



LEGENDS of the OZARKS:

Mythology Semester Project

MYTHOLOGY SEMESTER PROJECT: A LOOK AT LOCAL LEGENDS

LEGEND: A story that may or may not be true but contains elements with basis in fact.

TASK: Select a local legend for you and/or your group to research. Your job is to find the **FACTS** behind the **FICTION**. (This should be a tale that you are interested in because it makes your job so much easier.)

For example, if you are researching the Bride Under the Bridge at Phelps Grove Park, your job is **NOT** to prove that there is an apparition that appears under one of the drainage ditch bridges at the Springfield park.

Your job **IS** to find as much information as you possibly can about the legend such as: eye-witness accounts or stories from those who have heard the legend, the real life identity associated with the ghost, the property on which the ghost appears, the history of the legend, newspaper or magazine articles written about the legend, etc.

Only one group per class will be able to research a certain legend. As soon as you have decided on a topic, let me know, so that I can reserve it for you. The object is to learn more about our local folklore through a *variety* of presentations.

NOTE: Your project does **NOT** have to center around a “ghost story”. There are plenty of projects possibilities that do not concern “supernatural” happenings.

GROUPS: You are **NOT** required to work in a group, so if you chose to, you must accept the consequences of selecting a poor partner. Only groups of **TWO** are allowed. There will be no groups of three. Regardless of your partner’s actions, **YOU** are responsible for presenting a quality project on the assigned date.

RESEARCH: You are required to extensively research your legend. Research the people involved in your legend. Research the property associated with your legend. Interview the people who have heard the legend. All your collected research (contained in a folder) needs to be turned into me on the day of your presentation.

Here is how I will grade your research:

A-Grade Research: 8-10 documents

B-Grade Research: 6-7 documents

C-Grade Research: 4-5 documents

D-Grade Research: 2-3 documents

F-Grade Research: 0-1 documents

What constitutes a document?

1. A **transcript** of an interview you conducted with someone familiar with the legend. (The information in this interview has to be relevant.)
2. An **article** from a newspaper or magazine concerning your legend or the property associated with your legend.
3. Other **documents** related to the legend: deeds, death certificates, maps.

4. **Original photographs** of the site can count for *ONE* document only. (In other words, multiple photographs will count as ONE document. You cannot get your ten documents with ten pictures.)
5. **Website information** may be used, but only **THREE** of your documents may be from the Internet. One point of this assignment is to familiarize you with proper methods of research. (A newspaper article found through an ONLINE database is NOT an internet source.)
6. **EVERY** document must have a note card or sticky note attached, which explains its relevance to the project. If not, it will not count into the total.

Research Sites: The Nixa High School Library has a folder dedicated solely to many local legends. The Greene County Library Center located on South Campbell has a Local History Section. The Christian County Library has a searchable database of newspaper and magazine articles that would allow you to find information on your project. The Greene County Historical Society has links to all kinds of relevant information. County seat courthouses keep death records, accounts of property sale, etc.

GROUP ABSTRACT: A typed one-page paper from your group informing me of three things: the legend your group has chosen to investigate, the information you already know about your legend, and your plan of action for finding out more information. This will be written roughly two months before the final presentation. (100 points, Due: _____)

GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: A list of twenty-five interview questions that your group plans to ask to those interviewed. I do not need a *completed* interview, just the questions. These should be open-ended questions, ones that cannot be answered with “yes” or “no”. (To turn any question into an open-ended question, add “Why?” to the end of it.) (_____ points, Due: _____)

GROUP PRESENTATION: Your group (if you chose to work in one) will create a thorough presentation on your legend. This presentation is _____ **points total** and made up of three parts:

Visual Aid: A large piece of presentation board (capable of standing on its own) that briefly describes your legend, outlines your research, and includes plenty of pictures of the site. You will speak from this when you present. Original pictures are also required for both this and your paper. Take plenty of pictures when you visit your site and include them on your visual aid. (_____ points)

Information: I require plenty of information about your legend to be presented. What is the legend? When/where/to whom did it happen? What did you find when you visited the site? Flood us with information, and you can't go wrong. (_____ points)

Effective Communication: Know your information. If your research said that “The Bride Under the Bridge” is much like “The Legend of Hanna Bell”, you should know who Hanna Bell is as well. Research your research. Your presentation should leave us with few questions concerning the background of your legend. Be prepared to answer any questions that follow. *All* group members should take an active role in the presentation. (_____ points)

Presentations will begin on _____ . (Group presentation dates will be assigned closer to time.)

OPTIONAL GROUP VIDEO: If your group chooses to produce a video, it will take the place of a group presentation and must provide the same information. This does not exempt you from writing your paper. If you visit a site that gives tours, do not simply tape the tour guide speaking for. Your tape should be tightly edited and produced. Do not make a video if you lack video editing skills. **(Replaces Group Presentation, _____ pts.)**

INDIVIDUAL PAPER: Each member of the group will also write an individual paper over your selected legend. (See "Paper Guidelines") (_____ points, Due _____)

Disclaimer: Just because you pick a project that has been successful in the past, this does NOT mean that it will be successful for you. I am not responsible for your grade. When you chose your legend, you are making a commitment to check it out as soon as possible to avoid getting stuck with a "dud". Do not use this project as an excuse to travel against your parent's wishes. There are plenty of legends that do not require going further than the Springfield area.

Reminder: Everything for this project must be **TYPED**. Computers labs are available before and after school and during STAR for your typing convenience.

Helpful Hints:

- Do not pick a project site that you cannot visit multiple times (all the needed information cannot usually be gathered in only one visit)
- Don't wait until the last minute; if there is no information available on the legend you have chosen, you **MUST** switch to another one or suffer the consequences of a low grade.
- Do not trespass on any property. Obtain permission before entering. **BE SAFE**. Do nothing to endanger your life or the lives of others.
- Stories that you have heard **YOURSELF** or a family member work very well. Your family member is an easily interviewed source.
- Start today. It's never too soon.
- Partners can be great, but they can also bring you down. Only pick partners that are dependable and have schedules that match your own or opt out of having a partner.