



Appalachian Young People's Theatre
celebrates 50 years with...

APPALACHIAN

ECHOES

PERFORMANCE GUIDE



Adapted by
Teresa Lee

From the book
Dobie 'n' Me in Hoot Owl Holler
by Doris Smith Bliss



2022 TOUR

College of Fine & Applied Arts
APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY
Department of Theatre and Dance
APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY

theatreanddance.appstate.edu

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This study guide was created by Teresa Lee, Travis Pressley, Isabel Kaczmarek, Allison Martin and Zach Baugher.

Cover design by Brad Parquette.

Who We Are & What We Do

The Appalachian Young People's Theatre (AYPT) is committed to bringing high quality, low cost live theatre experiences to young audiences in North Carolina and the surrounding region. The AYPT touring program has been offered as part of the Appalachian State University Department of Theatre and Dance curriculum since 1972. AYPT's mission is to produce a variety of quality plays with educational value including fairy tales, folk tales, audience participation plays, and musicals. AYPT's productions are seen by an average of 6,500 young people each spring, largely in rural areas.



The company consists of dedicated undergraduate students from the Department of Theatre and Dance at Appalachian under the direction of Professor Teresa Lee. If you would like more information or have questions concerning the play, please let us know. Also letters and/or pictures and projects made by your students are always welcome and most appreciated.

This performance study guide provides some background information about the play and our company as well as activities, which can be integrated into your curriculum. These activities are intended to further the students' appreciation of the play as well as introduce to both the teacher and the student the many ways in which drama can be incorporated into the classroom. We believe that this experience should encourage creativity, nourish an appreciation of live theatre, and allow a further insight into ourselves, resulting in the cultural enrichment of our young people. Since our audiences range in grade levels, we have included a variety of activities. We encourage you to choose and use the information and age-appropriate activities in a way that will best suit the needs of your students. Feel free to photocopy any part of this booklet for educational purposes.





Appalachian Young People's Theatre Celebrates 50 Years!

This year marks the 50th Year Anniversary of the oldest school and community outreach program at Appalachian State University. Housed in the Department of Theatre and Dance, the Appalachian Young People's Theatre (AYPT) began in 1972. In 1973, the touring children's theatre component began working in partnership with communities and public schools of northwestern North Carolina to bring high-quality, affordable live theatre experiences to young audiences who would get little or no theatre in any other context.

Professor Emeritus, Ed Pilkington inaugurated this special program as a way of reaching out and educating the western region of our state. In 1972, Appalachian State had just become a regional university whose goal was, "to now reach out...to become number one in education and an influence on the region's cultural landscape, in addition to educating local teachers." AYPT was formed with that goal in mind.

So was the beginning of a fifty-year legacy, when a small band of university students loaded into a 1941 Ford pickup truck and ventured into the remote mountain communities with shows that were designed to teach components of the curriculum through live theatre. Leadership of AYPT was passed along from Pilkington to two subsequent directors, Vernon Carroll and Jonathan Ray in 1981. In the fall of 1988, Teresa Lee, Professor of Theatre joined the faculty as the director of AYPT and has remained in that role for the past thirty-four years. Since its beginnings, AYPT has grown into an award-winning regional performing arts program, receiving the prestigious Sara Spencer Award in 2016 from the Southeastern Theatre Conference. AYPT has also received the Constance Welsh

Award for excellence in theatre for youth from the North Carolina Theatre Conference.

