

# MEESE MANOR: LEGEND OF THE MYSTIC MAPLE

## DESIGN CONCEPT FOR AN ORIGINAL DARK RIDE

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# DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my parents, Paul and Jane Frank. I am so incredibly grateful for your endless love and support. Thank you for being my biggest cheerleaders and encouraging me in all that I pursue. Dad, you've taught me the value of hard work while also instilling in me the humor and silliness that helped to bring this thesis to life. Mom, thank you for inspiring me to pursue art and design and always encouraging me to be my own person. I will always look up to you for your creative knack. And double shaka to my brother, Bryan, for being my childhood accomplice and helping me to play in make-believe worlds long before ever beginning studies in Themed Entertainment Design. Love you all so, so much.

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# MEESE MANOR: LEGEND OF THE MYSTIC MAPLE

## DESIGN CONCEPT FOR AN ORIGINAL DARK RIDE

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This thesis explores fictional world building and its application to three dimensional storytelling in a theme park setting in the form of a children's dark ride. The original story and designs presented are components of a concept design package. The ride story is told as a step-through of the guest experience in which guests follow a beaver butler through a log cabin mansion inhabited by a family of moose, along the way discovering the reason why maple trees only yield syrup at the end of winter (as based on an Abenaki legend). From the story stem all design decisions, including ride track and vehicle design. Emphasis is placed on character development and humor. The study makes a case for the value of non-branded rides in theme parks.

*Keywords: Theme Park, Dark Ride, Log Flume, Concept Design, Character Development, Storytelling, Humor, Moose, Woodland*

## INTRODUCTION

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“As they plunge into the dark tunnel, [they] are made to feel that they are not just spectators of an adventure but participants in it.”<sup>1</sup> “They” are riders on a theme park dark ride. A dark ride is an indoor amusement ride where guests in guided vehicles travel through specially lit scenes that typically contain animation, sound, music, and special effects.<sup>2</sup> Rides such as Disney’s *Pirates of the Caribbean* or the *Haunted Mansion* come to mind. Dark rides are a storytelling medium, much like books or films, but told in three dimensions. The audience is able to see, hear, and smell the action of the story first-hand and often even play a role in the narrative, elevating the degree of viewer participation from an experience akin to the cinema to one in which the viewer is actually living inside the movie. A well-designed dark ride offers a highly immersive experience in which spectacle is around every turn. The creation of such a ride is no simple task. Multi-disciplinary teams of people and many months (sometimes years) of hard work are required to design and engineer these short, delightful adventures. I felt it would be a great (but fun) challenge to design a dark ride as a culmination of my studies in Themed Entertainment Design. It is an exercise that requires me to employ all that I have learned while presenting me with the opportunity to craft my own story. Many factors contributed to my pursuit of studying and working in the themed entertainment industry, but none weigh so heavily as wanting to design immersive storytelling experiences for children that allow families to

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<sup>1</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan and Steven D. Hoelscher, "Disneyland: Its Place in World Culture," in *Designing Disney's Theme Parks: The Architecture of Reassurance*, ed. by Karal Ann Marling (Montréal: Centre Canadien D'architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture: 1997) 196.

<sup>2</sup> *World Heritage Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Dark Ride," accessed February 2, 2016, <http://www.worldheritage.org/article/WHEBN0000175575/Dark%20ride>.

have a great time together. I thus set out to create a concept design package for a children's dark ride as an exploration of fictional world building and its application to three-dimensional storytelling in a theme park setting.

## INSPIRATION

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First and foremost, I wanted to make something that kids would love. Living in an age in which the media and, consequently, theme parks depict increasingly mature subject matters marketed towards teenage and adult audiences, I chose to target my story towards young children (ages 3-11) and work within the animal world. “Anyone who remembers childhood is likely to recall fanciful animal characters—Peter Rabbit, Barney the dinosaur, Curious George, or Nemo the damselfish. Children’s picture books, stories, toys, games, and media are saturated with animal symbols, reflecting, in part, the cultural assumption that animals and children go naturally together.”<sup>3</sup> I also have a personal dear love of animals and the natural environment. My empathy for nature was engrained in me through my undergraduate studies in landscape architecture and sustainable design, and I have always been a great admirer of the field of animation, most especially of anthropomorphic animal characters. These factors would come to influence me when I was challenged as part of a Game Design class in Character Development to come up with two characters and their game story. I thought up the kooky tale of a worrisome beaver butler who lives with an eccentric family of moose in a log cabin mansion deep in the Canadian wilderness. My two characters were Mr. Flapsby (the beaver butler) and Master Meese (the benevolent overseer). We were to select one character to develop visually, the final product being a 3D character model, and so Mr. Flapsby was born (see Figure 1). As I talked about Mr. Flapsby and his story with classmates, friends, and family, I found myself and whomever I was chatting with smiling and laughing. It dawned on me that I had something with

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<sup>3</sup> Aubrey H. Fine, *Handbook on Animal-Assisted Therapy: Theoretical Foundations and Guidelines for Practice* (San Diego: Academic, 2000), 209.

potential. I knew I wanted to expand upon the ideas planted by my Game Design course, and my thesis was the perfect opportunity to do it.

## CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

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Before beginning the design of the ride or even to refine the story, I first focused on the characters (see Figures 2-8). As legendary *Looney Tunes* animator, writer, and director extraordinaire Chuck Jones said, “Character *always* comes first, before the physical representation.”<sup>4</sup> I needn’t work on the form of the characters but rather their personalities. Personalities would need to be thought out and then visual appearances would follow. Although I was certain I wanted animal characters, there were still vast possibilities. I thought of many different scenarios from royal crabs to yodeling goats, but settled on the idea of a beaver and moose. One of my main priorities was originality. I wanted my characters to be unique from pre-existing IP’s (Intellectual Properties) and wanted to choose animals with distinguishing characteristics. To cite Chuck Jones again, he noted that with characters “it is the individual, the oddity, the peculiarity that counts.”<sup>5</sup> Beavers are certainly peculiar creatures with their buck teeth, paddle tails, and construction skills but it was up to me to imbue personality—where the real oddity comes in. Attributing a butler occupation immediately helped me to imagine the beaver’s mannerisms, and the dignified air of a large yet gangly moose brought to mind a high society eccentric. I had my characters’ beginnings but I needed to delve deeper. What was their relationship? Who were their family members? I was fortunate to get a head start on character analysis in my Character Development course by completing two character profile worksheets, exploring the minds of Mr. Flapsby and Master Meese and discovering what makes them tick—

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<sup>4</sup>Chuck Jones, *Chuck Amuck: The Life and Times of an Animated Cartoonist* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1989), 14.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

what motivates them, their hobbies, their habits, and their fears (see Appendices A and B).

These analytical exercises helped me to better understand the animal world they live in and, in turn, develop the story for the ride (see Figure 9).

## ADAPTING A NATIVE AMERICAN LEGEND

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When approaching the story that would be told on the ride, I was most interested in exploring the grand cabin the Meese family called home. At first I thought along the lines of an Omnimover ride through the manor, similar to Disney's *Haunted Mansion*, on which guests would pass through various rooms with a series of vignettes while the Meeses are stuck inside during the harsh winter. Alternatively, I thought of a story that began in the manor but largely took place outdoors (either actually outside, simulated outdoors contained inside a show building, or both). The story followed Mr. Flapsby on his quest to find the legendary Mystic Maple in an attempt to gain the respect and admiration of the Meeses. The ride would closely follow the Hero's Journey and Mr. Flapsby would encounter friends and foes along the way before ultimately finding the tree and bringing back its scrumptious syrup. There was a much stronger storyline to this version, but it took the guest experience away from the manor that I was most interested in exploring and where I believed there was opportunity for something more fun and original than the archetypal hero's quest. As I grappled with defining the story my advising professor, Mike Devine, suggested I look into Native American origin stories to give the ride a jumping-off point that would initiate the action. To my great satisfaction I came upon the Abenaki legend, "Gluskabe Changes Maple Syrup" (see Appendix C). Not only were the Abenaki Indians a Native American people found in eastern Canada (the hypothetical location of Meese Manor) but their legend dealt directly with maple syrup—the Meeses favorite food.<sup>6</sup> The legend explains why the sap of maple trees flows at only one time of the year (late winter/early spring).

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<sup>6</sup> "Abenaki Tribe," *Native Languages of the Americas*, accessed January 19, 2016, <http://www.native-languages.org/abenaki.htm>.

Long ago, sweet sap would gush year-round but the people became lazy and spent their days laying around drinking sap instead of tending to their village.<sup>7</sup> As punishment, Gluskabe (a god-like human) and the Creator decided to fill the maple trees with water so that the sap became watered down.<sup>8</sup> The sap would return to being thick and sweet “for only a short time each year so that they would remember the error of their ways.”<sup>9</sup>

I had my origin story but I needed to adapt it to the world of Mr. Flapsby and the Meeses. It was clear the Meeses could fill the role of the neglectful people who indulge too much in the syrupy sweetness. Returning to the idea of the Mystic Maple and placing it at the center of the house, I was able to incorporate the legendary tree while keeping the action of the story centered on the manor. This would be the Meese’s source of syrup which they would exploit. But how would the syrup be taken away from them? To answer this question, I returned to the concept of winter hibernation and the coming of spring. I thought of using snow melt as impetus for the manor to flood, thus watering down the tree, but with the Meeses too full to swim they would need rescuing. Using his natural beaver abilities, Mr. Flapsby chews a hole in the trunk of the Mystic Maple to drain away the water (creating an opportunity for a second drop), but causing the syrup to become watered down in the process as is told in the original legend. This leads to answering the question: What makes the Mystic Maple mystic? As backstory, the Mystic Maple is the origin tree of all maples. As such, whatever happens to the Mystic Maple affects all other maple trees, similar to the concept of a voodoo doll and its power over the

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<sup>7</sup> “Gluskabe Changes Maple Syrup: An Abenaki Legend,” *Snowowl.com*, accessed January 19, 2016, <http://www.snowowl.com/legends/abenaki/abenaki3.html>.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

person it represents. Hence, if the Mystic Maple has watery syrup, so do all other maple trees.

