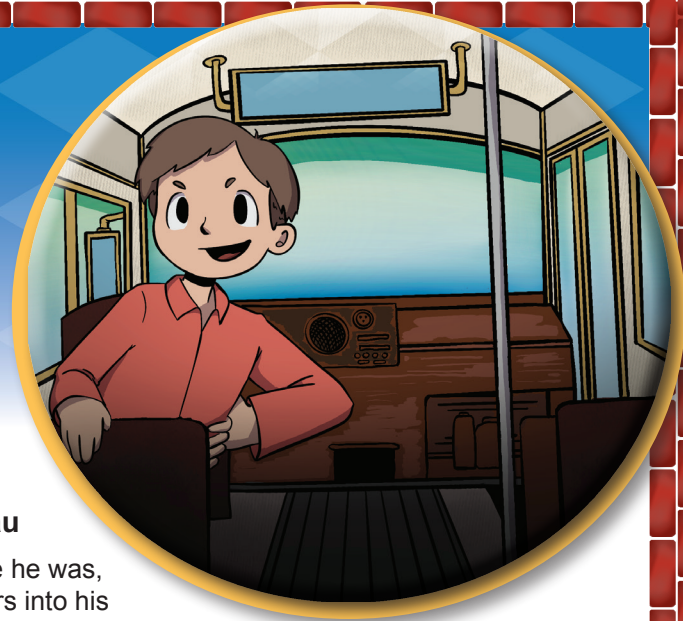


An Adventure in Arrow Rock

Chapter One

On the Bus

Written by Carolyn Mueller
Illustrated by Philip Goudeau



The bus flew down Highway I-70. Charlie looked out the window and watched the farm fields go by. Behind him, the bus was filled with rows of his fifth-grade students, but the only sounds were the thump of the tire wheels and the whistle of the wind around the bus.

“Does anyone know *why* Arrow Rock was named Arrow Rock?” Charlie stood up, asking the students in his loudest teacher voice.

Silence.

Charlie could see a few students glance up with bored expressions, but most didn’t even look at him. They were all staring into the glowing abyss of their phones.

“Anyone? Anyone?” Charlie asked. “OK, I’ll tell you!” he boomed enthusiastically. “Arrow Rock was named after the bluff near the town, along the Missouri River. The Missouri and Osage tribes used the flint found there to knap arrow tips.”

“Cool, Mr. P,” someone muttered. But most didn’t even look up.

Charlie tiredly slumped back into his seat and stared at the fields out his window. When Charlie was a fifth grader, he lived a great adventure. On a field trip to the Missouri Capitol Building, he became trapped overnight and experienced the museum and the history within it come alive.

That fateful night ignited Charlie’s passion for history. His newfound interest led to AP History courses in high school and a History degree in college, where he wrote his thesis about Missouri’s role in the Civil War. Charlie wanted to share his love of history, so he went to graduate school and got his Master’s in Education.

Here he was, five years into his dream job, teaching history to a gaggle of fifth graders. He remembered how he felt about history before and after his Capitol visit. His goal each year was to help his students become enthusiastic explorers of history.

But students are different now. They are obsessed with phones, tablets and laptops. If the kids aren’t texting each other, they’re on TikTok. Instead of homework, they play video games or chase virtual cartoon characters. Their enthusiasm for history is...lacking.

But today would be different.

Today, Charlie was taking his class on a field trip to the historic village of Arrow Rock, Missouri—a hop, skip and a jump from their school in Columbia. He hoped walking the cobblestone streets of Arrow Rock and seeing real, living history would help the students appreciate the stories of their state.

But he wasn’t so sure.

He heard the telltale swoosh of a text message being sent as the brakes squealed and the bus pulled into a dusty parking lot.

“Welcome to Arrow Rock!” the bus driver shouted, opening the double doors.

“OK,” Charlie thought. “Here we go.”



NEWSPAPER CONNECTIONS

Many school districts are considering banning cell phones in their schools.

Check your local newspaper to see if that is a possibility in your area.

Express your opinion on the topic to school district administrators.



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Chapter Two

Field Trip Begins

The first thing Charlie noticed as he stepped off the bus in Arrow Rock was the heat.

