



THE GREAT AMERICAN TALL TALES

A NEW ORIGINAL MUSICAL

Character Descriptions

Travis—a middle school student and enthusiastic lover of the Great American Tall Tales

Derek—a middle school student who loves a bit of mischief

Sloane—a middle school student who is quick-witted and intelligent, and who doesn't have time for the boys' nonsense

Logan—the middle school bully, constantly picking on Derek and Travis. He sings the lead on John Henry's tale, A Man is Just a Man.

Elizabeth Peele—the assistant to the museum's curator. Once a huge believer in the Tall Tales, she's fighting to keep them or at least move them to another museum. She is a people pleaser who hasn't learned to speak up for herself

Francis Stinson—the museum curator. He thinks there is no place for fiction in a history museum and aims to destroy the Tall Tales to keep them from "infecting other children with false hopes and lies." (Songs: Closing the Book)

Jack Davis—Logan's dad, the security guard at the museum

Mrs. Tate—a bumbling teacher who'd lose her head if it wasn't attached

Mrs. Madison—president of the museum board and Mr. Stinson's boss. She is a wealthy, eccentric woman.

The Tall Tales:

Note: The Tall Tales sing most of the other lead Tall Tale songs, either in the chorus or in the background, but listed below next to each name are the main ones!

Davy Crockett—One of the most popular Tall Tales characters, and the de facto leader of the group. (Songs: Come Along for the Ride, King of the Wild Frontier, Little Bit O' Tall, The American Tall Tales)

Sally Ann Thunder—Davy's wife and a spitfire. She's pretty, doesn't suffer fools, and can out-dance anyone in a nine county radius. (Songs: Come Along for the Ride, Little Bit O' Tall, Sally Ann Thunder Ann Whirlwind Crockett, Ain't Nothin' That a Man Can Do, The American Tall Tales)

Johnny Appleseed—A gentle soul, a peacemaker, and incredibly charismatic. (Songs: Come Along for the Ride, Little Bit O Tall, Plant a Seed, The American Tall Tales)

Pecos Bill—Rough and tumble, grisly but fun-loving, Pecos Bill was raised by coyotes and can shoot the wings off a gnat at five hundred yards. (Songs: Come Along for the Ride, Little Bit O' Tall, The Ballad of Little Bill, The American Tall Tales)

Slue Foot Sue—With Slue Foot Sue, the lights are on but no one's home. She's the first to go along with a plan but the last one to understand anything that's going on. She's married to Pecos Bill, and has a love/hate relationship with his horse, Widowmaker. (Songs: Come Along for the Ride, Little Bit O' Tall, The Slue Foot Stomp, Ain't Nothin' That a Man Can Do, The American Tall Tales)

Paul Bunyan—Larger than life, stronger than a dozen men, but a big ol' teddy bear at heart. (Songs: Come Along for the Ride, Little Bit O' Tall, Backwoods Man, The American Tall Tales)

Annie Oakley—The epitome of a beauty and a tomboy, she's the sassiest of the group and can shoot the wings off a gnat at SIX hundred yards. (Songs: Come Along for the Ride, Little Bit O' Tall, Ain't Nothin' That a Man Can Do (lead), The American Tall Tales)

Annie Christmas—Rough around the edges, workhorse and keel boat captain, she's the toughest girl out of the group. (Songs: Come Along for the Ride, Little Bit O' Tall, Ain't Nothin' That a Man Can Do, Runnin', The American Tall Tales)

John Henry—One of the most inspiring Tall Tales characters. Tall, built, stoic, hardworking and loyal. (Songs: Come Along for the Ride, Little Bit O' Tall, A Man is Just a Man, The American Tall Tales)

**THE GREAT AMERICAN
TALL
TALES**
A NEW ORIGINAL MUSICAL

Press Release

Sharp as a whipcrack, ***The Great American Tall Tales***, a wild and western musical written by Adam and Courtney Walsh, (Grimm, Girls of Summer), comes a-ridin' onto the stage, lassoing tornados, fightin' off mountain lions with a hand tied behind its back, and taming the hearts and minds of audiences of all ages.

When a trio of middle-school friends ditch their field trip and wander into a closed-off, soon-to-be-replaced "Tall Tales" wing of their local history museum, they discover way more than they were expecting.