I then had to tackle the issue of how the audience would understand the implications of what was happening. How would they know this is an origin story? I had had an idea for a porcupine chief character but was not sure how I could incorporate him into the story and how he would relate to the other characters. I now had the perfect role for him to play as well as a story to tell in the queue. While waiting to board the ride, guests would wind through the village of the Porcupine Tribe. Here they would be introduced to the legend by the wise, old storyteller, Chief Porcupine. His introduction gives guests a purpose for boarding the ride: to find out what happened to the Mystic Maple and why sugar maples only yield sap (aka syrup) at the end of winter. For story purposes, maple “syrup” is used in place of “sap” even though sap is what is produced by the tree and syrup is what is made after processing the sap. Syrup is simply a much more appealing and yummy substance than sap (especially to kids). Chief Porcupine bookends the experience by appearing again at the end of the ride to explain the lesson learned and the effects of what was witnessed on the ride.

Grounding the story in Native American legend led to the incorporation of the Porcupine Tribe which in turn allowed me to use mystic powers (in the form of special Porcupine canoes) as a means of transporting guests into the story without seeming beyond reason. There is much controversy over associations in popular culture of magic with Native Americans, as was recently in the spotlight with the release of J.K. Rowling’s “History of Magic in North America.” However, by creating a tribe of porcupine with their own culture, I am in no way attempting to reference any specific Native American tribe. Rather, the porcupines are an indigenous clan to the forest and have developed their own set of imagery and traditions. Yes, the story told by *Meese*

*Manor: Legend of the Mystic Maple* is inspired by an Abenaki legend, but the tale is an entirely new one. In this way it is my intent that the original story remains respected and that the use of talking animal characters underlines them as fantastical creatures not seriously associated with Native American peoples.

## GUEST EXPERIENCE

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The following is a detailed step-through of the guest experience, beginning in the queue and ending with the ride exit back out into the park. The step-through is written as if you and I are guests who have decided to ride Meese Manor and details the experience from a first-person perspective (see Figures 10 and 11 to follow along).

### Queue

We begin at the entrance framed by two totem poles. A ways away to our right stands Meese Manor above a calm pool of water, elevated atop a plateau of mud and sticks, surrounded on all sides by rushing water. Our approach to the manor first takes us through the neighboring forest. A thin trail of grey smoke rising above the tree tops draws us in. The forest trail opens up to reveal a tribal camp inhabited by porcupines. Wigwams dot the forest clearing along the water's edge. The path leads us to an enormous hollow stump repurposed as a meeting house. Inside, we gather round a central platform atop which burns a small fire. The lights darken. The warm but dim glow of the fire is all that illuminates the cozy theater space. With a spark and flash of flame, Chief Porcupine appears before us. Though small in size, he casts a large shadow on the wall behind. Chief Porcupine greets us and introduces us to the Legend of the Mystic Maple:

“The Porcupine Tribe welcomes you, brothers and sisters. Here, we are one with nature and work to nurture and protect our beautiful homeland, living lives founded on the principles of balance and harmony. When this balance is thrown off, the results are rarely favorable. Our most treasured tree, the sugar maple, was forever altered after the origin tree, the Mystic Maple, fell victim to a disruption of the natural balance one thawing winter day. Ever since, maple trees are

only able to produce syrup at the end of the cold months. But the Legend of the Mystic Maple is a tale best told through the eyes of a young beaver. Let us journey back to the day our story took place...”

Chief Porcupine turns and reaches his arm out towards the back wall. Two panels pull back to reveal a passage. The Chief watches on as we exit and proceed into the passageway.

The passageway is a short, relatively dark stone tunnel. Dim lanterns hang from the arching ceiling above. Small porcupine footprints dot the hardened muddy ground. The hallway quickly opens into a large cavernous space containing the load area. Reflections from the glowing turquoise water below dance on the stalactite-covered ceiling. We watch on as canoes ferry passengers along a slender waterway and out of the cavern. A sloping path leads us up and over the opening through which canoes have been entering the cave. After winding back down to the water level, we are ready to embark. A birch canoe pulls up adorned with the porcupine symbol on the back and a wooden beaver masthead at the front. We are ushered into the boat by cast members (honorary members of the porcupine tribe) dressed in woven cloaks and fringe-edged pants. Once seated, the canoe pushes forward, gently gliding out of the cavern and into a large misty tunnel.

#### SCENE 1

We round a bend and see the light of day gleaming ahead as we are greeted by the echoes of rushing water. As we grow nearer to the opening we are able to see a view of the calm pool of water below and the manor just to our left. However, our attention is quickly grabbed by the realization that we are about to drop down a waterfall. The canoe tilts forward and we gaze down at the log beaver dam waiting for us at the bottom. The next second we are falling

through the mist and splash down underneath the dam, entering into a bedroom.

## SCENE 2

All is spotless, neat, and organized. We quickly spot the furry young beaver (Mr. Flapsby) Chief Porcupine told us of wearing a cream sport coat. He sits with his back to us at a small desk on which lies a pile of toothpicks and a bottle of wood glue. Each toothpick is carefully chewed down from small logs into perfectly pointed, dainty sticks. The light of the desk lamp casts a shadow of the toothpick model he is absorbed in building upon the stick-encrusted mud wall. We watch the toothpicks slowly grow higher as the shape of Big Ben begins to take shape. Flapsby's modest collection of British landmark toothpick creations is proudly displayed on the shelves above his bed. A violin case lays on the ground beneath a music stand in the corner. Just as Mr. Flapsby cautiously attempts to place a final toothpick into place, he is startled by a ringing bell, causing him to knock the model into pieces. We look over to where we heard the sound and see a series of bells connecting to various rooms of the home with labels reading from left to right: Master Meese, Madam Meese, Maldwin, Mentley, and Menjamin. The brass bell above "Master Meese" continues to ding, teetering back forth. We leave Mr. Flapsby's quarters and continue into a hallway.

## SCENE 3

Hung along the mud and stick walls of a short hallway are portraits of a family line of beavers (specifically beaver butlers), beginning with the oldest member, Mr. Flapsby I, and ending in the present with Mr. Flapsby III whom we just encountered. A left turn at the end of this hall takes us up an incline inside another hallway—our first foray into Meese Manor. The wallpapered walls display portraits of the esteemed Meese family as well as documentation of

their accomplishments. Master Meese is featured in a newspaper clipping for founding the charity Goose to Goose Global—helps geese reconnect with family members lost during migration. A canvas splatter painting hangs prominently. A photo shows Maldwin playing in his first piano recital. One of Menjamin’s crayon drawings of Mr. Flapsby (incorporating some of his father’s stamps as a border) hangs proudly. The hallway ends and opens into the great hall.

#### SCENE 4

Enter the spacious great hall. Outside the floor-to-ceiling windows snow gently falls on the icy surface of the water and blankets the woods. Here the young triplets, Mentley, Menjamin, and Maldwin, are wreaking havoc (all three are dressed in costume as an explorer, artist, and pirate respectively). Mentley hangs perilously from above on a large branch chandelier. Menjamin is drawing a face on a portrait of his grandfather. Maldwin hides in a pillow/cushion fort against the disheveled sofa with a slingshot ready to fire a pinecone aimed up at Mentley. Mr. Flapsby is wiping off the black ink drawn on the other portraits while looking back worryingly at Mentley dangling from above. We hear a deep but kind voice bellow from afar, “Flapsby!”

#### SCENE 5

We follow the direction of the voice out of the great hall and up an inclined lift. In this hallway we pass a large standing cuckoo clock as well as a advent-style calendar counting down the days of hibernation until the End of Hibernation Celebration. Carved in the shape of a tree, the cabinet contains 20 little doors of slightly varying size, each inscribed with a number leading up to the 20<sup>th</sup> of March. All doors are open excepting the last and biggest of all: 20.

#### SCENE 6

Proceed into Madam Meese’s craft room. Madam Meese has recently taken up splatter

painting and is engaged in the middle of her fourteenth painting of the day. She dons a frilly white apron covered with smears of color. Menjamin stands on a stool next to her. Small buckets of paint hang from his antlers. Each moose holds numerous paint-laden brushes in each hoof. With a swing of her arm, paint flies onto the canvas in messy splats, hitting the wall behind as well. Mr. Flapsby stands on a ladder, taping newspaper to the wall while mumbling worries about his pristine white sport coat.

#### SCENE 7

Enter Master Meese's study. Here we find a warm fire and Master Meese leaning perilously backwards in a comfy armchair behind his desk whilst partaking in his favorite pastime: stamp-licking. He declares, "Prepare a round of flapjacks, Mr. Flapsby! I'm quite famished."

#### SCENE 8

Enter into the kitchen where Mr. Flapsby is hard at work simultaneously mixing pancake batter (his own family recipe) and flipping flapjacks on the griddle. On the counter sit stacks of flapjacks that nearly touch the ceiling. Jugs and bottles of syrup fill the back shelves. The bark of the maple tree growing through the center of the manor makes up the back corner of the kitchen. Pots, pans, and cooking utensils hang from branches protruding into the room. On the tree trunk is a direct tap to the sweet syrup contained inside.

#### SCENE 9

The dining room. The family is gathered round the dining table—a long, massive, roughly hewn tree section with shiny resin polish. Master Meese sits at the head of the table, chewing in delight. Madam Meese messily drizzles syrup from a teapot over a tall stack of flapjacks, standing on top of the seat of her chair on one leg and tilting forward in order to reach over the

top flapjack. Mentley lies under the table drinking syrup from the bottle while Maldwin and Menjamin stand atop the opposite end of the table engaged in a fork sword fight. Mr. Flapsby stands behind Master Meese balancing a silver tray on one hand with another fresh stack of flapjacks ready for the taking.

