

**Title:** *The Boy Who Saved the Town* by Brenda Seabrooke, (Tidewater Publishers, Centreville, MD, 1990)

**Literature Annotation:** This story is about the town of St. Michaels, Maryland and the people who lived and worked in the town around the time of the War of 1812. St. Michaels was an important shipbuilding center of privateers, blockade runners, and naval barges. Thus, the town was a target for British naval forces that set out to destroy it. St. Michaels became known as “The Town That Fooled the British” because, as legend goes, a young boy’s tree climbing helped the town discover a brilliant way to outwit the British.

**Grade Level:** 4

**Duration:** 2 days

**Economic Concepts:** Opportunity Cost; Consumption; Production

**Maryland Voluntary State Curriculum (VSC)**

**Geography Standard:** Students will use geographic concepts and processes to examine the role of culture, technology, and the environment in the location and distribution of human activities and spatial connections throughout time.

3.A.1.a Interpret a variety of maps using map elements (Grade 4)

3.B.1.c Explain how geographic characteristics affect how people live and work (Grade 4)

3.D.1 Describe how people adapt to, modify and impact the natural environment (Grade 4)

**Economics Standard:** Students will develop economic reasoning to understand the historical development and current status of economic principles, institutions, and processes needed to be effective citizens, consumers, and workers participating in local communities, the nation, and the world.

4.A.2 Describe how limited economic resources (natural, human, and capital) are used to produce goods and services to satisfy economic wants in Maryland (Grade 4)

4.A.3 Explain how technological changes have affected production and consumption in Maryland (Grade 4)

**History Standard:** Students will examine significant ideas, beliefs, and themes; organize patterns and events; and analyze how individuals and societies have changed over time in Maryland, the United States and around the world.

5.C.2.a Explain Maryland’s role in the War of 1812, such as the Battle of Baltimore, the Battle of Bladensburg, and the burning of Washington (Grade 4)

**Reading Standard (Comprehension of Informational Text):** Students will read, comprehend, interpret, analyze, and evaluate informational texts.

- 2.A.4 Determine important ideas and messages in informational texts (Grade 4)
- 2.A.4.g Draw conclusions and inferences and make generalizations and predictions from the text (Grade 4)
- 2.A.4.j Connect the text to prior knowledge or experience (Grade 4)

**Lesson Objectives:** Students will be able to...

- describe the location of St. Michaels
- explain why people lived in St. Michaels
- identify reasons why the British wanted to attack the town
- identify businesses and jobs that employed people in the town
- identify jobs that children had to perform
- explain how the people of St. Michaels used natural, capital and human resources
- make a brochure that will explain how people modified the natural environment to build the town of St. Michaels, and how natural, capital and human resources were used to produce goods and services

**Vocabulary:**

cobbler                      militia                      schooner                      barges                      blackout

**Materials:**

- Book: *The Boy Who Saved the Town*
- Transparency: "Map of Maryland" (Resource 1)
- Transparency: "The Republican Star" (Resource 2)
- "Welcome to St. Michaels" (Resource 3): one for each student

**Teacher Background:**

- Knowledge of the War of 1812
- Knowledge of the importance of shipbuilding to Maryland in the 1700s and 1800s
- Knowledge of what activities tourists find when visiting St. Michaels today

**Lesson Development**

**Motivation:** Setting for the story

1. Place a transparency of a "Map of Maryland" on the overhead projector and ask a student to point out the location of St. Michaels and describe its location in Maryland. Next, draw student attention to the Bay Region insert from Resource 1 using the overhead projector. Ask a student to locate St. Michaels and describe its location using this map insert. Then, using the full transparency, ask a student to explain the differences between the maps.
2. Explain to the students that one of the first land grants given in 1644 was "The Beach," a fifty-acre tract of land covering the present town of St. Michaels. Ask the students to explain:
  - what they think the land looked like in 1644 (*trees, woods, forests*)
  - what had to be done to this land and why (*trees were cut down; land was cleared to build on and farm*)

- what two major industries they think were established because of the location of this land and why (*tobacco farming because the land was flat and climate good for growing it; shipbuilding because of the trees and the location on a river near the Chesapeake Bay*)
3. Tell the students that during the time of the War of 1812, St. Michaels was an important shipbuilding center and, because of this, the British naval forces attempted to destroy the shipyards and boats that were under construction.
  4. Read the story, *The Boy Who Saved the Town*