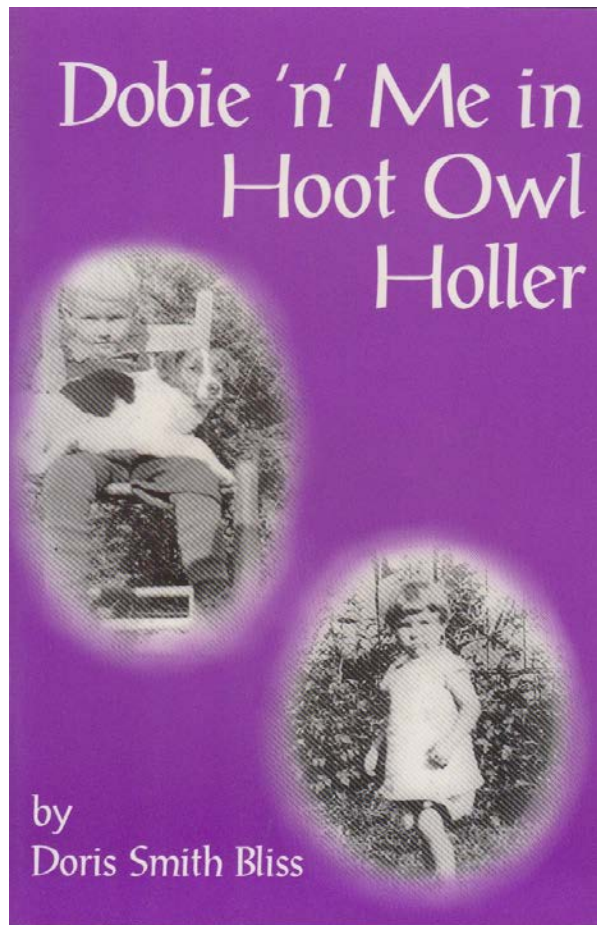
Each spring semester the AYPT performing company, consisting of dedicated undergraduate theatre students, tours to schools, libraries and museums to perform for approximately 5,000-8,000 young people. AYPT has traveled as far away as Roanoke Island and the Highlands and Islands of Scotland! The program has seen many changes over the years, but remains true to the roots of its beginnings. The group typically performs published plays written for young audiences. Often the plays still include audience participation, and always curriculum connections, which were founding elements of AYPT.

Appalachian Young People's Theatre is a shining example of the kind of program that enriches the cultural life of the region generation to generation. Through their participation in AYPT, Appalachian students are educating and encouraging the next generation of theatre audiences. They are also showing children that theatre is an essential art form and hopefully inspiring them to one day become young theatre artists themselves. The Department of Theatre and Dance remains truly proud to have such a reputable and far-reaching program to offer.



Play Synopsis

Appalachian Echoes is an audience participation play adapted by Teresa Lee from the original childhood stories of Doris Smith Bliss. In her book, *Dobie 'n' Me in Hoot Owl Holler*, (pictured) Doris tells of many adventures she and her brother Dobie experienced growing up in the Appalachian Mountains in the 1930's and 1940's. The play begins with the echoes of her childhood past calling out from the "holler". Adult Doris enters and narrates throughout the different stories. The first time we see Doris and Dobie as children is when they are getting ready to deliver butter to Miss Lou at the Taylor Boarding House. On their way they are fearful of running into a "paint'er" and other scary creatures in the woods which are created with the help of the audience. After a successful "trek" to the Taylor House and back, the next story shows us a typical day in an old country school. Later, Dobie and Doris chop wood for Miss Monarkie and the audience gets to help! Miss Monarkie's fussing and complaining lead to surprising antics that will be sure to entertain. In the final story Dobie and Doris go to "a revival meeting" to hear Uncle Jim testify about "punkin" and on their way to the baptizing' a neighbor boy takes a premature dunk in the chilly water of Pigeon Roost Creek. Join in the fun, as the Appalachian Young People's Theatre enlist the help of the audience to recreate the simple mountain life of years ago!



The World of the Play

The Appalachian Echoes play adaptation of *Dobie 'n' Me in Hoot Owl Holler* by Doris Bliss was originally written by Professor Teresa Lee in 1999 and produced in spring of 2000. In her stories, Mrs. Bliss talks about her childhood in the 1930s and 1940s in Matney, NC. In her stories, she retells her life and the stories that she still thinks about to this day. From childhood mischief to religion to working, Mrs. Bliss captures life in the Appalachian mountains from a personal perspective. She also wrote another book titled, *Echoes From Hoot Owl Holler*, in which she tells more stories from her life living there.