“Ok, Class! Let’s get into our groups!” Charlie shouted. He called out students’ and chaperones’ names, continuing until all of the groups were organized. “Rory, Samantha, Zuri, Henry, and Amir, you’re with me,” he told them, “Let’s get out there and explore Arrow Rock! We’ll meet back at the bus no later than 2 p.m.”

Then the whining began.

“Mr. P?” Henry whined. “It’s hoooooot.”

“Hot?” Charlie asked incredulously, ignoring his own sweat. “What are you talking about? It’s a great day to explore!”

With that, he began marching toward Main Street. The students followed.

“Shaaaddee!” Amir shouted, suddenly sprinting to a covered wooden boardwalk lining the shops on Main Street.

“Amir!” Charlie called. “Stay together!”

But the shady boardwalk did look inviting.

Charlie and the other students followed him.

“Now, this is what I’m talking about,” Henry sighed, collapsing into a rocking chair and pulling out his phone. “Much better.” Charlie just rolled his eyes.

Suddenly, a door swung open, and a dusty man with a brown goatee exited the shop. He looked like he needed some shade as he cracked open a cold soda. The man paused and assessed the kids.

“Visitors?” the man asked. “Field trip!” Charlie replied excitedly. “I’m Charlie Palmer, teacher of these fifth graders from Columbia.”



“Nice to meet you, Charlie, I’m Tom.”

“Do you live here?” Charlie asked Tom.

“Nope,” Tom answered. “Only a few people still live here. The village is maintained for its historic value. I’m a Doctor of Archaeology from Tennessee, excavating in this area with my students.”

“Wow! Like Indiana Jones?” Zuri asked, perking up. “What are you looking for?”

Dr. Tom answered with a delighted chuckle, “Right now, I’m looking for a lost nesting vase. I’ve found a collection of nearly perfect nesting vases while excavating near the Masonic Lodge. But there’s one missing.”

“Hmm,” Charlie said. “Interesting.”

Dr. Tom said his goodbyes and added “Enjoy Arrow Rock!”

“Sure,” muttered Rory, “I’ll enjoy the shade of this tree!” He slumped down under a big oak.

“Ouch!” Rory yelled. “I sat on something!” Rory pulled out a perfectly preserved piece of pottery tucked between the oak’s roots. He dusted it off.

“Hey,” Rory shouted. “There’s writing on it!”

Open your eyes and start the chase, Follow my clues to the missing vase. Keep your eyes open; look high, not low, Go to the place of the flint tipped arrow.

“Mr.P! Mr. P!” Rory called, “Look at this! I think it might be some kind of clue!” But just as Rory showed Charlie the pottery, the writing mysteriously disappeared.

NEWSPAPER CONNECTIONS

Check your local newspaper for articles about archaeological work in your area, be it recent or not.

Summarize the discoveries or conclusions.



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Chapter Three

An Osage Indian

Rory squealed. "Did anyone else just see that? There was writing, I swear!"

Rory, his friends and teacher were on a field trip to historic Arrow Rock, Missouri, where Rory had just discovered a mysterious pottery shard.

Charlie took the cracked piece from Rory. "Wow," he said. "This is perfectly preserved!"

"There was writing on it, about following the clues to find the vase," Rory pleaded.

"Hey," Zuri chimed in. "Dr. Tom talked about a missing vase. Maybe we could find it!"

Charlie saw more excitement in them than he'd witnessed all day.

"Well," he said slowly. "Let's decipher the clue."

"Look high, not low," Rory murmured. "To the place of the flint arrow...or something like that."

Samantha perked up. "Mr. P, you said something on the bus about Native Americans making arrow tips from the rock on the bluff?"

Charlie smiled as five pairs of eyes looked past him toward the craggy rock formation that was the town's namesake.

Charlie said cheerily, "Should we go check out the actual Arrow Rock?"

"Let's go!" the students replied, finally forgetting the heat. After a long hike, they came to the top of the bluff, with an expansive view of the Missouri River far below.

Charlie watched as all five students began searching the ground for more pottery and noticed there was not a phone in sight.

Rory was searching through the rocks and plants, imploring the others to help.



"It's impossible," Amir sighed. "We'll never find it."

"That depends on you," a deep, strange voice said.

