. She is the one sitting in the middle on the bottom row. She passed away in 1964. When the park was created in the 1930's, the Walker sisters weren't happy. The park wanted them to leave their home and they refused. This is the only place that they ever lived and they all wanted to die there. Eventually the park agreed to let the sisters stay and when Louisa Walker died, the house and land became the property of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. For many years, the sisters' house was surrounded by park property. Many tourists would wander by. Eventually, the sisters set up a tourist spot and demonstrated their daily living skills, such as spinning and even doing the laundry. They sold handwritten copies of their poems and crafts to people. The park even created a sign to lead people to their house. Eventually, as the sisters got older, all of the tourists coming by were a problem. Louisa wrote a letter to the park superintendent, who is liked the principal of the park asking him to remove the sign so the sisters could get their work done.

# ON-SITE ACTIVITY

## INTO THE PAST (CONTINUED)

---

2) House (photos available of the interior of the house)

The inside of the Walker house was as cluttered as it could possibly be. When all of the 11 children were still living here, there were 13 people in this house. This room had 5 beds, 2 chests of drawers and one sewing machine in it. To save room, one of the beds was a trundle bed. Does anyone know what this is? (it's a bed that stands tall enough to have another bed that can slide under it for storage. At night, the bottom bed is pulled out for use.) The appearance of the house has been described as organized confusion. The walls were papered with newspapers and magazines, and decorated with anything that took someone's fancy. Calendars, letters, pictures (family or religious), clocks, drying food hung on stings, and spice racks were found on the walls. From the wooden rafters hung hats, guns, bags of seed, canes, crutches, walking sticks, and baskets. Every available space was used for something. Every spring, the Walker family would clean the house from top to bottom. They would remove all of the furnishings so they could scrub the house. They would use scalding hot water that they heated in the fire and thoroughly clean the house, even the papered walls, where it would be re-papered when the house was finished.

3) Springhouse (photo available of the springhouse, thermometer)

Does anyone know what this house is? (springhouse) What was it used for? (like we use a refrigerator today). What causes the springhouse to stay cool? (the water from the spring comes out of the ground very cool, no matter what time of year). Inside this house there was a shelf as well as a rock bottomed floor. Why do you think the family wanted the floor to be made of rocks instead of wood? (It helped the house to stay cooler; wood absorbs heat faster than rocks). What types of things were kept in the springhouse? (eggs, mil, butter, meat). Pickled beans and kraut were kept in large crocks on the shelves. Butchered animals were left to cool in the house and then were crusted with salt. The meat that was to be eaten first was left salted in the springhouse and the rest of the meat was smoked to preserve it. Meat was cured first in the fireplace in the big house and then again in a smaller fireplace in the smokehouse which is no longer standing. What types of meat do you think the Walkers had? (Mostly sheep, then pig, and then beef. Cows didn't have a lot of grass to browse and the meat was tough and not very tasty)

Now we're going to see if this springhouse is still able to do its job. We are going to take the temperature inside and outside of the house and compare the two. While the thermometers are

# ON-SITE ACTIVITY

## INTO THE PAST (CONTINUED)

---

taking the temperature show an available photo of the springhouse. Pass the photo and ask the following questions: Why do you think some buckets are in the water? (cooler than the rocks and shelves). Why does everything have a cover over it? (to keep out critters and the hens who often liked to build nests in the springhouse).

If you look around you will notice a building missing that was found on most farms. The Walker family never had an outhouse for going to the bathroom and they never had indoor plumbing. The sisters didn't like the idea of an outhouse. They thought outhouses smelled bad. People would see it and know what it was used for and that would cause them embarrassment. The family used the woods, women went below the house and men went above the house.

#### 4) Corn Crib (two pictures available: gear shed and cane chair with canes)

Where we are standing now was the storage area for the most important crop the Walker family grew. It was so important that John Walker built a special house for the crop. He spent a lot of time cutting trees, shaping the logs, and putting this building up carefully to keep rain and critters from getting this special crop. Can anyone guess what is stored in here? (Corn). This building is called a corn crib. They may have called it a crib because it protects corn in the same way a baby crib protects a child. The corn can't fall out and it's hard for something to get in. Does anyone know what types of animals might want to get the corn? (mice, crows, deer, squirrels, bears, raccoons.) There was one animal that all farmers would allow in the corn crib. This animal was often feared, but it was never killed or removed. Any guesses? (snakes). Snakes would live in the corn crib and eat the mice who tried to get the corn. Now why do you think corn was so important to people who lived like the Walker sisters? (they ate corn in some form for almost everyday meal; corn was fed to farm animals such as chickens, sheep, dairy, cows, and pigs).