This year marks the 50th anniversary of Appalachian Young People's Theatre (AYPT) at Appalachian State, along with Director Teresa Lee's final



semester. To mark this occasion, Ms. Lee decided that AYPT should perform a revised adaptation of the production. Aside from rewriting and reorganizing portions of the show, adjustments also needed to be made to accommodate a larger cast. One of the main goals of the production was to stay true to Mrs. Bliss's story and writing while also making the show our own. This meant researching mountain speech, vocabulary, and culture as the actors brought her stories to life. A key factor in producing the show was finding a way to balance limited resources and simplicity with a desire to be

historically accurate. AYPT's production of *Appalachian Echoes (Dobie 'n' Me in Hoot Owl Holler)* touches on the culture and religious practices of mountain folk. While portions of our show are comedic, the goal of this show is not to ridicule or mock these stories. We wish to provide a respectful representation of the time period from the voice of a person who lived it, while providing young students with a chance to learn about the region that goes beyond the traditional classroom lecture. We hope that you enjoy the production as much as the cast did and help us keep the stories of people such as Mrs. Bliss alive.

- Allison Martin, Dramaturg

About the Playwright

Originally adapted in 1999, Teresa Lee was inspired by the stories of Doris Bliss in her book, *Dobie n' Me in Hoot Owl Holler*, to create *Appalachian Echoes*.



Ms. Lee joined the Appalachian State University Department of Theatre & Dance in 1988. She teaches acting, stage movement, and serves as the Artistic Director for the Appalachian Young People's Theatre. Ms. Lee has a rich background in producing and writing drama for young people, training drama educators and directing theatre for young audiences.

About the Author

"Doris Smith Bliss is a goldsmith and mineral collector, an interest she discovered while beginning her family in Wyoming. Upon returning to Matney to raise her children, she and her husband opened Little Bear Rock Shop, and later, Sheer Bliss, in Banner Elk, N.C., where she designs jewelry and shares nature's gifts (minerals) with all who seek them. Doris is a mother, grandmother, friend, explorer, and teacher. She embraces the richness of her heritage and looks for the beauty in all things. She still resides in Matney with her animals and plays in her garden of wildflowers any chance she gets."
- From the back cover of Doris' book, *Dobie 'n' Me In Hoot Owl Holler*

Before Performance Activities

Important Vocabulary

Different cultures have different “dialects”. A dialect is a way of speaking that is unique to a particular geographic region. Here are some words and phrases from the Appalachian mountain dialect you may not be familiar with.

Pain'ter: Panther, mountain lion.

Devil'ment: Mischief.

Reckon: Suppose, figure, foresee.

Young-uns: Young ones, children.

Straw tick: Mattress made out of straw.

Out House: Outside toilet.

Pokes: Bag or sack.

Right smart trek: Long journey.

Wore-out: Worn out, tired.

Hominy: Corn vegetable.

Lassy Fruitcakes: Fruitcakes made from molasses.

You'uns: “You Ones” addressing more than one person.

Discuss

- Discuss the differences in television and live theatre.
- Discuss etiquette on being an audience member.
- What is an echo?
 - Where do they occur?
 - How is an echo a metaphor for a memory?

Write

Doris Smith Bliss wrote a book about her memories from childhood, and that is what this play is about. Take some time to journal or write a story about one of your favorite memories, and try to recall as much detail as possible!

Play/Perform

Play games like children used to play in the 1930's and 40's, like Red Rover, jump rope, and hopscotch!

Practice pantomiming simple activities using your imagination to create imaginary objects. ***Appalachian Echoes*** uses a theatrical device called, ***audience participation***, meaning we want you to help us tell the story on stage! Be sure to listen closely to the actor's on stage, and they will guide you in helping us churn butter with Momma, saw wood with Miss Monarkie, and even help us in hide 'n seek!

Create

Draw a picture of the mountains! Don't forget to include the sky, trees, clouds, and the sunshine!

After Performance Activities

Discuss/Write

- Write a letter to AYPT and let us know your favorite part of **Appalachian Echoes**. We would love to hear from you! (Our contact information is on page 13!)

