Wagner Farm
Passport to the 1920’s Activities

Illinois State Standards:

Pre-Visit Activities

1. Have the class make a timeline of significant national and local events that took place between the year 1910 and 1930. The children can discuss how Wagner Farm might have been affected by any of those events.

2. Have the children make a record of their daily activities, starting from the time they wake up to the time they go to bed. Have them record what each activity is and at what time it took place. Keep this record and refer back to it for the post-visit activity.

Post-Visit Activities

1. Have each of the children or the class create a timeline of a farm child’s daily activities. Make it similar to the one done before the trip, including everything from the time they wake up to the time they go to bed. When finished, compare the two timelines. Discuss what differences and similarities exist. Talk about which day seems easier, or which day seems more productive.

2. Have each child read the primary source quotes on worksheet A—either out loud or to themselves. Then have the children interview each other about their daily experiences and memories. Each child can record them down so that they can have a primary source document about their own lives.

*please refer to worksheet A

Teacher Resources

http://www.aginthe classroom.org

http://www.livinghistoryfarm.org/index.html


http://www.uis.edu/archives/contents.htm
“Mother did all the milking ‘till we got old enough to milk and we had to take at least one cow apiece to milk, by hand, of course. We generally milked about three or four cows, generally about four. And my sister would milk one and I’d milk one, and Mother would milk the rest.”

Lennie Hern, 90, Decatur County, Indiana

“To get to school on time, we got up at four o’clock in the mornings. We children helped Mother prepare breakfast which was a huge meal consisting of meat, gravy, oats, apple butter, biscuits, milk, an coffee. My sister and I washed the dishes while my mother prepared our lunches, which we carried to school in small buckets.”

Violet David, 79, Brown County, Indiana

“We raised what we ate, and ate what we raised. You didn’t go to town and buy it, so it really was important to put your garden out and really take care of it when it was ready to harvest.”

Beulah Rawlings, 76, Hamilton County, Indiana

“The wheat was taken to the local mill. Enough was sold to the mill to pay for expenses and the rest left to draw 100 pounds of flour a month for the family use. Also in trade each family usually got some Graham flour and corn meal, a very good arrangement for both sides.”

Beatrice Shuel, 74, Gibson County, Indiana

“Every Monday morning we’d get the copper boiler out and cut up a bar of Fels Naptha soup in it. Fill the copper boiler with water and lift it up on the wood stove and get the water good and hot. Then put the water into the wringer washing machine and put a couple of galvanized tubs on a wooden bunch next to the washer. We’d put the wash through the wringer into one rinse water, than into another rinse water, then into a basket. Then we’d carry the clothes out to the line, and dry them with good old solar heat.”

Joyce Frederick, 56, St. Joseph County, Indiana

“...We’d take the rugs and put them out on the line and beat them, and the dust would just fog, and you’d think there was a dust storm. We had a good rug beater; all you had to have was a lot of energy in your arms, and you just beat and beat and beat. Then you’d sweep them real good with the broom, while they were still on the line.”

Gaby Moon, 69, Clay County, Indiana

“The first radios we had we were run on a battery. I remember sitting up late at night trying to get this, that and the other. It as always a mystery to me how we could just turn a button and that would come in through the air. I couldn’t understand it at all, but now it’s a common thing.”

Alvah Watson, 97, Allen County, Indiana

“As soon as we got old enough, we learnt to carry in wood, and we always had to fill the woodboxes and keep them full. We didn’t have anything else but wood stoves.”

Cora Keplinger, 80, Huntington County, Indiana

*all quotations were taken from: Memories of Hoosier Homemakers, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1984