The students and Charlie froze as a man emerged from the woods. He was dressed in the skins of an Osage warrior, but there was something peculiar about him. The warrior shimmered as if he were not quite there. It was like seeing a ghost!

Most teachers would be alarmed.

But Charlie was not most teachers. After his childhood adventures in the Capitol, he was somewhat used to the supernatural. The kids, however, were terrified.

"Hello," Charlie greeted the man with the cool confidence of experience. "I'm Charlie. And you are...?"

"Someone who can help you find what you seek," the man answered, stepping onto the bluff.

Henry stammered, "Um, well, um ...are you a ghost?"

"Arrow Rock is full of ghosts of the past," the man answered. "We will help you if you listen."

Samantha stepped forward, and the man suddenly disappeared. She gasped when something caught her eye.

"A piece of pottery," she shouted, picking it up. "There's writing on it!"

The ghosts of the past might make a lesser one faint,

But the brave must find the master of paint.



NEWSPAPER CONNECTIONS

Check your local newspaper for stories about haunted houses or places.

Write a poem in the style of Edgar Allan Poe and submit it to your school and local newspaper.

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Chapter Four

Artist George Caleb Bingham

The master of paint, Charlie's students muttered, watching the writing on the pottery shard slowly disappear.

"Look," Samantha said, "The pieces fit perfectly!"

The five friends were trying to solve the mystery of a missing vase, assisted by the supernatural!

"Back to town," Zuri said.

Charlie led the way. He'd never seen his students so engaged or excited. Thinking of his adventure at the Capitol, he felt a happy surge of *deja vu*.

Back in Arrow Rock, the kids looked frantically for a clue.

"The master of paint," Henry said. "Has to be an artist living around here."

"Lived," Zuri said, pointing, "Look! The sign says that house belonged to artist George Caleb Bingham."

Charlie had been in the Bingham Gallery during his Capitol adventure. He said, "George Caleb Bingham is from Arrow Rock. His family moved here when he was about your age and grew up to become an internationally acclaimed artist."

"The master of paint!" Amir shouted triumphantly. "Let's go!"

The kids crossed the threshold of the tidy red brick house with green shutters. Inside was simple pioneer décor, along with reproductions of Bingham's works gracing the walls.

Moving silently between paintings, the students studied Bingham's depictions of Missouri.

"Do you like them?" someone asked with a hint of amusement.

The kids were startled by a man in the middle of the room with the same shimmering quality of the Osage warrior.

"You're George Caleb Bingham!" Zuri cried. "Look!" she pointed from the ghost to a portrait of Bingham.

"I was about your age when I came to Arrow Rock," he said. "It was different then, a town on the edge of the wilderness, a stopping place for families heading to their futures, some planning to follow the Santa Fe Trail. My mother brought us here to find a better life too, after my father died."

The kids listened quietly. Charlie marveled at their rapt attention as Bingham continued.

"I loved to paint and was lucky my mother who encouraged me despite the work needed for a family to survive on the frontier. Teachers and mentors helped too. I wanted to capture the adventure and spirit of my home." Bingham gestured to the paintings. "I aimed to paint scenes of pioneer and river life and the political sphere. The early days of statehood were full of brave men and women with important stories to tell.

"We all have important stories to tell and impacts we can make in our communities," he added and then disappeared. Zuri saw a pottery shard on a table, lunged forward and grabbed it, hurrying to turn it over before its clue disappeared.

Find me in a place with libations and sustenance sold,

A gathering spot, well-known and incredibly old.



NEWSPAPER CONNECTIONS

Use context clues to define libations and sustenance, then do the same thing with unfamiliar words in your local newspaper.

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Chapter Five

Governor Meredith Miles Marmaduke

Charlie and his students exited the George Caleb Bingham House into the heat.

"Libations and sustenance sold," Henry muttered, repeating the newest clue. "Libations and sustenance sound good right now."

Charlie looked at his students, who were enthusiastic, but with waning energy.

"Let's break for lunch while we decipher this next clue," he suggested.

The students agreed, so Charlie led them to a restaurant called the J. Huston Tavern. A placard read, "Founded 1834: Oldest Restaurant West of the Mississippi."

