

**#9573**

## **THE LIGHT IN THE FOREST**

DISNEY EDUCATIONAL PRODUCTIONS, 1958

Grade Levels: 3-7

90 minutes



### **DESCRIPTION**

Johnny Butler, captured by the Delaware Indians in the 1700s, is released as a teenager. He struggles with the unfamiliar culture of his birth as well as white prejudice, family conflicts, and his own identity. Based on the book by Conrad Richter.

### **ACADEMIC STANDARDS**

#### **Subject Area: United States History – Era 2 – Colonization and Settlement (1585-1763)**

- ★ Standard: Understands why the Americas attracted Europeans, why they brought enslaved Africans to their colonies and how Europeans struggled for control of North America and the Caribbean
  - Benchmark: Understands peaceful and conflicting interaction between English settlers and Native Americans in the New England, Mid-Atlantic, Chesapeake, and lower South colonies (e.g., how Native American and European societies influenced one another, differing European and Native American views of the land and its use) (See Instructional Goal #4.)
  - Benchmark: Understands the cultural and environmental impacts of European settlement in North America (e.g., friendly and conflictory relations between English, French, Spanish, and Dutch settlers and Native Americans; how various Native American societies changed as a result of the expanding European settlements and how they influenced European societies; the impact of the fur trade on the environment) (See Instructional Goals #2 and 4.)

#### **Subject Area: United States History – Era 1 – Three Worlds Meet (Beginnings – 1620)**

- ★ Standard: Understands the characteristics of societies in the Americas, Western Europe, and Western Africa that increasingly interacted after 1450

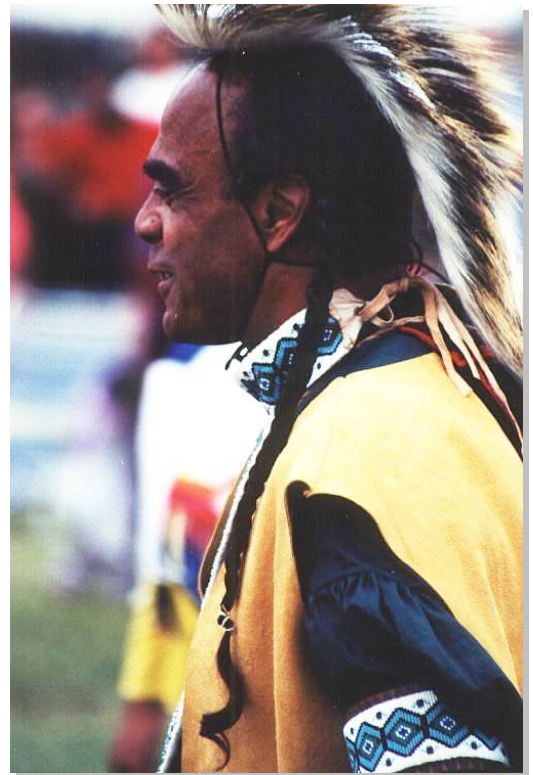
- Benchmark: Understands the significance of beliefs held by both Native Americans and Europeans (e.g., Native American beliefs about their origins in America, ideas of land use held by Native Americans and Europeans) (See Instructional Goals #1 and 2.)

**Subject Area: Behavioral Studies**

- ★ Standard: Understands that group and cultural influences contribute to human development, identity, and behavior
  - Benchmark: Understands that cultural beliefs strongly influence the values and behavior of the people who grow up in the culture, often without their being fully aware of it, and that people have different responses to these influences (See Instructional Goal #5.)

**INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS**

1. To introduce aspects of Native American tribal life in prerevolutionary times.
2. To recognize the deep attachment of the Native Americans to the wilderness.
3. To depict how hatred and revenge can escalate.
4. To introduce conflict for the territory between the colonists and the Native Americans.
5. To understand that in every culture there are both good and bad individuals.
6. To illustrate that the U.S. government broke treaties that they made with the Native Americans.



**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

*Light in the Forest* is a fictional story based on historical facts. About 25 years before the American Revolution, the real-life John Butler was born in the small frontier town of Paxton, Pennsylvania. He lived there with his parents, Harry and Myra Butler, for the early part of his childhood. At the age of four, young John was kidnapped by the Lenni Lenape and adopted by the great warrior Cuyloga, whose own son had died. John was renamed True Son, and for the next eleven years he lived happily with his Native American family.