**Activities:** Story Discussion

1. Describe St. Michaels and what Barnaby saw people doing from his perch in the tree. (*He could see some of the 60 big and small houses; a dirt road leading to the water; his father's shipyard; ships at the wharf; lots of trees; soldiers on guard; people on horseback, riding in carriages and walking. The town had a population of about 300 people.*)
2. What types of jobs do you think the people living in St. Michaels had? (*Most of the townsmen were employed in the shipyards, but St. Michaels also had two blacksmith shops, a brick kiln, a mill for grinding grain, several stores, and a market house where farmers sold products from the gardens, orchards, and dairies. There were also spinners, weavers, and people who sold local seafood.*)
3. Why do you think overseas merchants, captains and sailors lived in and near St. Michaels? (*The river and the Chesapeake Bay connected the town and the water routes to England and other countries for trading.*)
4. What types of chores did Barnaby have? Do you have any of these chores to do today? (*Barnaby had to carry water from the well, chop and carry wood, and watch his little brother.*)
5. What was happening in St. Mary's Square when Peter and Barnaby got there? Why was this happening? (*Militia from other towns along the Easter Shore were drilling so they would be prepared to protect St. Michaels's and other towns from the British.*)
6. An early ordinance provided for the confinement of wandering geese and swine. Why do you think the town needed this rule? (*The citizens did not want geese and pigs wandering in the streets getting in the way of the people or getting lost or stolen.*)
7. Look at the picture where the men are gathering the women, children and belongings to leave the town. Name at least three natural, capital, and human resources and explain how they were used. (**Natural Resources:** *horses for transportation; water for jobs and transportation; tobacco for trading; wood for furniture, boxes and wagons. Capital Resources:* *boxes, tools, barrels and wagons for storing, fixing, building and transporting items. Human Resources:*

*soldiers for protection; shipbuilders who built ships for transportation and protection; horse-back riders who drove carriages and wagons.)*

8. Explain why you think the town of St. Michaels had the first blackout on record and why they did this. *(Barnaby's tree climbing gave the townsmen the idea that if lanterns were hung from trees and all the lights in the town were out, the British might think the town was located on a hillside and shoot their cannon at the lights in the trees, overshooting the town.)*
9. Explain how you think Barnaby felt when General Benson shook his hand. *(Accept any reasonable answer with an explanation.)*

### **Conclusion**

1. Place a copy of the newspaper article from the *Republican Star* on the overhead and ask students to read it.
2. Discuss the article with the students and explain that now people in the town could go back to doing jobs and activities that they had not been able to do for several years because of fear of British attack.
3. Tell students that by 1813 tobacco exporting had almost ended because the local farmers switched to growing wheat, corn, and raising sheep and cattle. Boats were used to carry people and freight to the towns and cities along the Chesapeake Bay. For awhile, St. Michaels continued to be a boatbuilding and seafood center where crabs and shellfish were harvested and processed.
4. Ask students to predict what technology might have caused changes in St. Michaels and what happened to the town as a result of the changing technology. *(Later, steamships transported farm products and seafood to Annapolis and Baltimore. The railroad came to St. Michaels in 1890; as visitors arrived, boarding houses were established. Later, the automobile was invented. This change in transportation meant that people could travel farther away from work and relax; thus some jobs like shipbuilding were no longer as important to the town and, therefore, tourism became more important.)*

### **Thoughtful Application**

1. Give each student a copy of "Welcome to St. Michaels" (see Resource 3) and tell them that it is now their turn to make/complete a brochure about St. Michaels using information from the story and their prior knowledge of Maryland. Explain that in 1778, James Braddock developed a plan for building the town of St. Michaels. He purchased 127 acres at an auction and laid out approximately 20 acres of this land into streets and lots. He named the town "St. Michaels" after the parish and river of that name.

2. Tell students to think about what they know and what they learned from the story to explain three specific ways people modified the natural environment to build the town.
3. Next, tell students to think about the goods and services produced in St. Michaels during this time period. Tell students to select one of the goods or services and complete the chart by identifying the natural, capital, and human resources used to produce the good or service.