The kids slid into their seats, appreciating the air conditioning. As they passed around menus, their banter was interrupted by a clanging sound coming from the kitchen. With lunch on their minds, they ignored the noise, but as time passed, the situation started to seem odd.

"There's no staff here," Henry declared. "No other guests. And what's that banging?"

Henry jumped up and headed toward the kitchen.

"Henry!" Charlie yelled. "Stay together!"

The teacher ran after him, and the students raced to follow.

"Hello? Anybody in here?" Henry called as he pushed into the kitchen.

Clang! Bang! Crash!

A shimmering man was in the kitchen, rummaging around, pulling out pots and pans!

Oldest restaurant west of the Mississippi, Henry remembered, a gathering spot, well-known and incredibly old.

"The clue to our next stop!" Henry shouted. "And I found another ghost!"

Spinning around, this ghost was fancy, with a stuffy high collar, long mutton-chop sideburns and jowls.

"Um, hi," Henry said. "Who are you? And are you, uh, looking for something?"



"Oh, hello!" He greeted them cheerily. "I am Meredith Miles Marmaduke! Pleased to make your acquaintance."

"I was one of the original planners of this fair village!" he boasted "My father-in-law and I! His name was Dr. John Sappington. Invented a treatment for malaria!

"We ran successful businesses before I took the leap into politics and eventually became..."

Marmaduke paused for dramatic effect.

"Governor!", he said shining with pride.

"Are you enjoying Arrow Rock?" he asked.

"Oh, yes," Samantha answered. "Very much."

"Tis wonderful," Marmaduke said as his face fell. "But as history tells, it's not all...perfect here."

"There's a shadowy past, too," he noted. "I bought slaves at auctions held on the tavern's steps, I'm ashamed to say. Slaves labored on my plantation, making me rich on the backs of real people. Shameful."

Marmaduke hung his head and began searching again.

"Aha!" he shouted.

He set another pottery piece on the table, just in front of Henry. "It's up to you to set things right," he told them. "Learn the full story. Always."

And then he was gone.

Zuri called, "Quick! Read the clue!"

Search next to a celebration of song and dance,

A place where stars perform and enchant.



NEWSPAPER CONNECTIONS

Use your local newspaper to compile a list of famous or important people who lived in your hometown.

An Adventure in Arrow Rock

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Chapter Six

Actress Celeste Holm

The students chattered excitedly as they left the kitchen. Henry stopped just short of their vacated table, now magically weighed down with hamburgers and fries.

“Lunch!” he shouted. “Finally!” Everyone filled their plates.

Charlie and the kids fit the new piece to the vase.

“A place where stars perform and enchant,” Samantha said thoughtfully between mouthfuls of food. “It must be a movie theatre. Is there one in Arrow Rock, Mr. P?”

“Theatre is a good guess,” Charlie told her. “But I’m not sure.”

Zuri was looking at the back of the menu. “There’s an ad here for the Lyceum Theatre in town. That sure sounds like a place for song and dance.”

“To the theatre?” Charles asked his revived students.

“To the theatre!” they chorused, heading out the door.

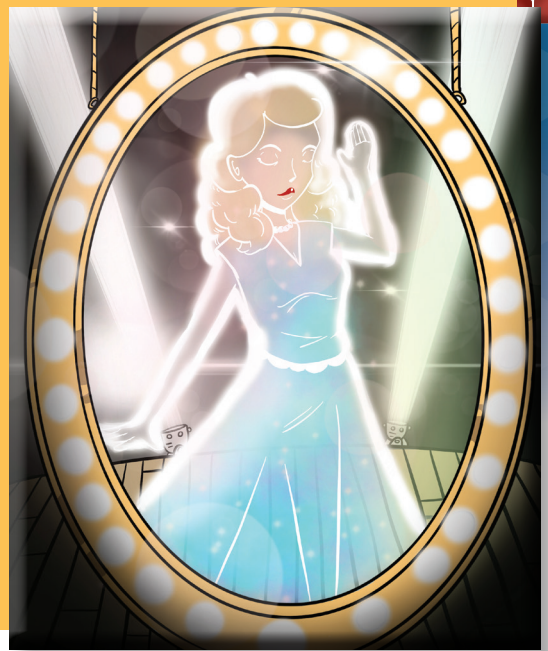
When they arrived, Zuri said, “It looks like a church.”