**VOCABULARY**

- |              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| 1. disgrace  | 7. scalp     |
| 2. indenture | 8. regret    |
| 3. savage    | 9. ashamed   |
| 4. vermin    | 10. warriors |
| 5. royal     | 11. ambush   |
| 6. massacre  |              |

## BEFORE SHOWING

1. Locate the following on a map: Paxton (now Harrisburg), the Susquehanna River, the Tuscarawas River, the Allegheny Mountains, and the Muskingum River.
2. Review the historical events in the American colonies in the 1760s.
3. Recall memories from when you were four years old. List specific events and people you remember. Imagine not seeing your birth family since you were four years old.

## AFTER SHOWING

### ► Discussion Items and Questions

1. How does True Son feel about being returned to his white mother and father?
2. Why is True Son being forced to leave his adopted home? Who made the decision that he would leave?
3. Who tries to go with True Son to keep him company? Is he allowed to march with True Son all the way to Pennsylvania?
4. Who is Little Crane? What happens to him and why is he important to the story?
5. How does Del know so much about the Delawares and the way they treated their prisoners?
6. What kind of welcome does John receive when he gets to his white home? Who is particularly unfriendly?
7. What difference does John notice between the way white men treat their wives and the way Indian braves treat their squaws?
8. What does Myra Butler come to appreciate about John's captors?
9. What is the Conestoga incident that John remembers his Indian father telling him about? Who is responsible for the killing? What do they call themselves?
10. What is Sarah's first reaction to John? Why does she feel this way? How do her feelings change?
11. Who steals the bearskin that John's father had given him? What is it used for? How does John get it back?
12. Why do Half Arrow and Little Crane come to Paxton? What happens after they arrive?
13. How does John feel about his cousin Half Arrow?
14. How does Half Arrow rationalize stealing the trapper's boats? When True Son objects, how does Half Arrow rationalize stealing only one boat?
15. What does True Son do to cause his family to consider him a traitor? Why did he do it?
16. How does True Son's father persuade the warriors not to burn his son at the stake?
17. Why does Cuyloga disown True Son?
18. What happens to make John's attitude toward Indians change?
19. What kind of man is Uncle Wilse? How did losing the fight to John at the end of the movie change him?

### ► Applications and Activities

1. Research the Lenni Lenape culture for factual information to determine how a captive would be assimilated into the tribe. Consider the following: living conditions,



- chores, food, and customs.
2. Compare the video with the book by Conrad Richter.
    - a. Why is Gordie's character missing from the video? Who else does not appear in the video version?
    - b. What new characters are added to the video version? Why do you think the video makers created them?
    - c. How does Del's part differ from the book to the video?
    - d. Is the book or the video a love story?
    - e. What or who stops Uncle Wilse from being scalped in the video and in the book?
    - f. Which version concentrates more on the boy's journey from Paxton Township back to the Indian village on the Tuscarawas?
    - g. Who talks with John about being a slave in the video? Who talks with him in the book?
  3. Write a journal entry using one of the following prompts.
    - a. Remember a time when you felt trapped between two value systems. Consider different expectations between family and friends or between two groups of friends. Describe the conflict and your feelings.
    - b. Recall an experience when you were away from home for an extended period of time. Describe your feelings and how the experience changed you.
  4. Create dialogue for one of the following situations.
    - a. Little Crane and True Son after they heard about the Indian treaty to return white hostages
    - b. Myra Butler and Harry Butler when Harry Butler is about to leave for Fort Pitt to pick up his son
    - c. Half Arrow and Little Crane on their way to Paxton
    - d. Cuyloga and Quaquenga, his wife, after True Son has returned and it is learned that Little Crane was murdered

---

## RELATED RESOURCES

---



- [First Frontier, Part 1 #2381](#)
- [First Frontier, Part 2 #2382](#)
- [Home Sweet Home: Daily Life In Early Colonial America #2666](#)



### World Wide Web

The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

---

- **THE LENNI-LANAPE**

<http://web-savvy.com/river/Schuylkill/lenape.html>

This web page has links regarding the history and customs of the Lenape.

---

# THE ONLINE COMMUNICATOR

- **INDIANS OF PENNSYLVANIA**

<http://www.online-communicator.com/indianpa.html>

This site contains links to many aspects of the Indians of the Pennsylvania area including links to specific tribal Web sites, research and history of the Lenni Lenape, as well as information on the Lenni Lenape culture.

---

- **THE DELAWARE TRIBE OF INDIANS**

<http://www.delawaretribeofindians.nsn.us/>

This site provides in-depth information regarding the Delaware or Lenni Lenape tribe including cultural and historical information.



- **PENNSYLVANIA STATE HISTORY**

<http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/bah/pahist/overview.asp?secid=31>

This site offers details about the founding of Pennsylvania, its population, politics, history, society, and culture.