#### SCENE 10

We exit the dining room and continue into a dark passage where we begin to make our way up an incline. We find ourselves in a stairwell where Mr. Flapsby is busy finishing up decorations for the End of Hibernation Celebration. He stands to our left on the stair landing hanging garland on the banister. A banner strung across the wood stair spindles reads, "Goodbye Winter! Hello Spring!" A strange grumbling sound is soon heard up ahead. We proceed towards the sound up the stairs only to discover the Meese family in disarray.

#### SCENE 11

The Meeses are so stuffed from indulging in syrup from the Mystic Maple they can barely move. They are lollygagging about what appears to be a game room scattered with empty syrup bottles. At the center of the room is a pool table. Mentley lies atop the green felt on his belly with a red ball in his mouth as if he were a cooked pig while Menjamin attempts to draw him, his sketch pad perched upon his little bulging tummy. Maldwin sits on the floor against a table leg, poking his stomach with his toy pirate hook hand. Madam Meese has fallen asleep propped against the edge of the table. As she breathes in and out the eight ball moves back and forth, just nearly falling into the pocket before it is pulled away from the edge and back towards her mouth. Master Meese uses one cue stick to prop himself up and another to scratch his back. Mr. Flapsby stands at the edge of the room, arms crossed disapprovingly and tail tapping. He urges them to get up and

ready for the party while he goes outside to collect firewood.

#### SCENE 12

We follow Mr. Flapsby to a swim platform from which he can access the river. Before reaching the jumping-off point, we pass by a trophy case. Accolades include Mentley's trophy for the junior golf tournament and Mr. Flapsby's diving championship trophy. Past the trophies, we emerge outside on a small covered patio. The wood flooring of the house ends and acts as a sort of dock on which Mr. Flapsby is poised to dive down into the water. As the ride vehicle leaves the manor it splashes down into the calm river and begins to float.

#### SCENE 13

We drift past snowy pines and spot Mr. Flapsby on the shore gnawing down a tree. With a loud crack, the tree comes falling down over the water, stopping just above our heads. Danger avoided, we journey on.

#### SCENE 14

We soon see a cave and enter into a cozy bear's den. Here we find two bears in bed waking up from their winter's nap—both in their pajamas, one drinking coffee.

#### SCENE 15

We leave the darkness of the den back out into the open where our speed rapidly begins to pick up after drifting by a rushing waterfall fueled by new snowmelt (signaling the end of winter). We are swept up by the swift water rapids and alarmingly find ourselves heading straight towards Meese Manor with no sign of stopping. Just as we think the end has come, the log wall bursts open and we break through.

## SCENE 16

We are dumped into the midst of the party where forest animal guests of all shapes and sizes have joined the Meeses in their maple syrup stupor. The room is flooded as a result of the damage caused by the gushing winter snow melt but all expecting Mr. Flapsby are too full to swim. The trunk of the Mystic Maple fills the center of the space and we move in an arc around the tree as chaos swirls around us. A buffet table passes by as does a raccoon floating on a syrup barrel and a skunk in a chair. Madam Meese's hat bobs up and down nearby. The triplets are spotted floating in a punch bowl with Mentley's lantern lighting the way. After circling 300 degrees (not quite a complete circle) we see Mr. Flapsby perched on the trunk, gnawing a large hole through which all the water is draining in whirlpool-like fashion. When we reach the hole we are sucked through the trunk, dropping down with a splash to emerge into the room below.

## SCENE 17

Enter into the music room where decorations are hung and the festivities have resumed. Lanterns and streamers hang from branches lining the ceiling. Happy to have narrowly avoided disaster but with no more room in their stomachs for feasting, the animals continue their celebration with music and song. Cheery folk tunes fill the air.

Master Meese casually sits in a tufted green armchair while playing the accordion. Mr. Flapsby chirpily plays his fiddle perched atop a table top, his tail tapping to the beat. He looks on at Master Meese with a rare but infectious smile spreading across his face. Madam Meese strums a guitar. Raccoons play fiddle accompaniment. Skunk plays a washboard while simultaneously washing his tail. The triplets hold hooves and prance around in a circle on top of a grand piano, at which sits Bear at the keys. Off to the left in the residual water through which

we drift, Canadian geese perform a synchronized swimming routine choreographed to the music. Woodpeckers peck at the log wall to add to the ensemble. All the other guests join in with rhythmic clapping—us included. A merry End of Hibernation Celebration indeed!

#### SCENE 18

At the opposite end of the hall stands a massive stone fireplace. Fire has turned to smoke after being extinguished by the flood waters. We slowly move towards the dark fireplace opening and drift through the veil of mist. We are transported into a cave-like room. Chief Porcupine once again appears before us, illuminated from below by a small glowing fire from which a slow and steady trail of luminous smoke rises:

“After the Celebration, the Mystic Maple’s syrup was watered down by the draining of the flood. No longer was it thick and sweet. A full year would pass until the syrup would be delicious again, but shortly after, flooding caused by snow melt would again enter the tree, repeating the cycle. Because the Mystic Maple is connected to *all* maple trees, ever since that day sweet syrup can only be collected near the close of winter. Let this be a lesson to respect Mother Nature, her gifts, and the natural balance.”

As Chief Porcupine speaks, the smoke changes to reflect his words, swirling into the shape of the maple tree, falling leaves, falling snowflakes, rushing water, and ending in peace.

#### SCENE 19

As the Chief finishes his soliloquy we proceed up a steep incline back to the cave where our journey began. Here we exit our canoe and leave the cavern through a stone tunnel. Depicted on the warm, hard, sandy walls are simplistic indigenous paintings of the story we were

just told—the Legend of the Mystic Maple. A glimmer of daylight appears up ahead and we emerge out into the park.

## DEALING WITH THE UNFAMILIAR

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A challenge throughout this project has been dealing with the unfamiliar. Because the attraction is entirely of my own creation, the audience is completely unfamiliar with the story as opposed to a ride based on an IP, such as *Jurassic Park River Adventure* at Universal's Islands of Adventure. *Jurassic Park* is a popular, widely-known movie franchise. Even for those who have not seen any of the Jurassic films, he or she is likely to know that the subject matter relates to the modern-day interaction between people and dinosaurs and at one point these dinosaurs are likely to attack. Thus, there is a precedent of what to expect when going on a ride with "Jurassic Park" in the title. Without such inherent knowledge built into the story of Meese Manor, I needed to strongly rely on visual cues and common associations to attract the intended audience and effectively convey the story. From the title of the attraction, to the characters' dress, to interior décor, by referring to images and concepts in the audience's collective memory a sense of understanding can be created. The late great Imagineer John Hench speaks to tapping into collective memory as key to guiding guests' decision making: "...where [guests] choose to go in the parks, and what they choose to do—is influenced by all kinds of personal and collectively shared memories, as much as by the sensory stimuli around them. As designers, we need to understand the role of memory as we seek to engage the imagination in visualization and play."<sup>10</sup> For instance, when viewing the exterior of the *Haunted Mansion* at Disneyland, the appearance of the southern manor façade implies formality and wealth while props such as a horseless hearse carriage are clues to the Victorian-era ghosts and décor that await inside.

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<sup>10</sup> John Hench & Peggy Van Pelt, *Designing Disney: Imagineering and the Art of the Show* (New York: Disney Editions, 2003), 41.

With these considerations in mind, I set about designing the ride's front exterior where guests would approach (see Figure 12). There had to be stateliness about the façade to imply the Meese's prestige and wealth, while playful colors, such as red and purple, denote a sense of childish whimsy. The massive nature of the manor and its elevated position above the water help to establish the prominence of the Meese family. Taking inspiration from Tudor mansions, the framing of the home recalls storybook qualities further reinforcing that this is a ride based on fantasy and legend. The log structure reinforces the woodland setting and the handmade, rustic nature of much of the furnishings and decor. The mounded dam to the left of the manor is instantly recognizable as being the home of a beaver and a repeated moose antler motif decorating the outside of the home alludes to the residents within. Furthermore, the movement of the revolving waterwheel attached to the side of the manor helps draw attention and brings interest to an otherwise relatively static façade. And perhaps most importantly, guests are given a sneak peak of what is to come when they look over at the waterfall and see canoes dropping down the face and disappearing at the bottom under the dam. This way they can decide if this is a ride for them.

## A DASH OF HUMOR AND A SPLASH OF FUN

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When I went down to Disneyland the first time, I felt from the very beginning that there was very little that was entertaining or funny to me. There was just a lot of stuff, like a World's Fair...As soon as I started to work on this stuff, I tried to find ways to add something that people could get a laugh out of. When I redid the jungle river ride [*Jungle Cruise*] I added the Elephant Pool and Trapped Safari. My designs were some of the first laughs found in any attraction at the park. After all, people do go down to Disneyland to be amused, not to be educated. That was my feeling. You want to take your family down there and have some fun and be entertained, and humor doesn't hurt anybody.<sup>11</sup>

–Marc Davis

Injecting humor was key to *Meese Manor* being a success. Portraying the Meeses without humor would be a disservice to the characters and the story. The ride needed to be fun and silly, as most any 6-year-old would want it to be. With fun, humor, and entertainment in mind, I wrote the ride step-through and proceeded to translate written word into a design.

My main tool of incorporating humor into the ride lies in the use of sight gags. “A sight gag is a visually humorous staging of characters and implied events that allows a guest to read a humorous situation without much need of context or dialogue, often involving embarrassing situations, silly appearance or behavior, humorous juxtapositions, and slapstick.”<sup>12</sup> For example, in Madam Meese's art studio, a paint-covered Madam Meese exuberantly flings paint while Mr.