In the area around the corn crib, there used to be other buildings. There was a gear shed (show photo). There was a smokehouse. What would you do in a smokehouse? (salt and store meat). There was an applehouse used to store and dry fruit. There was a blacksmith shop. Why did the Walker sisters need a blacksmith shop? (making simple tools for farm equipment and around the house) There was a grist mill. What did they grind in the mill? (corn and sometimes wheat). The grist mill also turned a lathe which is a wood working machine that makes things round, like the legs on a chair or a cane. Mr. Walker, the sisters' fathers, was very handy and enjoyed making things a bit fancier than they needed to be (show photo of chair

# ON-SITE ACTIVITY

## INTO THE PAST (CONTINUED)

---

and point out the fancy carvings on the canes).

Many of the tools you see hanging on the side of this building were probably made or repaired by Mr. Walker in his blacksmith shop. Not everyone had this skill so neighbors may have come to him and traded items to Mr. Walker so he would make a special object for them. Notice how crowded the gear shed in the photo is. This is because very little was thrown away. Most things that couldn't be used for their original purpose could probably be used for something else. The iron that made the hinges on this door was probably made by melting down an old tool. Iron was hard to get so it would be used over and over again. Money would not have been used unless something was purchased from town (Sevierville or Maryville). Salt was one of the items the Walker family bought, but they would sell things like chestnuts in order to get the money.

5) Garden (pictures available; two views of the garden)

Where you are sitting right now was probably the most important area of the entire Walker Sisters homesite. Does anyone want to guess what this area was? (a hint: it's where most of their food came from). This is their garden. They not only grew most of their food here, but also grew food for the animals they kept, such as chickens and sheep. Over 1/2 of their food and all of the food for their animals came from one crop in particular. Can anyone guess what it was? (corn) Louisa Walker, the longest living sister, said that in their garden grew "everything - - all the vegetables usually found in the garden and then some". The "and then some" included over 100 different types of flowers, a large plot of plants used for medicine, 20 different varieties of apple trees, chestnut, peach, plum, pear, and cherry trees, and grape arbor above the house.

The Walker sisters didn't have much money so they provided almost everything they needed from this land. Their chores were very important and even their social parties revolved around work. Shelling peas and beans and husking corn were the main social events by going to church. Much time was spent preparing summer crops for winter. Garden food needed to be dried or pickled so it wouldn't spoil. Pumpkins were dried in front of the fireplace on poles and all sorts of food were strung and hung on nails throughout the house.

The way the Walker sisters lived, if they couldn't make or grow something, then they did without it. Everyone in the family was expected to work to create something that everyone else could use. Even though the work was hard, it was also important to the sisters to have beauty around them which is why the grounds all around the house were carpeted with flowers. Also

# ON-SITE ACTIVITY INTO THE PAST (CONTINUED)

---

located all around the house were dozens of rock piles. Where do you think these piles came from? (as the sisters dug the gardens, they put all the rocks they found in piles).

I already mentioned that the sister's had fruit trees. These trees provided the sisters with the small amount of money they needed to buy a few things they couldn't make. During good years, the sisters were able to sell surplus apples, cherries, peaches, and especially chestnuts to get money. What do you think they bought with this money? (they would buy thin cotton fabric for making summer clothes, shoes and salt for preserving meat)

The Walker family had two oxen and 1 mule to help them with their farming chores. To get their hard and heavy work done, the sisters relied on the help of their two brothers and their sons, who would come and help. In 1954, there were only two Walker sisters living in this house. They were 70 and 82 years old, but they were still able to work the land with the help of their family.

## Resources and References

- Houk, Rose. The Walker Sisters of Little Greenbrier. Gatlinburg, Great Smoky Mountains Association, 2005.
- Page, Linda G and Smith, Hilton, eds. Appalachian Toys and Games. New York: Dutton, 1985.

# POST-SITE ACTIVITY

## SERVICE LEARNING EXTENSION

### REFLECTING ON HISTORY

---

**Duration:** unlimited

**Class Size:** any

**Materials:** interview worksheets (provided)

#### Directions for this Activity

Students learned how families lived in the early 1900's after visiting the Little Greenbrier Schoolhouse and the Walker sisters' cabin. Students discovered how family members depended on each other and how they lived during a time where few modern conveniences existed. They also learned how families handed down traditions through music, stories, and games. This activity provides an opportunity for students to help save a piece of their own history by recording family interviews and sharing them with the class.