The Lyceum Theatre did look like a church with its white clapboard siding and picturesque windows.

Amir found a pamphlet by the front door. “Lyceum Theatre,” he read. “It was a church. When the congregation dwindled in the 1960s, the two families who owned the building turned it into a theatre. Today, it provides Broadway-caliber productions for audiences.”

“What are we waiting for!” Samantha cried.

Amir swung the door open, and the others followed as he headed to the stage. As he approached, the spotlights flashed on, illuminating a set and nearly blinding the startled students. Amir jumped into the spotlight, mimicking tap as he danced



across the stage. Suddenly, he tripped and toppled onto his side. When he looked up, before him was another shimmering apparition, a blonde woman with bright red lipstick, curls and pearls.

“Whoa,” Amir murmured, scrambling to his feet. “Who are you?”

“I’m Celeste Holm, of course!” the woman sang, striking a dramatic pose.

“She sure looks like a star!” Henry said.

“Indeed!” Celeste chirped in bubbly tones. “I was born in Manhattan and came of age on Broadway. In my time, I’ve graced many stages and silver screens.”

“Why are you in Arrow Rock?” Amir asked.

“I played Aunt Polly in the Tom Sawyer movie that was filmed here, a big role! That’s when Hollywood came to Arrow Rock. Just look at this theatre! So many actors and musicians have performed here.”

She grabbed Amir’s hands and spun him in a dance across the stage.

“Take a bow!” she directed as they completed their spin.

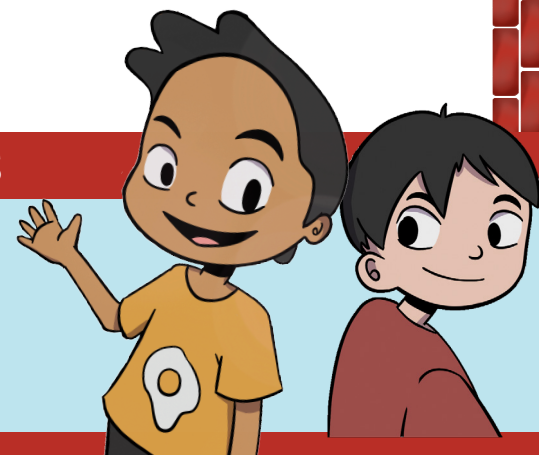
Amir bowed deeply. When he looked up, Celeste was gone! But right at his feet, sat a piece of pottery. He quickly picked it up.

One more piece needed to complete the vase,

Take time to appreciate a moment of grace.

NEWSPAPER CONNECTIONS

Learn about the theater scene in your area by reading the local newspaper. Find out the number of groups, types of performances, if auditions are open and other information you’d like to know. Share with friends and classmates.



An Adventure in Arrow Rock

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Chapter Seven

Pastor John Brown

“A moment of grace?” Samantha asked as the five kids and their teacher stepped out of the theatre and into the sunlight. “What’s that mean?”

The group walked along High Street, contemplating their clue. Suddenly, Charlie heard what sounded like singing.

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound...

“Do you hear that?” the teacher asked. The kids nodded.

“Look!” Rory said, pointing to a simple, white chapel. “It’s coming from that church.”

“A moment of grace!” Samantha gasped. “Let’s go!”

The music lured the students into the empty but lovingly preserved church. As the wooden door banged shut, the song faded away.

“Anyone else thinking that Arrow Rock is kind of spooky?” Henry asked.

The kids tiptoed to the first pew to sit together.

Charlie watched them and suddenly realized hours had passed since he’d seen any kids holding a phone. Instead of anxious and distracted, they looked engaged and curious as they gazed around the church.

No one was startled when a shimmering man emerged from the side of the chapel. The man stood before them, a friendly expression on his face, brown skin glistening.

“I’m John Brown,” he told them from the altar, clearly practiced at addressing a congregation. “Welcome to Brown’s Chapel Free Will Baptist Church. How has your journey been?”

“Busy,” replied Zuri, breathlessly. “We drove here from our school in Columbia, and we’ve been running all over town looking for pieces for this old, missing vase. We met an Osage warrior, George Caleb Bingham, Meredith Miles Marmaduke and Celeste Holm! Arrow Rock is fantastic.”

