

V

MAY DAY PAGEANT

PIONEER DAYS IN THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY

PROLOGUE

With the first of May comes the *Spirit of Spring*, banishing cold, gray *Winter* and bringing her *Fairies* who awaken the *Flowers* and prepare the earth for the *Queen of the May*. A group of *Children of Today* romp in, gathering flowers on their way to school and stand amazed as they behold the coronation of the *Queen*. She tells the children that it is her custom on the first of May to grant one wish to all little children who believe in *Fairies* and are fortunate enough to discover her at her ceremonies. The children ask to see some of the people who lived in our Valley in pioneer days; whereupon the *Queen* dispatches her *Heralds* to fulfill the children's wish. The episodes follow in chronological order. At the end of the last episode the *May Poles* are wound; the largest by the *Flowers* and the others by the children of the episodes. The *Queen of the May* then leads a Grand Recessional, the characters singing the "Cornish May Song."

Flowers: Daisies, Buttercups, Violets,

[This pageant was developed as a class project in Physical Education classes under the guidance of Mrs. Jas. C. Johnston. It was written by students of the senior class of the State Normal School and presented by the senior class, and the children of the Harrisonburg city schools.

A thousand different persons participated in the pageant, and the tremendous amount of work involved in training and costuming was much simplified by the effective organizations which took upon themselves responsibility for the various phases of the performance. The costumes were provided at an average cost of fifteen cents.

The scene of the pageant was on the crown of the hill adjoining the tennis courts at the State Normal School. Spectators grouped themselves on three sides of the hill-top, the slope to the east being sufficiently sharp to hide the actors from the audience. This was their "tiring-ground."

Especially should attention be directed to the happy combination of historical research and the usual May Day ceremonial. The information woven into the pageant was also worked out by students and due care was taken to insure the authenticity of all the episodes.]

Anemones, lie huddled in groups on the green, covered with capes.

Costume: Green dresses with petal ruffles at neck, and caps of appropriate color; covered with green cape.

Suggestion for costumes, including illustrations: "The Crowning of the May Queen," by Jessie M. Baker, *St. Nicholas*, May, 1915.

Enter: Winter leaning heavily on staff and hobbling around the green.

Costume—Gray robe.

Enter: Spirit of Spring.

Costume—Fluffy green or yellow dress, carrying garland of flowers.

Does solo dance in and out among the Flowers and drives Winter from the green. Calls in her Fairies.

Enter: Fairies (small girls from primary grades).

Costume—White dresses with colored paper wings attached.

They dance around in a fairy dance and surreptitiously remove pin that holds the hood of green over the blossomed heads of the Flowers.

Dance—Fairy.

Music—Canzanetta.

Fairies trip off stage and go to meet their Queen.

Flowers awakened by the Fairies dance and retire to a place near throne.

Dance—Garland Dance.

Music—Kiss of Spring Waltz.

Enter: Herald who announce the approach of the Queen.

Enter: Procession of Fairies and May Queen.

Two Pages in attendance.

Spirit of Spring crowns May Queen.

Enter: School Children of Today.

Costumes—Light school or play clothes with flowers and May baskets.

Dance—Pop Goes the Weasel.

Queen, welcoming those who bow before her, says:

"I, the Queen of the Fairies, each May Day grant one wish to the children who believe in Fairies and who discover me at my ceremonies. What is your wish?"

Spokesman of Children: "Dear Queen of the Fairies, we should like to see some of the people who lived in our Valley in pioneer days."

Queen sends her Heralds for groups of Valley settlers.

EPISODE ONE—THE INDIANS

The Shawnees were a tribe of Indians who frequently camped near what is now the city of Winchester, at Shawnee Springs and Babb's Marsh. They were bitter enemies of the Southern Indians who lived in the Carolinas. This episode portrays the Shawnees holding a council of war, with the inevitable dance, before going on the war path against the Southern Indians. They return with their captured enemies and worship the Great Spirit with another dance. Then the chieftains smoke the pipe of peace.

Costumes — Indian headdress, tomahawks, bows and arrows.

Dance—Indian War Dance.

EPISODE TWO—THE GERMANS

The earliest settlers in the lower Shenandoah Valley were the sixteen families brought, in 1732, by Yost Hite, a German fur-trader, from New York. He obtained the land on the condition of settling a certain number of families upon it. The settlers were farmers, and the women working with the men in the fields became expert reapers. This episode portrays Yost Hite riding about overseeing the families at their harvesting.

Costumes:

Girls—light calico caps.

Boys—Knee breeches, rough looking shirts opened at the neck.

Dance—German Hopping Dance.

Costume—Girls wear red shirts, white waists, black bodice, white dutch caps and white aprons with German colors.