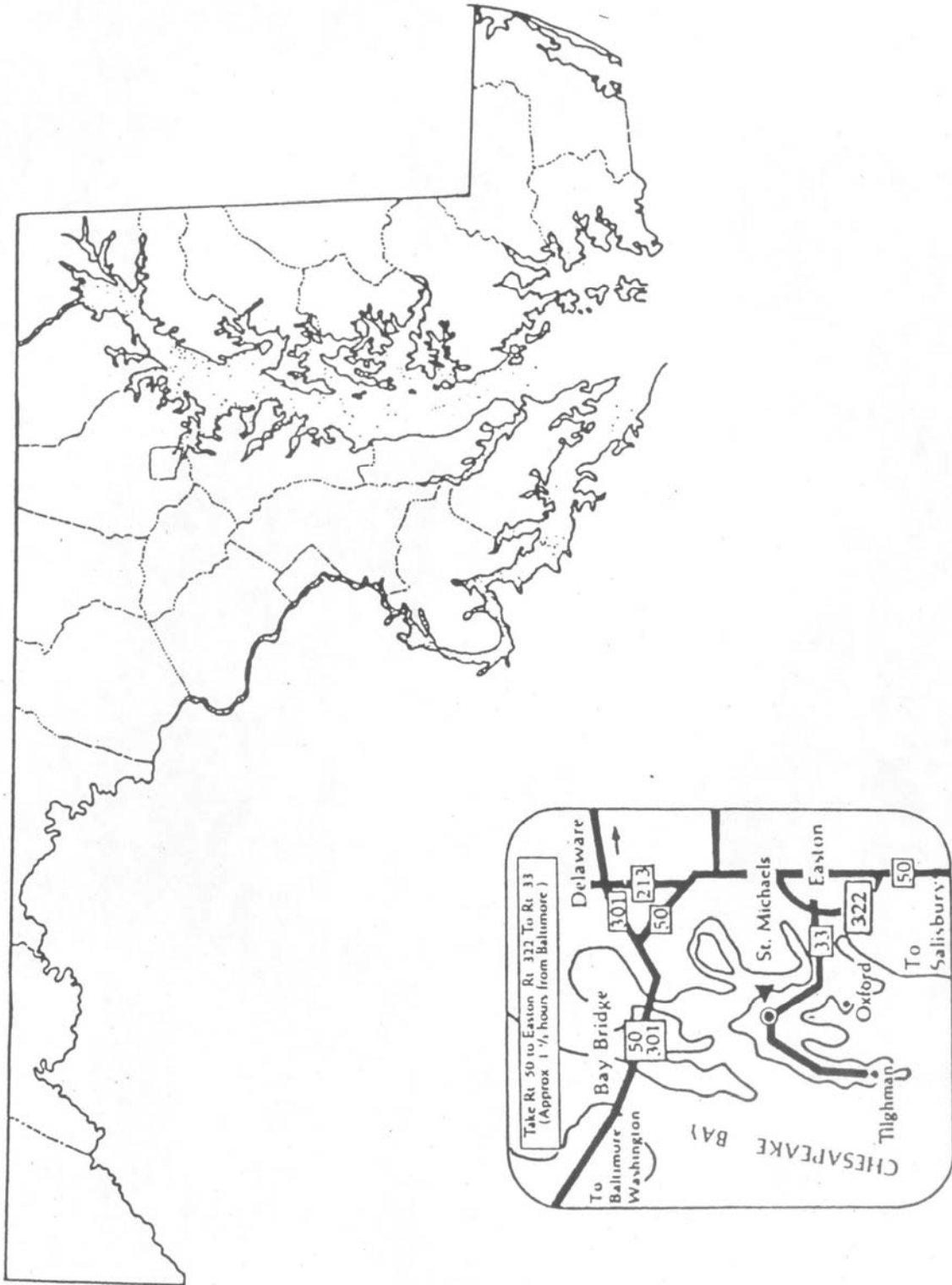
***Suggested Responses***

Modification: During the first years, forests were cleared to build roads, streets, buildings, and ships. The land was tilled for growing tobacco and wheat. Wells were dug to provide water for drinking.

Product or Good: Natural Resource + Capital Resource + Human Resource = Product or Service

Trees + Saws + Shipwright = Ships

Cotton + Shears + Sailmaker = Sails



The Republican-Start in Easton  
For Tuesday, August 31<sup>st</sup>, carried the following item:

“We have the pleasure of announcing to our readers that information was received at camp, yesterday, from our videttes upon Tilghman Island that during the morning a ship came up the bay under press of sail, fired several guns, when the whole fleet got under way and stood down the bay, and at 2 o'clock General Benson discharged the troops at St. Michaels.”

At the time of their discharge, the following orders were read to the militia:

“Brigade Orders, August 30, 1813. As the British are on their way down the bay, the militia at this post are discharged except such a guard as Colonel Auld may see proper to keep here. The Caroline militia will deliver their arms and cartridges to the Armorer at Easton. The extra arms will be delivered to the Quartermaster, Mr. Carey, and sent to Easton. The General in behalf of his country, sincerely thanks the militia that have remained at this place, under many privations, and in some instances, under disagreeable circumstances. In sight of a menacing enemy, the troops presented a determined front in support of our country's rights. All Commandants of corps and companies are on their return to their respective homes, to order court martial upon all deserts and delinquents. There is to be no firing of guns, no waste cartridges. Every officer stands accountable for the safe keeping of arms and equipments, and as the main body of the militia have done themselves honor, the General hopes and flatters himself that they will return home with the same honor.”

Think about the goods and services produced in St. Michaels during this time period. Select one of the goods or services and complete the chart by identifying the natural, capital, and human resources used to produce a product or service.

Natural Resources

+

Capital Resources

+

Human Resources

=

Good or Service

Now it is your turn to make a brochure about St. Michaels using information from the story and your prior knowledge of Maryland.

In 1778, James Braddock developed a plan for building the town of St. Michaels. He purchased 127 acres at an auction and laid out approximately 20 acres of this land into streets and lots. He names the town "St. Michaels" after the parish and rive of that name. Think about what you know and the story to explain three specific ways people modified the natural environment to build the town.

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2. \_\_\_\_\_

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3. \_\_\_\_\_

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