Have each student interview someone in their family. Use the following sheet to complete the interview. Share interviews in class.

## Family Member Interview

---

My Name is: \_\_\_\_\_

My Family Member Name is: \_\_\_\_\_

What Year were you born in? \_\_\_\_\_

Where did you grow up? \_\_\_\_\_

What did you do for fun when you were in the third grade?

\_\_\_\_\_

What were your favorite toys and games?

\_\_\_\_\_

Did you have any chores?

\_\_\_\_\_

How did you get to school?

\_\_\_\_\_

Did you have a pet?

\_\_\_\_\_

What was your favorite candy?

# POST-SITE ACTIVITY

## EXPLORE YOUR NATIONAL PARKS

---

**Duration:** 30 minutes

**Class Size:** any

**Materials:** internet access

The Great Smoky Mountains are world renowned for their diversity of plant and animal species. This great variety makes the park an exemplary outdoor laboratory for the study of relatively undisturbed native flora, fauna, physical environs and processes of the Southern Appalachians. The park is the largest federally preserved and protected upland area east of the Mississippi River offering park visitors a refuge from the stresses of everyday life.

You and your students can learn more about this special place as well as participate in on-line activities to further your knowledge of the National Park Service and other federally protected lands. Please check out the following web addresses:

### Especially for Kids

To become a web ranger for the National Park Service, got to:  
[www.nps.gov/webrangers](http://www.nps.gov/webrangers)

To become a Junior Park Ranger at Great Smoky Mountains National Park or other parks, go to:  
[www.nps.gov/learn/juniorranger.htm](http://www.nps.gov/learn/juniorranger.htm)

### Especially for Teachers

For a comprehensive understanding of the background and development of the National Park Service that is perfect for teachers and others those who need the maximum amount of accurate information in the minimum amount of time, go to:  
<http://wwwParkTraining.org>

The U.S. Department of Education is pleased to announce the newly remodeled and updated Federal Resources for Education Excellence (FREE) website. It now provides richer, more expansive resources to teachers and students alike. There are over 1500 resources to take advantage of at FREE, ranging from primary historical documents, lesson plans, science visualizations, math simulations and online challenges, paintings, photos, mapping tools, and more. This easily accessible information is provided by federal organizations and agencies such as the Library of Congress, National Archives, NEH, National Gallery of Art, National Park Service, Smithsonian, NSF, and NASA. Go to:  
<http://www.free.ed.gov/>

# APPENDIX A

## PARK ESSENTIALS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

---

### Traffic and Travel Tips

#### Restrictions on Large Vehicles

Trailers, RVs, and buses are prohibited on some secondary roads in the park, including Balsam Mountain Road, Greenbrier Road past the ranger station, Heintooga Ridge Road, Rich Mountain Road, Roaring Fork Motor Nature Trail, and the road exiting the park at Metcalf Bottoms Picnic Area. Caution is also advised when traveling on Little River Road between the Townsend entrance to the park and Elkmont Campground, and on the road leading into Cataloochee Valley.

### Overheated Engines and Brakes

When traveling uphill on hot days, watch your engine temperature carefully to make sure it is not overheating. If overheating occurs, stop at a pullout to allow your vehicle to cool down before continuing.

When driving downhill on steep mountain roads, it is important that you shift to a lower gear to use the braking power of your engine to prevent your brakes from over heating and failing. If your vehicle has an automatic transmission, use “L” or “2.” (Overheated brakes smoke and give off an acrid smell.) Keep an extra cushion of distance between you and the vehicle in front of you as protection against sudden stops.

### Avoid Collisions with Animals

Watch for animals crossing roads, especially at night. Scores of bears and other animals are killed by motorists every year. Following posted speed limits will reduce your chances of hitting wildlife.

### Use Pullouts if Driving Slowly

As a courtesy to other park visitors, slow moving vehicles should use pullouts to let other cars pass. Pullouts are located every mile or so on most park roads.

### Gas Stations

There are no gas stations or other related services available in the park. Complete services are available in Cherokee, NC, Gatlinburg, TN, and Townsend, TN.

### Emergency Number

In the event of an emergency, call 911. For non-emergency calls to park headquarters, dial (865) 436-1200.

### Pets

Dogs are allowed in campgrounds, picnic areas, and along roads, but must be kept on a leash at all times. The leash must not exceed 6 feet in length. Dogs are only allowed on two short walking paths—the Gatlinburg Trail and the Oconaluftee River Trail. Pets are not allowed on any other park trails. Pet excrement must be immediately collected by the pet handler and disposed of in a trash receptacle. Pets should not be left unattended in vehicles or RVs. Large national parks that have extensive backcountry areas as a rule do not allow dogs on trails. These include parks such as Yellowstone, Yosemite, Grand Canyon, Glacier, Rocky Mountains, and several others. Great Smoky Mountains National Park has prohibited dogs in the backcountry since the park was first established in the 1930s.