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<sup>11</sup> Quoted in David Younger, *Theme Park Design* (Inkling Wood Press, 2016), 140.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

Flapsby teeters on a ladder behind the painting wearing his cream sport coat. Newspaper is taped from the floor up to his height on the ladder, implying Mr. Flapsby's handiwork. He stands at the top of the ladder with his head turned away and his arms held out in front as a measly attempt to shield himself while muttering, "Not my coat!" With a flick of Madam Meese's arm, paint appears in splatters on the canvas (through the use of digital projection) and on the wall behind in the form of the rectangular outline of the canvas, framing Mr. Flapsby but without getting a drop of color on him. All this happens in a matter of seconds with only one line of dialogue, but the viewer is able to see the humor in the juxtaposition of the messy, care-free lady moose and the worrisome, clean small beaver.

Another tool used to entertain and immensely contribute to mood and emotion is music. Music is also "critical in dictating the pace of an attraction through its tempo."<sup>13</sup> On the ride music plays in the beginning in the cave, throughout the home, in the outdoor section, during the flood scene, and of course in the music room at the end. In large part, the music heard in *Meese Manor* adds to the lighthearted, playful nature of the scenes. Most of the music, including the celebratory music room scene, would consist of acoustic instrumental Canadian folk tunes highlighting the fiddle (an example can be heard here:

<https://youtu.be/z5TyIPfGKyA>).<sup>14</sup> Composer Richard Bellis comments, "...there is something about acoustic music that adds some kind of human empathy to what is an animated or a false representation of humans. It seems to be the case that if you put electronic with animation, it

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<sup>13</sup> Younger, 524.

<sup>14</sup> Graham Townsend, "Graham Townsend – Bully of the Town & Clarinet Polka," YouTube video, 4:46, posted by lizacreek, February 25, 2009, <https://youtu.be/z5TyIPfGKyA>.

would sort of double up on the artificiality of the animation...”<sup>15</sup> The woodland setting of the ride gives further reason to avoid any electronically made music as it would not be in fitting with the story. Fast-tempo, cheery tunes would help to make the speed of the ride seem faster than in actuality. In concept, the canoes move at an average pace of about 3 feet per second when not accelerating down drops, but the music would help to combat any feeling of languorous pacing and keep energy levels up. The Canadian fiddle music transitions to a slower-paced rhythmic drumming with tambourine accompaniment at the end of the ride when Chief Porcupine appears and can be heard in the cave area of the queue. The mood of these scenes are more serious in nature and so dictate a different background score.

Though there are many funny gags throughout the attraction, “when all is funny, none is funny.”<sup>16</sup> Chief Porcupine’s role at the end of the ride is important for two main reasons. One, he is necessary for ending the ride and returning guests back to the ordinary world. He and the porcupines’ seemingly mystic powers were able to transport us into the story and seeing him again is a clear indicator that we are being transported back to the present-day. Secondly, he is the wise storyteller (a character who does not joke around or engage in silly behavior) that grounds the adventure in a lesson, informing us how the story explains why maple trees can only produce syrup at the end of winter. The Chief also gives a moral to the story, to “respect Mother Nature, her gifts, and the natural balance.” This moral can be taken literally, to respect what we take from nature, but also alludes to a subtle moral of the story and theme of the ride: Everything in moderation.

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<sup>15</sup> Younger, 210.

<sup>16</sup> Jeff Kurtii and Bruce Gordon, *The Art of Disneyland* (New York: Disney Editions, 2005), 53.

## THEME

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The “theme” of the ride is the big idea. Theme in this case is not necessarily a noun, like “woodland animals,” but rather a concept. The theme of *Meese Manor* is “everything in moderation.” In this case, the theme takes the form of the moral of the story. All that the Meeses and Mr. Flapsby do is the opposite of moderation—they do everything in excess. Because of their exorbitance they are unable to fully enjoy and appreciate life’s pleasures. Mr. Flapsby would enjoy himself more if he was not such a perfectionist and obsessive over cleanliness. The Meeses would be better able to enjoy the party if they did not over-indulge and would have been able to swim out of the watery mess they found themselves in. The transition from winter to spring and the ebb and flow of the water also play into the theme—all systems are at work to maintain balance. The theme helps drive all choices made for the attraction. The design for the manor, for instance, was made to be larger than life. When the Meeses sit down to eat pancakes, the stacks nearly touch the ceiling. “Everything in moderation” also applies to the concept of time in the story. The Meeses stay inside the manor all winter long for nearly four months—an extreme circumstance. Such circumstances cause the Meeses to become exceptionally anxious about the approaching End of Hibernation Celebration signifying when they can once again socialize and venture outdoors. As anxiety tends to do to some, the Meeses normal eccentricities become even more exaggerated and their countdown to the first day of spring is consequentially over the top. Throughout the ride, some form of countdown can be seen through each room of the house (e.g. calendars, tick marks, clocks), helping to build the anticipation the Meeses feel in the guest. The theme can also be applied towards human’s interactions with nature. The Meeses drink too much of the Mystic Maple’s syrup and are

ultimately punished. The Chief's final words about respecting the natural balance linger with the guests. There is an implication that negative consequences will affect us too if we abuse that which we take from Mother Earth. Everything in moderation.

## LAYING THE TRACK

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I will not posit where the attraction *Meese Manor: Legend of the Mystic Maple* would be located because I do not wish to associate the ride with any particular park or company. Had I chosen an IP to work with, I would be more disposed to selecting a site but because I have an original ride concept I believe it could be successfully incorporated into various theme park locations across North America.

I knew I wanted the ride to be a dark ride for storytelling purposes, but I still had to settle on a ride system. I thought about how I wanted people to move through the scenes and what the story necessitated. A beaver protagonist and the prominent role of water in the story led me to quickly decide on a log flume system incorporating dark ride scenes. A log flume consists of a narrow ride vehicle, typically one or two passengers across, flowing along a trough of moving water and customarily incorporating “water coaster segments that allow for brief, gravity-powered inclines.”<sup>17</sup> In consideration of the target age group, ages three through eleven, the two drops on the ride stand at 28 feet and 14 feet, neither exceeding a 45 degree angle. Drop heights were established based on studying height restrictions for pre-existing attractions and their corresponding drop heights and angles. For example, Magic Kingdom’s Splash Mountain has a 52.5 foot drop at 47 degrees with a height restriction of 40 inches.<sup>18</sup> The initial drop down the waterfall at the beginning of *Meese Manor* is proposed as a 28 foot drop at 45 degrees which I attributed an estimated height restriction of 36.5 inches. A three-year-old’s average height is

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<sup>17</sup> Younger, 426.

<sup>18</sup> “Disney Splash Mountain CA,” Themed Development Management, accessed May 4, 2016, <http://themeddevelopment.com/portfolio-items/disney-splash-mountain-ca>.

35-38 inches so the ride would still be inclusive of the youngest end of my targeted demographic.<sup>19</sup> The first drop would leave guests a bit wet, but the intent is to splash and not to soak.

After dropping down the waterfall, the ride vehicle goes up a lift and continues to float through the house. The house contains two more lifts, taking guests up a total of 38 feet from the beaver's dam (scene 2) to exiting outside (scene 12). This allows for the ride vehicle to take a careening path sloping downwards before crashing into the house and then dropping down 14 feet into the music room (returning to the level of the beaver dam).

Timing of the ride scenes was estimated using comparative scene timing of other flume rides (Disney's *Splash Mountain* and *Pirates of the Caribbean* and Universal's *Ripsaw Falls*) and taking into consideration the length of track through each show scene as based upon the 3D SketchUp model. *Meese Manor* was divided into 19 scenes beginning with loading the ride vehicle and ending after pulling back up into the load/unload station. The total estimated timing came to five minutes and 53 seconds, rounding up to 6 minutes (see Figure 13). Based on ride vehicle design (a six-person canoe) a single ride vehicle could cycle through the attraction 10 times in one hour bringing the hourly capacity of one vehicle to 60 guests. With approximately 25 ride vehicles able to run simultaneously while leaving adequate space between so as not to detract from the intimacy of the show scenes, the Theoretical Hourly Ride Capacity (THRC) comes to a total of 1,500 guests per hour (see Figure 14).

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<sup>19</sup> "Your child's size and growth timeline," BabyCenter, accessed May 22, 2016, [http://www.babycenter.com/0\\_your-childs-size-and-growth-timeline\\_10357633.bc](http://www.babycenter.com/0_your-childs-size-and-growth-timeline_10357633.bc).

As previously mentioned, the ride vehicle would resemble a six-person canoe (see Figure 15). The canoe belongs to the Porcupine Tribe visited in the queue. As such, it is emblazoned with the Porcupine insignia painted on the back followed by a trail of porcupine paw prints. The body of the canoe is wider at the bottom than is typical of a real canoe for increased stability and ride functionality. Guests sit one behind the other in single-file inline seating.<sup>20</sup> The seats are made to look like giant folded leaves, in keeping with the woodland materials used by the tribe and the gigantic trees that are common to their land. The exterior is made to look like pieces of bark stitched together, very similar to a birch canoe. The Porcupine are eaters and collectors of bark and could theoretically use their quills to sew together these vessels. A carved “wooden” beaver masthead leads passengers on their journey at the bow of the canoe, just as Mr. Flapsby leads us through the legend of the Mystic Maple. In reality, the canoe would most likely be made of fiberglass with padded, rubberized seats for comfort.

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<sup>20</sup> Younger, 497.