Familiar characters like Davy Crockett, Paul Bunyan, and Johnny Appleseed come to life, stepping right out of their displays, offering wisdom, one-upping each other ('cause behind every bangtail swaggerin' man, there's a woman who's rollin' her eyes), and a string of fantastically poignant stories that nail the bullseye every single time.

The characters from American folklore *love* spinnin' stories about ridin' catfish and shootin' the wings off a gnat at five hundred yards . . . but no one else seems to. Not this generation. Everyone seems to have forgotten, moved on, and their stories are no longer being told. Slowly, these larger-than-life men and women who once captured the wonder of the Wild West are being forgotten.

Because of that, they're losing their ability to come to life and soon will be nothing more than statues in storage.

Can the Tall Tales convince these kids to carry on the tradition?

With countrified, toe-tappin', knee slappin' music, hilariously fun characters, along with a timely message about taking time for what's really important, audiences of all ages will be whistling the tunes and getting an itch to learn to lasso.

In the words of the Tall Tales themselves, *We are pioneers in the wilderness bringing stories tall and true. In a world that's learned to move right by, we bring hope long overdue.*

Experience the hope for yourself with this unique and exciting brand new original musical!



THE GREAT AMERICAN TALL TALES A NEW ORIGINAL MUSICAL

Scene by Scene Breakdown

Act I: Prologue

The History Museum, 1955, 1985, 2025

The Overture begins, and as the music transitions and the curtain raises, we see Davy Crockett, acting as a kind of narrator/storyteller. He introduces himself and the other Tall Tales, and the interior of the museum is revealed. The Tall Tales are singing and dancing (***Come Along For the Ride***) to a large crowd of families.

The lighting changes, depicting the passage of time. It's now 1985. Davy continues to narrate how times are a-changin', and with it, kids' interest in him and his friends.

We now see the Tall Tales performing the same song, but this time to a crowd half the size. The kids join in the song, but sing about how they're bored and want to go back to the car.

The lighting changes again, depicting the passage of time. It's now 2025. Davy joins his Tall Tales companions in one final number, half the tempo and 1/4th of the energy, and this time there's only one small child they're performing for. Midway through the song, the child pulls out her phone and walks out.

The final thing we see are Mr. Stinson, Jack, and several other workers bringing in crates and caution taping off the Tall Tales exhibit.

Act I: Scene I

The Lobby of the History Museum

The music changes, and it's an upbeat, country-rock song introducing the main younger characters, Derek, Travis, and Sloane (***Best Time of Our Lives***). They're getting ready for school, along with a chorus of other like-aged kids, and the song ends with their class lined up in the History Museum lobby on a field trip.

Mrs. Tate, a slightly out-of-touch-with-today's-youth teacher, explains to her class that a paper will be due on one of the exhibits. Travis is excited—he loves this stuff and has been to this museum countless times—but Derek and the rest of the class are not. Mr. Stinson greets them, welcoming them to the History Museum, and Travis notices a cordoned off wing, a hallway blocked by caution tape. He can't quite remember what's down there, but Mr. Stinson, in firm and condescending fashion, tells everyone in the class that it's "fake" and "full of myths and lies," and has no business being in a History Museum.

Mrs. Tate and the class then head to a film about dinosaurs—but Derek and Travis hang back, wanting to see what's down that blocked-off hallway. After getting scared by their class bully, Logan, and dared to check it out, they slip past the caution tape . . . followed by Sloane who thinks they're just going to get in major trouble.

Act I: Scene 2

The Tall Tales Exhibit - Stinson and Peele

Mr. Stinson is talking to his assistant, Miss Elizabeth Peele, and it's clear he wants this exhibit gone as soon as possible. She tries to argue to keep it, saying that their stories mean a lot to a lot of people, but he shuts her down in the most overhand, condescending fashion. It's clear he's on a power trip, and he's really overbearing and a horribly bullish boss.

Derek and Travis sneak into the room, unseen, and hide behind some of the crates.

Miss Peele capitulates, because she doesn't want to lose her job, but on her way out she lays a hand on Annie Oakley's arm, promising she's not giving up on her.

As Miss Peele exits, there's a slight twinkle of music and Annie Oakley's head turns to watch Miss Peele as she leaves.

Act I: Scene 3

The Tall Tales Exhibit - Seeing the Tall Tales

Derek and Travis emerge from their hiding places, and Travis is convinced he saw Annie Oakley's head move. Sloane enters, finally catching up, and while they are there, other Tall Tale characters start to move around. The kids get freaked out, but it's revealed that it's just Logan moving them, playing a trick.

