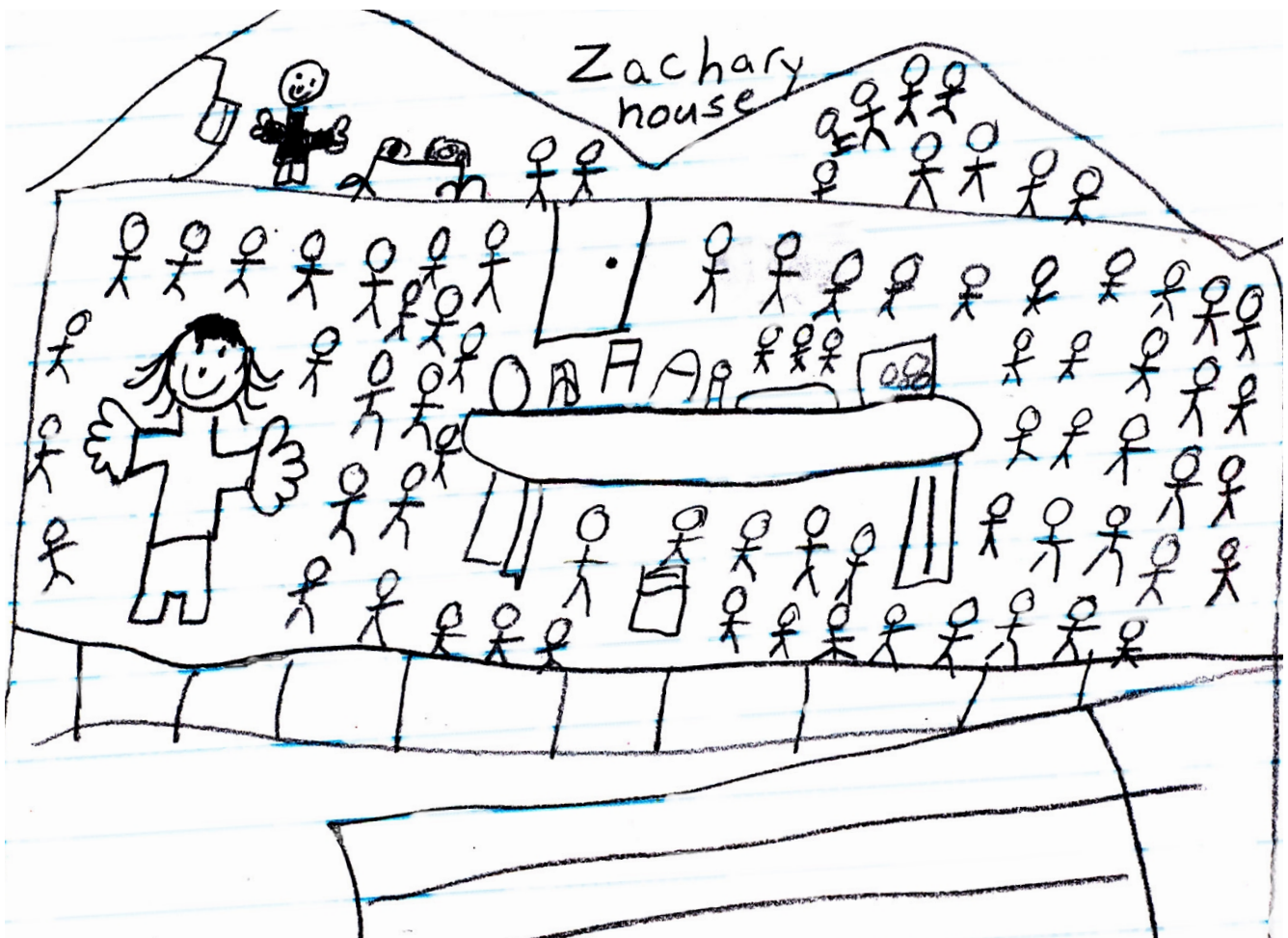


The only traditions that survive...



Are the ones that are passed on...


Discovering Our Heritage



Summary of School Lessons

Kindergarten - “Christmas in Old Cooleemee”

Goal: to learn about families and role they played in old Cooleemee.

Kindergartners come to Textile Heritage Center with their handmade paper decorations and place them on cedar tree. One class goes upstairs to see large old toy collection---none have batteries; other class is seated downstairs to hear story by an elder about what Christmas was like when their family had virtually no money---chopping down tree, Christmas play at church, Christmas breakfast with family (fresh sausage & country ham from their hog, eggs from chickens, milk & butter from their cow). Sing carols. Each leaves with a “poke” containing an orange and stick of peppermint candy.

First Grade - “Kids Chores in Old Cooleemee”

Goal: to learn about families, responsibilities of children, difference in household technologies.

