

Trade Book Guide for:

## And Still the Turtle Watched

by Sheila MacGill-Callahan, pictures by Barry Moser

### Background Information

**Story Summary:** A turtle carved in rock on a bluff over a river by Delaware Indians long ago, watches with sadness the changes humans bring over the years.

**Copyright:** 1991

**Author:** Sheila MacGill-Callahan was born in England, but now lives in Far Rockaway, New York. She joins her family in supporting a tradition; her father, mother, and two sisters all write books. This is Sheila MacGill-Callahan's first book. She and her husband have four children, four cats and one dog.

**Illustrator:** Barry Moser is a designer, printer, illustrator and owner of Pennyroyal Press. His work has been published in over one hundred books for adults and children. His illustrations for *In the Beginning* by Virginia Hamilton, received a Newbery Honor and won an AIGA Design Award. Barry Moser lives near Northampton, Massachusetts.

**Illustrative Technique:**

The illustrations were painted with transparent watercolor on paper handmade. They were then color separated and reproduced as red, blue, yellow, and black halftones.

**Teaching Strengths:**

The descriptive language and simple format of the story provides a strong model for developing new stories. Provides opportunities to infuse environmental education and Native American studies into the curriculum.

**Suggested**

**Grade Level:** 4th – 8th grade

**How to use**

**This Guide:**

The numerous ideas and lessons in this guide are to serve as a smorgasbord from which you should pick and choose the ideas that best meet your needs.

**Grade Level:** 4 - 8

**Subjects:** History, Geography, Social Studies, Language Arts

**Duration:** Pre-reading and during reading 30 minutes

Post Reading Activities vary (60 minutes to 2 weeks)

**Group Size:** Any

**Setting:** Classroom

**Key Vocabulary:** Manitou, carapace

**Materials:** Pre and during reading

- Book
- Copies of the turtle anatomy and cultures

Post activity varies depending on activity chosen

## Pre-Reading Activities (Background Building)

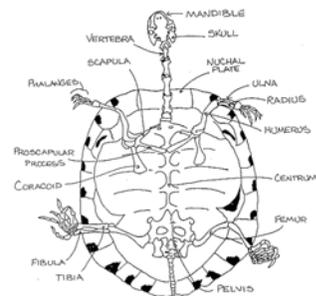
**Goal:** Provide the students with a framework that will allow the students to understand and enjoy the story, And Still the Turtle Watched.

### Vocabulary

**Objective:** Before reading And Still the Turtle Watched, the students will be able to define verbally the meaning of the words "Manitou" and "carapace."

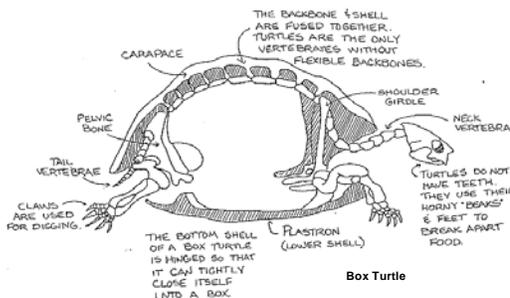
An important vocabulary word for this book is *Manitou*. Discuss terminology used by different cultures and religious groups to describe their all-powerful ruler. Include entirely fictitious characters, such as mother nature, in the discussion.

Study turtle anatomy (Figure 1). Find the turtle's carapace.



FRESH WATER  
TURTLE

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Box Turtle

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### Discuss Different Cultural Views of Turtles

**Objective:** Before reading And Still the Turtle Watched, the students will be able to list two views other cultures have toward turtles (excerpted from Beth Mittermaier's description of the logo she designed for the Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education 1994 Conference)

Turtles have witnessed the comings and goings of diversity for millions of years. They waddled beside dinosaurs, watched mammals evolve, and nourished the first humans. Today, many describe turtles as slow, lazy, and sleepy, but maybe we should look again. Throughout history many cultures all around the world have considered turtles objects of reverence. Many treated them as sacred, or conferred upon them high religious significance. The turtle plays a major role in the creation legends of Native American Indians, people from the Far East and several other cultures. In many of the legends the turtle supports the earth on its back... the strength of the turtle supporting the diversity of the earth.

