



Year of Miss Agnes by Kirkpatrick Hill

Synopsis:

Ten year old Fredericka (Fred, for short) tells the story of school and life in an Athabascan Indian village on the Koyukuk River in Alaska in 1948, when Miss Agnes arrived to be yet another new teacher.

Discussion Questions:

- Why didn't Fred's mother think school was important?
- Why do you think teachers always wanted to leave the village?
- How did the people in the village use the resources around them in their lives?
- How are your school days the same as Fred's? How are they different?
- What do you think your life would be like if you lived in the village... would you like it? Why or why not?
- What do you think makes Miss Agnes a good teacher?
- Describe what may have happened after the girls discovered that Miss Agnes was back.

Vocabulary:

potlatch
concertina
caribou
marten
stern-wheeler

Find these places on a map:

Aleutian Islands	Juneau
Allakaket	Koyukuk River
England	Nulato
Fairbanks	Yukon

Activities:

1. Read about the Athabascan Indians...where did they come from, where did they live, what were the traits of the tribe? Find pictures on the internet of their arts and crafts.
2. Make a map of Alaska charting the areas mentioned in the book. (Or, using a map, locate the areas mentioned in the story.)
3. Study the sign language alphabet. Learn signs for words important to this story.
4. Make a time line of your school year...or your life history.
5. Design a travel brochure to Alaska.
6. This book is dedicated to Sylvia Ashton-Warner. Find out who she was.
7. Write about a special teacher that you had. What made him/her so special?
8. Listen to "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry" by Hank Williams. (the song that Martha loves to sing)