The group of kids look around the room and discover a button that reads "Out of Order"—which of course the boys push anyway.

An old, scratchy recording starts to play, starting up an old-timey filmstrip, talking about the exhibit and "Tall Tales," and how they were part of the American Wild West, but it glitches and winds down halfway through.

Act I: Scene 4

The Tall Tales Exhibit - The Tall Tales Wake Up

They hear a noise coming from down the hall—it's Jack, the security guard, and he's heard the recording playing and is coming to check it out.

The kids all hide, with Derek panicking and hiding in a pose behind Davy Crockett.

Jack enters, muttering about hearing things, but doesn't see anything and leaves.

The kids come out of their hiding places, and Derek grabs Davy Crockett's hat and puts it on, bragging about how smart he is. Just then, the recording starts to play on its own.

The Tall Tales characters all start to move now, making the kids group up together. The characters all start to move robotically, but then more fluid, shaking out cobwebs, stretching, until they're all fully mobile and completely alive.

Davy plucks the hat back off Derek's head, telling him that he is impressed with Derek's mighty quick thinkin'. The kids are all terrified, not knowing what's happening. The Tall Tales characters manage to calm them down, and try introducing themselves the best way they know how . . . with a song. (***Little Bit O' Tall***).

They explain that they're able to come to life because people are out there, telling their stories. But now? Today's kids aren't interested. As long as people are passing down

these tales, the characters will remain alive. Davy explains to Derek, Travis, Sloane, and Logan that they've grown weak, and these four kids are their last chance at surviving—and not turning into statues to be thrown in some landfill forever.

The kids agree to help—all except Logan, who thinks the whole thing is stupid—and so the Tall Tales begin to tell their stories.

Act I: Scene 5

The Tall Tales Exhibit - Davy Crockett

First up is Davy Crockett. He's seemingly the leader of this group, and he's a master storyteller. He sings of his tale (***King of the Wild Frontier***) helped by a group of people that just appear out of nowhere. (Derek: Where are all of these people coming from?! Johnny Appleseed: Yeah, we don't really know, it just happens sometimes when we sing.)

Act I: Scene 6

The Tall Tales Exhibit - Sally Ann Thunder

After his song, Sally Ann Thunder notices that he left out the most important part of his story . . . *her*. He hems and haws, and she pushes him out of the way to tell Davy's story the *right* way, from her perspective. According to her, Davy fell asleep near an old oak tree, and he slept so long that the roots of the tree grew right around him and he was stuck. She found him, whimpering and crying (Davy: I was not!) and she decided to set him free by making a lasso out of rattlesnakes and pulling the tree apart.

He was so in love with her that he followed her all the way to her annual barn dance—where she promised any man who could outlast her on the dance floor her hand in marriage. She starts to sing (***Sally Ann Thunder Ann Whirlwind Crockett***) and is joined by a huge group of people, all joining in. At the end, Davy is the only one who can match her step for step, and the song ends with him proposing on one knee.

Act I: Scene 7

The Tall Tales Exhibit - Slue Foot Sue

After the song, Pecos Bill and Annie Oakley start having a shooting contest, firing at a target far away. When asked what the target is, Pecos Bill replies "My wife."

Slue Foot Sue is Pecos Bill's wife, and she's been shot 63 times so far—and each time she compliments Bill for not bein' such a cross-eyed shavetail. After the contest, she

decides to tell her story about how she and Bill met (***The Slue Foot Stomp***). She was riding a catfish in the middle of the Mississippi when Bill noticed her and asked her if she wanted him to buy her a pretty little dress. She said yes, but only if she got to ride his horse, Widowmaker. He warns her that his horse is named that for a reason . . . but she rides him anyway. Widowmaker bucks her off so many times and so high (and because she was wearing a hoop skirt with a really bouncy bustle) she bounced straight up to the moon.

Bill yells at her to get down, but she can't, and he ends up lassoing the moon and pulling it down so she can hop off. Being she's the only person other than him to survive riding Widowmaker, they get married immediately after.

Act I: Scene 7

The Tall Tales Exhibit - Pecos Bill

Pecos Bill notes that you can't go far from Sue's story without runnin' into his own, so he decides to tell his by singing a song about it (***The Ballad of Little Bill***). He was born into a family with 18 brothers and sisters, and one day while on the trail, the wagon his family was riding on hit a bump and he fell off the back. Alone, he wandered around until coyotes found him and decided, because he smelled a bit like them, he could stay. They raised him, until other humans find him and tell him he's actually a person, not a varmint. At the end of the song, Bill is reunited with his family.