## CONCLUSION

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*Meese Manor: Legend of the Mystic Maple* is funny, quirky ride for the child in all of us. Though the ride is characterized by silliness, the design process for developing a story to be made into a dark ride was challenging, requiring many revisions, and the design could certainly continue to be refined and developed in further detail. The greatest challenge was defining the ride story and creating a fictional world and the characters that lived there, all which had to be in place before I could begin to design the ride. In the end, the story and characters took the most time to develop, confining design time for the ride itself. My completed concept design package consists of character designs for the main characters (including one 3D character model), a written step-through of the guest experience, illustration of the manor exterior, ride vehicle design, conceptual ride track plan, estimated timing and THRC, and an axonometric drawing of the ride track depicting each scene. Moving forward, I would like to design the entrance marquee and plan and design the queue. I believe if *Meese Manor* were to be built as a theme park attraction, it would not only serve to entertain but would remind guests of what is in danger of being lost in today's digital age. The woods are the perfect setting to escape the stresses of contemporary life. Here, the Porcupine and Meeses live lives free of screens and electronics. The triplets are seen playing make-believe while Mr. Flapsby, Master Meese, and Madam Meese engage in physical hobbies. Additionally, the Meeses spend their time *together*. Children are thus encouraged to use their imaginations like the triplets and parents are reminded of the value of being present. The Mystic Maple also serves as a symbol of the natural resources we depend on that, if abused, could be lost. I set out to create a funny children's dark ride but hope that perhaps *Meese Manor* is more than moose and pancakes.

As a final remark, I believe *Meese Manor* also helps make a case for the value of original IP's (Intellectual Properties) in theme parks. Introducing an original IP may not entail a built-in audience or immediate popular appeal, but I think the longevity and intrigue of an original story with original characters is highly attractive, especially as the parks trend towards being increasingly IP-laden. Original IP's may require extra work, but the many possibilities and creative freedom inherent when unrestricted by pre-determined story requirements make for unforgettable, unique experiences that are not part of a franchise fad. Some franchises are difficult to successfully translate to an entertaining three-dimensional experience, but by setting out to craft a story specifically for a dark ride, the story can be more specially tailored to make for an entertaining experience rather than forcing an adaptation from another medium. During a time of sequels, adaptations, and movie-based attractions, *Meese Manor* rallies for the odd and new.

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Figure 1. Mr. Flapsby 3D character model, Zbrush