But now even the steady, reliable, determined turtle is in danger. Human predation and habitat destruction have begun to take their toll. People have admired the wisdom of the turtle for thousands of years. The turtle may be speaking to us. Are we listening? (See handouts for logo. Each turtle depicted in the logo represents cultural diversity from a different perspective.)

## During Reading Activities

### Read aloud

This relatively short picture book would be best read aloud with few interruptions to the story. Some prediction questions could be used throughout the story. Suggested questions follow.

- page 5 What do you think the turtle will see?  
page 11 Was your prediction right? What else might the turtle see?  
page 17 (at end of 1st paragraph, before showing illustration)  
What do you think the boys pointed at the turtle?  
page 17 (end of page, after viewing illustration)  
Was your prediction right?  
page 23 What do you think will happen to Turtle?  
page 25 Was your prediction correct?

Remember to read the last page to the students about Turtle's real location.

### Possible Adjunct Questions

- How did you feel when Turtle could no longer see or hear?
- What was your favorite part of the story?
- What episode made you the most upset? happy?

## Post-Reading Activities

### Story Mapping

- Goal: To develop students' comprehension of narrative text  
Objective: After the teacher reads And Still the Turtle Watched, the students will identify in writing the components of a story by completing the story mapping worksheet.

#### Sample of a Completed Story Map

*Story Title:* And Still the Turtle Watched

*Theme:* Humans have an impact on the environment, both positive and negative.

*Setting (time and place):* Pre-european settlement to present bluffside above a River near the east Coast (possibly the Delaware or Hudson River) and New York Botanical Garden

*Main Character and Traits:* Turtle; gentle, sad, lover of children, forlorn

*Goal:* The turtle wants to watch over the Delaware people.

*Conflict:* The turtle was forgotten and the environment was negatively impacted by humans.

*Resolution:* The turtle was recovered by an archaeologist who cleaned him up. Now the turtle oversees the children that visit the New York Botanical Gardens.

*Episodes:*

- Native American elder carved the Turtle to be the eyes of Manitou.
- Turtle watched through the seasons. Children visited the turtle.
- Turtle watched through the years. Fewer and fewer children visited.
- Turtle weathered.
- White settlers came and chopped down the forests.
- Human population and pollution increased, overpowering the natural sounds and sights.
- Children painted graffiti on Turtle. He could no longer be the eyes and ears of Manitou.
- An archeologist discovered Turtle.
- The archeologist removed and cleaned Turtle.
- Turtle now resides in a botanical garden where he watches the children and speaks to Manitou.

### **Creative Writing Extension & Field Trip**

Goals: To develop students' ability to conduct meaningful research  
 To develop students' writing skills  
 To develop students' knowledge of the Upper Mississippi River history

Objectives: After doing activities to develop the students' comprehension of the narrative text in And Still the Turtle Watched, students will write a list of five questions they would need answers for to write an adaptation of the story about an overseer of the Upper Mississippi River.

After writing the questions, the students will record the answers to their research questions on a QUAD grid.

Using the information they obtained from their research, the students will write creative adaptations of And Still the Turtle Watched.

This activity integrates writing and social studies. It can be a successful way to incorporate a field trip to Effigy Mounds National Monument (McGregor, IA) into the curriculum. Even though this book is fiction, it is based on real historical changes to an environment. For one to be able to adapt the book to a new setting would require the author to be knowledgeable about that setting. The students would need to do some activities prior to this one that help them comprehend the format used to write And Still the Turtle Watched.

Procedure:

1. Tell the students that they will be creating their own version of this book. The setting for their version will be an Upper Mississippi River bluff. Their main character can take any form that would be appropriate for a local Native American Indian Tribe. As a class, discuss how the story might be different in a new setting. Ask the students to begin thinking of possible episodes they might want in their story.
2. The next day, explain that they will need to research the history of the Mississippi River and this region to have the facts needed to support their story. To help