EPISODE THREE—THE ENGLISH

Lord Fairfax was born in England. He first came to Virginia in 1736 to visit his

agent, William Fairfax, who had charge of his property, the Northern Neck of Virginia.

He returned to Virginia in 1748 to visit his estate which he desired "to explore and lay out in plantations." Lord Fairfax proposed to George Washington, then sixteen years old, that he undertake this work. Washington accepted and together with an assistant proceeded to Frederick County and took the buildings at Greenway Court for his headquarters.

This episode portrays the planting of the famous White Post at the junction of three crossroads in Clarke County, to show the way to Greenway Court, the valley home of Lord Fairfax; it also shows George Washington surveying under Lord Fairfax.

Costume—Lord Fairfax and attendants, knee breeches, ruff, soft hats with plumes.

Washington and assistants, cocked hats and rough looking clothes.

Dances—Dancing on the Green, Jolly Is the Miller.

Costumes—Girls, mob caps and short waisted dresses.

Boys, white ruffs.

EPISODE FOUR—THE SCOTCH

Soon after the settlement of Staunton in 1732 by John Lewis, a Scotch gentleman, his four young sons brought a buffalo calf from the forest, which they presented to Benjamin Borden, their father's guest. Borden gave the calf to Governor Gooch on his return to Williamsburg. This present so pleased the Governor that he gave 50,000 acres of the Valley land to Borden for settlement.

Lewis and Borden are talking in the open when the boys lead in the young buffalo (a small black calf) and present it to Borden who goes off with it.

Borden returns with settlers, bringing a proclamation from the Governor which he reads.

Costume—Men and boys in long trousers and dark open-neck shirts.

Women in rather short plain skirts.

Lewis and Borden—dress of gentlemen of the period.

Dances—Did You Ever See a Lassie? Highland Schottische.

Costume—Girls and boys, plaid tams, sashes, and bands around socks.

EPISODE FIVE—THE FRENCH

John Sevier, of French parentage, was a native of Rockingham County, Virginia.

When quite a young man he surveyed the town of New Market. He was the keeper of the inn and general store which became the trading center of the Indians and the settlers. This episode shows John Sevier with groups of men measuring the land with chains and tapes and driving stakes.

Costume—Brown, open-neck shirts, long trousers, burlap moccasins.

Dances—Chimes of Dunkirk.
Villagers.

Costume—Tricoteen hats for boys, blue trousers, white blouses.

White aprons with red, white and blue stripes and white caps with streamers for girls.

EPISODE SIX—THE IRISH

The Irish who first came to Virginia settled in what is known as old Frederick County. Here the first pedlar, an Irishman, was granted a license to sell his wares. The episode portrays that event.

Enter pedlar, dressed in white blouse, dark trousers, green sash, tall hat. He carries a loaded bag from which peep bits of ribbons, laces, caps, etc., and sings his wares.

Children and women flock around him and buy.

Dance—St. Patrick's Day Irish Jig.

Costume—Green paper shawls and bonnets for girls.

Stove pipe hats for boys.

The children thank the Queen for her kindness and ask if they might stay to see the May Pole wound.

Flowers wind large central May pole. Children from each of the national groups wind five smaller poles with streamers of the national colors.

GRAND RECESSIONAL

Queen and attendants march from green under arch-way made by the Flowers. Remainder of cast retire in following order:

Fairies, American Children, Indians, Germans, English, Scotch, French, Irish, Flowers.

During the Recessional all the groups sing the "Cornish May Song."

THE END

Pageant Committee: Louise Houston, Elizabeth Burkhardt, Frances Tabb, Grace Heyl, Anna Cameron.

VI

"GETTING IT ACROSS" IN THE
STORY FORM

MRS. EMERSON EXPLAINS THE WASHING OF
COLORED CLOTHES

Little Dorothy, the oldest child of Mary Bealls, was puzzled. "Why don't you put them colored clothes in and boil them like you do your white clothes, Miss Jean? You can't get 'em clean that way, can you?" she asked.

"Why, yes indeed, Dorothy. It isn't necessary to boil them and, besides, it often makes the color run, or fade."

"But Miss Jean, your water ain't hot at all," said the little colored girl.

"No. I never use water any hotter than I can hold my hand in because that will fade colored clothes just as boiling will. See how your apron has faded—and the pink has run into the white. I expect your mother had the water too hot."

"No'm! Ma said 'twas 'cause the gingham ain't no good any more."

"The dye isn't so good as it used to be, but if you had set the color before you washed the dress and had used warm water instead of hot, I know it wouldn't have faded."

"What's settin' the color, Miss Jean?"

"Setting the color is putting the dress in something that will make the color stick tight when the dress is washed. Let me see, your dress is pink, isn't it?"

"Yass'um, Miss Jean."

"Well, before you washed that dress the