Figure 2. Master Meese character sketch and bio, Graphite and digital paint



Figure 3. Madam Meese character sketch and bio, Graphite and digital paint



Figure 4. Mentley Meese character sketch and bio, Graphite and digital paint



Figure 5. Maldwin Meese character sketch and bio, Graphite and digital paint

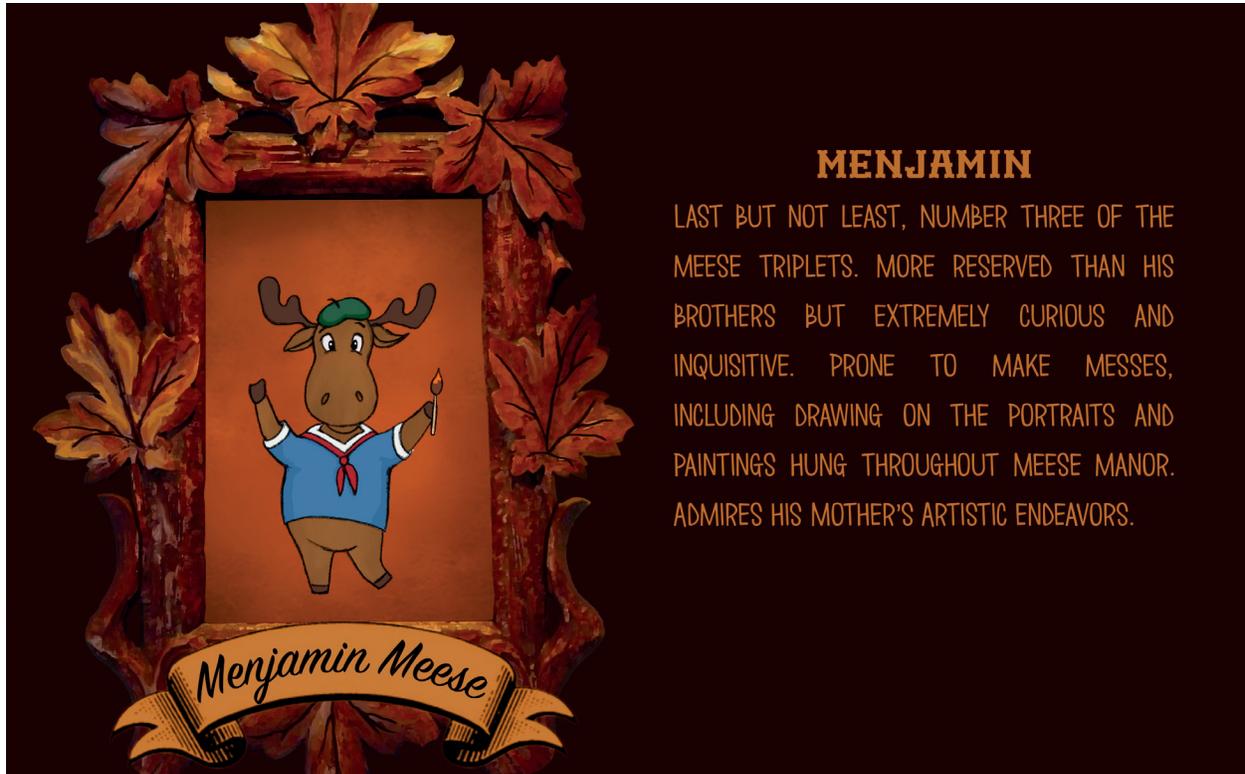


Figure 6. Menjamin Meese character sketch and bio, Graphite and digital paint



Figure 7. Mr. Flapsby character sketch and bio, Graphite and digital paint



Figure 8. Chief Porcupine character sketch and bio, Graphite and digital paint



Figure 9. Story chart

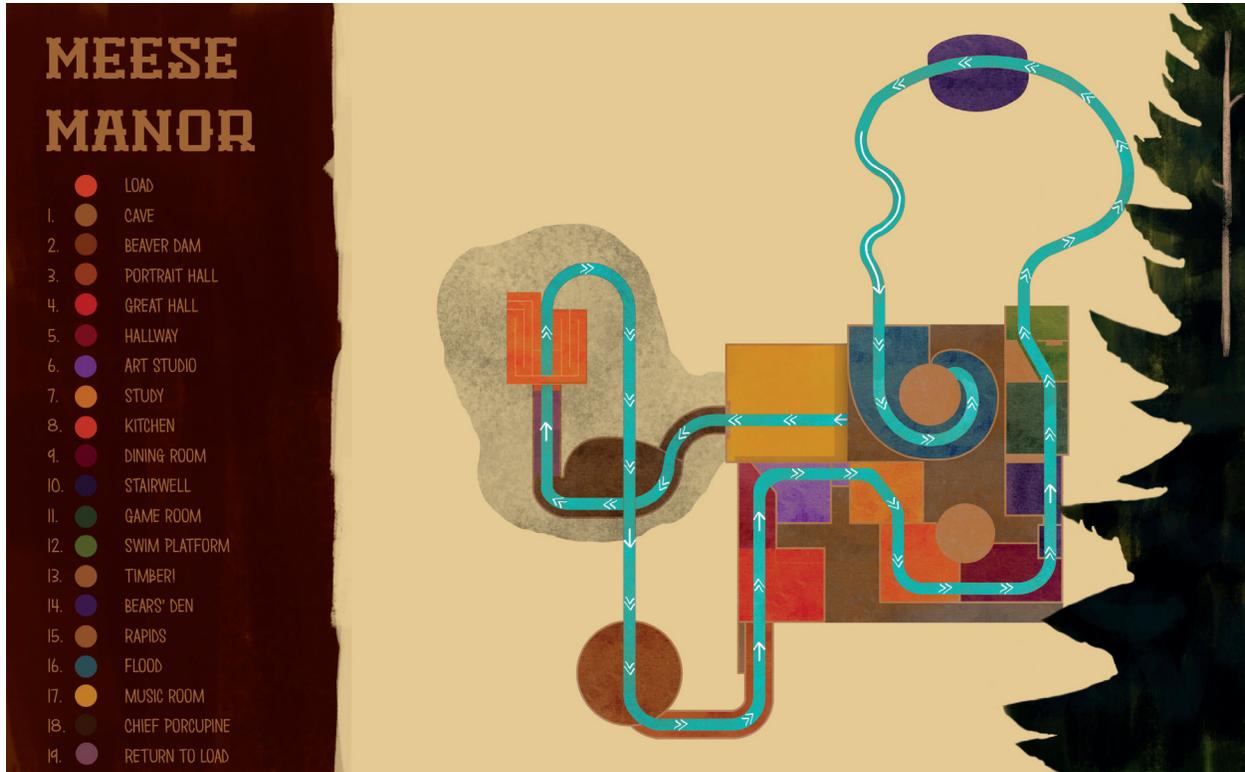


Figure 10. Ride track plan, Digital paint

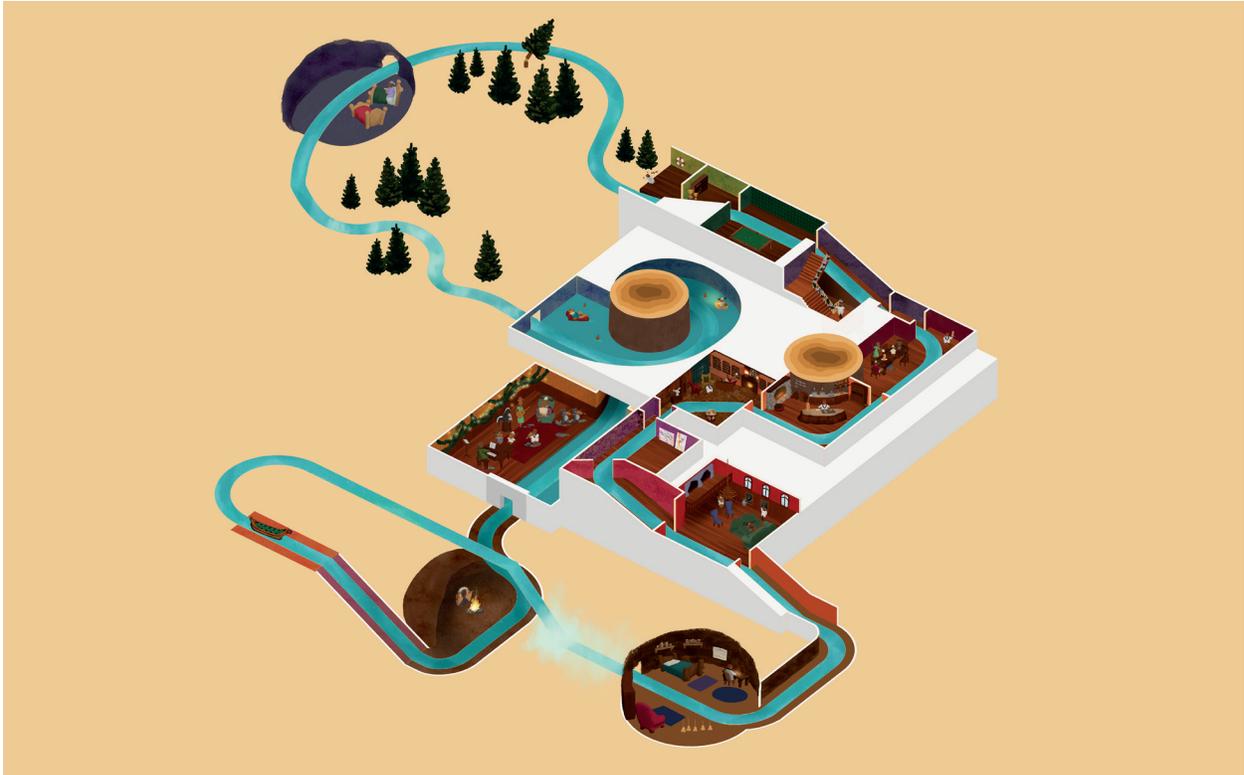


Figure 11. Axonometric drawing illustrating ride layout and scenes, SketchUp and digital paint



Figure 12. Manor exterior concept illustration, Digital paint

## TIMING

<i>Scene</i>	<i>Time</i> (MIN:SEC)	<i>Scene</i>	<i>Time</i> (MIN:SEC)
LOAD	0:23- 0:30	10. STAIRWELL	0:22
1. CAVE	0:24	11. GAME ROOM	0:12
2. BEAVER DAM	0:12	12. SWIM PLATFORM	0:05
3. PORTRAIT HALL	0:34	13. TIMBER!	0:16
4. GREAT HALL	0:14	14. BEARS' DEN	0:07
5. HALLWAY	0:18	15. RAPIDS	0:12
6. ART STUDIO	0:12	16. FLOODING	0:13
7. STUDY	0:14	17. MUSIC ROOM / CELEBRATION	0:22
8. KITCHEN	0:18	18. DARK CAVE: CHIEF PORCUPINE	0:26
9. DINING ROOM	0:20	19. RETURN TO LOAD	0:28

*Total Time: 6 minutes*

Figure 13. Scene Timing

## THRC: *Theoretical Hourly Ride Capacity*

- 6 MINUTE RIDE
- 6 GUESTS PER CANOE
- 25 CANOES

60 MIN / 6 MIN = 10 CYCLES PER HOUR PER RIDE VEHICLE

10 CYCLES X 6 GUESTS PER CANOE = 60 GUESTS

60 GUESTS X 25 CANOES = **1,500** *guests/hour*

Figure 14. Theoretical Hourly Ride Capacity (THRC) Calculation



Figure 15. Ride vehicle: Porcupine canoe, Pen and digital paint

## APPENDIX A | CHARACTER PROFILE WORKSHEET: MASTER MEESE

## Basic Statistics:

- \* **Name:** Master Meese (Manford Phineas Meese)
- \* **Age:** 52
- \* **Nationality:** Canadian
- \* **Socioeconomic Level as a Child:** Wealthy, upper class
- \* **Socioeconomic Level as an Adult:** Wealthy, upper class
- \* **Hometown:** Whitehorse, YT, Canada
- \* **Current Residence:** Meese Manor; Acer Heights, ON, Canada
- \* **Occupation:** Head of a real-estate empire
- \* **Income/Salary:** 3.5 million pinecones/year
- \* **Birth Order:** First born
- \* **Siblings (describe relationships):** Two brothers one sister—Malcolm, Macarthur, & Minerva  
Manford is the oldest, followed by Minerva, then Malcolm, and finally Macarthur.  
Manford is good friends with Minerva, often seeks her guidance when dealing with business matters. Manford and Macarthur get along well. Malcolm tends to cause trouble and can easily perturb Manford.
- \* **Spouse (describe relationships):** Madam Meese (Minifred)  
Madam Meese is Master Meece's closest confidant. She is always trying to get Manford to try new things with her—most recently she's taken up splatter painting.
- \* **Children (describe relationships):** Triplets—Maldwin, Mentley, and Menjamin  
Dearly loves his three sons. Spoils them and gives little discipline.
- \* **Grandparents (describe relationships):** Deceased
- \* **Grandchildren (describe relationships):** None
- \* **Significant Others (describe relationships):** Butler, Mr. Flapsby (III)  
Mr. Flapsby the Second was the Meese's longtime butler. With Mr. Flapsby's passing the previous spring, his son, Flapsby III, took his place. Master Meese had always viewed Flapsby as a kind of nephew or son but has just finally adjusted to Flapsby in his new role as head butler.
- \* **Relationship Skills:** Likeable, but talks a lot about himself. Quick to make friends.

## Physical Characteristics:

- \* **Height:** 6' 5"
- \* **Weight:** 1,300 lbs
- \* **Race:** Northwestern Moose
- \* **Eye Color:** Brown
- \* **Hair Color:** Brown
- \* **Glasses or Contact Lenses?:** Monocle
- \* **Skin Color:** Light brown
- \* **Shape of Face:** Oblong
- \* **Distinguishing Features:** Large, fuzzy antlers (from which sometimes hangs a pocket watch)
- \* **Manner of Dress:** Velvet smoking jacket and ascot

- \* **Mannerisms:** Hangs down his neck; A bit hunched over
- \* **Habits (smoking, drinking, etc.):** Smokes a pipe; Signature drink—brandy with syrup
- \* **Health:** Fairly healthy; Some joint pain in his lower legs
- \* **Hobbies:** Skiing (in his youth), Stamp licking
- \* **Speech Patterns:** Deep voice; Talks slowly; Speaks with fake British accent; Booming laugh  
British accent—attempts to mimic the Received Pronunciation British dialect but Canadian accent still tends to leak through. Others often make fun of him for this behind his back.
- \* **Disabilities:** Dyslexic
- \* **Style (elegant, shabby, etc.):** Sophisticated, Refined, A bit eccentric—wears nice clothes but do not always match and sometimes appear a bit unkempt.
- \* **Greatest Physical Flaw:** Slow-moving
- \* **Best Physical Quality:** Large size

#### Intellectual/Mental/Personality Attributes and Attitudes:

- \* **Educational Background:** MBA (Moose of Business Administration); Attended prestigious business school, University of Moosechester. Father and grandfather attended same school. More of an expectation he attend rather than a choice.
- \* **Intelligence Level:** Knowledgeable, but doesn't have much common sense. Master Meese knows many random facts (e.g. The unicorn is the national animal of Scotland) and is savvy about his business, but when it comes to knowing whether or not he should use electronics while in the bathtub, he is clueless.
- \* **Mental Illnesses (if any):** NA
- \* **Learning Experiences:** Learns to play accordion—playing the accordion is a pastime of his and he especially enjoys playing at parties when it harnesses everyone's attention.
- \* **Short-term Life Goals:** Throw the party of the year.
- \* **Long-term Life Goals:** Wants to be knighted by the Queen of England.
- \* **How does character see himself/herself?:** Thinks highly of himself.
- \* **How does character believe he/she is perceived by others?:** Believes others admire him and that many envy him because of his wealth and high status.
- \* **How self-confident is the character?:** Fairly self-confident. Confident in his looks and appearances, confident in conducting business, confident in social settings. Loses some self-confidence when encounters someone from the UK.
- \* **Does the character seem ruled by emotion, or logic, or some combination thereof?:**  
Character is ruled mostly by emotion. He acts on his fleeting wants and wishes.
- \* **What would most embarrass this character?:**  
To throw an ill-received social event or to be associated with a social faux-pas. He would also be verily embarrassed if someone called him out on his fake British accent.

#### Emotional Characteristics:

- \* **Strengths/Weaknesses:** Good leader, but does not always give clear direction and can be a hypocrite.
- \* **Introvert or Extrovert?:** Extrovert
- \* **How does the character deal with anger?:** Wants to be alone; May smash things

- \* **With sadness?:** Becomes quiet and reserved
- \* **With conflict?:** Doesn't want to be involved with matters that do not directly concern him—puts it on others to resolve conflict in his life.
- \* **With change?:** Generally ignorant to change
- \* **With loss?:** Extremely saddened by personal loss / Very competitive; is a sore loser
- \* **What does the character want out of life?:** To live out the rest of his days at Meese Manor
- \* **What would the character like to change in his/her life?:** Wishes he was British
- \* **What motivates this character?:** Make his father proud; Uphold the family name
- \* **What frightens this character?:** Losing respect and prestige; Running out of syrup
- \* **What makes this character happy?:** Being at home with his family; Pancakes
- \* **Is the character judgmental of others?:** Yes. He makes judgments on others' social standings upon first meeting based on behaviors and appearances.
- \* **Is the character generous or stingy?:** Generous—loves to invite friends to dinner and throw parties. Helped found the charity Goose to Goose Global—helps geese reconnect with family members lost during migration.
- \* **Is the character generally polite or rude?:** Polite, but with an air of superiority

#### Behaviors and Mannerisms:

- \* **Group Behaviors:** A Leader. Commands attention. Very talkative if approached—likes to talk about himself and his great Moose heritage, but interested in what others have to say. Discusses British news and the happenings at the Club (Acer Heights Country Club).
- \* **Individual Behaviors:** A bit lazy. Thinks out loud.
- \* **Catch Phrases:** "Cheers!"