Act I: Scene 8

The Tall Tales Exhibit - Miss Peele Meets the Tall Tales (Again)

After Pecos Bill's song ends, he challenges Travis to a race on broom stick horses. As they begin, Miss Peele walks into the room and catches all of them, kids and Tall Tales, right in the middle of what they were doing.

She can't believe it—the Tall Tales came alive when she was a little girl but it's been years—and she embraces Annie Oakley, her favorite Tall Tale and inspiration. They tell Miss Peele their predicament, and she says she can't do anything about it because she's just an assistant, and pretty ordinary, and her boss is not the nicest person. The Tall Tales, especially the women, frown and scoff and tell her she's a woman, and women can stand up to bullies anytime, anyplace. Miss Peele sadly disagrees, and their conversation is cut short by Mr. Stinson making his way down the hall into the exhibit.

Act I: Scene 9

The Tall Tales Exhibit - The Tall Tales' End

The Tall Tales scatter back to their frozen positions while the kids hide. Miss Peele remains unhidden, pretending to take inventory in the room before shipping them out.

Mr. Stinson and Jack (who is revealed to be Logan's dad) enter, with Mr. Stinson ranting about the delay in packing these things up. Miss Peele makes one last ditch effort to make her case, but she is immediately shut down and threatened with her job if she doesn't do what she's told. Mr. Stinson orders her to get the movers going, get crates in here, because the timeline has moved up and instead of tomorrow morning, he's packing them up and getting rid of them right now.

As she and Jack exit to meet the movers, Mr. Stinson lingers back and starts to reveal just why he hates these Tall Tales so much (**Closing the Book**). It turns out that as a wide-eyed and innocent child, he found a book in the library titled "American Legends and True Traditions." In it were the stories of the Tall Tales, with he took to be absolutely true. When bringing this book (and his belief) back to school, the other kids made fun of him, telling him he was ridiculous for believing that people could actually ride tornadoes or have oversized oxen as friends. From that point on, he vowed never to look stupid again—and blames the Tall Tales and their stories.

On the last line of the song, he loads Davy Crocket up into a crate, closes the door, and padlocks it. As the lights fade, we see plans made to haul them all away.

END ACT I

Act II: Scene 1

The Tall Tales Exhibit

We rejoin the exhibit, several Tall Tales characters boxed and locked up. Mr. Stinson, Jack, and Miss Peele are gone, and the only ones left are Derek, Travis, Sloane, and Logan. Davy Crockett knocks from the inside of his crate, asking to be let out—and Paul Bunyan, trying to be gentle, accidentally rips the crate's lid completely off, freeing him.

They all hunker down and try to come up with a plan—which they do. The girls decide that Miss Peele is the answer. She can help stall things, or maybe even figure out a different destination than a landfill. Sloane and the female Tall Tales (Annie Oakley,

Annie Christmas, Slue Foot Slue, and Sally Ann), led by Logan who is suddenly and out-of-character helpful, head to Miss Peele's office to set things in motion.

Act II: Scene 2

Miss Peele's Office

The girls arrive to find Miss Peele, dejected and holding her childhood cowboy hat, at a loss as to what to do. Instead of letting her wallow in her pity, they remind her of who she is . . . and that she's a woman, to boot. (**Ain't Nothin' That a Man Can Do**) Just like in the exhibit, loads of people come join the song, even though it's smack dab in the middle of Miss Peele's office. Once the song ends, Miss Peele has a new found confidence and comes up with a plan to help save the Tall Tales. The girls all make their way back to the Tall Tales exhibit.

Act II: Scene 3

The Loading Dock

Derek and Logan, as the second part of the plan that was hatched, are hiding at the loading dock. They're going to let the air out of the tires of the moving van so it can't leave, buying a bit more time.

Unfortunately, Mr. Stinson arrives and catches Logan—but he doesn't see Derek, and Logan, shockingly, doesn't give him up. Logan is hauled off and Derek is left to try and complete this part of the plan himself.

Act II: Scene 4

The Tall Tales Exhibit - Johnny Appleseed

The girls arrive back at the exhibit, and Miss Peele lays out her plan. She has overheard Mr. Stinson talking to the President of the Board of the museum, and he's convinced her that the Tall Tales are actually getting donated to another children's museum out of state—when that's not what he's planning at all. Her plan is to get the President of the Board down to the museum herself, so she can see the Tall Tales with her own eyes. Davy reminds her of his rule about coming to life in front of adults . . . it's not always the best plan. She tells him that they might have to break a few rules to make this work.

Not only that, but there are still stories to be told. And they're running out of time.

Johnny Appleseed, impressed the whole group of women, hands Sloane an apple. She knows his story, and he's impressed that she does—and he asks her to tell it. Sloane

takes center stage and starts telling Johny's story, that he was based on a real person, a missionary, who was actually trying to solve world hunger. He takes over, and sings the rest (***Plant a Seed***).

Act II: Scene 4

The Tall Tales Exhibit - Paul Bunyan

Travis tries to take control (much to Sloane's eyerolling) and get the other Tall Tales to get their stories out, quick as they can, and he reveals that his parents bought him a book about Paul Bunyan. He's forgotten some of the details, which makes Paul leap to his feet and rock out to his song and story (***Backwoods Man***). It's a high energy, country rock song, and at the end as everyone is hitting a final pose, Derek comes running in, out of breath.

Act II: Scene 5

The Tall Tales Exhibit - Logan's Change of Heart

Derek says they were all set to let the air out of the tires, but Logan got caught by Mr. Stinson. Then, to everyone's surprise, Logan walks in . . . with his dad, Jack. His dad helped Logan by telling Mr. Stinson that he'd take care of him and take him home—but Jack never liked Mr. Stinson anyway. Instead, they both came here because of what Logan told him was going on.

Jack then extends a hand to John Henry, thanking him for his story. Taken aback, John asks why—only to find out that he is Logan's favorite Tall Tale, and that he knows his story inside and out. John's story is one of hardworking, steadfast loyalty, and Logan and John together tell it (***A Man is Just a Man***) along with a chorus of men and women working the timber and the rail. They sing about John, pitted against a machine that can seemingly work harder and faster than any man laying track for trains. John bears down, and with a hammer in each hand, bores straight through a mountain and wins the race, causing the machine to break down—but at the cost of his own life.

Act II: Scene 5

The Tall Tales Exhibit - Annie Christmas

The final story to be told is Annie Christmas . . . and she absolutely hates bullies. It's what she's known for. She even has a long, beaded necklace (one bead for every eye gouged out or ear bit off) that shows off her disdain for people who take advantage of other people. She sees Mr. Stinson for what he is—an old fashioned bully, and she lets everyone know, through her story, exactly how she feels about that (***It Ain't***

Christmastime No More). In her story she's a keel boat captain and bully fighter, and she saved a hundred people from another boat capsizing in a storm—all because the guy captain wouldn't listen to her and drove the boat aground.

Act II: Scene 6

The Tall Tales Exhibit - Mr. Stinson Gets His

After Annie's song, the Tall Tales, along with the kids, plan out the final piece. They're going to break a few rules, but the plan is to have the Tall Tales characters come to life in front of Mr. Stinson and give him what for.

Mr. Stinson enters, the Tall Tales do just that, shocking him and causing him to react with disbelief. At the same time, Miss Peele enters with Mrs. Madison, the President of the Board, who confronts Mr. Stinson, asking him if he's lost that sense of wonder that kids have, the imagination, the stories that, while embellished, taught some amazing lessons.

He's belligerent, vowing to get rid of them one way or another, letting them all know that he's going to tell everyone just how fake and full of lies these stories are—when Annie Christmas walks up to him, gently puts a hand on his shoulder, and knocks him out cold.

Mrs. Madison, Miss Peele, the kids, and the Tall Tales all revel in their victory, and Mrs. Madison makes a proclamation that the Tall Tales will reopen soon—under new management . . . looking at Miss Peele.

The Tall Tales, considering this to be the tallest tale of them all, end things with a poignant song about the true meaning of their stories (***The American Tall Tales***). In a world that's learned to move right by, their stories bring hope long overdue.

Act I: Prologue

The History Museum, 3 months later

We see Davy Crockett, same as the start of the show, as a kind of a narrator. This time, the Tall Tales are singing a reprise of the first song (***Come Along For the Ride Reprise***) and kids and families are all joining in—and the song ends with a final pose and a flourish.