- create the story, each student must first decide what questions they would need to have answered before they could write a new version of the book. These questions will focus the research. If one did not set specific goals for the research, it would become an exhausting and overwhelming task. To organize the information, the students will be using a QUAD\* grid. Put a sample QUAD on the overhead. Tell the students that QUAD stands for *question, answers and details*. (Sample QUAD in the appendix.) Start the students thinking about questions they want answered by having the class brainstorm some questions. When a question is given, have the student explain why s/he thinks the answer to that question will assist him/her in writing their reports. (Possible information needed: local Native American Indian Tribe, symbols used by that tribe, the name of their great overseer, what environmental changes have occurred and when did the change occur)
3. Allow ample time for the students to create their lists of questions. Students may wish to refer to the book or a list of sequenced events to aid them in creating their questions.
  4. Provide instruction on sources of information. One source of information may be Effigy Mounds National Monument. Students may find answers to their questions in exhibits, hear it in the slideshow or while on a guided hike, or the students may ask the question of the naturalist. The combination of this activity and field trip would help focus the students' attention and result in a more meaningful experience for the students. Obviously some guidelines would need to be established by the class so that the naturalist is not inundated with questions at the start of the trip, rather questions are asked only when further clarification is needed on a topic currently being discussed by the naturalist. Allow research time.
  5. Allow ample time for the students to write drafts of their versions of And Still the Turtle Watched. Students may find they have some new questions while at this stage. Students can add to their QUAD when necessary.
  6. Have students edit and polish their work.
  7. Publish the new books.

\*For more information on using QUADs, read Evelyn Cudd's article, Research and Report Writing in the Elementary Grades, *The Reading Teacher*, December 1989, page 268-269.

## **Additional Integration and Infusion Ideas**

### **Art**

- Paint with watercolors. Try to use some of the techniques the illustrator used.
- Illustrate the versions of the books created by the students.
- Create paper mache rocks to watch over your classroom in the shape of an animal.
- Create a diorama for a specific scene in the story. Have the students attach a note card that asks two questions about their scenes.

## **Language Arts**

- Write a newspaper article about the discovery of the Turtle Rock by an archeologist. The students' articles should include what, where, when, why, how and a catchy title.
- Interview a Turtle Rock that has seen changes at a specific location over the years. This could serve as a practice interview for the writing extension research or as a form for presenting their research.
- Write a letter to the author (in care of the publisher) or the botanical garden to discover more details about the Turtle Rock.
- Write a journal entry about how you felt during different parts of the story.

## **Native American Studies**

- Study the Delaware Indian Tribe or a local Tribe that lived near another major river.
- Study Native Americans' relationship to the earth and to their Manitou.

## **Physical Education**

- Take a hike through Effigy Mounds National Monument.
- Play the *Aquatic Project Wild* game, Turtle Hurdles (adapted by Minnesota for Blandings Turtles)

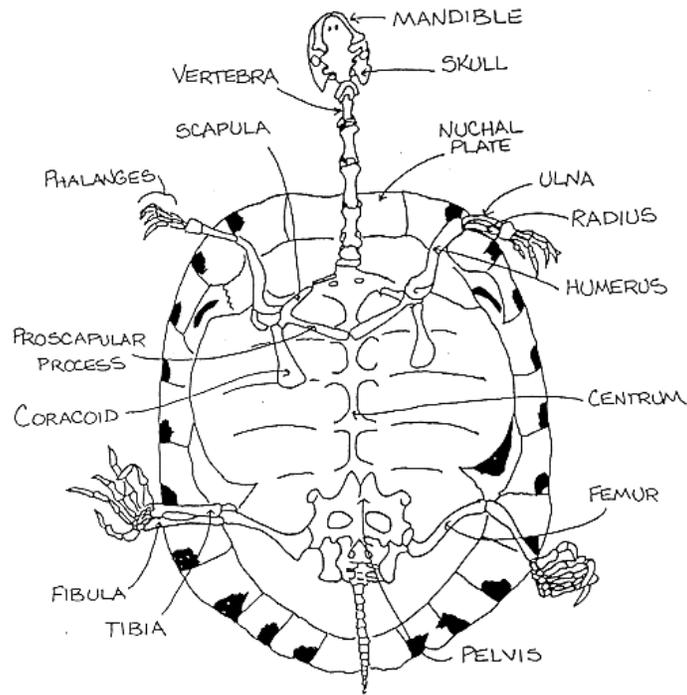
## **Science**

- Study turtle anatomy (include vocabulary word - carapace).
- Study turtle life history.
- Study weathering of rocks.
- Study archeology.
  - Have a guest speaker show tools an archeologist uses.
- Study constellations, including the great bear and the little bear.

