CHEROKEE BANDOLIER BAG

by Vickie Poynter

The Sam Houston Project
www.samhoustonmovie.com

Native American Art for Fourth and Seventh Grade
CHEROKEE BANDOLIER BAG

Sam Houston Among the Cherokees

by Vickie Poynter
York Junior High School
Conroe Independent School District

The Cherokee were highly skilled bead artists. In fact, Sam Houston gave Andrew Jackson a bandolier bag with the embroidered dedication “To Gnl Jackson From Sam Houston.” (Power 2007, 99). The bandolier bag was used by men to hold clothing or hunting supplies. The Eastern Cherokee used seed beads for decorating before the Removal era. When they were removed to the Indian Territory, they interacted with the tribes already living in the region. This resulted in the Cherokee using the imported glass beads in their work. Many of the designs were characterized by abstract and floral designs.

Images Courtesy of The Sam Houston Project.

Objective
Students will create a paper Cherokee bandolier bag.

Materials
- Brown paper bags
- Pencils
- Glue
- Fabric paints in squeeze bottles, several colors or Q-tips with acrylic paints
- Scissors
- Rulers
- 9” x 12” paper for sketch

Vocabulary
- Bandolier bag
- Geometric shapes
- Organic shapes
- Abstract
- Symmetrical
- Asymmetrical

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Assignment

Show examples of bandolier bags and discuss shapes and sizes. To make the bag, use brown paper bags or brown butcher paper. To give the paper a leather look, wad it up in a tight ball then flatten it out. It can be ironed to flatten, or the paper can be gently pulled back and forth on the edge of a table.

Students can create their own pattern out of the paper by cutting it and folding it like in the diagram. The sides are then glued together. For the handle, cut two long strips and glue them together. (Attach the ends as shown in the diagram after it has been decorated.) Now students are ready to decorate their bag.

Have students sketch out symmetrical or asymmetrical abstract designs on a piece of paper. The designs can be geometric or organic. Leaves and flowers are easy to abstract. Tell them not to draw their shapes too small because it will be difficult to add the paint. The designs can then be drawn on the brown paper.

To paint, students will want to first paint their outline. The easiest way is to use the fabric paints. They will let that dry before dotting in the color of paint for the inside of the shape. The small dots of paint resemble beads.

NOTE: For young students a black Sharpie would work for the outline.

4th Grade TEKS
4.1 History

7th Grade TEKS
7.1 History

Art TEKS

4th Grade
4.2 Creative Expression A&B
4.3 Historical A&C

7th Grade
7.2 Creative Expression B&C
7.3 Historical / Cultural A&B

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Image courtesy of the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution.
Catalog number: 17/9690

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture/People</th>
<th>probably Cherokee (attributed)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Object name</td>
<td>Shoulder bag inscribed &quot;To General Jackson from Sam Houston&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date created</td>
<td>1810-1820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place</td>
<td>Tennessee; USA (inferred)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media/Materials</td>
<td>Wool cloth, glass bead/beads, silk ribbon, wool yarn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Techniques</td>
<td>Sown, overlay beadwork, embroidered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection History/Provenance</td>
<td>Probably commissioned by Sam Houston (1793-1863); presented by Sam Houston to Andrew Jackson between 1814 and 1828; formerly in the collection of Walter C. Wyman (ca. 1851-1927, Chicago area dealer and collector); acquired by MAI in 1931.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions</td>
<td>72.2 x 28.9 cm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catalog number</td>
<td>17/9690</td>
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</table>
6" x 6.5" Bag
26" Strap
Size and shape can vary

1. Fold

2. Glue Sides

3. Fold over flap and decorate

4. Glue strap together and decorate

5. Attach strap to bag