On the museum’s grounds we have five stations. Slopping hogs, feeding chickens & gathering their eggs, walking the cow & churning butter, hoeing & planting in the garden and Washing with Mama (fire under old black iron pot, 3 wash tubs & scrub boards, clothes line, etc.) After an introduction about kids chores (which they had even if they worked in the mill), group is divided to do each chore. Two classes (up to 50) at a time. Kids leave with a coloring sheet depicting each chore.

Second Grade - “Neighbors Helping Neighbors”

Goal: to learn about families and the tradition of obligation to neighbors

Inside the Textile Heritage Center students hear ean elder’s story of a winter fire at her childhood mill home in the 30s when the family of nine barely escaped their house at midnight with only their underclothes. By the next day at noon, the Sprys had more clothing, food, furniture and money than before the fire---all donated by their neighbors and co-workers. Kids go back to school with a plastic fire fighters hat. Children then learn about “poundings”—the tradition of taking “a pound of this & a pound of that” food to a sick person or new neighbor or pastor. They each select a food item set up on a table and we all walk down to the Mill Family Life Museum in a mill house one block away taken back to the time of 1934 to “pound” an elderly woman who has been sick. She thanks them and explains that she’s “gotten by” only with the help of her neighbors and church family.

THESE LESSONS ARE SPECIFIC TO OUR LOCAL HISTORY. THE SOCIAL STUDIES TOPICS TAUGHT CAN BE TAILORED TO ANY LOCALE. KEY INGREDIENTS: PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE SCHOOL & LOCAL HISTORIANS, A DETAILED KNOWLEDGE OF LOCAL HISTORY & TRADITION, HISTORIC ARTIFACTS & PROPS, A COORDINATOR AND LOTS OF VOLUNTEERS!

Third Grade - “Cooleemee: A Great Old Place”

Goal: *to learn about the social geography of the town (what was where and why) & basic map skills*
Students come to the Museum for first full visit to learn basics of growing up in a mill village. There's a giant map covering one whole wall. Learn main physical features---river, cotton mill, houses, old downtown square, churches. Two additional exhibits set up to divide group. One “Before Electricity” features household items, play, work tools. Upstairs another display features a real hand loom and students learn rudiments of how cloth was made. Leave with cotton boll, small sample of burlap.

On another day, museum staffer visits all 3rd grade classes, one at a time, for a map lesson. Hand-out colonial map of NC and asks kids to find Cooleemee--born in 1898 and can't. They learn how to find this spot with physical features of map by going up Yadkin River, forking up the S. Yadkin River, and stopping before Bear Creek. An 1887 map is handed out but they're no longer fooled. Then 1934 Cooleemee map. On yet another day, two classes at a time, we kids take their 1934 map and we go for a giant walking tour which lasts an hour, seeing all the things they've learned about. At each intersection they call and point out the four directions.

Fourth Grade - “Three Economies at the River”

Goal: *to learn about families, how the essentials of life were produced during 3 historic periods*
Classes take place on the banks of the river. After a brief introduction which gives a simple explanation of what an “economy” is, students are divided into families of 5 each. They first visit the “Native American Economy,” learn from guide about food, clothing, housing. They scrape a deer hide with a stone scraper and see genuine local Indian artifacts, food items. Move on to the “Backcountry Economy” where grist mill operator is their guide. Divided into “apple” and “peanut” families, then barter til all family members have some of each. Then, take corn cob to grist mill operator exchanged for small cloth sack of cornmeal tied with a string. Move on to “Mill Village Economy” Each student is given a pay envelope with their name on it containing play money. Learn from guide that many of them would have been at work in the mill at their age in 1902. Doffer boys get \$2.20 for 66 hour week and girls get 55 cents. Girls get mad. Then, all students file by “Mama,” giving her all their pay but a quarter which they then take to the “Company Store” buying a big pickle from a barrel, hoop cheese & crackers, stick candy. Lots of loot to take back to school.

Fifth Grade - “Why They Fought for Liberty”

Goal: *How backcountry neighborhoods lived and why local men became patriots in the War for Independence.*

Activity bus takes students 1 1/2 mile to Pearson's Graveyard. Disembark, walk through woods on a dirt road for about 1/4 mile. Told to keep quiet as there are “patriot militiamen roaming the woods looking for British Gen. Cornwallis who just came through here.” Shot rings out, costumed re-enactor jumps out demanding to know whether “be ye for the King or Liberty?” Gets their attention. Then group proceeds a little further to see display of pictures depicting Southern campaign in the American Revolution, and visit restored cemetery where Captain of the local militia is buried along with family members. Take home a card with the “Liberty or Death” insignia from the old Rowan patriot militia.