

6th Grade Passages

Between MOY and EOY Student Packet

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Mistippee

In November 1825 a group of Creek Indians met
9 with men who worked for President John Quincy
17 Adams. The Creek men needed help because people
25 were taking their land. The following letter is from
34 James, the son of one of the men who went to the
46 meeting.

47 November 30, 1825

50 Dearest Mama,

52 I went with Papa today to meet with the leaders

62 of the Creek Indians. Papa needed me to help

71 him with the horses. There were many Creek

79 **men** sitting at the table when we walked into the

89 meeting place. The Creek men sat tall and straight.

98 They were very quiet. Their eyes were kind, and

107 their voices were gentle. Papa told me that the man
117 sitting at the head of the table was a chief.

127 Standing behind him was a boy who looked 12
136 years old, like me. The first thing I noticed about
146 the boy was his clothes. He wore a white cotton
156 shirt, like mine. However, he also wore boots, a
165 vest, and pants all made from deerskin. These
173 clothes were very different from mine. I was
181 wearing pointed black leather shoes, a button-down
189 coat, and wool pants. The Creek boy had markings
198 on his face. There was a line of blue dots painted
209 on each side of his face and an orange sun painted
220 above his nose. Papa told me later that each mark
230 had a meaning.

233 Papa and the boy's father told us to go outside
243 while the men talked. The boy spoke perfect
251 English. He said that he could read and write in
261 English, too. He told me his name was Mistippee.

270 He said that his father had educated him. Mistippee
279 wanted to know everything about me and asked
287 a lot of questions. I told him about our small farm
298 where we grow wheat. I also told him that I share
309 a room upstairs with my three brothers. Then
317 he asked about my school. I told him that I go
328 to school in the same room as my brothers even
338 though we are not the same age. I also asked
348 Mistippee many questions. He answered them all
355 very politely. He told me his family has two houses
365 built near each other. One is used in winter and
375 one in summer. The winter house is made of wood
385 and mud. Mistippee said that it is very warm. The
395 summer house is made of wood and grass. It has
405 open sides to let the air in. Mistippee told me his
416 people fish and hunt. They hunt animals such as
425 rabbits and deer for both food and clothing.

433 His family grows corn, beans, and pumpkins.

440 Some Creek children help their mothers dig in the

449 fields, plant seeds, and gather crops. His people
457 also gather berries and many other wild plants for
466 food. Mistippee said he must help chop firewood
474 and take care of the horses. I told him that I had
486 to do those things, too. He laughed when I told him
497 about how I almost got kicked by my horse the first
508 time I tried to put a horseshoe on it. He said he had
521 almost been kicked by a horse once, too.

529 Before long, it was time to leave. Mistippee shook
538 my hand and said farewell. On the way back to the
549 inn where we would stay the night, I told Papa all
560 about Mistippee. I hope that I get to see Mistippee
570 again. Papa told me we should be on our way home
581 in a few days. I miss you.

588 Your son,

590 James

591

A Great Comet

For six months in 1997, people watched a glowing
9 object in the night sky. Comet Hale-Bopp made a
19 show in the sky that lasted from January to June.
29 Its head shone as brightly as a star. Its tail swept
40 back like a fan. Some people thought it might be
50 the best comet to pass by Earth in 20 years.

60 Comets begin as dirty chunks of rock in an icy
70 fog. Some of these rocks move toward the sun
79 when its gravity pulls them. Once the rocks get
88 near the sun, they begin to look like comets. Each
98 comet forms a tail and a round head that are
108 characteristic of all comets. The round head and
116 tail make a comet easy to recognize. Comets travel
125 in orbits, or circles, around the sun. These orbits
134 can be big or small. Comets that make small orbits

144 around the sun come near Earth every 200 years
153 or less. They are not very bright, but we see them
164 more often.

166 Hale-Bopp is a comet that makes big orbits around
176 the sun. It will not pass near Earth again for about
187 2,400 years.

189 In the 1990s about 12 comets a year were
198 discovered. Most of these could not be seen in the
208 sky without special equipment because they did not
216 come very close to Earth. Even though Hale-Bopp
225 was far away from Earth, it could be seen because
235 its head was huge. The heads of most comets
245 are no larger than six miles in diameter. Hale-
254 Bopp's head was about 25 miles across. Because
263 of its size, Hale-Bopp glowed brightly. Most of
272 the famous comets have had long, thin tails that
281 streamed for millions of miles. Hale-Bopp's tail was
290 wider and shorter.

291 People enjoyed watching Hale-Bopp for several
298 reasons. It glowed brightly. Hale-Bopp could be
306 seen without a telescope for six months, from an
315 hour after sunset until an hour before sunrise each
324 day. Everyone had sufficient time to see this bright
333 traveler. There were plenty of chances to look at it.
343 There will continue to be many more comets for us
353 to see. Like Hale-Bopp, they will look like glowing
363 balls in the night sky.
368

Dolley Madison Saves the Day

During the War of 1812 between the United States
9 and Great Britain, British troops marched toward
16 Washington, D.C. They had already defeated a
23 group of U.S. soldiers nearby. Now they were
31 headed for the nation's capital. They threatened to
39 burn all government buildings, including the White
46 House. The White House was the home of James
55 Madison, the fourth President of the United States,
63 and his wife Dolley.

67 On August 22, 1814, President Madison left
74 the White House to join the U.S. soldiers. While
83 Dolley waited to hear from him, she packed
91 important documents, such as the Declaration of
98 Independence and the Constitution. She sent them
105 to Virginia for safekeeping. As the hours ticked

113 by, Dolley began to worry. From her windows in
122 the White House, she nervously watched people
129 fleeing the city. On August 24 a courier delivered
138 important information. He said that the British
145 were approaching and that Dolley should leave
152 immediately.

153 However, Dolley refused to go until one more
161 task was complete. A large painting of George
169 Washington was fastened tightly to the wall, but
177 no tools were available to remove it. Dolley ordered
186 that the frame be broken in order to remove the
196 canvas. After the painting had been rolled up
204 and sent to a safe place, Dolley raced from the
214 White House, leaving behind almost all of her
222 personal belongings. At 8:00 that evening, British
229 troops entered Washington. Although the troops
235 completely burned the White House and other
242 government buildings, both President Madison and
248 Dolley were safe. The precious painting of the first

257 U.S. President and all important papers associated
264 with the United States had been saved. Many
272 would call Dolley's actions heroic. But Dolley never
280 thought of herself as a hero. She felt what she had
291 done was her duty to the country as First Lady.
301