John chuckled.

“Fantastic, huh?” he asked. “You’ve seen a lot of places and met many people today. But there’s a community here you’ve yet to meet.”

The kids looked at him with interest.



“I’m speaking about the black community here in Arrow Rock,” John told them. “This church was built in 1869, and I was its first pastor. It was the center of the African American community. We even had a school here! People worshiped, gathered, ate, sang, celebrated and mourned here. The ties we made guided us through the ups and downs of history.”

“We learned about the slave traders at J. Huston Tavern,” Amir told him.

“That’s part of it,” John said. “But there’s more to the story than that. Those stone gutters running along Main Street? Skilled black tradesmen built them. Same for many of the brick buildings. After emancipation, many formerly enslaved people moved here to start new lives. By 1880, half of this town’s population was black. We had our traditions, lives and community in Arrow Rock. This place is very much ours, too.”

John’s eyes fell on Charlie, holding the almost completed vase.

“May I see it?” he asked.

Charlie handed it to the ghost, who reached into his shimmering pocket. His hand emerged, holding the last piece of pottery, which he slid into place. The vase was complete! The students squealed with delight. But Charlie was watching John’s hands. Something about the way he handled the vase seemed so natural.

Was John Brown the artist behind the mysterious vase?



NEWSPAPER CONNECTIONS

Are there ethnic communities in your area? If so, use the newspaper to learn about how they were treated when they came to the area, whether it was recently or long ago. Present the information to your class.

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Chapter Eight

Heading Home

As John slid the last piece of the vase into place, he looked up at Charlie. Their eyes met.

"That's right," he said. "I was an artist, too. I made many useful things at the potter's wheel and I also made them beautiful." He smiled.

"The black community contributed a lot to this place. Not just building its foundations but its arts community as well. The influence of our community here may have been ignored by generations who looked the other way, but it's always been here, and it's important. Look, and you'll see black influence all around you."

The kids nodded, taking in John Brown, the completed vase, and the church.

"Well," John said. "I expect now you've got a vase to deliver."

He handed the vessel to Charlie, who took it with careful reverence.

"History reminds you," he told them. "To never forget."

And then he was gone.

"Let's go find Dr. Tom!" Rory shouted excitedly.

The kids scurried out of the church, heading to the Masonic Lodge on 6th Street.

They arrived at a small, white clapboard house. A muddy graduate student sat on the steps, bits of pottery on a cloth around her.

"We're looking for Dr. Tom!" Samantha announced. "Is this his dig site?"

"It is," the student answered cheerily. "But he went to do research at the Print Shop Museum on Main Street."

"Quick!" Henry yelled. "Back to Main Street!"

Charlie had to jog to keep up as the students raced to a large, red brick building in the center of town.

The group burst through the doors, but the hush inside the Museum quickly stifled their exuberance.

"Wow," Zuri murmured. "Look at all of these presses and

old newspapers."

The group made their way around the room, examining everything. Charlie chuckled at his students, entranced by the many ways people once made newspapers. It contrasted sharply with their modern-day phone addictions.

Dr. Tom walked in and greeted them. "Charlie, class! How was your day in Arrow Rock?"

Everyone started talking at once.

"We saw lots of ghosts! We learned about history from all of them! We found clues, solved puzzles and finished your vase!"

"Whoa, whoa, whoa," Dr. Tom said. "You did what and met who?"

Charlie presented the vase to Dr. Tom whose eyes lit up.

"It's the missing nesting vase! It matches the collection perfectly! But how did you?..."

Charlie looked at his class. They radiated excitement.

"We took a journey through Arrow Rock history," he said. "And had help along the way."

Half an hour later, students and adults boarded their bus. As the driver turned onto I-70 East, Charlie sat back in his seat. The drive home felt so different. It was anything but silent. The kids bubbled with excitement, swapping stories and retelling history. Not a phone in sight.

Charlie's goal each year was to turn his students into who he became after his own adventure. And here they were, excited explorers of their world and its past.

And the rest, as they say, is history.



NEWSPAPER CONNECTIONS

This story ends at the Print Shop Museum. Write a short story of your own, based on the history of your area and submit it for possible publication. Wouldn't it be awesome if a press printed it?