Discuss with a classmate, the whole class or journal about the following questions:

- What was your favorite part of the play? Why?
- Who was your favorite character in the play? Why?
- What are 3 things you learned from this play about the people that live in the Appalachian Mountains?
- What kinds of musical instruments were used in the show? Discuss traditional Appalachian music.

Ask for a Story/Reflect

- Ask a grandparent or older member of your family to tell you an interesting and fun story from their childhood.
- Did you notice anything different about their childhood than yours? What toys did they play with? What kinds of chores did they do that you haven't done before?
- Be sure to write down the fun story they told you, and be sure to include the differences between your life and theirs!
- We think you can be an artist too! Draw a picture of your favorite scene or part of the play!

Play/Perform

- During the performance you saw the actors "freeze" in different moments as if they were in a still picture. In small groups, create "freeze frame" moments from the show. See if the rest of the class can tell what picture you are creating just using your physical bodies in space. Notice what it takes to stay "frozen"!
- Perform parts of your favorite scene from the play. (For example imagine and recreate what it would be like to walk through the woods before daylight.)

Thimble Game

- Everyone sits in a circle and one person is chosen to be 'It.' The objective is for 'It' to pass the thimble (or an object you can find to be the thimble) to another person playing without being detected. "It" holds the thimble in their hands in the "prayer" position, slides their hands quickly through the hands of each of the other players holding their hands the same way, and leaves the thimble in the hands of one of the players. After 'It' has been to everyone, the others try to guess who has the thimble. Whoever has the thimble becomes 'It', and the game repeats.

Name: _____

Appalachian Echoes

Y U R P Y O U N G U N S S F O W I W
D E V I L M E N T Y P O K E S Z S T
B B W Z A D B T O U T H O U S E T W
I R A P A I N T E R O F S R E D R O
S I J H K H S W E E T B R E A D A R
C T X A G R A V Y C O F F E E K W E
U C D C M M F R U I T C A K E S T O
I H H Z A U S T P I P E I W L S I U
T E F R U I T R E C K O N F P Y C T
S S P B U T T E R H O M I N Y D K R
D X H H L Y R L O A F E R S X D U D
Q R Z M U S H M E L O N Q I N P W M

Find the following words in the puzzle.
Words are hidden → ↓ and ↘ .

BISCUITS
BRITCHES
BUTTER
COFFEE
DEVILMENT
FRUIT
FRUITCAKES
GRAVY

HOMINY
JAM
LOAFERS
MUSHMELON
OUTHOUSE
PAINTER
POKES
RECKON

STRAWTICK
SWEETBREAD
WOREOUT
YOUNGUNS
ZAUSTPIPE

Cross Curricular Activities/Resources

Art: Draw images of what you saw during the show! Draw your favorite character and the costume they were wearing, or a drawing of what the set looked like!

Social Studies/History: Think more about what life was like in the rural Appalachian mountains, especially for kids. Ask an adult in your life if they know someone who grew up during the 1930's and 40's or know someone who did?

Math: If a piece of peppermint candy costs 1 penny, and a pack of grape chewing gum costs 2 pennies, how many pieces of peppermint can you get with one nickel? How many packs of chewing gum can you get with one nickel? *Hint: 5 pennies = 1 nickel.*

Music: What type of instruments were used in the show? Do we hear those instruments in the music we listen to today? Research traditional music of the western Appalachian mountains—origins and influences that made it popular.

Additional Resources:

- *Dobie 'n' Me in Hoot Owl Holler* by Doris Smith Bliss
- *Echoes from Hoot Owl Holler* by Doris Smith Bliss
- *Foxfire* Book Series <https://www.foxfire.org/>
- <http://www.ncsociology.org/south.htm?msclkid=3f573b78a5fc11ec8d6d3cf1487ff7af#doris>
- <https://collections.library.appstate.edu/collections/appalachian>
- <https://music.appstate.edu/academics/special-programs/appalachian-songs-and-singing-games-project>