#### Skills/ abilities:

- \* **inherent:** Strong, Tall—can reach high places
- \* **will learn:** How to play the accordion

#### Spiritual Characteristics:

- \* **Does the character believe in a God? Many gods? None at all?:** Yes. Believes in a god—the Father of the Pines.
- \* **What are the character's spiritual beliefs?:** Has strong belief that spirits live among them.
- \* **Is religion or spirituality a part of this character's life?:** Not really
- \* **If so, what role does it play?:** NA

#### How the Character is Involved in the Story:

- \* **Character's Game Role (Main character? Hero? Heroine? Romantic interest? Sidekick?, etc.):** Secondary character
- \* **Scene where Character First Appears:** Eating pancakes in the study
- \* **Relationships with Other Characters:** He is Mr. Flapsby's primary overseer

#### Scenarios:

While the following scenarios are not specific to any game, they will help to further define your character's persona.

- \* How does the character hold a baby?: Cradled in one arm
- \* What does the character do when they are left in a room alone?:  
Listens to cassette tapes on how to be British.
- \* How does the character act around the opposite sex?: At ease

**Character Growth (How is the character different at the end of the ride from when the ride began?):** Learns to accept Flapsby for who he is (and for not being a replica of his father, Flapsby the Second). Realizes he needs to lead by example and should quell his tendencies towards excess.

## APPENDIX B | CHARACTER PROFILE WORKSHEET: MR. FLAPSBY

## Basic Statistics:

- \* **Name:** Mr. Flapsby (III)
- \* **Age:** 24
- \* **Nationality:** Canadian
- \* **Socioeconomic Level as a Child:** middle class
- \* **Socioeconomic Level as an Adult:** middle class
- \* **Hometown:** Acer Heights, Ontario, Canada
- \* **Current Residence:** Meese Manor, Acer Heights
- \* **Occupation:** Family butler
- \* **Income/Salary:** Room and board at Meese Manor plus the national currency of the Canadian wilderness: pinecones
- \* **Birth Order:** First born
- \* **Siblings (describe relationships):** Only child
- \* **Spouse (describe relationships):** Single
- \* **Children (describe relationships):** None
- \* **Grandparents (describe relationships):** Deceased  
Grandfather was also a butler to the Meese family.
- \* **Grandchildren (describe relationships):** None
- \* **Significant Others (describe relationships):** Mother and Father (Deceased)  
Father was a butler and recently passed. Mother died when he was three—killed by a bear. The case was declared a homicide and the bear was declared insane.  
Nightmares of what occurred have haunted him throughout his life.
- \* **Relationship Skills:** Attentive listener. Caring. Intuitive.

## Physical Characteristics:

- \* **Height:** 32 in.
- \* **Weight:** 30 lbs
- \* **Race:** Beaver
- \* **Eye Color:** Brown
- \* **Hair Color:** Reddish brown
- \* **Glasses or Contact Lenses?:** No
- \* **Skin Color:** Brown
- \* **Shape of Face:** Rounded
- \* **Distinguishing Features:** Buck teeth; wide paddle tail
- \* **Manner of Dress:** White tuxedo—keeps his tux pristine and severely bothered if it gets stained or dirty
- \* **Mannerisms:** Obsessive, compulsive tendencies; Twiddles fingers behind back
- \* **Habits (smoking, drinking, etc.):** Neat freak, clean freak
- \* **Health:** Strong and healthy
- \* **Hobbies:** Likes to build miniatures of British landmarks out of toothpicks
- \* **Speech Patterns:** English accent—Received Pronunciation

- \* **Disabilities:** Allergic to birch wood
- \* **Style (elegant, shabby, etc.):** Well-kempt, Casual sophistication
- \* **Greatest Physical Flaw:** Slow-moving on land
- \* **Best Physical Quality:** Strong, sharp teeth

#### Intellectual/Mental/Personality Attributes and Attitudes:

- \* **Educational Background:** Attended prestigious butler school in London; Also learned butler etiquette from father
- \* **Intelligence Level:** Above average
- \* **Mental Illnesses (if any):** NA
- \* **Learning Experiences:** Learned how to patch leak in lodge from father; Mother's death left him with a fear of and extreme prejudice against bears.
- \* **Short-term Life Goals:** Please the the Meese family; Pull off a successful End of Hibernation Celebration
- \* **Long-term Life Goals:** To have his own home and family
- \* **How does character see himself/herself?:** Feels like he never does anything right (but tries not to let that dampen his spirits); Doesn't think too highly of himself but does believe himself to be a hard worker.
- \* **How does character believe he/she is perceived by others?:** Likes to think that he makes others happy and is very well-liked.
- \* **How self-confident is the character?:** Not very self-confident in his abilities as a butler—feels like he needs to prove himself—but doesn't let it show
- \* **Does the character seem ruled by emotion, or logic, or some combination thereof?:** Combination; Logic is instinctual but emotion usually wins out in the end
- \* **What would most embarrass this character?:** Doing a poor job. He also instinctually and uncontrollably slaps his tail when he gets scared—is embarrassed by his animalistic behavior.

#### Emotional Characteristics:

- \* **Strengths/Weaknesses:** Responsible, Thoughtful, Resourceful, Patient / Easily scared, Worrisome
- \* **Introvert or Extrovert?:** Introvert
- \* **How does the character deal with anger?:** Retains anger around others but grinds teeth and slams tail when alone
- \* **With sadness?:** Focuses on work
- \* **With conflict?:** Avoids conflict at all costs
- \* **With change?:** Likes the idea of change but when it actually happens is terrified; has lived entire life in Meese Manor
- \* **With loss?:** Accustomed to loss in terms of loved ones. Is a dignified loser in competition
- \* **What does the character want out of life?:** To be a prodigious, respected butler; Family of his own—Mr. Flapsby observes the Meese family everyday and admires their love, support, and camaraderie. Mr. Flapsby does not envy Master Meese in wealth but does in terms family.
- \* **What would the character like to change in his/her life?:** See more of the world/forest

- \* **What motivates this character?:** Makes his father proud/Make Master Meese proud; So badly wants to uphold his father's name that he overcompensates, often resulting in fiasco.
- \* **What frightens this character?:** Disappointment from others
- \* **What makes this character happy?:** Praise, A job well-done, Going on an adventure
- \* **Is the character judgmental of others?:** No, but he does not tolerate poor manners—judges poor manners as a reflection of poor character. Is judgmental against bears.
- \* **Is the character generous or stingy?:** Generous. Always willing to lend a helping hand.
- \* **Is the character generally polite or rude?:** Very Polite. May sometimes have sarcastic undertones to what he says so that he may still be perceived as polite while implying his true sentiments.

#### Behaviors and Mannerisms:

- \* **Group Behaviors:** Works well with others. Very professional.
- \* **Individual Behaviors:** Highly focused. Will work until near exhaustion.
- \* **Catch Phrases:** "I bit off more than I can chew."  
"Jolly good!"

#### Skills/ abilities:

- \* **inherent:** Gnawing through wood, swimming, tail slapping, cleaning
- \* **will learn:** How to go with the flow

#### Spiritual Characteristics:

- \* **Does the character believe in a God? Many gods? None at all?:** Believes in a higher being
- \* **What are the character's spiritual beliefs?:** Not affiliated with any specific religion. Believes strongly in the power and spirit of the pine tree.
- \* **Is religion or spirituality a part of this character's life?:** Sometimes prays for the Meeses; Sometimes prays to his parents, seeking guidance, seeking a purpose.
- \* **If so, what role does it play?:** Gives reassurance and hope

#### How the Character is Involved in the Story:

- \* **Character's Game Role (Main character? Hero? Heroine? Romantic interest? Sidekick?, etc.):** Hero
- \* **Scene where Character First Appears:** Carrying a silver tray of pancakes and syrup
- \* **Relationships with Other Characters:** Beloved butler to the Meeses

#### Scenarios:

While the following scenarios are not specific to any game, they will help to further define your character's persona.

- \* **How does the character hold a baby?:** Cradles with both arms.
- \* **What does the character do when they are left in a room alone?:** Paces back and forth,  
Chatters teeth
- \* **How does the character act around the opposite sex?:** Fumbles with words—usually a fairly eloquent speaker—but does not shy away.

**Character Growth (How is the character different at the end of the ride from when the ride began?):** At the end of the ride has increased confidence, feels sense of accomplishment despite the disaster that arose.

**Additional Notes on this Character:**

\*Very curious

\*Always busy

\*Mr. Flapsby overcompensates because he is no the butler his father was. He usually falters at the task at hand when he tries too hard to be like his father.

## APPENDIX C | GLUSKABE CHANGES MAPLE SYRUP: AN ABENAKI LEGEND

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Long ago, the Creator made and gave many gifts to man to help him during his life. The Creator made the lives of the Abenaki People very good, with plenty of food to gather, grow, and hunt. The Maple tree at that time was one of these very wonderful and special gifts from the Creator. The sap was as thick and sweet as honey. All you had to do was to break the end off of a branch and the syrup would flow out.

In these days Gluskabe would go from native village to village to keep an eye on the People for the Creator. One day Gluskabe came to an abandoned village. The village was in disrepair, the fields were over-grown, and the fires had gone cold. He wondered what had happened to the People.

He looked around and around, until he heard a strange sound. As he went towards the sound he could tell that it was the sound of many people moaning. The moaning did not sound like people in pain but more like the sound of contentment. As he got closer he saw a large stand of beautiful maple trees. As he got closer still he saw that all the people were lying on their backs under the trees with the end of a branch broken off and dripping maple syrup into their mouths.