## **Social Studies**

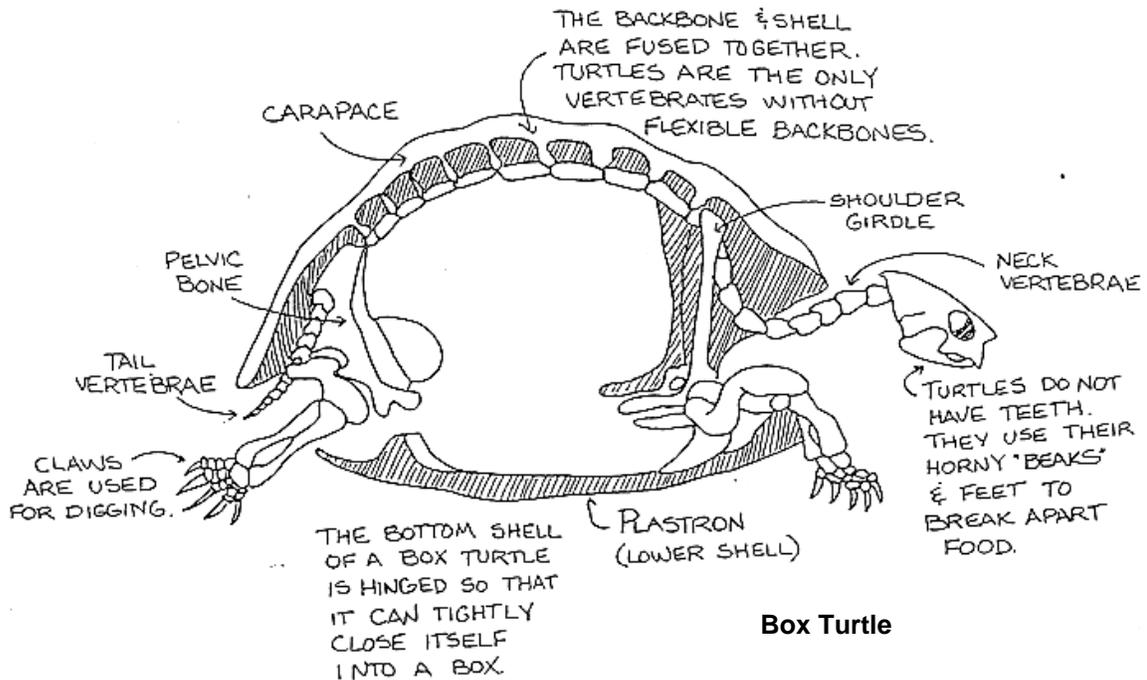
- Develop map skills.
  - Have the students make maps showing where they think the Turtle Rock was carved. Students should include an explanation supporting their site choice.
  - Have the students show on a map how they would get from their home to where the story took place. Students could tell how they would travel there. They could also tell something about this place and why it is important to the story. (from *Reading as Communication* by Frank May)
- Research how your local community was altered to make room for a growing population.

Figure 1. Anatomy of freshwater and box turtle.



FRESH WATER  
TURTLE

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Box Turtle

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The Earth's strength is in diversity, both cultural and biological. Many peoples, spanning thousands of years, have contributed their artwork to this design.



Senoufo peoples of the Ivory Coast of Africa. Painted cloth used for the costumes of wild animal and fire spitter masqueraders.



Native Americans of North America. Inscribed on skins, bark and stone as a symbol for storytelling and recording events.



Natives of Arnhem Land in Australia. Painted with red, yellow, white, black, and light brown on bark. This X-ray painting may give us a clue to early peoples' understanding of animals.



Hindus of India, 18th century. From a painting showing symbolic uses of reptiles in Hindu mythology.



Mexicans of Palenque, Mexico. Carved into the facade of a ruin.



Children of the World, represented by Adam Mittermaier (age 3). In honor of all the children whose art and love for diversity is universal.



Cassites of Babylonia, 1150 B.C. Carved into a boundary stone or kudurrus which were placed in sanctuaries, covered with inscriptions and carved in relief with figures of kings and gods in presentation scenes or with divine symbols and attributes.



Laps of Sweden. Painted on the skin of a shaman drum. The drums were used to induce the trance which is central to the shaman's magic rites.



Quilters of the New World, 20th century. Patchwork pattern composed of four Drunkard's Path blocks.

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## **Story Mapping**

Story Title:

Theme:

Setting (time and place):

Goal:

Conflict:

Resolution:

Episodes:

## Research QUAD

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Questions	Answers	Details
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
References:		