Theatre in Our Schools

The American Alliance for Theatre (AATE) and Education's Theatre In Our Schools (TIOS) campaign is designed to help promote theatre for youth at all levels all across America. Public relations, advertising and publicity are used in every aspect of life to promote ideas and to impact people. The TIOS campaign is meant to use all of these means to positively affect TIOS by making the various publics aware of the positive impact that theatre has in our schools. Visit AATE at: <http://www.aate.com/>

10 Simple Ways to Incorporate Theatre into Your Classroom

Integrating theatre into your classroom can be a great way to get your students more engaged in the curriculum and build teamwork and community in your classroom. If the idea seems a bit daunting, remember that theatre doesn't have to mean putting on a play; here are some activities you can use to bring elements of theatre into your classroom and even into other subject areas! Click on the items below for more detailed explanations and to help determine which activities are most appropriate for your class. Don't forget to make use of the many resources available to help you provide quality drama experiences to your students.

1. Encourage Creative Project Options.
2. Play Classroom Charades.
3. Read a relevant play.
4. Give oral reports in character.
5. Remember that drama isn't just acting – use sound, lighting, or costumes in your classroom.
6. Assign letter or journal writing from the perspective of a character or historical figure.
7. Use non-verbal teamwork activities to form project groups or as part of a lesson.
8. Plan an Immersion Day when students can dress and act like they are immersed in a specified story, place, time or event.
9. Create a "tableau" or human sculpture of an important event or moment in literature or history.
10. Create and perform a Movie Preview about a topic or event.



Director's Note

As we were approaching a new millennium in 1998, I was inspired with the idea to write a play for children about life in the Appalachian Mountains. Looking forward into what a new century might bring, it seemed important to recollect the rich mountain culture that sustained the folks of this region for generations.

About that same time, as luck would have it, I met Doris Bliss. My first reaction was "I have struck gold!" Doris truly is a treasure. She grew up in the Appalachian Mountains, between Valle Crucis and Banner Elk, in the 1930's and 40's, where she experienced, as she says, "a way of life that will never be lived again." Fortunately, Doris had a deep desire to share that way of life with generations to come through her stories that she had just published in a book, *Dobie n' Me in Hoot Owl Holler*, about her and her brother growing up in the Matney community. She invited me to her home where she cooked fried cabbage and onions (showing me the "right" way to cut it all up!) and gave me permission to adapt her stories to the stage. It is my deep desire to honor and celebrate her stories through the magic of children's theatre.

This year the Appalachian Young People's Theatre celebrates its fiftieth anniversary! It seemed fitting to me to pay tribute to the place where it all began with a new production of *Appalachian Echoes*. I will add that this program simply would not have existed all these years without the unfailing dedication of Appalachian State's talented young students. We invite you to join us in celebrating AYPT as we look forward to the next fifty years! I too am moving forward, as I complete my final year as Director of AYPT and faculty member at Appalachian State. It has been a great honor and privilege to be a part of this special program for so many years. I can't think of any better day's work than bringing joy, laughter and learning to hundreds of children through the experience of live theatre!

Contact Information

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Celebrating 50 years with...

Appalachian Echoes

Adapted by Teresa Lee

From the Book *Dobie 'n' Me in Hoot Owl Holler* by
Doris Smith Bliss

Spring 2022

CAST

Isabel Kaczmarek.....Adult Doris
Alexa Nemitz.....Young Doris
Travis Pressley.....Dobie
Hannah Millette/Allison Martin.....Momma/Miss Monarkie
Brittney Gonzalez.....Miss Lou/Teacher/Addie
Clay Cooper.....Hubert/Mr. Clyde/Uncle Jim/Gaither
Zach Baugher.....Mr. Will/Roy/Hoover
Natalie Jones.....Pupil/Preacher

Directed by
Teresa Lee

Stage Manager, HollyMarie Lane
Dramaturg, Allison Martin
Music Direction/Musicians, Clay Cooper & Natalie Jones
Scenic Painting, Mike Helms & the Company

Special thanks to:
Kristin Grieneisen, Matt Tyson, Elaine Hartley, Brad Parquette, & Mike Helms