The maple syrup had fattened them up so much and made them so lazy that they could barely move. Gluskabe told them to get up and go back to their village to re-kindle the fires and to repair the village. But the people did not listen. They told him that they were content to lie there and to enjoy the maple syrup.

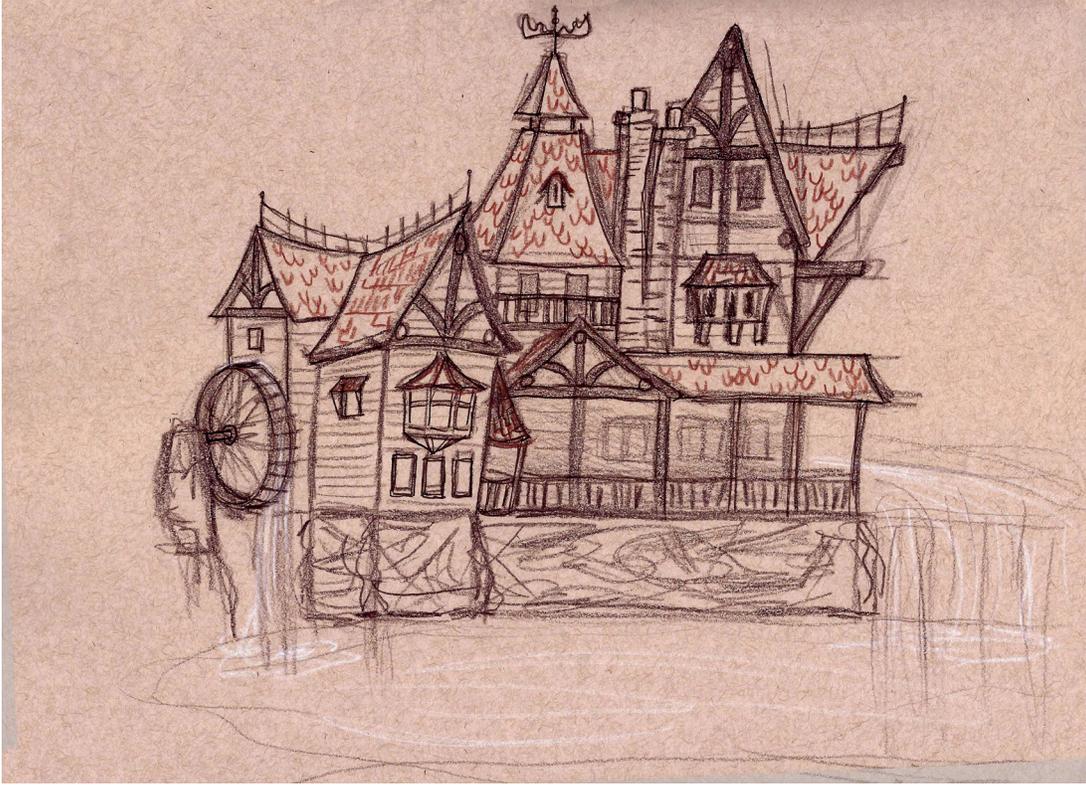
When Gluskabe reported this to the Creator, it was decided that it was again time that man needed another lesson to understand the Creator's ways. The Creator instructed Gluskabe to fill the maple trees with water. So Gluskabe made a large bucket from birch bark and went to

the river to get water. He added water, and added more water until the sap was that like water. Some say he added a measure of water for each day between moons, or nearly 30 times what it was as thick syrup. After a while the People began to get up because the sap was no longer so thick and sweet.

They asked Gluskabe "where has our sweet drink gone?" He told them that this is the way it will be from now on. Gluskabe told them that if they wanted the syrup again that they would have to work hard to get it. The sap would flow sweet only once a year before the new year of spring.

The People were shown that making syrup would take much work. Birch bark buckets would need to be made to collect the sap. Wood would be needed to be gathered to make fires to heat rocks, and the rocks would be needed to be put into the sap to boil the water out to make the thick sweet syrup that they once were so fond of. He also told them that they could get the sap for only a short time each year so that they would remember the error of their ways.

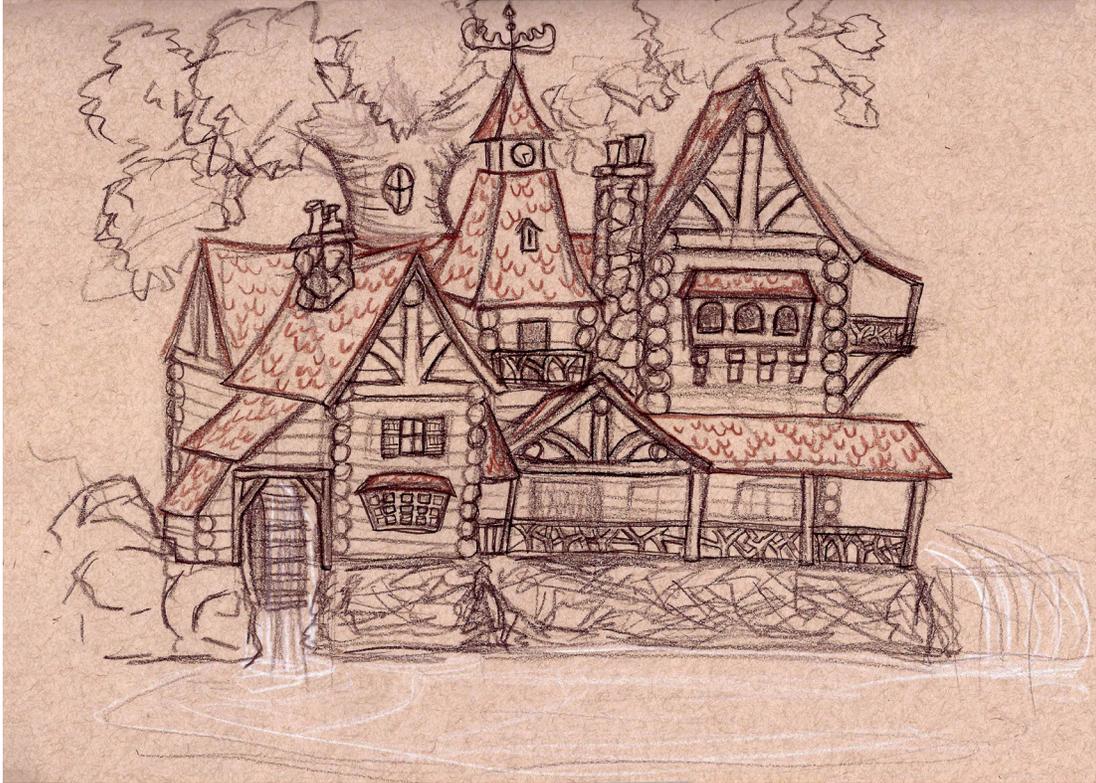
And so it is still to this day, each spring the Abenaki people remember Gluskabe's lesson in honoring Creator's gifts and work hard to gather the maple syrup they love so much. Nialach!



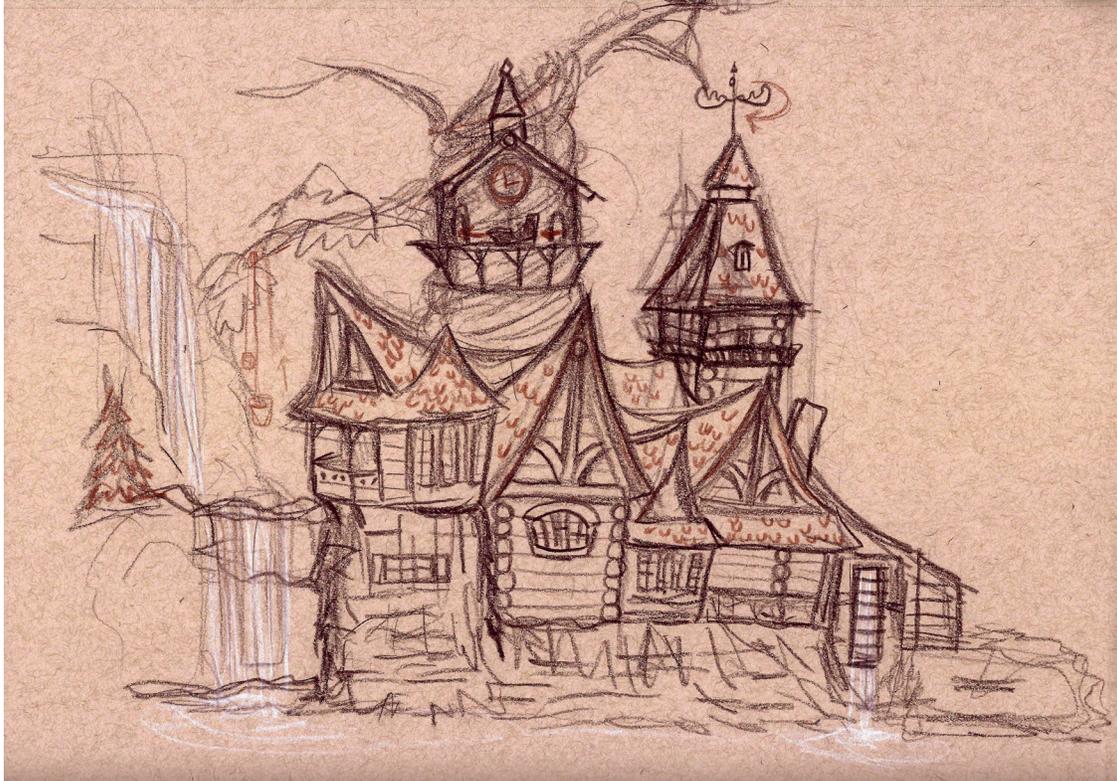
Appendix D. Manor façade sketch 1, Colored pencil



Appendix D. Manor façade sketch 2, Colored pencil



Appendix D. Manor façade sketch 3, Colored pencil



Appendix D. Manor façade sketch 4, Colored pencil

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