



THE EARLY YEARS: LIFE AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

Lesson Plan for Grades 4, 7-8, 11

Teacher Resource: Excerpts from Gail Jarrow, *Robert H. Jackson: New Deal Lawyer, Supreme Court Justice, Nuremberg Prosecutor* (Calkins Creek, 2008)

“The United States was changing into an industrial nation of factories, large companies, and growing cities. But rural Spring Creek, Pennsylvania, remained much the way it had been when Robert’s great-grandfather Elijah built the farmhouse next to Brokenstraw Creek.

Elijah Jackson was one of the first settlers in the forests of northwestern Pennsylvania near Lake Erie after the Revolutionary War. He and his sons cut down trees on the farm and sold the lumber.”

“Uncle William showed Robert the springs where they could get a fresh, cold drink of water. He entertained his nephew with stories about the Indians living in the area when the Jacksons first settled there.

As they strolled along the Brokenstraw Creek, Uncle William told of his adventures taking lumber from the farm down the creek on a raft to the Allegheny River. Robert loved hearing how Uncle William had piloted the raft all the way to Pittsburgh to sell the lumber, then hiked more than a hundred miles back home.

Uncle William had been Spring Creek’s justice of the peace for thirty years, and neighbors regularly came by the house for legal advice. Robert first heard about courts and trials from him.

Robert and his sister Ella, two years younger, were expected to help their mother...

...Robert collected wood for the stove, churned butter, weeded the garden, and fed the chickens and hogs. He knew how to do the milking, but he tried to get out of that chore...

...When Robert was five, his father decided that he couldn’t earn a good living from the farm anymore. The best timber had been cut down and there wasn’t enough lumber to sell...

...He set his eye on Frewsburg, New York, thirty miles north of Spring Creek. The village of about five hundred people had dirt streets, wooden sidewalks, and a railroad station.”

“After living on the farm, Robert thought the village was exciting. Local farmers drove their horse-drawn wagons into town to visit the stores and businesses, and trains passed through.