### Hiking Safety

You are responsible for your own safety! Travel in Great Smoky Mountains backcountry areas has inherent risks and hikers assume complete responsibility for their own safety. Rescue is not a certainty! Carry a current park trail map and know how to read it.

- Carry 2 small flashlights or headlamps—even on a day hike. If you have trouble on the trail, darkness may fall before you can finish your hike.

Take adequate water—minimum 2 quarts per person

# APPENDIX A CONTINUED

## PARK ESSENTIALS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

---

per day. All water obtained from the backcountry should be treated either by filtering or boiling.

- Carry a small first aid kit.
- Check the current weather forecast and be prepared for quickly changing conditions.
- Wear shoes or boots that provide good ankle support.
- Avoid hypothermia (the dangerous lowering of body temperature) by keeping dry. Avoid cotton clothing. Dress in layers that can be easily removed or added as you heat up or cool down. Always carry a wind-resistant jacket and rain gear—even on sunny days!
- Don't attempt to cross rain-swollen streams; they will recede rapidly after precipitation stops and the wait may save your life! When crossing any stream more than ankle-deep: unbuckle the waist strap of your pack, wear shoes, and use a staff to steady yourself.

### Ice and Wet Leaves

In winter, most trails at high elevation will be covered with ice. Use crampons or other traction devices for your boots. In autumn, loose, slick leaves on the trail cause many hikers to fracture their ankles. Be certain to wear ankle supporting boots.

### Safety Around Wildlife

#### •Encounters With Bears

Bears in the park are wild and their behavior is unpredictable. Although extremely rare, attacks on humans have occurred, inflicting serious injuries and death. Treat bear encounters with extreme caution.

#### •Venomous Snakes

Two species of venomous snakes live in the Smokies, the northern copperhead and timber rattlesnake. Although very few snake bites occur here, visitors should be cautious where they place their hands and feet, especially around old buildings and stone fences. No fatalities from snakebites have ever been recorded in the park.

#### •Insects

Yellow jacket wasps are the insects of greatest concern. They build nests in the ground along trails and streams and are aggressive when disturbed. Avoid perfume, powder, and scented deodorants which may attract yellow jackets. Stings cause local swelling and can lead to severe allergic reactions in a few sensitive individuals. Such persons should carry epinephrine kits.

#### •Poison Ivy

Please be aware of the presence of Poison Ivy throughout the park, particularly in the spring, summer and fall. Poison ivy is a three leaved plant which can grow on the ground as well as on "hairy" vines up trees. To avoid chances of an allergic reaction, stay on trails and avoid direct contact with vegetation. If contact occurs or is a concern, wash affected parts in cold soapy water immediately.

# APPENDIX B

## WHAT TO CARRY/ HOW TO PACK FOR YOUR TRIP

---

The following information is recommended to assist students in packing for their trip.

From experience it has been found that students will often bring too many items on a class trip, or not enough of the right items.

For the **Walker Sisters** trip,

Students should wear:

- Sturdy walking shoes. Hiking boots are not necessary, but flip flops or slip on shoes are not appropriate for the walking portion of this trip.
- Long pants are suggested any time you visit the National Park. This is the best precaution against cool temperatures, bee stings and ticks.

Students should bring:

A lunch which includes water to drink, and healthy meal to provide them with energy for extended periods of walking and learning.

If lunches are packed in lunch pails (as recommended in Pre-Site “Good Eatin”). students may carry lunches to the school house. Otherwise, lunches should be packed and kept in a car at the schoolhouse until lunchtime.

Other reminders:

Students will not need anything except the materials that the teacher provides. iPods or other electronic devices (if permitted on the bus) should not be brought off the bus during any part of the program.

- Cameras are recommended to preserve memories of the trip and to share with family members.

# APPENDIX C

## RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

---

Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont. Connecting People With Nature

Houk, Rose. The Walker Sisters of Little Greenbrier. Gatlinburg, Great Smoky Mountains Association, 2005.  
(Excerpts copied directly with permission from Great Smoky Mountains Association)

Page, Linda G and Smith, Hilton, eds. Appalachian Toys and Games. New York: Dutton, 1985.

Voorhis, Ken, et al. Connecting People With Nature. Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont.