

Unit: Researching Farming Families in Illinois

Introduction to Unit:

This unit focuses on the early settlement of Illinois by pioneers from the eastern or southern United States and from Europe. Students will understand some of the difficult work, hardships, and accomplishments of these early settlers, who founded some of our towns and started Illinois on its way to becoming a major agricultural state.

- Students will learn to analyze historical photographs, public records, early publications, maps, and other secondary sources to obtain information.
- They will use their findings to create a family Web album that tells the history of an early family and farming on their land.
- Lastly, they will reflect on the contributions of past Illinoisans who were on a new frontier, and think about how they may be embarking on such a journey themselves.

Illinois State Board of Education Standards and Goals Addressed:

History: Social Systems:

Late Elementary: 18.B.2a: Describe interactions of individuals, groups and institutions in situations drawn from the local community (e.g., local response to state and national reforms). (*Teachers of elementary students may want to choose some of the lessons rather than the whole unit.*)

Middle School: 18.B.3a: Analyze how individuals and groups interact with and within institutions (e.g., educational, military).

Late High School: 18.B.: Use methods of social science inquiry (pose questions, collect and analyze data, make and support conclusions with evidence, report findings) to study the development and functions of social systems and report conclusions to a larger audience.

History:

Late Elementary: 16.A.2c: Ask questions and seek answers by collecting and analyzing data from historic documents, images and other literary and non-literary sources.

Late High School: 16.A.5a: Analyze historical and contemporary developments using methods of historical inquiry (pose questions, collect and analyze data, make and support inferences with evidence, report findings).

E: Understand Illinois, United States and world environmental history. (Discussion of farming methods, conservation, chemicals, etc.)

Target Grade Level:

Middle and High School, grades 7-12

Beginning college, general public

Major Understandings:

- Illinois was created and shaped by people from many backgrounds who pioneered agriculture on the prairie, contributed to our lives today with their agricultural knowledge and techniques, and left records and a legacy behind.

- It is possible, through historical research methods and today's technology, to find these records and describe some of the lives and legacies of these farming pioneers, some of whom are our ancestors.

*Note: students may choose to research a family or farm near them, or if they live in a city, they could choose one of the farms featured in our History of Agriculture site or from another source.

Essential Questions:

- Who were early Illinois settlers who created farms in Illinois?
- What were the contributions of pioneers and their descendants to Illinois agriculture and state development in general?
- How can we find out about 'regular' people who lived in our state 100-180 years ago?

Key Knowledge Objectives:

Students will:

- Know that pioneers started coming to Illinois about 1800 and continued to arrive and create farms through the 19th century.
- Know the methods, materials, and techniques historians use to learn about the settlers and their descendants who used to farm Illinois during the 19th century and beyond.
- Know that these settlers made contributions to agriculture and the state that continue today.

Key Skill Objectives:

Students will:

- Work as part of research groups
- Analyze historical photographs for information about past events, places, and people.
- Analyze maps for geographic, economic, historical, and cultural information
- Analyze farm objects and art objects (hands-on or images) for information and meaning.
- Gather information from living people by making audio or video interviews with prepared questions created to reflect what they are researching.
- Gather information from primary and secondary written sources to increase their understanding of the history of Illinois agriculture related to the people they are researching.
- Use computer hardware and software to create a story of their subjects.

Formative Assessment Suggestions:

Students will keep an organized folder of document copies of their research findings.

Students will record facts, analyses, and observations in a journal.

Students will create a site map of their Web site design and content.

Students will create a Web exhibit or album that incorporates their research.

Lesson Plans for this Unit:

Preparing our Groups for the Unit

Finding Meaning in Historical Photographs

Digging for Gold: Taking an Oral Interview

Finding Farmers: Using Online Genealogical Sources

Finding Farms I: Public Land Sales Records

Finding Farms II: Reading Plat Maps from Land Descriptions

Understanding Settlers: Reading Journals, Letters, and Books.

Understanding Farming: Researching Plants and Livestock

How Was It Done: Farm Machinery and Tool Development

Culminating Performance:

The Student Web Album or Exhibit will consist of text divided into sections (topics) chosen by the students and appropriate to the subject and information they found.

Biography of the persons researched

Family tree of the farm family

Land sales records

Plat map image

Photographs if available (or original photo of the person)

Short history of the type of farming done on the farm or in the area

Short description of the methods, machinery, and products of the farm or area

Software for Album:

Photo image-formatting software to crop and adjust photographs

The Exhibit sections can be a Photo Gallery made in a freeware such as

<http://www.slooze.com/>

Slooze (this is the software used in the Museum's online Exhibit galleries
(*Barker Paperweights* and *Harvesting the River*)

<http://members.jcom.home.ne.jp/mtpsoft/limon/>

Limon freeware

http://shareware.about.com/library/best_of_1999/bl_keepsake_studio.htm

Keepsake Studio

http://www.brothersoft.com/Multimedia_Graphics_Viewers_My_Photo_Album_21740.html My Photo Album 4.2

Software for text files:

Word processing software

Adobe pdf writer

Integrated Presentation Possibilities:

Power Point

Dreamweaver, Front Page

Freeware:

http://www.freedownloadcenter.com/Web_Authoring/Multimedia_Web_Authoring_Tools/index.html

Software aimed at children's web authoring

<http://www.webattack.com/freeware/categories/13/>

Web Attack software programs to help create a web site

<http://www.action-links.com/windows/miscfree.htm>

Page of freeware links for Windows 95 and the Web

Links to Sample Farming Album Unit:

Frank Sadorus. Illinois Photographer:

This unit had the advantage that one of the farmer's sons was a self-taught photographer. In the off-season, mostly, but sometimes in the harvesting season, he took pictures of the family and the farm intensively from 1909 – 1912. The sections on the biography of Frank, his immediate family and ancestors, and the farm are similar to what students can produce with their research. It does not contain plat map/land sale information, but some Sadorus land history information is included in Lesson 4A and 4B.



Henry Sadorus, Sr.

<http://www.museum.state.il.us/ismdepts/art/sadorus/>

Click on the sections Frank Sadorus, Sadorus, Illinois, The Sadorus Family, and The Sadorus Farms. The 500 photographs can be seen in the Photo Gallery, divided into three themes; Family, Farm, and Sadorus Area

You could add types of crops and livestock on the farm, and machinery and tools used on the farm to add more agricultural content.

Illinois State Museum, History of Agriculture Web Exhibit